

Chapter Two

Public Art for Commemorating Warrior Traditional Leaders

2.1 Introduction

This chapter traces the history of the Warrior Traditional Leader project from its conception in 2004 until the dedication of the last monument in 2006. It explores the competition/approach that resulted in the selection of the designs and appointment of sculptors, and it considers the monuments' gestation in the sculptors' studios. The chapter also investigates the inherent challenges involved in that process and how these were channelled into a high-profile project. The chapter furthermore considers how these traditional leaders were selected and what their symbolic significance was perceived to be. An attempt will be made to demonstrate that components of the wars of resistance in Limpopo did not become "part of the list" based on the culmination of critical debate, consultation, and conscious selection. However, specific circumstances, pragmatic considerations, political compromises, and other technocratic processes of decision-making played a major role. To this end it can be argued that the Wars of Resistance project did not represent a need on the part of the people of Limpopo province, rather a reflection of a decision by the political principals on a highly institutionalised form of commemoration sponsored and directed by the provincial government in pursuit of specific aims and intentions to address present challenges.

It is important to introduce this section by providing some historical background on heritage and policy as strategic unifiers in the eyes of the new rulers of the new South Africa. Arthur Danto and George Dickie, advocates of the so-called institutional theory of art, have argued that any object becomes a work of art through a process of designation by the institutions, theories, and official structures of the art world. Marschall (2005a: 31) believes that the same holds true for heritage and observes that the value of a heritage site is not intrinsic; it becomes valuable through selection, through an act of designation, or proclamation. It is through the act of proclamation—by those official structures empowered to perform it—that a heritage site acquires its status and

significance (Danto and Dickie, as cited in Marschall 2005a: 31). In South Africa, at a national level, the official structure empowered to determine what counts as heritage today, is the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), which replaced the National Monuments Council (NMC) of the previous era. It is through policy and legislation that a site is declared as heritage of national or provincial significance (Republic of South Africa 1999).

Frescura (1991) calculated that at the beginning of the 1990s, 97 per cent of all heritage sites listed by the NMC related to the values and experiences of the white population minority. The remaining three per cent covered the heritage of all other population groups combined, much of which was taken up by San/Bushmen rock art sites (Frescura 1991).

Marschall wrote that with the advent of fundamental changes in the political arena following Nelson Mandela's release from prison in 1990, discussions about the need for a radical democratisation and multicultural adjustment of the South African heritage landscape ensued. After the first South African general elections in 1994, it was decided to completely restructure the existing body of legislation and administration, dissolving the NMC in the process. The National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA), adopted in 1999, established SAHRA as a statutory body entrusted with the protection, not only of "monuments" in the sense of previous legislation, but of "cultural heritage". The shift of terminology was a significant one and was widely interpreted as a progressive move. A new term "heritage" now opened the field to include a broad range of objects and sites—not necessarily containing any built structures—of which many were related to the history and culture of Africans and other previously marginalised population groups. In line with the foundation myth of the new South African state, particular attention was devoted to sites associated with the liberation (and resistance) struggle (Frescura 1991). Grobler (2008: 174) wrote that the new South Africa's foundation myth consisted of a struggle against injustice and for freedom.

Equally important in the new heritage legislation was its decentralisation policy, assigning control over heritage matters to the jurisdiction of the provinces. This decision was a strategic political move by the ANC-led central government, meant as a concession to opposition political forces concentrated in certain regions. Notably, supporters of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) in KwaZulu Natal and many whites in the Western Cape were keen to foster—through heritage—a unique identity different from the ANCs efforts at building a new national identity (Marschall 2009a: 33-34). The identification, conservation, and management of heritage—so central in identity construction—were thus relegated to the provinces. This move allowed for a balancing out of specific regional identities, thus preventing the failure of the project of national unity through

its perceived threat to diverging identities. It is for this reason that one can observe, for instance in Limpopo, the prioritisation of heritage sites that celebrate warrior traditional leaders.

Finally, in 2004 the Limpopo provincial government appropriated funds to the amount of R6 000 000.00 to erect statues throughout the province to a select group of warrior traditional leaders who fought the “Wars of Resistance against Colonialism and Imperialism”. The provincial DSAC, which was mandated to preserve heritage issues, persuaded the government to allocate funds toward the statues. The appropriation, by far the largest Limpopo provincial government expenditure for a fine arts project up to that time, led to the establishment of a Project Team empowered to select sites, commission sculptors and /or architects to design and to carry out the work, and supervise the construction of the monuments and formal dedications. This chapter traces the history of the statues to the warrior traditional leaders from conceptualisation until the dedication of the last statue in 2006. The chapter will also explore the conception that resulted in the decision to use public art (statues/ monuments) in the Limpopo province; the process of appointing sculptors; monitoring and evaluation of the designs of the statues; and the unveiling amid (sometimes a storm of) protests from some competing sections of communities; the chapter also considers the statues gestation in the sculptor’s studios.

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2.2 Fields of memory: burial grounds or battlefields?

At the first meeting of the Project Team in 2004, preliminary decisions were made concerning the content of the Terms of Reference (ToR) to be given to prospective sculptors. Soon after the first meeting, the Project Team started considering the question of site, and suggested that an even better location for a traditional leader’s monument would be on a battlefield site (Mulaudzi 2013).

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Photograph 1: Former Lebowa Prime Minister, Dr C.N. Phatudi statue, outside Lebowakgomo Legislative chambers. Photo by Mahunele Thotse. **Question:** In what ways was this image of the former Lebowa Bantustan Leader different from the image of the Warrior Traditional Leader?

Arguments in favour of the inclusion of specific battlefields included that those battlefields must play a part in a people's sense of place, local distinctiveness, and culture as well as their understanding and enjoyment of the past. Battlefields, it was further argued, should offer a rich resource for education and research, including family histories. The selected battlefields where traditional leaders fought would have a significant place in the history of the people of the province and by implication, on South Africa's national conscience. The proposed statues on the battlefields would also have a strong resonance in the sense of provincial and national identity. Some of these battlefields might still contain physical remains associated with the battles or have the potential to yield important archaeological evidence that can enhance an understanding of events (African Heritage Consulting 2008).

Further arguments in favour of the statues being placed at the battlefields were that battlefields, particularly modern examples, are often viewed as types of memorials, however, if the memorial itself is not on the battlefield, the focus can become detached from the site of the conflict. The connection between the battlefield and memorial could later be lost, since the memorial itself becomes the symbol of the event. The above proposals, however, also present challenges as they highlight the need to physically record where the boundaries of conflict sites were located (Sutherland and Holst 2005). Unfortunately, in Limpopo the exact limits of the locations of the battlefields were often not recorded, resulting in uncertainty with boundaries unknown. The Project Team, however, made no final site selections and left the question of specific placements of the monuments open to would-be advisors.



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Photograph 2: Archaeological remains found on the site on the northern foot of Mosego, Tjate. Picture taken from Assessment of the Cultural Heritage Resources on the Provincial Heritage Site of Tjate on the Farm Djate 249KT in Sekhukhune, Limpopo province compiled by African Heritage Consulting, July 2008, p. 27.

The Project Team eventually agreed that a decision regarding the siting of the monuments in the correct context at the right places to align meaning with the correct location and place was possible, however, dependent on what the future holds with such identified sites. Therefore, the

future development of the sites became a much-discussed topic in Limpopo, as members of the Project Team began their search for suitable sites for the monuments they had been empowered to erect (Mulaudzi 2013).

Finally, the siting of the monuments to the warrior traditional leaders resulted from the discussions and collaborations between the Project Team and associated institutions, such as the Limpopo Heritage Resources Authority (LIHRA) as well as delegated members of the communities and representative members of the royal houses involved. This shows that these bodies formally or informally joined forces and created mutually beneficial liaisons which ultimately resulted in the Warrior Traditional Leaders Monuments' placement in premier locations, thus providing anchors for the Limpopo government to cast the "Warrior Traditional Leaders who fought the Wars of Resistance against Colonialism and Imperialism" as the thematic focus of the commemorations intended to be the unifying structure of the province's ceremonial core (Mulaudzi 2013).

Therefore, to understand the importance of these collaborations, one must first gain an understanding of the potential of the identified sites as tourist attractions and of the provincial government ambitions for the sites as heritage sites. As the Premier of Limpopo province, Sello Moloto, indicated in September 2006:

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There are many sites of historical significance in our province that only deserve to be graded to the status of heritage sites. High amongst these include, Tjate in Sekhukhune, Soutini in Baleni (Mopani), Fundudzi Lake and Dzata in the Vhembe District. These sites are bequeathed from our ancestors and are equally deserving to be called national symbols. Our government is committed to doing everything possible to facilitate the optimum conditions in which these sites can be developed and marketed for the benefit of local communities and for tourism purposes (Speaker's Notes [Sello Moloto] 2006).

In terms of its location, Tjate valley—where Sekhukhune's monument is located—lies east of the Leolo Mountain and west of Modimolle hills on the farms Djate 249KT and Hackney 116KT. Tjate valley is south of the road from Mosego to Swale. One must also note that the events during the Sekhukhune wars cover a large portion of what is today known as 'Sekhukhuneland', but also links up with Burgersfort, Steelpoort, and eventually with Mapoch's caves at Roosenekal and Botshabelo near Middleburg (Mapungubwe News n.d.). Kgoši Sekhukhune's long and bitter struggles against the ZAR between 1876 and 1877 as well as against the British in 1879, were

determined and submitted by the Limpopo government to SAHRA as the significance of the battlefield for the consideration of its declaration as a provincial heritage site (Mapungubwe News n.d.).

Soutini-Baleni is situated twenty-five kilometres further east of Nkomo-Goxani village near Mahumani on the southern bank of Klein Letaba River. It is under Mahumani Traditional Authority in Greater Giyani Municipality, Mopani District Municipality, approximately 35 km from the eastern side of Kruger National Park. The significance of Soutini-Baleni is demonstrated in its hot mineral spring (geo-thermal spring)—a unique natural feature in the otherwise arid Mopani veld wilderness, south-east of Giyani. It has been declared as a Natural Heritage Site (1999) because of its unique ecology. A species of fish, the stunted population of Mozambique tilapia (*Oreochromis mossambicus*) lives in the fountain. The surrounding swamp is covered mostly by bulrushes and reeds (Mapungubwe News n.d.).

Other than its scientific significance, indigenous people have been harvesting salt at the Soutini-Baleni fountain for the past 2000 years. Stone tools also tell a story of Stone Age people being active at Baleni. Soutini-Baleni is, thus, the only salt production site where indigenous people harvested salt using indigenous technologies, practices, and customs in this part of Limpopo province. Traditional customs which accompany salt making processes at Baleni include interaction with the ancestral world through ritual and appeasement offerings at the sacred dry leadwood tree (the shrine). It forms part of the community's tangible or living heritage. The natural fountain is significant to a broader indigenous community because of its mythical character. It is referred to as Mukhulu (the Great One) (Mapungubwe News n.d.).

The cultural landscape at Baleni includes ancient salt mounds which date back to 250 AD and which cover an area of one-and-a-half to two kilometres in radius from the fountain eye. The modern salt production site and the shrine are also part of the cultural landscape. Oral history abounds and because of all the myths, legends, and other stories that are well known to all the people in surrounding communities and regularly told to visitors, the place and the fountain are considered sacred. Besides being sacred, it is a gendered site since salt making at Soutini-Baleni is an activity that is only practiced by women (Mapungubwe News n.d.).

In an address at the Summit of Limpopo Traditional Leaders in 2007, then Premier Sello Moloto stated that the newly declared provincial heritage sites of Tjate in Sekhukhuneland, Dzata in Vhembe, Soutini-Baleni in Mopani, and the Malebogo-Boer war battlefields in Capricorn are important tourism icons, which must be linked to other offerings to attract as many visitors to the province as possible (Speakers Notes [Sello Moloto] 2004). Premier Moloto impressed on

traditional leaders to help sustain the memory of the tales behind these sites by ensuring that they do not get lost.

The Baleni site is indeed developed for tourism. It forms part of the chain of destinations on the African ivory route and their facilities, including accommodation and tour guides, to welcome visitors (South African Heritage Resources Agency 2006).

Dzata is in the eastern section of the Soutpansberg mountain range in Vhembe district, in the north-eastern part of Limpopo province. It lies adjacent to the Nzhelele valley, some forty kilometres to the west of Thohoyandou. Dzata is regarded as the spiritual home of the Venda people since it is the ancient capital of Venda. Khosi Dambanyika settled at Dzata from Zimbabwe following the breakup of the Monomotapa Empire. He found peaceful aboriginal Venda residents at Dzata and subjugated them c.1688 (Kruger 1972: 561, 639). There is a museum of the Drum which will inform tourists to Dzata on the history and heritage of the area (Luonde Uhavenda History n.d.).

The battlefields of the Malebogo-Boer War cover a vast part of the Blouberg area. It is situated approximately sixty kilometres from the rural city of Senwabarwana (translated as place where Bushmen drink and formerly called Bochum). The battlefields site covers a vast area because of the nature of the war between the Bahananwa and the Boers in which the latter established fortifications throughout the area in preparation of their assault. The vast site covers the farms Leipzig 264, Buffelshoek 261, Beaully 280, The Grange 257, Wiltstein 256, and Veredig. Its significance lies in the fact that this area played host to the bitter war of Kgoši Malebogo against the ZAR over white encroachment on his land towards the end of the nineteenth century (Setumu 2005a: 15).

It was, however, the LIHRA that launched information gathering projects as part of their requirements for the protection, conservation, preservation, and declaration of the sites. The emphasis was on gathering information to set forth ideas for the planned growth and embellishment of the sites. Various proposals, advanced during meetings sought to ennoble the potential of heritage sites. Embodied in all the plans, was a desire to bring the future heritage sites into ceremonial step with other similar sites in accordance with the province's growing political and economic importance to South Africa.

To achieve the above aims, LIHRA invited applications for the development of Cultural Resources Management Plans (CRMP) for the targeted memorial and battlefield sites. This was also a part of a project to nominate the sites for gazetting them as Grade II heritage sites (Rainbow Heritage Institute n.d.).

Limpopo Heritage Resources Authority wishes to nominate and declare Malebogo-Boer War Battlefield as a Provincial Heritage Site under section 27 of the National Heritage Resources Act, Act 25 of 1999. A Cultural Resources Management Plan for Malebogo-Boer War Battlefield is required for the smooth running of this envisaged declaration. LIHRA had invited applications from professional heritage practitioners to compile the required CRMP for the declaration (Mapungubwe News 2005).

In addition to designing a CRMP for the heritage site, the ToR required that a cultural database be compiled that could be used for comprehending the interrelationships of various heritage resources around the heritage sites. The ToR also proposed that for a useful conservation strategy, measures, and sustainable use of heritage resources for the benefit of host communities is determined. The general aims of the project were to build heritage site conservation management plans that would define the significance of the site and identify management issues that needed to be addressed in proportion to the declaration of the site as a Grade II heritage site; accumulate existing data on heritage resources in the area earmarked for declaration; find information that was not documented in order to fill the gaps in the existing data; conduct a field survey and motivate for nomination. These processes ended with the declaration of the sites in 2007, as can be seen below on the photo of notice of declaration..



Photograph 3: Declaration of sites as provincial heritage sites. Photo by Mahunele Thotse.
Question: What is the difference between declaring sites as international/universal, national, and provincial heritage sites?

The potential of other battlefield areas, such as the Magoebaskloof area, even though they were not declared heritage sites, were also tested. In a report on the potential impact of prospecting activities on items of historical significance in Haenertsburg and its surrounding areas, Prof

Louis Changuion (1999) reflected on the 1894-1896 skirmishes and the war fought between the ZAR forces and the local Makgoba people. Less than a decade later this area was also impacted upon by skirmishes between Boers and British soldiers during the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. These skirmishes left relics behind that today have become tourist attractions, hence modern prospecting with eventual mining in the area was discouraged as it would make tourism difficult and spoil the site (Changuion 2008). This area is not a declared heritage site, yet it still enjoys visitation among other things, for its recorded [hi]story of the Makgoba wars.

2.3 Sculpting the statues

The Project Team first looked within the borders of Limpopo province for potential sculptors. They soon realised that there were no reputable sculptors in the province of Limpopo who could qualify for the work in accordance with the ToR, which potential sculptors had to adhere to for them to be considered for the commissioning of the sculpting project. The ToR stipulated that competing sculptors had to complete detailed plaster models on a scale of one to twelve. The Project Team also requested that artists submitting models make their intentions known to compete by writing to the Heritage Unit of the DSAC prior to submitting their models. The ToR further stipulated that 'All statue work and bronze casting must be executed in South Africa' (Limpopo Heritage Resources Authority 1999). Competing sculptors were further instructed to submit full, written descriptions of their designs, including exact dimensions, materials to be used, and detailed cost estimates (Thotse 2014).

The ToR made no detailed stipulations regarding the monuments' style or iconography, requesting only that prospective sculptor's fashion their designs representing 'the character and individuality of the subjects honoured', and that each statue had to reflect the image of a true leader, a soldier (Limpopo Heritage Resources Authority 1999). To be able to achieve this, the Project Team needed pictures or photographs of all the selected historical icons (Limpopo Heritage Resources Authority 1999). Such photographs would then serve as source material for the sculptor/s. The term icon is derived from *eikon*, which is the Greek word for image (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary: 742).

Miller and Schwartz (1985: 522-527) provide enough reasons on why it is important to use pictures for the images of historical icons. The authors submit that four properties—likeness;

“manifestiveness”; moral stimulus; and sacredness—have clear parallels in political iconography. For the purposes of this study, as icons, the statues had to mirror a certain likeness to the represented leaders. The second property, manifestiveness is reflected in an icon’s ability to show or manifest the represented person(s) by bringing them alive cognitively. The Limpopo province in this way, hoped to make these leaders’ appearances and moral character known to those of their time as well as of later generations who would never see them in person. They believed that the statues would enable the provincial populace to stay in proximity to the revered, but distant or deceased leaders whose character and actions deserve to be emulated. The Limpopo Premier, Sello Moloto, in this regard, used Sefako Makgatho as an example of a prominent person who managed to link past and present:

The great Sefako Makgatho emulated the example of Sekhukhune I amongst others, when he became the President General of the African National Congress in 1917 and continued the struggle for liberation and freedom for all South Africans. He was following in the footsteps of the generation of warrior traditional leaders like Shaka, Bambatha, Hintsa, Makhado, Malebogo, and Ngungunhane who fiercely fought colonialists in defence of the heritage. They fought for our freedom even before the formation of political parties. They were in the forefront fighting to free us from those who descended on the African shores to disposes (sic) of our land. They too must be honoured for what they were, heroes and heroines of the liberation struggle (Speakers Notes [Sello Moloto] 2004: 40).

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This perspective of a link between the warrior traditional leaders and the liberation struggle is significant in contextualising those traditional leaders. Miller and Schwartz (1985: 522-527) emphasised that portraits can bridge the distances of space and time to bring a society’s heroes and leaders to living presence for its members. Since moral qualities are commonly attributed to the countenance of public leaders, their images can exhibit those human qualities that society looks up to and promotes. Great leaders are “representative men”, that is, persons who embody a community’s most cherished ideals and virtues (Miller and Schwartz 1985: 522-527). This becomes clearly translated in Sello Moloto’s speeches at unveilings with special reference to traditional leadership:

The institution of traditional leadership has become an indispensable element of the democratic system; particularly in Limpopo...Traditional leadership has an important role to play in this phase of our struggle. It is an institution that emerged from the roots of our history and should therefore speak for the lives and souls of our people. In pursuit of the African Renaissance, traditional leadership should be seen in the forefront in defence and regeneration of our morals, norms, values, culture, and tradition (Speakers Notes [Sello Moloto 2004: 40).

The Project Team, therefore, set out to find pictures or photographs of all the warrior traditional leaders. This they managed to achieve, except in the case of Mokopane. Chapter Four contains details on exactly what followed. Johnson (2010) confirms that no photographs of Ngungunhane could be found, however, there were some paintings of him available. In the case of Makgoba, only a photograph of his severed head was found (Johnson 2010).

With the ToR, the Project Team then approached the University of Pretoria's Department of Fine Arts with a request for the latter to recommend suitable sculptors. The list of sculptors which the University of Pretoria made available included the names of Harry Johnson, Phil Minnaar, and Andre Otto. These sculptors were approached with the ToR and a request for quotations. Significantly, the Project Team stated in their ToR that they would not be bound to selecting any one design but were instead at liberty to reject them all if they saw fit.

In all the cases, members of the relevant royal families were to serve as advisory committees to adjudicate the sculptors and models and to select the best designs based on their knowledge of, in each individual case, the subjects commemorated (Mulaudzi 2013). The advisory committees assembled at the DSAC offices in Polokwane, examined the models and made their selections. Mulaudzi, the Senior Heritage Manager at DSAC confirmed that Harry Johnson emerged the least expensive of all the sculptors, quoting R250 000 per sculpture. He was then offered an opportunity to cast the statues of Sekhukhune, Makhado, and Ngungunhane (Mulaudzi 2013).

Indeed, Harry Johnson admitted in an interview that he did not know about the commission before he was approached, however, he seemed very confident that universities, particularly the University of Pretoria, rated his work highly. Harry Johnson had studied at the University of Pretoria. He also thought that Professor Alex Duffey of the same university might have been instrumental in nominating him to be included on the list of potential sculptors. However, Johnson also believed

that a telling factor in his selection, was that his work did the talking for him. He said that the committee that picked him for the commission was very happy that he was politically neutral and that there would not be any accusations of him getting the job because he knew somebody. The sculptor also mentioned some of the names that competed with him for the project, such as Danie de Jager, Phil Minnaar, Andre Otto, as well as a few young black sculptors from Limpopo whom he ended up helping in terms of preparations for the presentations of their works. Johnson was confident that it was mainly his track record that worked in his favour. He had previously done portraits for famous people among them, Anton Rupert and Nelson Mandela, hence, nobody could question the quality of his work (Johnson 2010).

The issue of not having to sign a contract or any Service Level Agreement did not seem to bother Harry Johnson, since he was used to working without signing such contracts. As if to qualify that contracts or service level agreements (SLAs) were not necessarily that important for him, he mentioned that he was once also commissioned by the Oppenheimer family for work for which he also did not have to sign any contract and yet he still received what was due to him—something he called a “gentlemen’s contract”. He had received requests, and in the case of the Limpopo province he also received the ToR, and in turn, he gave a quotation. Upon receiving the go ahead to do the job, that was reason enough to believe that his quotation has been accepted and therefore, he did not demand further contracts (Johnson 2010).

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In addition to Johnson, the DSAC approached the sculptors Phil Minnaar and Andre Otto to make the statues of Malebogo and Makgoba. Minnaar, who was commissioned to sculpt Kgoši Malebogo’s statue, also confirmed in an interview that he did not know about the project before being approached by Limpopo’s DSAC official Dirk de Wet, in his capacity as heritage manager. Dirk de Wet handed Minnaar the ToR together with a request to submit models and a quotation on what he would need for a project of such a magnitude. Minnaar confirmed that he quoted R158 000 for the project. This begs one to question Mulaudzi’s claim that Harry Johnson was the least expensive sculptor, as was indicated earlier on (Minnaar 2010). Both Johnson and Minnaar confirmed that a committee visited their studios for inspection and asked questions about how many people they (the sculptors) were employing and how long it would take for them to complete the work of the scope described in the ToR if they were commissioned. Like Johnson, Minnaar also could not remember signing any contract, however, did acknowledge that he was paid what he asked for (Minnaar 2010).

Upon this researcher contacting Andre Otto for an interview regarding his work, the sculptor was not prepared to share any information regarding the statue of Makgoba until such time that his work was erected by the province. Since the statue was never installed, this study has been robbed of the sculptor’s comment (Otto 2010).

2.4 Early challenges confronting the Project Team

The project team met with challenges that delayed the project of erecting the statue of Makgoba. Initial successes were recorded when the Project Team and the Makgoba royal house agreed on the image of the traditional leader's statue. While only the image of his head was found, the royal family agreed that the artist be given the go ahead to design the rest of the torso to finish with a full life-size statue of the traditional leader. Makgoba was designed holding a bow and arrow. However, problems began to emerge when the royal family attempted to tie issues of land claims to the erection of the statue. While the DSAC argued that these were two different issues, the community continued to attempt to use this as leverage and to force the Limpopo government's hand to act swiftly to resolve the communities land claim application. As a result, the community gave an ultimatum to the effect that there would be no erection of the statue without finality to the issues of land claim. Since issues of land claims were neither their responsibility nor their mandate, the DSAC then decided to halt the project of erecting the statue of Kgoši Makgoba and therefore, the statue has since been stored in the warehouse of the provincial Department of Public Works and will probably remain there until the status quo has been resolved (Mulaudzi 2013).

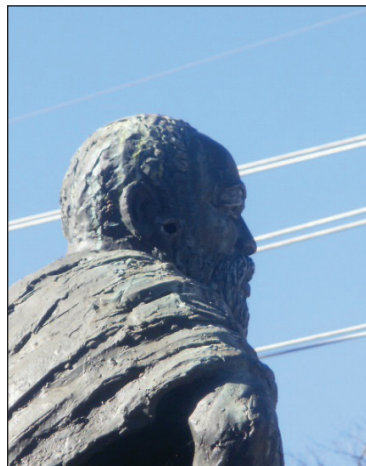
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Eventually, the land claim was at least partly resolved successfully when in 2006 farms worth more than R1 000 000.00 were returned to the Makgoba clan in settlement. However, problems at the tribe continued unabated amid claims of the money being misappropriated. A bitter struggle ensued over the control of the land and assets between the head of the royal family, Mokopa Makgoba (incumbent chief), the Mamphoku Makgoba Community Trust (administrators of the fund) and the beneficiaries committee (Govender 2011; Molefe 2011). Unfortunately, this meant that the statue could still not be erected, since the problems were not yet resolved. This also explains why the sculptor of Makgoba statue, Andre Otto, would not offer any interviews as his work was never on display.

Mulaudzi further mentioned that no official complaints were recorded regarding the statue of Makhado, except that a few days after its unveiling, the statue was painted in the colours of the old South African flag (used between 1928 and 1994) one morning and a bullet had also gone through the head which demonstrated that some individual or some sections of the community were not entirely happy about the erection of the statue in Louis Trichardt.³ The choice of paint colour indicates that the people who thus expressed their opposition to Makhado were probably white. A contemporary witness thus reported at the time:

3 The town had just become known as the City of Makhado after its name was changed for short period and before it assumed the old name of Louis Trichardt again after. Again, the Minister of Arts and Culture, Paul Mashatile approved the name City of Makhado, but after another court case in the second half of 2014, the town became Louis Trichardt again.

To commemorate Makhado, the municipal authorities in Louis Trichardt had decided to re-name the town after him. The statue was erected as part of that process. However, less than a week after the statue was unveiled in 2006, vandals defaced it by painting it in the colours of the old South African flag. The attack reflected the intense feelings about the name change, especially among the town's white population and its business community which felt the name change would cost more than it would benefit the local economy (and who fought and won a legal case to have the town's name changed back to Louis Trichardt) (NUIM Geography's Eye on the World 2013).



Photograph 5: Photo of Makhado statue with a bullet hole in the head. Photo by Mahunele Thotse.

Question: To what extent did these depictions draw complaints and treat Makhado as a fellow citizen?

Photograph 4: Image of Kosikhulu Mkhado's painted statue (Gabara 2005 [Zoutpansberger]).

However, it was not only a section of the white population who were unhappy about the situation surrounding the celebration of Makhado. Lithole, who was a SAHRA provincial officer at the time, had attended several consultative meetings with the community and other relevant bodies where some sections of the community voiced concerns about the appearance of the Makhado statue (Lithole 2013). Amongst others, they complained that Makhado was a man-about-town, that is, he liked suits as he had been exposed to white culture from a young age. In fact, a regional publication *ZOUTNET* on 13 April 2007 quoted one of Makhado's grandchildren Sam Ramabulana who was already in his eighties saying:

That statue of Makhado at the Information Centre: I don't know where people got it from. I don't know where they got that picture. As far as I know, Makhado didn't put traditional dress. He wore normal clothing, a shirt and trousers. He even had a checkered (sic, should be chequered) morning gown! Moreover, the statue of Makhado should be at the town hall (Van der Westhuizen 2007).

The newspaper also quoted Makhado's great grandson, M.P. Marageni, agreeing with his uncle on the statue: '... [w]e don't want that one, we want one that looks like the well-known picture of Makhado. That one looks like Moshesh'. Marageni reportedly said this while pointing to a picture of Makhado held up by Sam Ramabulana. Indeed, the sculptor Harry Johnson admitted that it was his idea to dress him traditional to reflect his "Africanness". The descendants also complained that Makhado should have been given a gun and not a knobkerrie as he used guns, not only as one of the best hunters, but also during his combat times (Van der Westhuizen 2007). These complaints and concerns, however, were never made official, since Meshack Mulaudzi's office did not receive anything along those lines (Mulaudzi 2013).

Johnson completed the first three statues of Sekhukhune (2004); Makhado (2005); and Ngungunhane (2005) successfully. He, however, ran into trouble with the DSAC when he claimed payment for the little gifts he gave to members of the Makhado Royal family, which were not ordered, hence he was wrong to claim payment for, but for which he held the Department to ransom until he was paid before releasing the proper bronze statue of Ngungunhane (Mulaudzi 2013). Johnson confirmed that he was being owed money and when the DSAC requested that the statue of Ngungunhane be erected he was only prepared to make available a statue in fibreglass that looked exactly like bronze. This statue was the one unveiled (see picture below). He was paid his money a year after the unveiling of the fibreglass statue and only then did he release the bronze statue to replace the fibreglass one. The payment was only affected after an official intervention by MEC Joe Maswanganyi when he gave an instruction that the sculptor be paid (Mulaudzi 2013). It was at this stage that Johnson realised that a contract is often of great importance. The absence of a contract in this instance, brought about tension between Johnson and the DSAC which led to the latter abandoning the former (Johnson 2010). It is not farfetched to argue here that had it not been for the stand-off between Johnson and the DSAC, Phil Minnaar and Andre Otto would probably not have been appointed to sculpt the other statues.

The controversy surrounding the Ngungunhane statue did not end when the money issue was resolved. Even before the bronze statue could be unveiled, a delegation representing Shangaan

Chiefs met with the project leaders and opposed the location of Ngungunhane's statue in Giyani. The delegation was disputing the legitimacy of Ngungunhane, claiming that he had done nothing whatsoever for Giyani; that he never even reached Giyani and that his reign was only confined to Bushbuckridge, if at all in the Limpopo province; that he never ruled the Tsonga speaking people and that they (the delegation and their supporters), therefore, did not acknowledge him as their hero that deserved this kind of honour.

The Daily Sun newspaper extensively quoted those they called Shangaan and VhaTsonga leaders, criticising the Limpopo government's attempts to honour an anti-colonial warrior traditional leader by erecting a R250 000 statue in his honour. The leaders were quoted pointing out that while the Shangaan traditional leader Ngungunhane was undoubtedly a hero, he was a Mozambican who had never ruled over any South African territories or people:

King Nghunghunyani was a great man who fought the Portuguese invaders in Mozambique and tried unsuccessfully to preserve the independence of his Gaza Empire," the group's joint spokesman, Hosi Muhlava was quoted saying. "But he never ruled any territory in what is now South Africa. He has no link with Limpopo. Government failed to consult with us (Daily Sun 2005: 11).

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In the newspaper article, Muhlava was presented as a spokesperson for all major Shangaan and VhaTsonga traditional leaders in the Giyani, Bushbuckridge, Phalaborwa, and Tzaneen areas. The group complained that if the government was interested in honouring their heroes, they should have consulted with them and that they in turn, would have gladly suggested several great people who fought for their rights. 'The statue to King Nghunghunyani should perhaps rather be erected in Mozambique, where people remember and honour him' (Daily Sun 2005: 11).



Photograph 6: The fibreglass statue of Hosinkuklu Ngungunhane that sculptor Harry Johnson unveiled at Giyani, prior to replacing it with a bronze statue after he was paid in full, Johnson studios, Groblersdal. Photo taken at Johnson's workshop by Mahunele Thotse during interviews with the sculptor, 2010. **Question:** Why were statues of active chiefs more attractive to the Limpopo provincial government?

The saga of Ngungunhane's statue even ended up in court. This resulted from actions taken by one of the current traditional leaders of the Tsonga tribe, Mpisane Eric Nxumalo. Gezani Samuel Mabunda who was not only Traditional Leader Mpisane Nxumalo's advisor, but at the same time an official of the DSAC, was disturbed by what he perceived as ignorance of the facts by the traditional leaders of the Shangaan Chiefs. Traditional Leader, Mpisane Eric Nxumalo is said to be a descendant of Hosi Ngungunhane. During this period, and through the courts, Nxumalo attempted to be recognised as the rightful traditional leader of all Tsonga/Shangaan speaking groups in South Africa. Mabunda (2013) cited several government gazettes that confirmed that even tribal authorities represented by the Shangaan Chiefs were at some point part of the larger Gaza state. Amongst others, Mabunda noted the contents of Republic of South Africa Proclamation R. 15 of 1973 (Government Gazette no. 3772, 26 January 1973) which declared former Gazankulu as a self-governing state. The authorities represented by the Shangaan Chiefs were all part of the Gazankulu (literally translated as Greater Gaza or Gaza State) Homeland. Proclamation R. 148 of 1971 (Government Gazette no. 3163, 25 January 1971) also established what was called the Machangana Legislative Assembly. Mabunda claimed that these proclamations confirmed that there has always been only one Gaza, which was originally established by Soshangana of whom Ngungunhane was a descendent and to which the other tribal authorities also belonged, even if they now wanted to reject this link (Mabunda 2013).

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However, on Friday 3 October 2014, the *Sowetan* newspaper reported that Traditional Leader Mpisane Nxumalo lost his Constitutional Court bid to set aside a decision which held that Ngungunhane's kingdom was destroyed over 100 years ago. The court found that the Commission on Traditional Leadership Disputes and Claims, which dealt with claims of traditional leadership, had been correct in dismissing Nxumalo's claim for the restoration of the kingdom. Nxumalo lodged the claim with the commission, commonly known as the Nhlapo Commission, for the restoration of the traditional leadership of the traditional community and for him to be recognised as its traditional leader. In 2010, the commission dismissed Nxumalo's claim mainly on the basis that the kingdom had been destroyed around 1894 and that he had not shown good cause for the restoration. It also found that the traditional leadership was never restored after it had disintegrated. Furthermore, in 2012 the case was dismissed by the Supreme Court of Appeal, after which Mpisane approached the Constitutional Court (Sowetan 2014: 5). The Constitutional Court decision, therefore, vindicated the position of the Shangaan Chiefs represented by Hosi Muhlava, even though for a different reason.

The Gaza Kingdom Committee charged with planning the unveiling of the statue of Hosi Ngungunhane, had earlier on in response to the objections of Muhlava on behalf of the Shangaan Chiefs, reacted angrily to what they considered to be efforts to undermine the occasion of the unveiling. One of the coordinators, Hosi John Ndindana, said that he found it surprising that people planned to form an “unholy alliance” to undermine history. Ndindana was reacting to statements attributed to Hosi Samuel Muhlava of the Nkuna tribe, that traditional leaders should have been consulted regarding the statue. Muhlava had, as already indicated, said that Hosi Ngungunhane had no history in South Africa and should be honoured only in Mozambique (Ntlemo 2006: 7).

Further, Chief Ndindana ruefully noted that the Gaza Kingdom Committee visited different tribal areas to seek the views of others, all of whom believed Ngungunhane was worthy of the honour. Ndindana stated that, ‘people led by Soshangana who broke away from the Ndwandwe kingdom immediately after the defeat of traditional leader Zwide by Shaka Zulu in 1819 formed the Gaza state. They subjugated different tribes in Mozambique to form one nation...The kingdom stretched to parts of present-day Zimbabwe and South Africa, until colonialists dismantled it’ (Ntlemo 2006: 7). Ndindana conceded that Ngungunhane was toppled by the Portuguese in 1895 and deported to Portugal and died in exile in 1906 after ruling for eleven years (Ntlemo 2006: 7).

The *Daily Sun* also quoted the DSAC spokesman Mbangiseni Masia confirming that the government would proceed with the unveiling of the statue despite the contestations: ‘King Nghunghunyani is undoubtedly a hero who fought colonialism. Our government is honouring such leaders and will continue to build monuments to the wars of resistance’, Masia was quoted saying (Daily Sun 2005: 11).

Masia declined to comment on the assertions that Ngungunhane had no historical link with Limpopo or other modern South African territories. This reaction was not surprising, since it was not the first time that it was used. In response to the same assertion, former Premier Sello Moloto bluntly confessed that the Limpopo provincial government wanted to appease the Shangaan speaking populace of the province (Daily Sun 2005: 11; Moloto 2009).

In consultation with the Giyani Municipality, MEC Maswanganyi learnt that there were political manoeuvres as the municipality felt that the erection of Ngungunhane’s statue in Giyani would legitimise the claim of the Nxumalo family to be paramount. The Nxumalo Royal House claimed to be the biological descendants of Ngungunhane. Instead, the Giyani Municipality wanted Chief Ntsanwisi to be recognised. Among the four chiefs that formed the Shangaan Chiefs delegation were chief Ntsanwisi of Majeje village around Phalaborwa and Nkoankoa and E.P.P. Mhinga, brother to Chief Shilungwa Cydrick Mhinga. The delegation was eventually persuaded

by the Limpopo government in 2005 and agreed that the unveiling ceremony could go ahead. An estimated crowd of over 30 000 gathered to bless the occasion (Mabunda 2013; Mathebula et al. 2007).

Problems surrounding Sekhukhune and Malebogo were resolved when the offices of traditional affairs issued leadership certificates to the incumbent leaders. The project leadership could therefore only deal with these leaders, despite objections from other sections of the two communities respectively. However, Mulaudzi's office received no such objections in writing (Mulaudzi 2013). Unfortunately, Mulaudzi could not indicate details of the objections as he said they were not brought to his attention, and it would be speculation if he were to mention things that were not officially presented to his office. It would, however, have been interesting to know such details.

2.5 Symbolism of the statues

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The selection of these leaders representing prominent ethnic groups in the province shows that the Wars of Resistance were not confined to one specific ethnic group. These groups could therefore be united under one umbrella as they all fought against the same threat—colonialism and imperialism—by white governments, be they Boers, English, or Portuguese. The selection of just these leaders which represent the BaPedi by Sekhukhune, the Venda by Makhado, the Shangaan by Ngungunhane, the BaHananwa by Malebogo, the Ndebele by Mokopane, and the BaTlhalerwa/Tlou/Kolobe (Krige 1937: 4; Van Warmelo, 1935)⁴ by Makgoba, was also questioned. In response Mulaudzi indicated that they also had similar questions and invited the public to provide evidence that other than these, other leaders also took up arms to “fight the enemy” and that such evidence did not come forth. Mulaudzi went so far as to give the example of Queen

4 NJ van Warmelo, the State ethnologist of the early twentieth century, described the Makgoba people as Tlou (elephant totem) whereas JD Krige referred to them as Kolobe (duiker totem) and in the State publication, *Short History of the Native Tribes of the Transvaal* they are called Batlhalerwa (leopard totem). Van Warmelo admits that they were sometimes referred to as Kolobe and Batlhalerwa because they had people of those origins in their midst. Changuion noted that Makgoba himself stated in 1892, when he appeared before the Location Commission, that although they were previously subordinate to the Letswalo/Narene tribe (Nare-buffalo totem), they are closely related to the Molepos (Tlou-elephant totem).

Modjadji. Apparently, concerns were voiced from several quarters of the community about the exclusion of Modjadji from the ranks of those who were honoured. Mulaudzi pointed out that in response to enquiries, no one provided evidence to prove that any specific queen within the Modjadji dynasty fought encroachment by whites. On the contrary, the Modjadji dynasty was found to have been collaborating and siding with the white governments in most cases (Mulaudzi 2013). Contrary to Mulaudzi's assertion, Grimsehl wrote the following about Modjadji's conduct and reaction to white encroachment in her country in 1890:

Op 26 September het Meriam, een van Eerw Reuter se bekeerlinge hom gewaasku dat Modjadji van plan was om die sendingstasie te oorval en af the brand. Sy het reeds bevel gegee dat alle weerbare manne ten volle gewapen en na die hoofkraal moet kom en vir 'n paar dae kos saambring. Nog dieselfde middag het gewapende bendes by die sendingstasie verbygetrek op weg na die hoofkraal. Een bende was so brutaal om hulle gewere by die stasie af te skiet. Reuter het dadelik boodskappers na die hoofkraal gestuur om te verneem wat aan die gang was. Hulle het die berig gebring dat Modjadji alle knopneuse binne haar gebied wil vermoor en ook die sendingstasie wou afbrand omdat Reuter die lokasie-komisie by hom opgeneem het. Modjadji is ontevrede oor die afbakening van lokasie. Eerw. Reuter en W. Boshoff het hulle hierop dadelik na Lt. Du Toit gehaas om hom van die toestand van sake te verwitting en om ook van hom, indien moontlik, die nodige gewere en ammunisie te kry om hulleself en die sendingstasie te verdidig. Lt. duToit het dadelik patrollies uitgestuur om ondersoek in te stel en volgens berigte wat hulle teruggebring het, het alles "geleek op eene groote voorbereiding van oorlog.

[On 26 September, Meriam, one of Reverend Reuter's converts warned him that Modjadji was planning to attack the mission station and burn it down. She [Modjadji] had already given instructions for all able-bodied men to come to the royal kraal fully armed and to bring with them food for a few days. The same day armed troops marched past the mission station towards the royal kraal. One of the troops was so brutal that they shot at the mission station. Reuter sent messengers immediately to the royal kraal to find out what was going on. They brought back a report that Modjadji was planning to kill all knob nosed people [Shangaans] in her country and to burn down the mission station because Reuter had welcomed the location commission.

Modjadji was discontented with the beaconing of the location. Immediately thereafter, Reverend Reuter and W. Boshoff hurried to Lieut du Toit to notify him of the state of affairs and to get from him if at all possible, the necessary weapons and ammunition to protect themselves and the mission station. Lieut. Du Toit also sent out patrols to investigate and according to reports received “it looked like one huge preparation for a war.” (Grimsehl 1955: 44)

If the above excerpt is a true reflection of what happened, then the assertion that Modjadji never resisted white encroachment could not have been entirely correct. This would then mean that there must be other reasons why Modjadji was not considered for the kind of honour accorded other selected leaders.

The significance of the selected leaders was that they all demonstrated the ability to mobilise their people to rebel against their perceived enemies (which significance Modjadji seems to have met in as far as Grimsehl’s quotation above is concerned). Their supporters got concerned every time whites seemed to settle permanently in their territories; characteristics that demonstrated vigilance and alarm (Grimsehl 1955: 44).