

Chapter Three

‘Warrior’ Leaders and the Wars of Resistance

“The notion of collective memory refers both to a past that is commonly shared and a past that is collectively commemorated.” Barbara A. Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering*

3.1 Introduction

Historian Lize Kriel observed that the history of South Africa, in particular history of the nineteenth century, is rich in actions by the indigenous African population to resist the colonial subjugation by the expanding settlers of European extraction and the British colonial power (Kriel 2009). By the early 1870s, the government of the Transvaal officially known as the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republic (ZAR), had become relatively successful in administering and controlling the black African communities in the central regions of their Republic (Kriel 2000: 57). However, as Bergh and Morton (2003: 9-10) noted, an important obstacle faced by the ZAR administration was its lack of proper control over black African polities in the western, northern, and eastern frontier districts. In the outlying northern and eastern districts of the Zoutpansberg and Lydenburg, black African communities rejected attempts by white officials to extract tax or tribute, whether in the form of labour or hunting trophies. From early white settlement in the 1840s, repeated attempts were made by white settlers and officials to impose such demands, and a series of small-scale wars were conducted as a result. However, with Africans, such as Malebogo’s BaHananwa and Makhado’s VhaVenda in strong fortified positions in the mountainous region, effective control was not possible. Meanwhile, Sekhukhune’s BaPedi and Mabhogo’s AmaNdebele in the eastern districts also offered resistance (Berg and Morton 2003: 9-10). These chiefs were not prepared to voluntarily relinquish their *de facto* sovereignty, nor were they willing to move to demarcated reserves and faithfully start paying taxes merely because the local Boer officials insisted upon it. These black African chieftaincies remained autonomous, and effective ZAR administration was

introduced only in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. From the 1870s the ZAR government eventually resorted to military force to coerce these communities into accepting its supremacy.

The focus of this chapter is on the traditional leaders who fought these wars against subjugation. Their reaction to the white governments' (ZAR, British, and Portuguese) measures to turn them into subjects through the appropriation of their lands, labour, and taxes will be considered. The Limpopo provincial government has since 2004, recognised the brave efforts of these leaders by honouring those selected with monuments erected under a collective theme "Warrior kings who fought the Wars of Resistance against Colonialism and Imperialism".

The emergence of this select group of traditional leaders as the preeminent heroes of the historic "Wars of Resistance" struggle in Limpopo province, requires some explanation. Kriel (2009) noted that like elsewhere in oral cultures, the moment of humiliation (defeat) was transformed in the collective memory into a celebration of brave defiance, an indictment against the perpetrators and a constant inspiration for future generations. The chapter considers the "Wars of Resistance" in the north-eastern Transvaal—what is today Limpopo province in the period 1850-1895. Resistance by each individual warrior traditional leader to white attempts at subjugation is examined. The aim of this chapter is not to investigate either the causes or the course of the wars. However, provision of information on the wars that culminated in the memorialisation of the selected warrior traditional leaders in Limpopo province is essential for understanding the process itself and to illuminate just why this select group of leaders was being honoured. The traditional leaders are discussed in no order.

48

3.2 'Warrior' leaders and the 'Wars of Resistance'

3.2.1 Kgoši Mokopane

During 1854, growing resistance amongst the northern Ndebele against the frontier of colonial expansion erupted in the murder of several Boers who were encroaching on their territory. Problems between the Ndebele chiefdoms and the Boers stretch back to the arrival of the Boers in the north-western Transvaal in the 1840s. By the end of the decade there was growing tension over land, labour, and allegations that Boers were enslaving indigenous children. The incursion

of white hunters, traders, and the then settlers into the territory that Ndebele chiefs had always considered their own did not please the latter. A growing Boer presence impacted on the local Ndebele living in the area. De Waal writes that the relationship between Mokopane and the first cohort of the whites he met were initially friendly.

Soos reeds gemeld, was Mokopane se houding teenoor die eerste blankes met wie hy in aanraking gekom het, vriendelik...Op grond van Mokopane se optrede teenoor Tregardt, kan aangeneem word dat hy die blankes aanvanklik goedgesind was. Sy houding moes mettertyd egter verander het.

[As already stated, Mokopane's attitude towards the first group of whites he met was friendly...Based on Mokopane's treatment of Tregardt, it can be assumed that he was very welcoming to the Whites. His attitude must have changed thereafter.] (De Waal 1978: 23-26)

In support of the notion of the initial good relationships between Mokopane and the whites, Naidoo also wrote that at first relations between the tribesmen and the settlers were cordial. However, the settlers' growing incursions in greater numbers was trying on the tribesmen. Naidoo maintains that the Trekkers had an unappeasable (and dislocating) appetite for tribal stock, land, and labour. Friction between the two communities was inevitable (Naidoo 1987: 177). This view is supported by Nel (1933: 23-26) who wrote::

49

Toe die Boere hulle permanent in die omtrek van die teenswoordige Pietersburg en Louis Trichardt begin vestig het, het die naturelle die vrede nie langer vertrou nie.

[When the Boers began to settle permanently in the vicinity of the present Pietersburg and Louis Trichardt, the natives no longer enjoyed peace.]

The two communities that severely felt the impact of the changes were those of chiefs Mugombane II (Makapan or Mokopane) and the members of his Kekana Ndebele chiefdom that lived near to the wagon route that was used by white travellers that visited the Soutpansberg area and that of Mankopane (Mapela) and his Langa Ndebele chiefdom. De Waal quoted Chief Sechele of the BaKwena tribe declaring:

I had heard also from some of my people who had been working for the Boers, of the manner in which they had treated Mangkopane and Mokopane, two chiefs living to the eastward of the Mariqua, how they attacked these chiefs without cause, and taken numbers of cattle and children from them, and many of these children were sold (De Waal 1978: 21)

The turning point for Mokopane came in 1847/8, when some Trekkers attacked his people and made off with some of his livestock, as well as some women and children. Mankopane suffered similar losses. With only themselves to rely on for redress and protection, the two chiefs gradually started arming themselves (Naidoo 1987: 177-178).

50 The area was marked by continuing clashes, which culminated in the siege of the famous Makapan's Cave. Chief Mokopane was even more perturbed when, in the early 1850s, permanent white settlements in the Makapanspoort area began to emerge. Esterhuysen (2006) acknowledges the general perception that the Boers' interest in the Makapanspoort and more specifically the territory of the Kekana and Langa Ndebele chiefs, was based on its strategic importance as a major trade route to the ivory rich Limpopo River valley. In 1852 Commandant Hendrik Potgieter had plans to formalise the Makapanspoort settlement by proclaiming a town, and chose the name Vredenburg not only for it to celebrate his recent reconciliation with his arch-rival Andries Pretorius, but also to lay claim to the trade route and facilitate the movement of goods and people between the Soutpansberg area and the Magaliesberg area (Maguire 2007: 38). Commandant Potgieter could not carry out his intention as he died in December the same year. It was his son Pieter Johannes who achieved his father's intention when he later proclaimed the town. Finally, when the town Vredenburg, which was later named Piet Potgietersrust and recently renamed Mokopane was proclaimed, Mokopane's *mošate* (capital) Chidi was a mere two hours away by horseback, something that left the Ndebele leader uncomfortable (Hofmeyr 1989: 6). De Waal expressed this better:

Die roete vanaf Schoemansdal in die noorde na Pretoria, het deur Makapanspoort, naby die huidige Potgietersrus, gegaan. Die blankes het hierdie roete gebruik en in baie gevalle getrek en gereis waar hulle wou, sonder om hulle aan die kapteins oor wie se grondgebied die roete geloop het, te steur. Mokopane en sy stam het op die huidige plase Pruisen en Vier-en-twintig Riviere, oos van die roete, gewoon. Een van

sy hoofmanne, Lekalekale, het wes van die trekroete sowat 8 km vanaf Potgietersrus by Sefakaolokop of Lekalekaleskop gewoon. Die trekroete het dus reg deur Mokopane se grondgebied geloop. Mokopane moes hieroor ongelukkig gevoel het en hieroor kon wrywing tussen hom en die blankes ontstaan het.

[The route from Schoemansdal in the north to Pretoria went through Makapanspoort near the present Potgietersrus. The whites used these routes and, on many occasions, travelled at will without bothering themselves about the chiefs over whose ground the routes crossed. Mokopane and his tribe stayed on the present farms Pruissen and Vieren-twintig Riviere, east of the routes. One of his headmen, Lekalekale, stayed west of the travel route at Sefakaolokop or Lekalekaleskop somewhat 8 km from Potgietersrus. The travel routes thus, cut right through Mokopane's territory. Mokopane must have felt unhappy about this, and friction developed between him and the whites.] (De Waal 1978: 40)

By 1854 the Kekana, who had been victims of repeated Boer raids, demands, and various acts of cruelty, were ripe to join a growing network of resistance against the Trekkers. Mankopane suggested a meeting of the two chiefs, himself, and Mokopane, at the latter's kraal to map a plan to scare the white man away.

51

Op voorstel van Mankopanie het die twee kapteins 'n groot vergadering met hul indoenas in die „Nkgoendla” (hofplein) van Sejwamadie gehou. “Die witmense is nie agter die volk nie, maar agter die kapteins, en dit is tyd dat ons een van hul leiers doodmaak,” het Mankopanie gesê. Na 'n bespreking wat die hele dag geduur het, is 'n bondgenootskap tussen die twee stamme gesluit met die doel om die „Magoa” (witmense) 'n bietjie skrik te maak.

[On the suggestion of Mankopanie the chiefs held a huge gathering with their indunas in Setšwamadi's “Nkgoendla” (palace). “The whites are not after the people, but after the chiefs and it is time to kill one of their leaders” suggested Mankopanie. After a discussion that lasted the entire day, the two tribes forged an alliance with the purpose of scaring the white man a little bit.”] (Nel 1933: 23-26)

Esterhuysen (2006) observed that between 1850 and 1854, Mokopane (whom she calls Mugombane), had formed alliances with three other Ndebele chiefs, namely Sebetiele, Mankopane, and Maraba against the Boers. While the full extent of the network is not known, a letter written just after the 1854 siege by members of the white community who settled in Lydenburg to J.P. Hoffman, State President of the Orange Free State, suggested that the web of connections included Mapog (Ndebele), and Moshweshwe (BaSotho), who was able to provide guns and ammunition. The Boers made matters even more difficult when they shifted their trade route from Strydpoort to Makapanspoort—this after they were finding it increasingly difficult to exert their control over the BaPedi of Chief Sekwati (Esterhuysen 2006: 3).

52

Meanwhile, trouble continued to brew unabated. Hermanus Potgieter, a younger brother of the late Commandant, seems to have had an unappeasable predilection for livestock, land, and labour of the local people. Even amongst his own people he had a reputation for rough behaviour and for being a troublemaker of note. Field Cornet H.J. van Staden from Magaliesberg informed Commandant-General M.W. Pretorius on 14 May 1854 that Hermanus Potgieter, accompanied by nineteen other whites had attacked a chief named Ramaglabootla (Ramatlabotja) and his people. They robbed them of their cattle and deprived them of some of their women and children. Since there was not yet a united government of the white communities north of the Vaal River, their war council, aware of that misconduct, condemned it, and even instructed A. van der Walt (another field cornet) to order Potgieter to restore the stolen cattle and return the abducted women and children (Naidoo 1987: 176).

What seems to have made matters even more complicated was that there was little if anything to curb excesses of behaviour in that very remote frontier region. Hermanus Potgieter's methods to secure what he wanted were chillingly ruthless. He was notorious for demanding tributes of cattle, and more importantly, of children, who were forced into indentured labour under the *ingeboekt* (indentured labour) system, which was in effect a form of slavery (De Vaal 1953: 72). In 1853, the famous trader João Albinini who ran a safari trade from the Zoutpansberg to the Portuguese port at Delagoa Bay, warned the Boers of incipient hostilities...by Ndebele rulers (Maguire 2007: 39).

The last straw came in August 1854 when Hermanus Potgieter shot and killed the brother of Mokopane over a dispute concerning a buffalo that had been shot. The two allied Ndebele rulers decided that enough was enough. A month later, in September, twenty-eight Boers were killed in three separate incidents by the two chiefs. Mankopane avenged the death of Mokopane's brother by luring Hermanus Potgieter into his kraal at Fothane Hill with tales of ivory. Once there,

Hermanus and his supporters were tempted away from the wagons by bearers carrying great tusks of ivory. They were caught unawares and brutally killed (Acutt 1938: 47; Gerdener 1952: 37-40; Law 1955: 1079-1080).

There are conflicting accounts on how Potgieter and his entourage were killed. Theal contends that Hermanus Potgieter, a man of 'violent temper and rough demeanour' (Theal 1984: 415), entered Mokopane's capital with a party of men, intending to trade some ivory. Mokopane was, according to Theal (1984: 415), of ferocious disposition and had the reputation among the surrounding tribes of being a 'man of blood' referring to his nickname Setšwamadi (he who bleeds), which he was given when his (Mokopane's) tribe sustained heavy losses from attacks by BaPedi (De Kock 1972: 478; Theal 1984: 415-420). "Unfriendly" newspaper correspondents claimed that Hermanus Potgieter and his men made demands, without payment, for sheep and oxen. They also demanded gifts of African children, something that Theal considered improbable, for white men would hardly have ventured thus far. Theal, who obviously had little respect for indigenous Africans, felt tribesmen were easily irritable and it is possible that some banal act excited "the Africans to frenzy". Potgieter was 'flayed alive', and his skin was prepared in the same way as that of a wild animal (Theal 1984: 415-420).

Other versions of this incident, however, suggested that it was not Mokopane who killed Potgieter, but his confederate Mankopane (Acutt 1938: 47; Gerdener 1952: 37-40; Law 1955: 1079-1080). Potgieter was on friendly terms with Mankopane, so he would not have expected the treatment that he was about to receive. Mankopane lured Hermanus Potgieter and the other Boers to his capital by mentioning that there was a roaming herd of elephants in the area. This was sufficient to bait the ivory-hungry Potgieter, whose party outspanned near *Mapela's* (Mankopane's nickname) capital, and proceeded on foot to where they thought the elephants were located. They were met by Mankopane's warriors who had placed exceptionally huge elephant tusks on the distant ground, but also had assegais concealed under their clothing. Delighted, the Boers left their rifles and hurried to examine the specimen. While thus engaged, they were attacked and killed, all except Hermanus Potgieter who even though gravely wounded, managed a successful dash to his wagon, however, was finished off by Kheresa, Mankopane's right hand man, with his broken off assegai (De Kock 1972: 478; Maguire 2007: 39; Naidoo 1987: 174-175).

The other two murders were carried out near Mokopane's capital Chidi in the Makapanspoort district. The first was at a river crossing at *Esikgweni sengwenyama* where a Boer party of twelve people, who were camping under camel thorn trees next to a drift, was attacked and killed. In subsequent years this place acquired the name Moorddrift (murder drift). The sandstone

monument that was built there was declared a national monument in 1940 (Hofmeyr 1989: 6).

The third incident involved a smaller party of two white men that had gone to trade at the chief's village on the farms Pruisen and Twenty-Four Rivers, south-east of the newly proclaimed Transvaal town of Vredenburg. They too were murdered. The Ndebele chief (Mokopane) was hoping in this way, to scare the Boers from the territory they deemed to be their own. However, far from scaring or persuading the Boers to decamp, the murders prompted the latter to call up a commando against Mokopane. In fact, two Boer commandos were gathered under the joint command of Commandant-General Piet Potgieter of Soutpansberg and M.W. Pretorius of the Potchefstroom-Magaliesberg-Marico area and proceeded to the Makapaanspoort area. On 24 October 1854, Mokopane and his people retired to a massive cave fifteen kilometres further north where they soon holed up defensively (Hofmeyr 1989: 8; Oberholster 1972: 317-318).



Photograph 7: The monument at Moorddrift. Photo by Mahunele Thotse. **Question:** How does this ensemble represent the changing values of intergroup relations in the region?

The Boers devised several tactics to force the Kekana out of the cave, however, with no success. The first tactic was to storm the cave on 25 October and when this tactic bore no fruit, the attack was called off. Eventually, on 28 October the joint Commandos held a council to discuss further strategies. A second plan was hatched. This was to collapse the roof of the cave by setting off explosives. This experiment also failed and proved costly, and no second attempts were made using this tactic. The third tactic employed was to smoke the Kekana Ndebele out of the cave. Thomas Baines who was in the vicinity of the cave in the early 1870s, described how the attempt to smoke out the Kekana was made:

The Boers adapted the ...expedient of bringing several hundred waggon loads of wood to the brow of the mountain hurling them down to the foot of the cliffs in which the caves were, and then throwing fire upon the mass (Baines, as cited by Hofmeyr 1989: 8).

When that too proved ineffective, the Boers cut off water supply to the cave by diverting the stream outside the cave. Stone redoubts were set up within firing range of the cave and from the cover afforded by the farmers, trained their guns on the cave's openings and kept up a twenty-four-hour watch. They had estimated that the store of food and drink was running low, and the tight vigil was an attempt to ensure that it would continue. On the fifteenth day of the siege, 8 November, they resolved to block up the openings of the cave. The Kekana reportedly tried to slip out of the cave under the cover of darkness, however, they paid dearly, as more than 700 reportedly fell victim to the gunfire of the night patrols. Women and children thereafter surrendered in greater numbers (Hofmeyr 1989: 8).

Meanwhile, recognising that they were holed up and faced with the possibility of extinction, Chief Mokopane decided to give up his heir to the Boers. Nel wrote about this in his article:

Die volk het nou daaglik by die hope van dors gesterf en daar het gevaar bestaan dat die enigste seun van die hoofvrou van die koning ook sou omkom. So 'n ramp moes ten alle koste voorkom word. Hierdie kroonprins was toe omtrent ag jaar oud. Sejwamadi [Mokopane] roep die Raad byeen. Nadat die saak deeglik bespreek is, besluit die Raad dat die enigste manier om die opvolger se lewe te red, is om hom uit die gat te jaag. Die volgende oggend jaag die volk hom uit die gat. Hy is dadelik deur die Boere geneem en aan die sorg van een van die burgers toe vertrou. Later het die stam hom

van die betrokke burger, wat destyds in die distrik Pretoria gewoon het, vir beeste en olifantstande terug geruil.

[Members of the tribe were now dying daily of thirst and there existed the danger that the only son of the main wife to the traditional leader would also die. Such a disaster had to be avoided at all costs. This crown prince was about eight years old at the time. Sejwamadi [Setšwamadi] summoned the Council. After the case has been thoroughly discussed, the Council decided that the only way to save the heir was to send him out of the cave. The following day he was sent out of the cave by the tribe. He was immediately captured by the Boers and was entrusted in the safety of one of them. He was later bartered by the tribe from the farmer who was then a resident in the vicinity of Pretoria in exchange for cattle and elephant tusks.] (Nel 1933: 17)

On 17 November, the Boer patrols were called off after several of them entered the cave and discovered many dead and decomposing bodies, thus concluding that the resistance was over (De Waal 1978: 105-115; Naidoo 1987: 179-189).

56

Toe die Boere meen dat die Kaffers swaar genoeg gestraf is, het hulle die beleg opgehef. Sejwamadi [Mokopane] neem die deeltjie van die volk wat nog in lewe is na die plaas Vier-en-twintig-riviere, ongeveer ag myl [13 km] suidoos van Potgietersrust. Hy gelas hulle om hul stat daar te bou en die erfgenaam te gaan opspoor. Die derde dag na hul aankoms, op Vier-en-twintig riviere het die Koning selfmoord gepleeg deur gif te drink.

[Once the Boers determined that the blacks have been punished enough, they lifted the siege. Sejwamadi took the remainder of the tribe to the farm Vier-en-twintig-riviere, approximately eight miles south of Potgietersrust. There he instructed that they settle to build their capital and to then search for the heir. On the third day after their arrival at Vier-en-twintig-riviere, the traditional leader committed suicide by drinking poison.] (Nel 1933: 63)

One consequence of the siege was the commemorative re-naming of the rather inappropriately named town of Vredenburg (town of peace, oddly the town did not know peace) to Piet

Potgietersrus to commemorate him. Piet Potgieter was killed during the siege. He was shot from the cave where there is a marker to indicate where he fell. There is also a memorial in front of the Mogalakwena Municipal building in his honour. Still more recently, the town was renamed Mokopane in commemoration of the chief whose tribe was almost destroyed in the cave. The history of the town has come full circle with the new name. History is tacked onto the landscape by signifiers, in the form of names and monuments that different people give them. Different names—a form of monument—record different perspectives of history and events. Is Mokopane the same as Potgietersrus? (Maguire 2007: 40)

It is strange that the provincial government of Limpopo could only choose to honour Mokopane when there is sufficient evidence that the two chiefs Mokopane and Mankopane, acted in collusion. It is therefore contented, that only one was enough to represent the Ndebele speaking groups.

3.2.2 Kgošikgolo Sekhukhune

Sekhukhune was born c.1810 to paramount Chief Sekwati of the BaPedi Empire by his first wife Thôrômetšane (De Kock 1972: 646). Sekhukhune distinguished himself as a leader and a fighter in 1852 when Sekwati was besieged and deprived of drinking water in his stronghold Phiring by Commandant-General A.H. Potgieter. Sekhukhune rallied the Mathuba regiment, of which he was a member and together with a group of young women, crept under Boer fire to fetch water from the river. This was the exploit which earned the young Mašile (his original name) the nickname Sekhukhune, a nickname derived from the Sepedi verb- *khukhuna* (to creep). Sekhukhune was the traditional leader of the Marota people (commonly called BaPedi). He came to power in September 1861 after his father Sekwati's death (De Kock 1972: 646).

Friction between the BaPedi and the ZAR was nothing new in 1861 and certainly not of Sekhukhune's making. Some of the challenges were deferred and inherited from the time of his father Sekwati. One such problem related to the establishment of a Boer settlement in the eastern Transvaal in 1845, and the extension of the authority of the ZAR that resulted in the creation of overlapping areas of Maroteng and ZAR rule. Delius noted that by the early 1860s, in the northern reaches of the Lydenburg district, a multiplicity of Koni, Tsonga, and eastern Sotho groups lived under a loose dual hegemony. To the south-west of the BaPedi heartland, the BaKopa under Boleu

and the Ndzundza Ndebele under Mabhogo, who had earlier recognised Sekwati's paramountcy, had become subject to varying degrees of Boer control after 1845 (Delius 1980: 125, 1983: 91). After his accession, Sekhukhune's immediate concern in relation to the Boers, and particularly the Lydenburg authorities, was to ensure that they recognised him as the legitimate successor to Sekwati and that peaceful relations were maintained while he was occupied with imposing his authority on his rivals and subordinates. The Lydenburg *Krygsraad* (War Council) was quick to reply to Sekhukhune's initial letter with assurances of their recognition and their desire for 'peace and friendship'. However, they made several stipulations: *inboekselings* should be denied refuge within the BaPedi domain; stolen cattle should be returned; Sekhukhune should ensure that his subjects who took employment on Boer farms did not desert, and should put an end to raids by his subjects on Boer farms. In a letter dictated to the German missionaries A. Merensky and A. Nachtigal in late October, Sekhukhune agreed to these conditions. No mention was made of the land and boundary questions. In Delius's view, the subsequent exchange of gifts, letters, and messages in the early years of Sekhukhune's reign constituted no more than recognition of subjection to Boer authority. It was another attempt by both parties concerned to establish a framework for coexistence (Delius 1980: 131, 1983: 95).

58

Their coexistence opened the way for direct military co-operation in September 1863 between the BaPedi and the Boers. The most plausible cause was a major Swazi raid into the Lowveld in late August, during which five chiefdoms were attacked—an event which prompted Sekhukhune to improve his relationship with Lydenburg officials to another level. Delius, however, suspects that even with the subsequent gift of ivory, letters, and messengers to the *Landdrost* (Magistrate), reflected Sekhukhune's unease at possible Boer complicity in the recent Swazi raids and in future raids. On the other hand, the BaPedi gestures encouraged the Lydenburg authorities to also renew their requests for military assistance against Mabhogo. In October, the baPedi paramount agreed to mobilise the BaPedi army. Jointly the Boers and the BaPedi attacked the Ndzundza Ndebele on 3 November 1863, however, recognising that most of the Boers were content to do little more than supply covering fire, the BaPedi army broke camp the following day leaving the Boers to face their enemy alone. The joint attack represented a high point in co-operation between Sekhukhune and the ZAR. The outcome of the joint venture, though, persuaded Sekhukhune of the disadvantages of further direct military collaboration (Delius 1980: 134, 1983: 97).

Delius contends that Sekhukhune remained uneasy about the nature and extent of the relationship between the ZAR and the Swazi. This uneasiness emerged clearly in 1864 in his response to the appointment by the ZAR of J.M. de Beer as Diplomatic Agent for the eastern

Transvaal. The mandate of the Agent was to maintain good relations, monitor trade—particularly in arms and children—and investigate the perennial complaints over stock theft. Sekhukhune refused to deal with the diplomatic agent after a recent demonstration of essential support to Boer authority provided by Swazi military strength. Sekhukhune feared that De Beer was thus appointed largely because of his likely expertise in handling relations with the Swazi. His fears were confirmed when in their first official act, De Beer attempted to prevent a group of tribesmen fleeing Swaziland for the BaPedi domain, and even warned Sekhukhune against receiving them. Sekhukhune therefore, sent a letter to the *Landdrost* at the end of August 1864 with which he rejected any possibility of dealing through the Diplomatic Agent and expressed his wish to rather continue communicating through the *Landdrost* (Delius 1980: 137, 1983: 98).

Another challenge that Sekhukhune had to face that was passed on to him from the time of his father, was that of missionaries. The first missionaries to visit Sekwati were Alexander Merensky and Albert Nachtigal of the Berlin Missionary Society (B.M.S.) in 1860. Sekhukhune's father Sekwati had allowed the missionaries to enter the area under his protection. They were later followed by other missionaries, Heinrich Grützner and C. Endemann. Initially Sekhukhune maintained friendly relations with white people. The first mission station to be built was Kgalatlou in 1861. Two more mission stations were started in 1863 and 1864 at Phatametsane under Endemann and Ga-Ratau under Merensky. Mounting popular and chiefly hostility to the converts and missionaries, however, resulted in all three mission stations being abandoned by early 1866 (De Kock 1972: 646). The relationship between the missionaries and Sekhukhune had deteriorated irreparably. Sekhukhune became alarmed at the strides being made by the new religion and was soon complaining that the influence of the missionaries was undermining his authority. Delius maintains that one element in the hostility towards the Christians was a reaction against the cavalier fashion in which converts treated conventional ritual forms and observations. There had been a general unhappiness amongst African chiefs that converts no longer observed or performed some of the significant rituals and tribal obligations and duties. One affected chief summed it as:

I like very much to live with the teachers (i.e., missionaries) if they would not take my people, and give them to the government; for they are my people. Let these school people pray for me. How is it that the government takes them to spill blood? How is it that you teachers take them away? Whenever one believes, he goes away from me. Why is it that you call them to all live in one place? I do not like your method of breaking up my kraal. Let the believing kaffir look to his own country men, and not go

away, but teach others (United Presbyterian Church, cited by Braun 2008: 300).

Sekhukhune was also irked as he was plagued by vigorous complaints from “elders” that the teachers/converts were intent on undermining their control over their women. In 1863 Merensky was appointed as the representative of the ZAR, among the BaPedi—an act that did not sit well with Sekhukhune, who early in 1864 described the missionaries as ‘people of the Boers’. Merensky’s appointment most certainly did little to improve Sekhukhune’s cautious vigilance to the activities of the converts. Sekhukhune, now antagonised, began to place strict restrictions on halting the spread of converts. Delius wrote that complaints made against the Christians by subjects and subordinate chiefs, the conversion of royal agnates and affines, the increasingly compromised position of Merensky as the representative of the ZAR, and the manifest weakness of the Lydenburg authorities, forced Sekhukhune to consider his continued accommodation of the Christians while he set about curbing Christian activities (Delius 1980: 166-167, 1983: 120-121).

60

Finally, when Sekhukhune’s own wife converted and was baptised in November 1864, Sekhukhune eventually ousted the missionaries with his own half-brother, Johannes Dinkwanyane, who had also just converted. He forbade them to work their land; their guns, cattle, and grain supplies were seized as they were ordered to leave his capital Thaba Mosego at Tjate. By December 1865 all the mission stations within the BaPedi domain had been closed. The refugees established a new station, Botshabelo (Smith 1969: 122-123).

Smith wrote that during this period the number of people under Sekhukhune’s rule increased rapidly. A report by G. Roth on tribes living in and adjacent to the district of Lydenburg estimated the total number of people under Sekhukhune at 75 000 in 1879 (Aylward 1881: 32-33; Smith 1969: 240). The number included many members from neighbouring tribes who had been persuaded to declare their loyalty to Sekhukhune. With the growth of Sekhukhune’s power and the growth of the BaPedi population since they also welcomed refugees of Zulu and Swazi origins, it became increasingly difficult to maintain so many people on the land between the Steelpoort and Olifants Rivers. Sekhukhune therefore, was determined to expand eastwards, a move made possible through cattle raids and infiltration into Boer farms across the Steelpoort River. As Boers abandoned their farms in fear, consequently both of fever and BaPedi rustlers, Sekhukhune’s followers occupied this land. Another consequence of Sekhukhune’s growing power was that the collection of taxes by the ZAR came to an end as the tribesmen who professed loyalty to Sekhukhune refused to pay (Smith 1969: 240).

In July 1876 war broke out between the forces of the ZAR and the BaPedi. Bulpin (2002: 247)

stated that Sekhukhune was certainly anxious to try his strength against the Europeans. The largest ZAR commando thitherto assembled, 14 000 men as reported in an anonymous article in *Sechaba*, led by President Burgers failed, however, to break BaPedi resistance. *Sechaba* was an official organ of the African National Congress (ANC). In the early 1980s, articles published in this ANC mouthpiece did not carry the identity of authors for fear of being victimised by the apartheid government. In the case where an author would be identified, it was only the initials. It is important therefore, to acknowledge that as a mouthpiece of the ANC, this publication was always going to be biased in favour of that organisation. It was reported in *Sechaba*, that the ZAR troops were armed with 7-pounder Krupp guns and marched to Thaba Mosega, which they reached on August 1, 1876. They were supported by 2 500 Africans—who fought in the hope that the land under Sekhukhune would be given to them after Sekhukhune was defeated (Sechaba 1982: 18). Sekhukhune inflicted a humiliating defeat on the Boers and President Burgers. It is stated in *Sechaba* (1982: 18), that when the heat was on, the Boers retreated pell-mell and did not stop until they had re-crossed the Tubatse (Steelpoort River) and then dispersed to their homes—‘*huis toe*’ became their common cry! Bulpin agrees that the men seemed to have a contagious disease nicknamed *Huis Toe* (Go Home) as the whole commando was melting away, and there was nothing Burgers could do to hold it. This view is supported by Delius who contends that President Burgers and his *Krygsraad* had, in effect, been deserted by their army. This military debacle had dire consequences for the authority of the ZAR and welcomed additional ammunition to the British who were committed to securing the annexation of the Transvaal (Delius 1980: 250, 1983: 181).

Delius (1980: 166-167, 1983: 120-121) offers a collection of plausible explanations for the reasons behind President Burgers’ decision to embark on war against Sekhukhune. Amongst others, Burgers mentioned the aggressive posture adopted by Sekhukhune, which reflected on the subordinate chiefs. Burgers allegedly explained Sekhukhune’s adopted attitude as a suffering from overweening ambition.

The Pedi leadership was aware of the inspections carried out in their land and the implications thereof. Sekhukhune had broadcast complaints about the inspection commissions, and the act of inspection, far beyond the borders of the ZAR by 1873. At the same time, Sekhukhune sought to uphold his own claim to territory as far as the Komati River to the east and beyond Pretoria to the west as well as some distance north and south. Delius (1983: 185) hints at the inspections of Pedi lands as being part of a colonial strategy to break down Maroteng power by settling whites in their midst. Whether or not this charge was true, and despite it being the only clear case of core territory being deeded over to others, Sekhukhune certainly saw malice. That perception seemed

to be confirmed when the Boers and their Swazi allies made war on him in 1876.

Delius quotes Uys arguing that 'A study of the causes of the war, both remote and direct, leads to the conclusion that neither Burgers personally nor his government was responsible for Sekhukhune's hostile attitude' (Uys, as cited by Delius 1980: 251). In C.J. Uys's view, this hostility was the consequence of the supply of guns from the diamond fields, incitement on the part of Lt. Governor of Griqualand-West, R. Southey and his agents, and the influence of the Langelibalele War in Natal (Uys 1933, as cited by Delius 1980: 251). Delius also cited S.P. Engelbrecht, who went out of his way to defend Burgers and in the process placed heavy emphasis on external influences, suggesting—with a feel for mystery, if with almost no basis in the existing evidence—that 'the Sekhukhune trouble had been gradually planned and instigated by external powers' opposed to Burgers. Engelbrecht also points to the supply of guns from Kimberley and the activities of local traders and arms smugglers as contributory factors (Engelbrecht 1946, as cited by Delius 1980: 251). Other historians of the 1876 war produced variants of the same broad view. Sekhukhune's territorial aggression, in Otto's opinion, lay at the root of the conflict (Otto 1984, as cited by Delius 1980: 251). Van Rooyen maintained that the outbreak of war was shaped by the expansionist policy pursued by Sekhukhune: a policy fuelled by land shortage in the heartland of the BaPedi domain and the personal ambition of Sekhukhune.

62

Sekukuni was gedetermineerd om nie af te sien van sy gebiedseise ten opsigte van die Noordoos-Transvaal nie, al moes dit dan ook tot oorlog tussen hom en die Boere lei.

[Sekhukhune was determined not to part with his land possessions in the northern Transvaal even if it meant going into war with the Boers.] (Van Rooyen 1951: 240)

In October 1876, President Burgers wrote a letter in response to Henry Barkly's letter of protest. Barkly had written on 6 October that the unfortunate war with Sekhukhune could have been avoided had the Republican government been happy with the Transvaal's boundaries as they were earlier on in her (ZAR) official maps. In response, President Burgers stated that the Transvaal government in the first place, was forced to act in self-defence against the BaPedi. In the second place, the government had to act to demonstrate its authority over one of its subjects. While President Burgers listed other reasons for launching the war against Sekhukhune, he managed to demonstrate his aggression when he declared that:

Dit sou ondenkbaar wees om hirdie gronde nou aan 'n onbeskaafde stam soos die Pedi “barely free from cannibalism, which they practiced up to the time within the memory of men still living” oor te lewer.

[It would be unthinkable to leave these lands in the hands of the Pedi who are “barely free from cannibalism, which they practiced up to the time within the memory of men still living.”] (Van Rooyen 1951: 240)

Further, Delius offers a substantially different explanation from C. de Kiewiet. De Kiewiet suggests that the war was in part, the consequence of the growing land crisis in the Transvaal which was reflected in increased pressure on African lands in the various areas—it was really a war for the ownership of land. Delius demonstrated that while De Kiewiet thus pointed to a vital dimension to the conflicts, his reliance on Colonial Office documents prevented him from detailing the nature of the land crisis, the form taken by the struggles over land, and the way in which conflict over land meshed with struggles over labour, tax, and tribute (De Kiewiet 1937, as cited by Delius 1980: 252).

The war dragged on after the bulk of the Transvaal commando members left the front from August 1876 until February 1877, when a peace (or armistice) was concluded at Botshabelo. Although he had not been defeated, Sekhukhune was forced to sue for peace in 1876 because of the shortage of food, but also because he saw his power dwindling amid his surrounding chiefs submitting to the Pretoria government (Appelgryn 1979: 131). Some accounts claim that Sekhukhune ratified the peace treaty in February 1877. In the subsequent treaty, Sekhukhune acknowledged that he was a subject of the ZAR. Sekhukhune later denied that he agreed to certain stipulations in the treaty that was signed and refused to surrender the 2 000 cattle that he had to hand over as compensation in terms of the treaty.

63

Op 15 February 1877 het Sekhukhune die ooreenkoms aanvaar; later het hy die geldigheid daarvan ontken.

[On 15 February 1877 Sekhukhune accepted the treaty; but later denied it.] (Smith 1966: 1-69)

On 12 April 1877, Sir Theophilus Shepstone annexed the Transvaal on the pretext, *inter alia*, that a Boer Republic that failed to “pacify” the BaPedi threatened, by its very existence and weakness,

to destabilise the British colonies of the Cape and Natal. When the Boer force withdrew from the war with Sekhukhune, some gold diggers in the eastern Transvaal, of whom the majority were English, were greatly alarmed, thinking that they would be left unprotected against the BaPedi. These people agitated for the annexation of the Transvaal by Britain:

Maar die pro-Britse element het dadelik hul kragte gemontster toe hulle daarop by hom aangedring dat hy die Transvaal moet annekseer. Dit het volgens hulle 'n dringende noodsaaklikheid geword, anders sou die land geruïneer word.

[But the pro-British elements had immediately demonstrated their powers when they insisted that he annexed the Transvaal. According to them the situation had become an urgent emergency, otherwise the land would be ruined.] (Van Rooyen 1951: 302)

In response to their actions and misinformation, on 14 September 1876, Sir Henry Barkly sent a highly coloured and badly written report of the Sekhukhune war to the British Colonial Office:

64

Army of President totally routed deserters pouring into Pretoria Sickakuni (Sekhukhune) pursuing in force meeting at Landrosts office Leydenburg agreed to ask British government to take over Transvaal... (Sechaba 1982: 17-24).

Shortly after the annexation of the Transvaal, Sekhukhune received a message from Shepstone informing him of the change of government, stating that if he and his people intended remaining in the Transvaal, they would be regarded as British subjects and would have to pay taxes. Several accounts have shown that initially the British had recognised Sekhukhune as an independent Chief. Thus, the historian Ken Smith (1969: 240) stated that when the Colonial Office first learnt that the ZAR had declared war on Sekhukhune, they condemned this as an aggression against an independent chief. Van Rooyen (1951: 289) refers to a letter that Shepstone received from Merensky which made Shepstone even happier. In the letter, Merensky stated that Sekhukhune signed the treaty '*onder 'n misverstand'*' without understanding and that he did not see himself as the subject of the ZAR.

Upon being informed that he was now a British subject, Sekhukhune, however, rejected the new British position as a matter of course. The British, however, continued to insist that he was now a British subject. As a result, by March 1878 war was looming between the BaPedi and the

British. Delius categorised the war that ensued into three phases. The first was initiated by a British attack on Lekgolane (Sekhukhune's sister and chieftainess of the Maserumule chiefdom) which developed into a two-month siege, which ended only when Captain Clarke abandoned Fort Weeber and returned to the town of Lydenburg (Delius 1980: 327, 1983: 239). The *Sechaba* magazine mentioned that Captain Clarke who had been sent to subdue Sekhukhune, was actually defeated with heavy loss of life at Magnet Heights and barely escaped with his own life. A few accounts seem to corroborate the article by *Sechaba* including the Dictionary of South African Biography which supports the *Sechaba* article, when it refers to the fact that Capt. R.A. Clarke who was appointed a Special Commissioner by the British authorities, was dispatched to deal with the BaPedi situation. Captain Clarke built Fort Weeber and Fort Mamalube as bases and initially succeeded in maintaining peace. However, when the BaPedi soon recommenced with raids across the boundary, Clarke realised that his forces were not equal to their task and therefore, asked for reinforcements (De Kock 1972: 647). Van Rooyen (1951: 313) also wrote the following:

Toe Sekukuni sy impi's in die rigting van Lydenburg gestuur het, was kaptein Clarke verplig om die vyftig vrywilligers wat hy by Fort Weeber gehad het, terug te trek, sodat hulle Lydenburg self kon verdedig en wag totdat kaptein van Deventer met sy vrywilligers daar sou opdaag. Lekgolwana [Sekhukhune's sister] het daarop die geboue by Fort Weeber afgebrand met die gevolg dat die hele westelike gedeelte van Sekukuni-land weer in die hande van die Pedi geval het.

65

[When Sekhukhune sent his regiments in the direction of Lydenburg, Captain Clarke was forced to withdraw the fifty volunteers that he had stationed at Fort Weeber so that they could go to protect Lydenburg itself while waiting for the arrival of Captain Van Deventer with his reinforcements. Lekgolwana [Sekhukhune's sister] then burnt the building at Fort Weeber which resulted in the whole western part of the Sekhukhuneland back in the hands of the BaPedi.]

Whereas the above excerpt does not necessarily explain that Clarke was defeated as claimed in *Sechaba*, it however, confirms that indeed Sekhukhune did manage to take back some parts of his land. Delius only emphasises that direct confrontation was avoided (Delius 1980: 327, 1983: 239; Sechaba 1982: 20).

The second phase as far as Delius is concerned, began in August 1878 when Colonel Hugh

Rowlands was placed in charge of the troops in the Transvaal and regulars were made available for a military assault on the Maroteng capital. Rowlands commanded a force of 2000 men (1800 – *Sechaba*) which set out to either take the Maroteng stronghold or lay siege to it between August and October. On 3 October a force of 130 infantry and 338 mounted men failed to even reach Sekhukhune's stronghold as the BaPedi regiments ambushed the attackers. The mission had to once again be abandoned when Rowlands, after consulting with Clarke, decided to retreat to Fort Burgers (Delius 1980: 335, 1983: 240; *Sechaba* 1982: 20; Smith 1969: 246).

Sechaba (1982: 20) claims that the British made a third attempt (which no other source mentions) at subduing Sekhukhune in June/July 1879 under the command of Colonel Lanyon. That too failed to achieve the purpose.

The third and final phase in Delius' take (and according to *Sechaba*) of the campaigns against Sekhukhune is represented with the arrival of Sir Garnet Wolseley in South Africa at the end of June 1879, and in Pretoria specifically on 27 September. Having supervised the capture of Cetshwayo and the settlement of the Zululand question, Wolseley hoped that the destruction of Zulu power would scare Sekhukhune into accepting subject terms, the most important of which were that Sekhukhune should acknowledge British sovereignty and pay taxes. A deputation sent to Sekhukhune in October was told that he will never be subject to the English and that the BaPedi would rather fight than become British subjects (Bulpin 2002: 320; Delius 1980: 338-339, 1983: 242; *Sechaba* 1982: 20; Smith 1969: 247).

On receiving this response, Wolseley decided to attack quickly and overwhelm the BaPedi by sheer numbers. Wolseley therefore turned to the Swazis for military assistance. According to Smith, 5 000–8 000 Swazis, 8 000 according to Delius and De Kock, and 10 000 Swazis according to *Sechaba*, were mustered for this invasion to bring Sekhukhune down. Aside from the Swazi regiments, Wolseley's army also consisted of 3 500 troops and volunteers as well as 3 000 Transvaal African auxiliaries from Zoutpansberg chiefdoms and Ndzundza Ndebele of the eastern Transvaal. Wolseley chose November 1879 for this major military operation (De Kock 1972: 647; Delius 1980: 338-339, 1983: 242; *Sechaba* 1982: 20; Smith 1969: 247).

The Marota, as the BaPedi were also called, fought bravely with muskets obtained from Lesotho where Sekhukhune seemingly enjoyed royal support and had French missionaries as friends; from the Kimberley diamond fields where BaPedi worked; and from Delagoa Bay (Mozambique) with which Sekhukhune had close trade and other relationships. The British used more modern Mausers

(Delius 1983: 242).⁵ As the battle raged, Sekhukhune was taken by surprise in the form of an attack from behind by the Swazis. This surprise attack virtually brought the war to a close. Sekhukhune took refuge in a cave called Mamatamageng on the Grootvygenboom Ridge (high up in the Leolo Mountains). There he was cut off from all sources of food and water. On 2 December 1879, when he was called out by Captain Clarke and Commandant Ferreira, Sekhukhune surrendered having claimed 500 Swazi lives. Sekhukhune and a few of his followers were taken to prison in Pretoria on 9 December. He remained in prison until 1881 when he was set free under article 23 of the Pretoria Convention which was signed between Britain and the Boers after the First Boer War of Independence. The article stated that Sekhukhune be released and returned home. He could not return to Thaba Mosega that had been burnt, however, settled in a modest abode in the nearby village of Manoge, where on the night of 13 August 1882 he was murdered by his half-brother, Mampuru.

Several accounts seem to agree on the reason why Mampuru killed Sekhukhune. In terms of Sepedi custom, Sekhukhune, though the eldest son of the first wife, was not the rightful heir to the paramount chieftainship, for his father Sekwati was a regent ruling in the name of a son (Mampuru) whom he (Sekwati) fathered on behalf of his late elder half-brother Malekutu (who was the legitimate heir) by a woman named Kgomomakatane of the house of Magakala. Kgomomakatane had shown her faithfulness to Malekutu. Upon Sekwati's death, Sekhukhune usurped power thwarting Mampuru's (who was twenty years his junior) legitimate claim, by staking his (Sekhukhune) own claim to the chieftaincy as the first son of Sekwati's first wife. Furthermore, Sekhukhune killed all the councillors who supported Mampuru for the chieftainship, but spared Mampuru's life, yet drove him away from his tribal territory. Thus, the BaPedi were divided and a lifelong enmity emerged between the rival half-brothers over the succession question. Then on the fateful night of 13 August 1882, Mampuru killed his long-time rival half-brother, thus ending one of the stormiest politico military careers and with that, the great Marota Empire of Sekhukhune (Bulpin 2002: 320; Delius 1980: 346-347, 1983: 251-252; *Sechaba* 1982: 22; Smith 1969: 252.

5 Probably rather Martini-Henry breech-loading single-shot lever-actuated rifles adopted by the British Army in 1871. The Mauser was a German rifle only introduced in the 1890s and was never used by the British Army.

3.2.3 Khosikhulu Makhado

Reliable sources (Boeyens 1990: 6; Tempelhoff and Nemudzivadi 1999: 104) recorded that Makhado was born between 1830 and 1840. He was the youngest son of Ramabulana and his wife Limani. Makhado worked as a labourer on white owned farms and, most importantly, as a tracker for elephant hunters. He was such a good assistant and gun carrier that the hunters taught him to use a gun and he became a good shot. He also earned their trust to such an extent that they gave him and his men guns to hunt on their own. Many of these guns were never returned and were later to be used against their attacking enemies, particularly the Boers (Boeyens 1990: 7).

When Ramabulana died in 1864, Makhado took over power from his brother Davhana. During his reign, troubles with the ZAR government surfaced when he refused census among his people, while he also refused to pay ZAR taxes. To make sense of the career of Makhado, especially against the background of the tension between the Venda and the Boers, it is essential to explore the tense and anxious relationship between the ZAR and the Venda leadership in the four decades before the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). The Venda were remarkable because of their power under the paramount Makhado, combined with a concerted refusal to accept the paramountcy of the ZAR and their early recognition of its implications. This *inter alia* mooted the power of the ZAR's land surveyors and inspectors over them. Insight into the various strategies and meanings of resistance to "cadastralisation" are provided for by the exchanges between Makhado and the ZAR government (Braun 2008: 300). The power and autonomy of the Venda were remarkable in the ability of the latter to hold the Boers and their hunger for land, tax, and labour at arm's length (Braun 2008: 304).

One of the key events in what Braun (2008: 304) calls the 'rollback of Boer influence' was the evacuation and destruction of Schoemansdal in 1867-1868 due largely to Venda pressure. Tempelhoff considers the deterioration of the white community's relationship with the Venda under Makhado during the 1860s as the biggest setback for white settlement during the era of exploitation (Tempelhoff 1997, translated by Kriel 2009: 67). This rollback also seemed to cement official Boer respect for Makhado, known also as the "Lion of the North" (Tempelhoff and Nemudzivadi 1999: 113). This situation remained effective despite the maintenance of a titular official in the north by the ZAR government being the Portuguese trader João Albasini, who was already living in the area as a veritable warlord over people displaced from the Mozambican coast (Braun 2008: 29).

Makhado, who had demonstrated his power to the Boers, was particularly unlikely to buy into the “brilliant” ideas of state power imagined in far-away Pretoria, more so given that Boer settlers had been proven utterly unable to impose their will unilaterally in the north (note: The evacuation of Schoemansdal on 15 July 1867 after Commandant General Paul Kruger’s army of 500 burghers had failed to bring Makhado down, was considered to be a clear defeat (Tempelhoff and Nemudzivadi 1999: 108). A similar situation, like in the lands of the BaPedi, developed in the Soutpansberg areas, especially where Makhado was concerned. It resembled the relatively loose formal institutions that had connected BaPedi groups under the Maroteng (Sekhukhune) paramountcy, where Boer coercion and military power had failed in 1876. A development that played into Makhado’s hands was that the proven military danger of British arms had suddenly disappeared with the retrocession of the Transvaal to the Boers in 1881. In the eyes of Makhado and other rulers in the Limpopo region, the assumption of Boer rule in Pretoria in 1881 would have constituted a positive development for their security, such that Makhado and the other traditional leaders of the north were understandably dismissive of—if not simply offended by—any pretensions of imposition from Pretoria (Delius 1983: 305).

Despite Makhado utilising the land, the Location Commission (Locatie Commissie) (Lijst van afgebakende locaties 1883 [List of barked off locations 1883]) of the ZAR, fearing that the former occupied far too large a swath of land, assigned to him eight standard (3 000-morgen) 2 570.1 hectares of farms in August 1883 based on the presumption that he had only 524 households based on taxes paid. Subsequently, the Commission took a resolution to send a surveyor to beacon that area “as soon as possible” (Minutes of Location Commission meeting 5 August 1889; Van Biljon 1947; Marais 1883). However, the government only moved to define locations for Makhado and others in the Zoutpansberg district in 1887, at a time when the Superintendent of Native Affairs had recognised the need for the reconsideration of the matter by the Commission. The settlement of boundary issues with Britain and the proclamation of the *Occupatiewet* (Occupation Law) No. 6 of 1886, had a great deal to do with matters of state and the need perhaps to reach an accommodation with Makhado if it were possible. The proclamation was designed to further white settlement and occupation by granting farmlands in the north. The farmlands would benefit from cheap African labour, generate taxes, and provide a standing militia. The discovery of vast taxable gold reserves at the Witwatersrand also needed labour. The taxes might pay for military confrontation if that was necessary. The proclamation could be seen as the official start of final white settlement offensive in the Zoutpansberg district. Braun is of the opinion that the presence of Commandant-General and Superintendent of Natives for the Republic P.J. Joubert

as chairman of the Commission further suggested the effect of other considerations, including military confrontation, should that be necessary (Braun 2008: 205-306; Tempelhoff 1997: 20-22).

In February 1887, the Location Commission met with Makhado near the Venda capital, Luatame. The prompt invitation from Makhado, notwithstanding he immediately made it clear to the commission that he felt the status quo was in no need of alteration and that all he needed to say he had already told Albasini long before—presumably referring to Makhado's own position as ultimate arbiter of his lands (Transcript of Conference 1887: 73). Joubert's response to Makhado specifically addressed the influx of people to the mines and thus the ZAR's aim to look for land in the north. Joubert stated that:

[d]aarom heft de Regeering my gestuurd, om bijtijds te zien en om die locaties af te bakenen, zoodat de naturellen ook weten wat hun grond is en niet kunnen verdrukt worden. ... dan zal het Gouvernement er dadelijk naar zien en ook de Naturellen helpen dat zij niet verdrukt worden en de overtreders straffen, maar om dat te kunnen doen wil het Gouvernement vóór de menschen intrekken de bakens opmaken en de lijnen afgebakend hebben.

70

[[t]herefore the leadership sent me to see and beacon the Locations, so that the natives also know what their land is and cannot be oppressed. ... then the government shall see to [it] and also help the natives not to be oppressed and punish trespassers, but because the government wants to be able to do this before people move in [they want] to make [your] beacons and have the [boundary] lines beacons off.] (Transcript of Conference 1887: 73, translated in Braun 2008: 308)

Makhado's responses demonstrated his awareness of divisive tactics and questionable assessments on the part of the Commission. Indeed, the government had already announced the opening of the Spelonken area for white settlement, under the *Occupatiewet* on 6 October 1886, and inspections for occupation farms had begun at about the same time that the Commission was visiting Makhado, heightening the brinkmanship (i.e. bring a situation that could prove to

be dangerous, closer) (Braun 2008: 308; Tempelhoff 1997: 20-22).⁶ Makhado's initial response to Joubert was that he knew all of those things, and that there were already foreign farms on the flatlands where his sheep grazed and which were otherwise under cultivation and use. Subsequently, Makhado refused to agree to give up any part of the plains south of the mountain where his animals grazed, or of the less arable region north of the mountains where people often migrated. Further, the Commission's request for a population count from Makhado, so they could assign a location size, met with the amusing and ironic, yet also witty response, that the Superintendent of Native Affairs was welcome to count the people himself if he so badly wanted it. Makhado furthermore declared, that he could not show the Commission the limits of his land, since he really did not know them—an uncertainty that arose because 'before, the entire land was Ramapulana'—suggesting that everything belonged to Makhado's predecessor Ramapulana and any peaceful land occupation by white settlers represented sheer hospitality and sufferance on the traditional leader's part (Braun 2008: 309; Transcript of Conference 1887: 73).

The fact that the Venda used a levy in labour to cultivate land and thus, production in the most fertile areas at any given time was essential to maintain cohesion and prosperity of the Venda state, is perceived by Braun to provide another perspective to Makhado's position. Whereas the consideration of the boundaries was a cadastral, financial, and administrative issue for the ZAR, allowing them to incorporate and alienate land; Makhado's statements on the other hand were articulations of sovereignty and control over the body of the state. These basic differences in the assumptions behind the two positions were surely crystal clear to both Joubert and Makhado. Further repetitions of engagements and attempted engagements between the Location Commission and Makhado reflected moments in changing power relations (Braun 2008: 309; Transcript of Conference 1887: 73).

The only definite information the Commission derived out of Makhado in 1887 was a statement of what he regarded as the *onderste vlakke* or level areas below the mountain belonging to the Venda people. The boundaries, Makhado maintained, were the Doorn River from Levhubu and parallel to the mountains to the source and from there to Machaba, then back towards the Zoutpansberg mountains along the Brak River, including the salt pans to the west of the mountains, and from

6 In the 1890s, other pastoral people in the area employed the tender of valuable cattle as peace offerings, while showing their arms and maintaining that they had no obligation to pay taxes on their own lands to the Boers. See for example, the account of Colin Rae, Malaboch: or Notes from My Diary on the Boer Campaign of 1894 (Cape Town: Juta, 1898), xviii-xix; Tempelhoff, "Die Okkupasiestelsel," p.268.

there to the *Krokodil*/Crocodile (Limpopo) River. Makhado, like most African traditional leaders, defined his lands not by population, but by those territories directly under his effective control—and that definition had not changed since he had expressed these boundaries to the Boers in the 1860s. Naturally, Joubert would refuse to guarantee such an extent, stating that it was the surveyor (Rissik) who would ultimately decide on the extent of land Makhado could retain based on his census—a response that was to render Makhado unhappy. The latter expected that tendering taxes to Pretoria—something he considered a gift, as it was mostly done in cattle should exempt his lands from being “subdivided” (*gesneden worden*). Makhado consequently refused to make any hard concessions, preferring instead to offer vague agreements with sentiments for peace and fairness (Braun 2008: 310; Transcript of Conference 1887: 44-45, 77-79, 92).

Just like other major chiefs in the region, Makhado recognised the threat that locations presented, and likewise, refused to conduct a census that would give legitimacy to it. Again, the tendering of cattle—seen as a precious source of wealth reserved for great *mahosi* (chiefs), and given as gifts to equals—entitled him, in his opinion, to better treatment or respect from quests. Given this status quo, it was “completely impossible” for the surveyor to undertake the beaconing without new instructions, and the Commissioners sent a resolution to that effect to the government along with reports of proceedings, however, not a map—a map, no matter how flawed, would have granted undesirable legitimacy to Makhado’s side of the impasse (Braun 2008: 313).

When the Commission reconvened again a year later in February 1888 at the fortress of the District Native Commissioner, Captain Oscar Dahl, to make a draft of resolutions regarding reserves in the Zoutpansberg district, Albasini, related in no uncertain terms that he believed Makhado had only 3 000 households, many on “private” land and that the latter was neither obeying government regulations nor paying any taxes at all. Once again, the only resolution obtained was to grant Makhado a location as an independent chief, though what that meant remained unclear. Makhado made his disapproval clear of any such imposed land settlement later in the year (Braun 2008: 313; Notulen der Locatiecommissie 1888: 64-66; Tempelhoff 1997: 268).

The continuing unsettled state of boundaries for the lands of the Venda encouraged efforts on the part of the ZAR to surround and enclose Makhado in, through security. The erection of forts ever nearer his capital, encroaching on land he had claimed, was openly provocative—as was the parcelling out of occupation farms in the forts’ shadows, which brought European grantees into conflict with people already living on the land. To both Joubert in Pretoria and to the local commissioners, this scenario presented a vital response to unrest in the area that was driving white farmers off the land and generating an increase in complaints of theft and trespassing (Braun

2008: 314; Tempelhoff 1997: 269). Joubert, therefore, decided not only to beacon all the locations of lesser chiefs first, but also to place a fort as close as possible to Makhado's capital, specifically to push him towards an acceptance of taxes and boundaries—a provocation Makhado categorically warned him against. Joubert further hoped to beacon Makhado's location with the backing of a significant military force and made numerous inquiries of the resources available locally while he also sought to convince neighbouring chiefs to put pressure on Makhado (Braun 2008: 315).

However, the government of the ZAR would not allow Joubert to provoke Makhado in that way for fear of starting a real war at an inopportune time. The State Secretary W.J. Leyds, was alarmed enough to send a telegram specifically refusing to allow him (Joubert) to establish the fort or to demonstrate military force even though he felt that both Makhado's claims and even Joubert's counter proposed location were unacceptably vast. Indeed, the government went so far in its efforts to avoid confrontation in 1889, as to order Joubert to put Makhado on notice that the government by itself ceased the occupation across the Doorn River, since it may appear that the present location may be too small and to remind Makhado that he must 'understand well [that] the goal is to keep the peace' (Braun 2008: 315). Peace in this sense would mean leaving Makhado's claim unchallenged by any alternate definition of the lands under him (Braun 2008: 315-316; Leyds to Joubert 1889; Tempelhoff 1997: 269).

Although the cessation of new grants on Makhado's side of the Doorn River did not stop further extension of the general white immigration to the area, the latter river became known by 1894, in the words of Leo Weinthal of the Pretoria Press as, 'the famous border "Rubicon" of Magato (Makhado)'s territory' (Weinthal 1984: 146) which they would defend. Perhaps the most telling point of the whole confrontation, in the opinion of Braun—the one that was never been specifically articulated anywhere:

...even as they carved out occupation farms to the west of the Sand River, inspectors never parcelled out the valuable salt pans that Makhado had deliberately included in his territorial claims, and left them as one large un-alienated plot (Braun 2008: 317).

Indeed, Makhado certainly stood to lose had he agreed to any such arrangement. Pressure, nevertheless, kept pace with opportunity and in the resulting atmosphere of non-cooperation, Makhado's forces drove away a Location Commission sent in 1894 as well as a separate visit from Joubert himself the same year, despite the assurance of the *Landdrost* in Pietersburg that Makhado was prepared to accept a location and pay taxes. Yet, by April 1895, Makhado was receptive to

meeting the Commission, since by the end of 1894, ZAR military actions against other powerful paramount chiefs in the northern regions, for example, the 1894 war against Malebogo, using new weapons, enjoyed devastating military successes, which did not fail to impress Makhado if not alarm him outright (Braun 2008: 319-320; Kriel 2009; Makhura 1993; Nemudzivhadi 1977: 26-28; Pretorius to Joubert 1895; Stiemens to Joubert 1895).

In May 1895, a new commission under H.P.N. Pretorius arrived at the foot of the mountain and requested an opportunity to meet with Makhado. The meeting was treated with protocol as a state affair. A body of 30 to 40 armed soldiers escorted the Commission into the mountains and Pretorius noted the presence of 'many armed "Kaffers" on both sides of the path' (Du Plessis 1945: 122-127), a show of military power that was certainly intentional. At the capital, the Commissioners met with several "*indunas*" including one Funyufunyu, whom the Boers referred to as "Tromp" and the Commission regarded as the "head *induna*". Funyufunyu, who was probably Makhado's *mukoma*—in effect, his private secretary—was sent to negotiate on behalf of the traditional leader, as his eyes and ears (Du Plessis 1945: 122-127). Funyufunyu stated in no unclear terms that his purpose was to convey the words of Makhado, that the latter refused to allow a count of huts or a census of people, and that he would also not allow the land to be divided. Funyufunyu further reiterated that they would not allow the land to be divided or have a census taken. Makhado then sent word that he would meet with the Commission in person the following morning (Braun 2008: 321-322; Dictionary of South African Biography n.d.; Kriel 2000: 57-70; Notulen der Locatiecommissie 1895).

Again, held in his dwelling, the audience with Makhado served simply to put an official stamp on Funyufunyu's words. When asked directly by the commission if that answer was final, Makhado responded that his *mahosi*/chiefs (all present at this meeting) could speak freely on the matter, at which point all echoed Funyufunyu's sentiments (Braun 2008: 323; Notulen der Locatiecommissie 1895).

Pretorius's response that Makhado's attitude meant then that the status quo remained, demonstrated how little had changed in the eight years since Joubert first stated his opinion—that the demarcation line he (Joubert) had conveyed was not binding on the government (for it was neither beacons nor surveyed), that new immigrants would continue to come in, and without a census the boundaries could not be fixed and Venda lands "assured". Makhado seemed to have recognised that the acceptance of cadastral integration meant the loss of land and abdication of sovereignty. Therefore, his final response to Pretorius was that it was unnecessary to talk further, since the southern boundaries were good as they were, loosely at the Doorn and Sand Rivers.

However, such natural boundaries were too imprecise and bounded too vast an area ever to meet with approval from Joubert, much less the government of the ZAR in Pretoria (Braun 2008: 323; Notulen der Locatiecommissie 1895).

Braun concludes that, Joubert, after hearing of the Commission's failure to exact concessions, proposed that stronger measures be taken in the next year, and in fact he approved an attack on Makhado by Commandant Vorster in the winter of 1895 that was only narrowly averted by a direct telegram from President Kruger. However, Makhado's death in September 1895, allegedly from (brandy) poisoning, would change matters entirely. Braun (2008: 323) contends that he may have been murdered specifically to allow the pursuit of a more conciliatory attitude towards the ZAR (Nemudzivhadi 1977: 29-32; Tempelhoff 1997: 272). This view is shared by Johann Tempelhoff and Henry Nemudzivhadi who also noted that it was only circumstantial evidence that suggested that Makhado might have been poisoned whilst on a visit to his friend the trader John Cooksley at Lovedale Park. The co-authors, like Braun, also concurred that it is possible that his own (Makhado's) people were responsible for the deed. Further, the authors believed that whites, especially the Republican troops stationed at Fort Hendrina, near Elim, were eager to get the upper hand over the Venda ruler. The poisoning and subsequent death of Makhado, therefore, might have been a combined operation (Tempelhoff and Nemudzivadi 1999: 113). In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, the story of the poisoning remains merely a plausible explanation in account of Makhado's death.

75

3.2.4 Kgoši Makgoba

Kgoši Makgoba is famously known for resisting attacks by the Boer forces of the ZAR government in 1894, almost at the same time as the Malebogo-Boer War. Makgoba's people occupied the Lowveld around today's Magoebaskloof area, at the Houtbosberg (Makgoba) Mountains and Letaba River. The arrival of whites in the area caused friction. Accounts of the area show that the first white man to settle permanently in the Letaba area was a German missionary, the Reverend Mr Fritz Reuter of the Berlin Mission Society, in October 1881. In 1885, the ZAR Administration laid down new boundaries for the Republic. The Republican law stipulated that every Voortrekker or white person who had settled in the Transvaal before 1877, was entitled to a farm. Researchers interested in this history have yet to find evidence that any white person exercised that right in

the Lowveld before 1880. In 1886, in trying to lure more settlers to the area, the government promulgated Act No. 8, called (*Occupatiewet voor Gouvernementsgronden gelegen in het district Zoutpansberg*) 'Occupation Act for State Land' or the Occupation Farms Act no. 8 of 1886 as others referred to it (Changuion 1989). The act provided that white farmers might receive farms *gratis*/ free on condition that they occupy them permanently. According to the historian L. Changuion, the rationale behind this act was to create a buffer zone between black and white in that area. The first farms to be allocated in terms of that law were awarded in the Lowveld in 1888. These gifts of free farms were an incentive to many white people to settle in the area, yet there were no more than fifteen white families living in the Letaba towards the end of the eighties (Changuion 1989; Kriel 2009: 67; Tempelhoff 1997:11)

Other events that pulled white people to the area include the gold strikes of 1870 that led to further discoveries which drew more people; the founding of the town Haenertsburg in the Houtbosberg Mountains; and the Murchison Range that yielded good mineral finds which lured miners, led to the proclamation of the Selati Goldfields in 1887 and the founding of yet another town, Leydsdorp in 1889. A further contribution towards opening the Lowveld came from C.H. Zeederberg in 1889, when the latter established a mail coach service between Pietersburg and Leydsdorp via Haenertsburg (Changuion 1989).

76

Changuion noted that not long after the coming of the first white men to Letaba, there were signs of friction between them and the local black tribes, chiefly because of the allocation of occupation farms. The area where the Makgobas stayed was within the area demarcated for the buffer zone. The black captains complained that it was their land which was being given to white farmers and they refused to be herded together in locations. Combined with the fact that more and more white farmers moved in and a tax system was introduced by government, these were the main causes of the war (Changuion 1989: 25).

The first open confrontation came in 1888 when the ZAR government attempted to carry out its location policy, as proposed by the Native Location Commission of 1882, in the Houtbosberg area. When the officials began to erect beacons for white farms in the territory of Chief Makgoba, his people summarily destroyed the beacons and threatened the officials of the commission (Changuion 1989: 26).

In applying the forced removals at the time, the ZAR government distinguished between tribes bigger than 500 families and those smaller. The bigger tribes in the Lowveld area, like the BaLobedu of Modjadji, the Mamabolo, and the Molepos, were given their own locations. The smaller tribes with less than 500 families, Tsolobolo, Maupa, Mosote, and Makgoba, had to move to one location

south of Letaba River where they would have been subordinate to Mmamathola whose territory that was. Makgoba did not want to be subordinate to Mmamathola and in fact requested that if he had to be moved, he would prefer that it should rather be to the Molepo location, since they were related to the Molepos. The request was rejected. The Native Commissioner for Soutpansberg, Oscar Dahl, negotiated with Makgoba trying to reach a solution. He failed to achieve success, since Makgoba refused to pay the fine imposed on him in the form of cattle due to his refusal to move. Makgoba was eventually arrested, however, soon afterwards escaped from prison and subsequently swore that the white people would never again capture him (Dicke 1933b: 19).

Conditions gradually deteriorated as the local black local people became openly hostile. The situation became so threatening to them that white farmers in the neighbourhood thought it prudent to mobilise themselves into commandos. Field Cornet Botha addressed petitions to the government to complain that they were being harassed on the mountain by Makgoba. The government in response, appointed a "Location Commission" again on June 20, 1892 to define the boundaries between the white men in the north and black tribes without delay. The commission completed their assignment the same year and informed each chief where his location was situated. However, unanimously the chiefs refused to accept the commission's instructions. Hardly had the commission returned when the first attacks on white farms were reported (Dicke 1933b: 63; Changuion 1989: 27).

77

Changuion wrote that the government seriously considered abandoning the Lowveld to the various black tribes and settling the white farmers elsewhere. However, after much deliberation, it was decided that a show of force might force the blacks to back off. Consequently, Comdt.-Genl. Piet Joubert, the commander of the armed forces of the ZAR army sent a final warning to Makgoba in March 1894 from Pretoria to move to his reserved place south of the Great Letaba River within one month or to suffer the violent consequences (Changuion 1989: 27).

Meanwhile, war had broken out between the ZAR and Kgoši Malebogo of the Blouberg, north of Pietersburg. Comdt.-Genl. Piet Joubert proclaimed a general mobilisation of the ZAR commandos to advance upon Malebogo. This campaign temporarily diverted the focus away from Makgoba. The war against Kgoši Malebogo ended on 31 July 1894 when the latter surrendered. The situation in the Houtbosberg had since deteriorated to such an extent that appeals for help by whites were being sent to Pietersburg almost daily. Most farmhouses were being destroyed by fire and cattle driven away by the warriors belonging to Kgoši Makgoba and others (Changuion 1989: 27).

Comdt.-Genl. Joubert and some commandos gathered in Pietersburg on 10 August 1894

where they decided to engage into immediate military action to diffuse the volatile situation in the Houtbosberg (Grimsehl 1955: 27; Kruger 1955: 117).

Volgens rapporte het die toestande in die Houtbosberg elke dag meer gespanne geword en die kaffers het alreeds baie wonings afgebrand.

[Following reports, the situation got tenser every day and the blacks have already burnt many houses.] (Grimsehl 1955: 27; Kruger 1955: 117)

Reinforcements were summoned from the Lydenburg, Rustenburg, and Marico districts and the combined forces attacked Makgoba. However, due to incessant rain, typical of this area, the immediate attack had to be postponed. The combined ZAR forces meanwhile kept themselves busy by dealing severely with the neighbouring villages of Maupa, Maphitha, and Tsolobolo who were all defeated without much difficulty (Dicke 1933b: 63; Grimsehl 1955: 27; Kruger 1955: 117; Tempelhoff 1997: 20-22).

78 After the rains had cleared in September 1894, the main village of Makgoba could be attacked. By then Makgoba had ignored yet another ultimatum. Makgoba and his people offered resistance in the beginning and then retreated into the dense forest where the Boer commandos could not reach them. The commandos were consequently allowed to return home. Realising how difficult it would have been to pursue Makgoba into the dense bush, the ZAR council of war therefore decided to encircle Makgoba's followers with forts. Two forts were erected, namely Fort Oscar near Modjadji's location under the command of Lieutenant du Toit and Fort Burger near Agatha under the command of Lieutenant Schutte. The forts were given the following mandate:

Hulle moes die onderdane van die voortvluggende kapteins Maupa, Makgoba, Maphitha e.a. opspoor en hulle nie toelaat om op hulle vroeëre plekke te gaan woon nie, of op verbode grond pik of bou nie. Hulle moes die Boere en ander bewoners beskerm en help. Hulle moes, sodra hulle kennis kry van veediefstalle, die vee opspoor en terugneem. Indien hulle weet van versteekte vyande, moet hulle die Kommandant-Generaal daarvan verwittig en volgens sy instruksies handel.

[They must keep track of the subjects of the fleeing rebel chiefs Maupa, Makgoba, Maphitha, etc. and not allow them to go back to their former places of residence, nor

even to dig nor build on the forbidden grounds. They were supposed to protect and help the farmers and other residents. If they knew of any theft of livestock, they were supposed to track and bring them back. If they knew of any enemy fugitives, they were to alert the Commandant General and handle it following to his instructions.] (Grimsehl 1955: 104)

One way in which the Republican forces could achieve the above mandate was through patrols which were to be held on a regular basis to ensure the area was rid of the enemy. Makgoba, however, was by no means subdued and by February 1895 there were rumours afloat of his clashes with white farmers in the neighbourhood. The initial two forts were not sufficient and proved ineffective. The government finally decided to erect four more forts. Changuion (1989) maintains that the forts could still not improve matters even though the burghers in the forts succeeded in repulsing the many attacks made on them. Again, a decision was made in Pietersburg in April 1895 to once more call up the commandos of the other districts to make a concerted attack on Makgoba during the winter months. The native Commissioners of Lydenburg, Pietersburg, Waterberg, and Spelonken were instructed to bring a corps of black warriors from each of their districts (Grimsehl 1955: 95; Kruger 1955: 95).

79

There were soon altogether 1 000 white commando members and approximately 3 000 (6 000 according to Kruger) black warriors taking part in the war (Changuion 1989: 88). Before the first attack, on 29 May 1895, a third ultimatum was issued to Makgoba, however, his guards refused to allow the messengers to deliver it. The ultimatum was calling on Makgoba to surrender himself before Joubert to avoid the spilling of innocent blood that would happen if he continued to refuse (Kruger 1955: 83-84). The Makgobas were then attacked on 3 June. His stronghold was taken the next day and burnt down, Makgoba was, however, still at large, once more managing to evade capture.

Sonder veel moeite is die hoofstat van Makgoba op 4 Junie verbrand en in puin gelê...
Die werklike doel, nl. Om Makgoba vas te keer, het misluk.

[Without so much difficulty, Makgoba's chief settlement was torched on 4 July and left to ashes...The main purpose, namely to capture Makgoba, had however, failed.] (Kruger 1955: 96)

Very early on the morning of Sunday 9 June, a contingent of Swazi warriors entered the forest and successfully captured one of Makgoba's wives, who had fallen behind on account of a sore foot. Out of fear, the poor woman was compelled to point out where Makgoba and his other wives were hiding. As a result, Makgoba was surrounded, forced to surrender, and was killed (Dicke 1933a: 61).

There are different versions on how Makgoba eventually died. Bernard Dicke (1933a: 61) recorded that when Makgoba realised that they would not be able to escape, he sent the women and children ahead to get away while he awaited the Swazis alone. He stood in a narrow footpath in the forest and defended himself until he was overpowered.

Nadat hy by sy vrouens en kinders aangesê het om te vlug, het die dapper hoofman die aanstormende Swazies voorgekeer in die smal paadjie wat deur die bos geloop het. Hy het 'n tweeloop-geweer gehad waarmee hy een Swazie doodgeskiet het. Die tweede skoot wou egter nie afaan nie, en toe was die bende op hom.

[After he had instructed his wives and children to run, the brave chief faced the attacking Swazis in the small corridor that went through the bush. He had a twin barrel gun with which he shot one of the Swazis. The second shot misfired, and he was overpowered.] (Dicke 1933a: 61)

Another version is that after Makgoba had been surrounded, the Swazi leader challenged him to a duel in which he was killed.

Gleefully they (Swazis) formed a ring in the bush while their champion challenged Magoeba to mortal combat. And there, while the Swazis catcalled and cheered, Magoeba was slowly battered to his knees and then, defeated, rolled over on the ground and his head cut off and taken to the Europeans as evidence of his ending (Grimsehl 1955: 97).

As proof that Makgoba was dead, the Swazis cut off his head and presented it as evidence to Genl. Joubert (Changuion 1989: 37; Dicke 1933a: 61).

3.2.5 Hosinkulu Ngungunhane

Ngungunhane was the leader of the Gaza Empire in Mozambique between 1884 and 1895. He was the last paramount chief (Emperor) to resist the Portuguese campaigns when, after the Conference of Berlin in 1885, it was decided that possession of colonies had to be legitimised by effective territorial occupation. Kriel wrote that the most obvious umbrella under which to discuss European conquest of African communities in the late nineteenth century seems to be the 'Scramble for Africa' or 'the partition of Africa' (Kriel 2003: 74; Nowell 1947: 1-17).

The author concurs with Kriel that to understand what happened in Southern Africa during the 'Scramble for Africa', it is imperative to explore what the author describes as 'the notion of secondary empires' (Kriel 2003: 74) in more depth. By secondary empires, Kriel referred to African communities who exploited their partial monopoly over European military technology to colonise their neighbours. Ngungunhane fits this description, however, due to the restricted nature of this study such an exploration will not be accommodated here. According to Khosa (1987: 7), 'Ngungunhane was a Nguni leader who had come from what is now South Africa and who occupied the territories in the south of Mozambique, enslaving the Tsonga and Chope tribes, local ethnic groups.'

Khosa's quotation above is in sync with Wheeler (1968a: 165-220), according to whom, Ngungunhane was anathema to local ethnic groups, namely Chope, the Tsonga, and the Shona. Ngungunhane tried to rebuild the crumbling Shangana empire in Gaza, which he had inherited from his father Mzila, by means of conquest, collaborating with the Portuguese for firearms and money, as well as dealing with British commercial and official parties. Khosa depicts Ngungunhane as a dictator, a foreigner, and a powerful figure who controlled and enslaved a significant part of Mozambique. He became known in Portuguese colonial history as an example of the defeat of the Mozambican blacks. With the coming of independence in 1975, the figure of Ngungunhane was recuperated as a national hero and mythical figure, one who represented the first Mozambicans to resist Portuguese colonisation before the struggle for independence, led by FRELIMO (Isaacman 1976: 13).

Ngungunhane came to power in late 1884 (1885 according to Warhurst 1962: 81) after the death of his father Muzila, who was the chief of the Shangana of Gaza in southern Mozambique. He was the last Shangana traditional leader of any significance to rule in southern Mozambique and the last in the line of the Nguni dynasty that originated in Zululand, northern Natal, in the

early nineteenth century. The name “Shangana” is derived from his grandfather, traditional leader Soshangane (c.1800-1858 or 1859), who led Nguni refugees from Zululand after 1819, fleeing the wrath of Shaka Zulu. The Nguni regiments under Soshangane came to rest in the Limpopo Valley (on the plains from the Limpopo, across the Sabi, as far as the highlands of Manica). Wheeler observes that the Nguni regiments were frequently on the move thereafter, however, in the 1830s they attacked and unsettled Portuguese settlements on the south bank of the Zambezi River, thus acquiring a fearsome reputation with the feeble Portuguese communities. At the peak of Shangana power under Soshangane around 1850, the area of control and influence included most of the region between the Incomati and the Zambezi Rivers. There is, however, no indication that their control extended much beyond the edge of then Monomotapa, the would-be Rhodesian plateau (Wheeler 1968b: 170).

Soshangane’s death in either 1858 or 1859, left a serious succession dispute between two of his sons, Muzila and Mawewe. Muzila is said to have prevailed after he obtained arms and aid from Portuguese authorities at Lourenço Marques. He finally defeated and expelled his brother in 1861. The help and aid were a result of a treaty of alliance and “vassalage” signed by Muzila with the Portuguese. The Portuguese government thereafter claimed that the Shangana were legally vassals to the Portuguese crown and that Muzila’s royal heirs were under Portuguese authority. Ngungunhane was to bear the burden of this Portuguese claim in later years (Wheeler 1968b: 172).

Disputes between Ngungunhane and the Portuguese seem to have started in 1885 after the Conference of Berlin concluded that European possession of colonies had to be legitimised by effective territorial occupation. Added to that, in 1875 Portugal had won an arbitration dispute with Britain over the possession of the southern part of the strategic Delagoa Bay. Although the town was founded by Portuguese traders, the British came to contend that only a part of the bay was Portuguese territory. The British simply signed agreements with local native chiefs around the area and then claimed ownership of certain parts. Bixler (1934: 4) noted that in 1817 an Anglo-Portuguese treaty designed to limit the ravages of the slave trade, defined Portuguese possessions on the east coast of Africa as embracing the territory between Cape Delgado and the Bay of Lorenço Marques. The right to Delagoa Bay or Lorenço Marques was based partly on discoveries and partly on the right of conquest in the campaign of 1569. To resolve the impasse on the rights, the two powers presented a historical resume and argument on behalf of their claims to the President of the French Republic. Further, Bixler maintains that it was based on these claims that a decision was announced on 28 July 1875, by which decision the territory in dispute was judged to belong to Portugal because of the rights of discovery, exercise of the rights of sovereignty, exclusive

control of commercial transportation, and the defence against foreign nations. That award and the interest that it aroused seems to have served to awaken some Portuguese colonialists to the potential value of that great harbour and estuary. Due to its strategic potential as the natural port outlet for the Transvaal—where vast gold deposits were discovered in 1886—some Portuguese wisely asserted that the harbour would revolutionise Mozambique’s economy and would be ‘the centre of commerce for all of East Africa’ (Wheeler 1968b: 170). Increasing pressure also came from the Portuguese colonial elite to develop, safeguard, and control southern Mozambique, in view of the Shangani power reaching within forty miles of the coveted harbour (Bixler 1934: 425-440; Isaacman 1976: 13).

Portuguese activity in southern Mozambique quickened somewhat after the arrival of a public-works expedition in 1877 from Portugal for the development of the harbour town and particularly after the beginning of railroad construction of the Lourenço Marques-Transvaal line in 1886. The first area over which Ngungunhane and the Portuguese came into conflict was Manica and the hinterland of Sofala. In 1884, the Portuguese administration created on paper “the District of Manica”, despite having refused to grant concessions in 1881. Muzila considered the area his tributary holding. The principal reason for the Portuguese interest in Manica was the discovery of gold deposits in the area. The Portuguese planned to colonise the region and to exploit the minerals which they hoped would amount to a great deal (Wheeler 1968b: 177).

The Portuguese authorities next decided to send José Caseleiro d’Alegria Rodrigues as an envoy to Ngungunhane. Rodrigues persuaded Ngungunhane to send two *indunas* to Lisbon to sign an “Act of Vassalage” on 12 October 1885. In this document, it was stated that Ngungunhane willingly submitted to several conditions. The conditions included: (1) obeying laws and orders from the governor-general of Mozambique; (2) promising not to allow the rule of any other nation “in his territory”; (3) permitting a Portuguese agent (resident-chief) to live near him and to advise him on how to rule his people; (4) flying the Portuguese flag in his kraals; (5) allowing all Portuguese subjects to travel freely in his lands; (6) permitting the mining of minerals only by individuals who have Portuguese concessions and; (7) allowing the establishment of missions and schools (Wheeler 1968b: 177). In return, Ngungunhane was to have complete jurisdiction in Gazaland, as well as the right to govern and collect taxes. Article 2 of that treaty stipulated that Portugal could not use armed force in Gazaland without Ngungunhane’s consent. Warhurst (1962: 79), however, wrote that Ngungunhane later asserted that the two purported representatives were worthless individuals, and not his representatives. He therefore refused to accept that he had ever made any such arrangement with Portugal. Wheeler (1968b) wrote that Ngungunhane had replied at

the mention of this treaty that the agreement was useless and only a Portuguese ploy to obtain his lands. Ngungunhane was quoted saying the 'paper [treaty] is good only for fishing for lands' (Warhurst 1962: 79).

Yet, from the beginning of 1886, José d'Almeida, the Portuguese official and later agent of the Mozambique Company, acted as *residente* at Ngungunhane's kraal. This was a demonstration of Portuguese power growing at the expense of the Gazas. D'Almeida continued to press for a concession to exploit Manicaland for minerals. Ngungunhane had been alarmed at how Portuguese influence had grown in the Inhambane district by means of treaty-making and promises. Fearing that the Portuguese would establish their rule in the interior of Gaza if allowed concessions in Manica, he refused to grant concessions.

Increasing Portuguese activity spurred the Gazas on to look elsewhere, particularly to Britain as a potential ally. When in 1887 Ngungunhane sent envoys to Natal with which he expressed the wish to be guided by British government, he was frustrated by the British response. In his response, the British Governor of Natal mentioned that he had heard that Umdungazwe (as Ngungunhane was also called) was now paying tribute to the Portuguese and that in fact a Portuguese Representative (referring to d'Almeida) was resident among Ngungunhane's people (Warhurst 1962: 82). This response was not necessarily new. Already in 1870, Muzila had sent emissaries to the Natal government asking for trade, a British visitor to Gaza, and some kind of protection. The British did send a visitor to St. Vincent Erskine, however, the British official position even at the time, was that the Gaza region was Portuguese territory (Wheeler 1968b: 181).

Meanwhile, as early as 1887 Ngungunhane had also begun to cast his attention toward the south where his vassals, the Tonga and the Choqe, were rebelling against him. This was one area of European interior penetration even before 1880. The Choqe tribe had become allies of the Portuguese thanks to the influence of one João Loforte, a former trader of French descent and the Portuguese laid the foundation for later interior expansion. Wheeler noted that by 1884 over twenty chiefs in this region were paying some form of tribute to the Portuguese in return for protection against him (Ngungunhane) and his Shangana. Hence, Ngungunhane found himself under pressure from two fronts: from the war party in Gazaland to reconquer the area and from the Portuguese officials to stop raids against tribes which were now considered Portuguese vassals (Warhurst 1962: 82).

In 1888/9, Ngungunhane and his advisors reached a vital decision when they made a major move by transferring his capital from the far interior on the edge of the Zimbabwean plateau to a spot in the Limpopo valley. This move would profoundly affect the future of the Gaza nation.

The new capital also called Manhlagazi (Manjacaze) and named after the old capital, was approximately forty kilometres north of the Limpopo River (Warhurst 1962: 83; Wheeler 1968a: 588).

The two main sources consulted are not in agreement on the reasons behind this move. Warhurst wrote that it was because of the growing power of one Manuel António de Sousa in Manica, while Wheeler, on the other hand, maintained that Ngungunhane was consumed by a determination to settle an old score with the Chope tribe and to assert his sovereignty over other rebellious tribes in southern Gaza (Newitt 1973: 76). The migration of the Shangana in 1889 had the effect of dislocating groups in southern Mozambique, and moving Ngungunhane closer to Portuguese coastal settlements. During the first battle at Baul Island, some Chope refugees including Chief Speranhana, escaped to the north into the Inhambane district where he came under the protection of Portuguese authorities (Wheeler 1968a: 93).

To complicate matters, Dr Aurel Schulz, ostensibly another concession-seeker, arrived from Natal in 1890. Schulz had been sent by Cecil John Rhodes' company—the British South Africa Company—to secure a treaty with Ngungunhane. Rhodes had taken note that the chief lay claim to the coastline between the mouth of the Zambesi River and Delagoa Bay, except for Inhambane. This proved an opportune moment for Rhodes to secure an approach to the sea from Mashonaland, which was shortly to be opened by the Pioneer Column. Schulz persuaded Ngungunhane of the necessity for a treaty. Recognising an opportunity with a desired ally (Schulz had claimed to also represent the British government), Ngungunhane drove a hard bargain for the concession and insisted on 1 000 rifles, 20 000 rounds of ammunition and an annual subsidy of £500. Ngungunhane only promised to ratify the agreement in writing if, and when, the goods were delivered (Warhurst 1962: 83).

Meanwhile, the Portuguese were taking positive measures to ensure the loyalty of Ngungunhane in the face of British action. In December 1890, Almeida arrived at Manhlagazi with the greatest expedition Ngungunhane had yet seen. On 29 December a great indaba was held at Violente (Zefunha) at which Almeida made every effort to get the traditional leader to acknowledge his loyalty to Portugal. According to Portuguese reports of the meeting, Almeida was successful. The reports stated that Ngungunhane had renewed the subjection to Portugal which his grandfather Soshangane (also called Manicusse), his father Muzila (also known as Umzila), and he himself had pledged. He admitted having sent emissaries to the Natal government, however, denied that he had compromised his loyalty to Portugal. He had simply wanted support in an inter-tribal war. Warhurst noted that British reports of the meeting were quite different. It was claimed that

Ngungunhane had vehemently denied vassalage to Portugal. The most plausible explanation was that the chief's leanings towards Britain as an ally had received a severe set-back when confronted by Almeida's *tour de force* (Newitt 1973: 61).

On 22 February 1891 a British hundred-ton steamer, the *Countess of Carnarvon*, was caught by the Portuguese at the mouth of Limpopo offloading the goods for Ngungunhane towards the concession still to be ratified in writing. The seizure of the steamer led to a first-class diplomatic row and brought the whole question of Gazaland before the Foreign Ministers of Portugal and Britain. The Schulz concession had been invalidated by the signing of the Anglo-Portuguese treaty of 11 June 1891 which partitioned the kingdom of Gaza between Britain and Portugal. This was a confirmation of another August 1890 convention between the two nations. In August 1890, Britain and Portugal struggled to define their respective boundaries in East Africa by means of a Convention. Negotiations progressed rapidly and on 20 August the Convention was signed between Lord Salisbury, British Foreign Secretary, and Senhor Freitas, Portuguese Minister in London; all that was now required to make things final was ratification by both governments. In terms of the two, northern Gazaland, in effect, became British territory, however, the greater part of Ngungunhane's kingdom in the south was officially recognised as Portuguese territory. At least, in the realm of international diplomacy, Ngungunhane's fate seemed sealed by mid-1891 (Barnes 1975; Wheeler 1968b: 181).

86

To resolve the impasse, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Salisbury, who was not indifferent to those who felt that it was Britain's moral duty to protect Ngungunhane, however, whose attitude towards the Ngungunhane affair was always consistent, implicitly explained why Britain had always upheld Portuguese claims throughout. Lord Salisbury, whose speech made to the House of Lords on 11 June 1891 seemed to reflect on plain dictates of international Law, had said that:

By a Treaty signed on behalf of this country in 1817, which was confirmed in fuller terms by a Treaty signed in 1847, the whole of this littoral from the Zambesi to Delagoa Bay which Ngungunhane claims, and which some persons would like to claim through him, was recognized by this country as belonging to the King of Portugal (Warhurst 1962: 99).

After these pronouncements, Shangana hostility toward the Portuguese and toward concession seekers in general increased after December 1893. After the Salisbury's speech, Rhodes accordingly

advised the chief to send two *indunas*, namely Huluhulu and Umfeti, to Britain to put forward their case in person. He must have expected that their appearance would tip the balance in favour of British annexation to “save” the Gaza from Portugal. The two *indunas* were well received in England. Their visit unfortunately did not alter the position at all. Queen Victoria told them that a communication would be made to Ngungunhane, which was done after their return. It was to the effect that much of his (Ngungunhane’s) territory was now Portuguese by virtue treaty and he could, therefore, not be protected by Her Majesty (Warhurst 1962: 104-105).

Meanwhile, continuing battles with the Choipe exacerbated the enmity between the Gaza chief and the Portuguese. In June 1894, Ngungunhane lodged a formal, written protest with the British South Africa Company (BSAC) using the services of Swiss missionaries. This, he did based on the verbally agreed concession treaty of 4 October 1890 with BSAC representative Dr Schulz, who also claimed to represent British government; although, he in fact had no authorisation from that government. The concession was a ‘Treaty of Alliance between the said nation and the government of Her Britannic Majesty, Queen Victoria’ and went as follows:

The occupation of lands for farming purposes, by white people within my boundaries, is an unwarranted proceeding as no grant whatever has been given by me to white people to farm, or otherwise to occupy land for agricultural purposes ... [and I protest] against settlement in the Umsaapa [Musapa] district of my country, a district it was understood should be exempt from interference by white people, as I told Dr Aurel Schulz and the Felses in 1890, 1891, when they were with me on behalf of the English people ... [I have given to Mr Dennis Doyle] no grants whatever concerning rights in my country (Wheeler 1968a: 595).

87

As Shangana grievances and fears mounted, so did Portuguese impatience with Ngungunhane. Skirmishes in Matabeleland aggravated the situation. The Matabeleland War of 1893 spread waves of confusion into Gaza, and drove African refugees in several directions from Rhodesia (now known as Zimbabwe). Portuguese authorities observed that several Ndebele fled from Rhodesia and settled in the lower Baleen area following an arrangement with Ngungunhane. The Portuguese acted swiftly to hold up to Ngungunhane the example of the defeat of his neighbours. In March 1894, an official told the Portuguese resident at the royal kraal in Gaza to inform Ngungunhane that ‘good words’ were no longer sufficient; they wanted him to keep his word referring to an alleged concession by Ngungunhane made at a great *indaba* held at Violente on 29 December

1890 at which he agreed to being a Portuguese vassal, which he later denied (Warhurst 1962: 84).

As events approached a final confrontation between the two conflicting forces, conditions in adjacent territories aggravated the situation. Trouble had been brewing over a decade in the Lourenço Marques district as Ronga chiefs struggled for supremacy. In 1894 a war began in this district. Ngungunhane was initially careful not to get involved, however, would eventually be drawn in. Warfare broke out in August 1894, as Ronga chiefs involved in a succession dispute resisted arrest by Portuguese African troops at Angoane. Within weeks, the peoples of Chiefs Mahazul and Matibejana of Zixaxa attacked Lourenço Marques. The Portuguese considered the conflict 'a matter of life or death' for their control of Mozambique, and they dropped the cautious, peaceful policy of 1891-94 (Warhurst 1962: 84).

The peaceful policy had been founded mainly on a survey of respective strengths. In a report of December 1890, Almeida had advised that it would be very difficult to defeat Ngungunhane, and that it would be foolhardy even to try it for fear of a reverse effect and the consequent possibility that Britain might take advantage of the Portuguese weakness and seize what was now the province of Mozambique or an important part of it. At the time, the Portuguese obtained international recognition of much of what they considered 'the province of Mozambique', their power, prestige, and resources seemed incapable of supporting their sovereignty (Wheeler 1968b: 187).

The attack by Chiefs Mahazul and Matibejana's people on Lourenço Marques caused the Portuguese to send in António Enes as Royal Commissioner to the Gaza area in January 1895. Enes grimly set about building Portuguese strength to a force of over 2 000 troops. At the battle of Marracuene on 2 February 1895, the Portuguese won a victory over the Ronga chiefs by means of machine-guns and repeating rifles. Disturbed over the arrest, imprisonment, and subsequent exile to Angola of some chiefs in southern Mozambique, Ngungunhane requested that their families be protected in his kraal. Other chiefs subsequently fled into his territory for protection in early 1895. Ngungunhane gave them protection as well. Negotiations at the eleventh-hour proved inadequate as Enes refused to meet a delegation of Shangana *indunas* sent by Ngungunhane to confer with him. Enes's reasons for his refusal were that by harbouring the Ronga rebel chiefs in Gaza, Ngungunhane had been a disloyal Portuguese vassal. A meeting brokered by two Swiss missionaries, Junod and Liengme (acting as Ngungunhane's agents), with Enes also failed to bear fruit. The Portuguese requirement that Ngungunhane surrender the refugees under his protection was regarded by the Swiss missionaries as an immoral and un-Christian demand. They insisted that Ngungunhane could not break his promise to those chiefs that he would protect them. Enes,

on the other hand, was adamant and the meeting was fruitless (Wheeler 1968a: 597-598). Enes now assumed a tougher stance, and on 14 July he issued his 'Conditions with which the submission of chief Ngungunhane will be accepted' (Wheeler 1968: 597-598). The *sine qua non* condition, one which the chief never fulfilled completely, was the surrender of Ronga Chiefs Mahazul and Matibejana, to be duly punished. In the other remaining conditions, the Portuguese authorities demanded: an annual tribute of £10 000; Ngungunhane's recognition of Portugal's right to establish military posts and garrison troops in Gaza; an end to war between the chief and vassal chiefs; the placing of African armed forces at the disposal of Portugal; and the last condition, that if Ngungunhane failed to comply, 'he will lose the right to rule the lands of Gaza, thus occasioning chiefs of those lands to meet and choose his successor' (Wheeler 1968a: 597-598).

Acceptance of these conditions would have meant the loss to Ngungunhane of that 'real and practical independence' (Wheeler 1968a: 598) which Enes in 1893, had acknowledged as his major objective. Ngungunhane received the document on 8 August, however, refused to hand over his subject chiefs; he still claimed, nevertheless, that he wanted peace (Wheeler 1968a: 598). A week later, Ngungunhane stated his own terms: Portuguese acceptance of *saguete* (gift of tribute) from his people, in return for which the chief would surrender several important *indunas* to Enes, however, not Mahazul and Matibejana. He also claimed that he was willing to pay £1 000 in gold as tribute.

89

Ngungunhane refused to limit his negotiating position despite it being evident to his Portuguese opponents that he was committed to an eventual *détente* with Portugal, if not outright defeat. Again, to bring Britain into the picture, Ngungunhane sent envoys with ivory tusks as gifts, via Pretoria to Natal and Cape Town to obtain a promise of protection or alliance, however, it was in vain. Until this last attempt had failed, Ngungunhane harboured hopes that he could enlist British aid at least to get protection against the military forces now camping on his frontiers (Wheeler 1968a: 598).

Still refusing to surrender the rebel chiefs, on 19 August Ngungunhane stated that he would pay tributes demanded in the "conditions" as well as accept the establishment of forts in Gaza. By 25 August, Enes believed that peace negotiations were concluded. However, desultory negotiations continued into September and later. Ngungunhane now complained to D'Almeida that Portugal had broken the rules by invading Cossine territory, which he considered to be part of Gaza. Almeida himself complained to Enes that his position as envoy had been compromised by this demonstration of Portuguese aggression, and that peace was now impossible. Almeida understood that it was illegal to use an army in any part of Gaza, in line with Article 2 of the

1891 charter of the Mozambique Company as well as Article 2 of the 1885 Act of Vassalage of Ngungunhane, both of which recognised that in Gaza, the chief had complete jurisdiction as well as the right to govern and to collect taxes (Wheeler 1968b: 190). D'Almeida left Ngungunhane's kraal in mid-September, after the Portuguese defeated several of Ngungunhane's regiments at Magul. Ngungunhane now summoned a war party and pressed for an all-out attack on the approaching Portuguese force. He, however, still held out for a negotiated peace settlement, and sent envoys to Enes to request for peace on 20 September, with no definite reply. Ngungunhane's war party prevailed by early November 1895. On 7 November at Lake Coolela, using effective small-arms fire, the Portuguese crushed some eight Shangana regiments. Ngungunhane fled to Chaimite, a village north of the Limpopo River. Chaimite was a sacred village for Ngungunhane as it was the resting place of his grandfather Soshangane. On 28 December 1895, after learning of the chief's location from informers, Mousinho de Albuquerque, now military governor of Gaza, captured Ngungunhane at Chaimite (Wheeler 1968a: 599). Ngungunhane was exiled to Portugal where he died in 1906.

There is sufficient evidence to confirm that throughout his whole life, Ngungunhane's reign was restricted and confined to the Gaza area in Mozambique. Preller confirmed Ngungunhane's location in Mozambique; when in reference to the movement of the Sakana (Chakana or Shangaans) he wrote that:

Nadat die grens tussen Mozambiek en Transvaal later gereël was, het Sakana se opvolgers na die Portugese gebied getrek, om nader te wees aan hul hoof-kaptein, Gungunyana...

[After the boundary between Mozambique and Transvaal had been determined, Sakana's followers moved into the Portuguese territory to be near their paramount chief, Ngungunhane..."] (Preller 1938: 349)

This then calls to question the decision by the Limpopo provincial government to honour him with a statue at Giyani in the Mopani District. As will be demonstrated in Chapter Five, the only plausible explanation is that in the absence of any prominent leader of the Tsonga/Shangaan speaking groups of the province, Ngungunhane was probably the closest the group could identify with. Hence, Ngungunhane's monument in Giyani was meant to appease the Tsonga/Shangaan speaking groups of the Limpopo province.

3.2.6 Kgoši Malebogo

The Boers of the ZAR attacked the Bahananwa under Kgoši Malebogo in June 1894, attempting to force the community out of their stronghold in the Blouberg Mountains onto the plain adjacent to the Mogalakwena River. The main purpose of the conquest was to extend stronger Boer control over the people so that they could be compelled to contribute to the state income by paying tax and providing labour for farms as well as the gold mines of the Witwatersrand. The campaign against the Bahananwa was part of a series of expeditions against African communities in the Soutpansberg district still regarding themselves as independent political entities (Bergh 1999: 201-213; Kriel 2000: 57-70, 2003: 78; South African National Archives TAB, SS 4700, R2000 n.d.).

The Bahananwa originated from the Bahurutse branch of the Batswana nation. They are a break away section whose roots are in present day Botswana. Before the break away, they were the Malete people of the Bahurutse. Oral history has it that this break away was caused by the fact that Kgoši Malete had no sons by his senior wife to succeed him to the throne. This wife only had one child, Mmatsela, a girl. Without brothers, Mmatsela was the natural heir to succeed her father. However, there were people who strongly opposed the fact that they could be ruled by a woman. As a result, there were plots to kill Mmatsela, especially by Kgoši Malete's one son by a junior wife (Makhura 1993; Setumu 2005a: 4). To avert bloodshed, Kgoši Malete advised his daughter Mmatsela to flee. Mmatsela took her followers and headed to the east, crossed the Limpopo River, and settled in today's Blouberg area. Malete had tipped his daughter, to swiftly cross the Limpopo River before they could even rest, making them Bagananwa (rebels, resisters, or dissidents) (Makhura 1993; Setumu 2005a).

Setumu concedes that due to lack of records, especially written records, much of the history of the Bahananwa in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth century is scant. Much light on this history was shed by the arrival of the missionaries—who kept written records—in the second half of the nineteenth century. The missionaries arrived in the Bahananwa country during the reign of Kgoši Matsiokwane. The first missionary to arrive was Reverend Beyer in 1868. Beyer was warmly welcomed by the Bahananwa and was even given a piece of land to establish himself so that he could be able to perform his duties of spreading the Holy Gospel among the Bahananwa (Setumu 2005a: 8).

Setumu noted that reception of the missionaries by Kgoši Matsiokwane consisted of more than just embracing the Holy Gospel. The Bahananwa viewed the White missionaries as important

diplomatic agents in the increasingly changing environment in which colonial forces were slowly encroaching on their area. Just like most black communities, the Bahananwa found the missionaries to be useful sources of information on broad world view issues, such as the presence of whites, and other related matters which the missionaries knew about, as they had travelled extensively. The missionaries also acted as advisers to black communities in the face of the approaching aggressive colonialists. In other words, in addition to the missionaries' role of preaching the Word of God, they inevitably became involved in the diplomatic and political matters of affected communities (Setumu 2005a: 8).

92 Like most commentators, Setumu also noted that, even if the missionaries were useful to the African communities and their leaders, their roles soon caused trouble among these communities. In their quest to spread Christianity, the missionaries found some obstacles along the way. They were very intolerant of some of the traditional customs of the Africans which they wanted to eliminate so that these communities could be "saved" and "shown the light". They found some of the African customs as "evil", "backwards", and "barbaric". For instance, they worked tirelessly to discourage polygamy, *magadi* (bride price), *koma* (initiation), and such related African customs. The attacks on the Africans' way of life by the missionaries created divisions and confusion within communities. Those people who were converted began to look down upon those who resisted conversion. Tensions among communities due to the missionaries' presence varied. In most instances, missionaries used the political intervention of the colonialists to overthrow the African tribal system which disabled them to achieve their goal of converting Africans to Christianity (Setumu 2005a: 8).

It is important to note that similar encounters with the missionaries and other white groups were experienced by the other chiefs who came before Malebogo. Both Magoši Sekwati and Sekhukhune had embraced the missionaries before they fell out with them; the relationship between both Magoši Mokopane and Mankopane with the whites in the 1850s was also reported to have been very welcoming, cordial, and friendly before the eventual fallout. The Bahananwa themselves certainly had friendly interaction with both the Buys family, descendants of Coenraad de Buys, and with the pioneer Voortrekker Louis Tregardt, since he referred to such connections in his diary in 1836 (Tregardt 2013: 42-44).

The missionaries' divisive impact was also felt by the Bahananwa. As already indicated, the missionaries created tension within tribal politics and in the Blouberg Mountains, the Bahananwa of Kgoši Matsiokwane were divided as a result. This tension, partly due to power struggles and partly because of Christian/non-Christian factors, resulted in Kgoši Matsiokwane expelling

the missionary, Stech, who had succeeded Beyer in 1874. Matsiokwane expelled Stech from his country because in addition to causing divisions, he also regarded the piece of land he was allocated as his own private property and began prospecting for minerals on that piece of land. The Bahananwa (and other African neighbouring communities) did not know of such a thing as private land ownership and they were disgusted by Stech's actions. Stech was also accused by the officials of the ZAR of trading firearms to the Bahananwa (Majeke 1952: 43).

As shown in the context of other polities above (Setumu 2005b: 5), tension within the Bahananwa polity reached a climax when Kgoši Matsiokwane was assassinated in 1879 and a succession struggle erupted. The missionaries' involvement, which complicated the power struggle, partly accounted for this tragic event. The main contestants for power after Matsiokwane's death became Ramatho (Kibi) and Kgaluši (Mašilo/Seketa/Ratšhatšha). There were allegations that it was the section of Kibi, with the help of the Christians, which orchestrated the assassination of Matsiokwane, in the hope of seizing political power. However, their hopes were dashed when Ratšhatšha succeeded to take the throne. As a result, Kibi fled with his followers and settled on the north-eastern side of the Blouberg Mountains (Setumu 2005a: 10).

After the turmoil which even split the Bahananwa chiefdom into two, Ratšhatšha slowly rebuilt the remaining larger portion of the chiefdom on the south-western side of the mountain. He also became weary of the missionaries after learning of the damage they had caused. However, as much as he was suspicious of the missionaries, he still needed them as diplomatic agents in the rapidly changing world. After the unceremonious departure of Stech, Blouberg remained without a missionary for a while. Mission activities were managed from Makgabeng mission station which had been established in 1870 by Trumpelmann. However, eventually in 1892, Christoph Sonntag arrived in Blouberg to resume missionary activities among the Bahananwa. As much as Sonntag was cautious in dealing with the Bahananwa, especially the chieftaincy, because of his predecessor's experiences, Kgoši Ratšhatšha was also cautious of the new missionary. Ratšhatšha even rejected gifts from Sonntag stating that, should he accept them, the missionary would later claim that he had bought land with those gifts. This was a reference to Stech who claimed private ownership of the land he was given by Matsiokwane (Setumu 2005a: 10-11).

Sonntag arrived in Blouberg when tension was mounting between the Boers of the ZAR and the Bahananwa in 1892. The Boers had divided the ZAR into districts or divisions for administrative purposes. The Bahananwa resided in the Zoutpansberg district of the ZAR. When Sonntag arrived in Blouberg in 1892, Barend Vorster was the Commissioner for Native Affairs in that district. Paul Kruger was the President of the ZAR, while Piet Joubert was Commandant-General of the ZAR

armed forces. Native Commissioner Vorster by that time had already made several attempts to bring the Bahananwa under the ZAR authority. Up until then, his efforts had been in vain (Sonntag 1983: xiii-xvii).

Makhura believes that ever since their early contact, the economies of both African and Trekker societies were mainly based on pastoralism, agriculture, hunting, and trade. Therefore, the struggle to control resources, such as land, water, grazing, hunting grounds, and labour inevitably led to competition and conflicts (Makhura 1993: 130). The struggles over land ownership were further exacerbated by a land speculation drive in the area in the early 1890s. Linked to the land pressures were attempts by the ZAR government since 1882, to implement the 1878 British Commissioners' plans in the region. In 1878, a "Native" Commission constituted of, among others, Commissioners Dahl and Barlow, paid the Blouberg capital an official visit. The purpose of the visit was to inform the Bahananwa that they were British subjects and that they would, consequently, be given a location and be expected to pay taxes to the new government. The Commissioners' report clearly manifested the unfolding of British policy in the region (Makhura 1993: 131). However, even before implementation, British attention in the Bahananwa was distracted by their involvement in the military campaign against BaPedi of Sekhukhune in 1879. From 1880 to 1881, the British were further drawn into a battle with the Boers which eventually cost them the colony.

94

The Transvaal was restored to the Boers in 1881. No serious restructuring of the former British system took place, for example, Dahl retained his post as a Commissioner in Rhenosterpoort ward (Pietersburg). The Law of 1880 gave the Administrator of the "Transvaal province" the authority as 'a Supreme or Paramount Chief over all the native chiefs and natives of this Province' (Makhura 1993: 138). The Department of Native Affairs with its Secretary and his duties had been co-ordinated with local offices, like those of the *landdrosts* and field cornets. The law clearly spelled out the system of tax collection, pass regulations, and local administration of justice. With the new Boer state strengthened by the inheritance of this superior administrative scaffold the British had left in 1881, the ZAR government was simply implementing the British Commissioners' plans of 1878. One of the plans was the allocation of a location for the Bahananwa. The Native Commissioner Barend Vorster accompanied by some African policemen and a few local burghers visited Kgaluši in May 1888 instructing him to move to the new location from his own land. Kgaluši rejected diplomatically what he considered an eviction order. Nothing further happened until 1891 when the idea of a location for the Bahananwa was mooted again in the ZAR *Volksraad* (Makhura 1993: 143).

Until 1894, the Bahananwa refused to move from their original areas on the mountain

stronghold to a (40 000 morgen) 34 268 hectares strip location along the western portion of Mogalakwena River for various reasons. Amongst others, the specified area was considered very small in size; the area had been used for many years as pasture land for Bahananwa livestock and was therefore, not fit for habitation; the area was partly a settlement for the Babirwa subjects, many of whom were herders of the Bahananwa (especially royal) livestock; most importantly, the Bahananwa understood that such a removal not only meant the uprooting of their settlements, but also the sacrificing of their strategic mountain stronghold and lastly, it would seem that the location was also rightly understood as a colonial move to satisfy the local Boer farmers in terms of more land, labour, and easy control of the local people (Makhura 1993: 145).

Neither Malebogo or the Bahananwa were prepared to submit under the ZAR nor to leave their mountain stronghold unless the matter was amicably negotiated. The Boers of the ZAR expected the Bahananwa—just like all the African communities within what they viewed as their jurisdiction—to be counted in a census, pay taxes, and recognise their authority. Another reason why the Bahananwa rejected the Boer authority was that they had much more respect for the British than the Boers, and that they preferred the British authority to that of the Boers'. However, the reality was that the Boers had regained power from the British in 1881 and regarded themselves as masters (Setumu 2005a: 13; Sonntag 1983: xv-xvi).

With the Bahananwa polity still independent and their communal possession of land still entrenched, they could offer firm resistance to mounting pressures over land. Kgoši Ratšhatšha and the Bahananwa's refusal to meet the demands of the Boers led to the mobilisation on both sides which set the stage for a military confrontation to settle the struggle over land.

Parallel with the struggle over land, were intensified pressures on labour. Between the 1880s and 1890s, the demands for labour increased somewhat on the Rand following the formation of the Chamber of Mines by the mining magnates in 1887 and the establishment of the "tout" system for labour recruitment around 1889. It appears that in 1887, in response to a growing demand for more labour, the ZAR passed the Squatters Law (Act 11 of 1887) with the aim of redistributing African families and thereby meeting labour needs of the local Boer settlers by limiting African squatters to five families per Boer farm. Generally, the Bahananwa refused to be redistributed along similar lines in almost similar ways as they resisted the location issue. Makhura noted that the Squatters Law was in fact inextricably linked to the issue of taxes, for both (the Squatters Law and taxation) had similar objectives of coercing labour for European employers. The Bahananwa continued to oppose labour procuring laws and taxation (Makhura 1993: 152).

The ZAR was deemed powerless when in 1891 the Bahananwa refused to be counted because

they still considered themselves to be independent. The Superintendent for Native Affairs sent circulars calling on all the Commissioners to conduct a census in African occupied territories. The main reason behind the census was to enable the state to estimate the total amount of taxes to be collected. Vorster's subsequent delegation to the Bahananwa capital late in 1891 failed when they were dismissed with a defiant response from Kgaluši after a prolonged ceremonial procedure of communication when the paramount declared 'I am *baas* (boss) upon this mountain and shall not allow census to be taken' (Makhura 1993: 153-154).

When Sonntag arrived in Blouberg, he found himself more involved in the Bahananwa-Boer conflict than his mandate of preaching the Holy Gospel (Setumu 2005a: 13; Sonntag 1983: xiii). However, in his handling of the conflict, Sonntag mainly requested the Bahananwa to submit under the Boers, while he failed to restrain or at least ask the Boers to refrain from attacking the Bahananwa. Sonntag's siding with the Boers was evidenced by numerous incidents. His maxim of 1892 is recalled to explain his approach adopted towards the Bahananwa: 'We [the missionaries, unlike the Boers] must simply fight [against the indigenous people] with other weapons: we must use the velvet glove...' (Sonntag 1983: 2). Sonntag himself documented his assistance of Boers with valuable information about Bahananwa and their area which helped the former to finally defeat the Bahananwa (Setumu 2005a: 13). Makhura believes that Sonntag's objective of using an iron hand in a velvet glove against the people among whom he worked, clearly showed that he identified himself to a large extent with European interests, while he appeared to be friendly to the Bahananwa (Makhura 1993: 134). Of course, he later conceded when he admitted in his account that '... the old heathen independence, chieftainship and everything that was connected with it ... must be superseded by something else [probably, colonial rule] if the Word of God was to be successfully preached...' (Sonntag 1983: 28).

Although all the odds were stacked against him, Malebogo put up a brave fight against the Boers from June 1894. His people had gathered a substantial number of sophisticated firearms which they used effectively during the war. Rev. Sonntag, quoted by Makhura, wrote that 'There was not a member of his [Kgaluši's] tribe who was not aware that his thoughts and actions were concentrated on the desire to arm himself and his people well enough to be able to withstand all enemies, especially the Boers.' (Sonntag, as cited by Makhura 1993: 157). Indeed, by this time the Bahananwa had developed their own munition plant for the manufacturing of gun powder, later referred to by Schiel as '*Kaffernpulver*' (Makhura 1993: 157; Sonntag 1983: 32-34). Boer commandos came mainly from the Soutpansberg, Waterberg, Lydenburg, Middelburg, Pretoria, Rustenburg, and Zeerust (Marico) districts. What occurred was the mobilisation of one of the largest combined

forces yet seen in the history of the ZAR. They had one mission—to attack and subjugate the Bahananwa of Kgoši Malebogo. These large numbers of commandos were also added to by black warriors from allied Chiefs Kibi, Mapene, Matlala, and the Matebele (Makhura 1993: 162; Sonntag 1983: 102-104).

The war comprised four main phases. The first phase, which is called the peripheral war phase by Makhura, began seriously from May to June 1894. This phase came in the wake of Commandant Piet Joubert's first ultimatum which had reached the Bahananwa on 25 April 1894. The ultimatum demanded, among other things, that: first, the Bahananwa should abide by the laws of state, that is, leave the mountain stronghold, allow the taking of a census and pay taxes. Second, Paramount Kgaluši had to appear before Vorster at Kalkbank to answer questions regarding the issues raised above within three days of receiving the ultimatum. Thirdly, failing to appear, the Bahananwa would have to suffer the indignity of bearing the cost of the results of resultant violence. The ultimatum was the last warning. Joubert is quoted saying:

“Indien u en u volk nie gehoor gee aan hierdie laaste waarskuwing nie, sal julle verantwoordelik gehou word vir alle koste en skades of wat die gevolge ook mag wees.”

[Should you and your people not give heed to this last warning, you will be held responsible for all the costs and damages incurred of whatever the results.] (Rae 1898: 53)

With numbers on the side of the ZAR forces mobilised from Marico, Rustenburg, Pretoria, Waterberg, Lydenburg, and Middelburg added to by African warriors from allied Chiefs Kibi, Mapene, Matlala, and some Matebele, it was inevitable that the Bahananwa were going to lose. However, it was not going to be easy. The Bahananwa were not submissive bystanders. The Boers were so frustrated by the bravery of the Bahananwa that they even used dynamite, which they hoped would destroy the Bahananwa among the rocks. They again tried petroleum which they burnt in the hope of smoking out the Bahananwa from their mountain strongholds (Makhura 1993: 162-163).

Despite all such unconventional methods of warfare, the Bahananwa still resisted. Sonntag condemned the use of dynamite and petroleum against the Bahananwa. After the Boers' failure to subdue the Bahananwa with their numbers, black allies, dynamite, and petroleum, they finally

decided to surround the water hole which supplied the Bahananwa with water. This marked the crucial stage of the war. Heavy gunfire was exchanged around the water hole. Some Boers also lost their lives as they tried to capture the water hole (Makhura 1993: 171).

Other highlights of the war included a scene in which the Matebele were ambushed by the Bahananwa and killed in large numbers. The Bahananwa blocked other entrances and opened one line so that their enemies could be forced to follow the open path with excitement only to plunge into a hail of bullets. Sonntag (1983: 75) wrote:

The Matebele warrior in the lead tried to pull away the thorn-branches barricading the entrance. Others were so impatient that they wanted to leap over the thorny obstruction. Then, waving their war-banner, which consisted of a huge bunch of pitch-black ostrich-feathers, and uttering their unearthly-sounding, blood curdling war-song and clamorous battle-cries, the Bahananwa [Bahananwa], with a terrible, irresistible suddenness broke forth and with tremendous force and impetus threw themselves upon the fast-moving enemy column. The leader of the Matebele, riddled with many bullets, crashed backwards stone-dead. All this was too much for the Matebele and overwhelmed them with such an overpowering fright, that like one man they turned tail and fled helter-skelter.

98

Another significant incident on the same date 20 June 1894 during the war was that the Boers were so determined to crush the Bahananwa that they carried their canon up the mountain in the hope of firing at the royal kraal. On their way up, they struggled to push the heavy machine in between the rocks and huge boulders. During that tiresome job of pushing the canon up, the Bahananwa attacked and fired heavily on them. The Boers left the canon and ran away (Sonntag 1983: 75).

After a bitter skirmish and loss of life, the Boers eventually took control of the water hole at the beginning of July 1894. This marked a turning point in the war. Thirst took a heavy toll on the Bahananwa. There is no life without water. Lack of water soon proved to be unbearable for the Bahananwa.

On the other hand, Sonntag continued to push Kgoši Malebogo to submit. Women and children began to surrender to the Boers at the water hole. The other thirsty Bahananwa also followed and large numbers flocked to the water hole where they quenched their thirst and surrendered. With his people surrendering in large numbers, Kgoši Malebogo had no option but to consider surrendering himself (Makhura 1993: 201; Sonntag 1983: 120).

The decision to surrender to the Boers was very difficult for Ratšhatšha. He thought of the number of Boers his warriors had killed, and he then feared that the Boers might execute him on sight. The available sources could not come up with an approximation of how many Boers fell in the war due to what Makhura calls 'cover-ups in Boer sources' (Cape Argus 20 June 1894; Rae 1898; Weidemann 1947). Sonntag tried very hard to allay Malebogo's fears, however, it persisted. Again, in his engagements with Sonntag, who was more of the Boers' messenger and spokesperson than anything else, Ratšhatšha appeared convinced to surrender, however, his councillors, especially Monyebodi, appeared to have been against surrendering, since he was unsure of the leader's safety. After bickering for a long time, Ratšhatšha sent messages to the Boers that he was prepared to surrender. It is also claimed that it was Kibi who helped the Boers in their plan to surround the water hole (Makhura 1993: 201; Sonntag 1983: 120).

Eventually, Malebogo surrendered. To show that he was reluctant to hand himself to the Boers, he is said to have attempted to commit suicide by throwing himself into an open fire. His face was badly burnt; however, he was rescued out of the fire. Kgoši Malebogo and those close to him surrendered on 31 July 1894 to the Waterberg commandos' camp of Commandant Malan. Kgoši Malebogo tried to show his peaceful intentions to Malan by offering him £100. Malan was so arrogant that he even ignored Kgoši Malebogo's gesture of shaking hands. Earlier on, Kgoši Malebogo had made a request to be given water to wash before meeting the Boers, however, that request was rejected. After handing himself to his enemies, he was subjected to humiliation by being tied with thongs like an animal. A make-shift shelter of branches was built for him (Sonntag 1983: 122).

The surrender of Kgoši Malebogo ended a short but bitter war. Ratšhatšha and his close associates were taken to Pretoria as prisoners. When the Boer commandos dispersed, they instructed that all the Bahananwa should settle on the flat plains and those who were still in the mountain strongholds, should come down to the designated location on the flat plains. They further requested their ally, Kibi, to cleanse the mountain strongholds, by killing Ratšhatšha's people who still occupied the mountains (Setumu 2005a: 23).

After the Boer commandos had left Blouberg, many people came down and most of them settled around the mission station. They joined Sonntag's converts who had not been involved in the war (Setumu 2005a: 23).

While the ZAR was sure that it was in control of the republic after they subjugated most of the black chiefdoms, it was again faced with yet another war in 1899. This time it was against their White counterparts, the British. The mineral wealth discovered in the republics—diamonds (1868)

and gold (1886)—tempted the British interest in the interior. Eventually, war broke out in 1899 and the Boers were on the receiving end. It was during this war—referred to mostly in literature as the Anglo-Boer War—that Kgoši Malebogo was released in 1900.

After his release, Kgoši Malebogo went back to Blouberg and found his son, Mabea, who was leading the Bahananwa, staying at Kwarung, on the southern foot of the Blouberg Mountain. He refused to stay in his son's household permanently. He later returned to his original royal capital on top of the mountain. Although he took Mabea with him up the mountain, Ratšhatšha was in charge. He continued to rule his people until his death in February 1939, at the age of ninety-five. After his death, Mabea's son, Seiphi, took over the reins of power.

3.3 The collective and the need for a memory

In responding to a question on why the Africans lost their Wars of Resistance, Kriel referred to the main reason put forward by many other scholars that the whites had better weapons in their possession than the Africans. Plausibly, this was probably the single most decisive factor in the white victory over the Africans during the Wars of Resistance in the Limpopo province. Another reason that was advanced in cases such as the Sekhukhune's war against the British and the Malebogo-Boer war, was that the indigenous communities were outnumbered by their opponents and their allies (Delius 1980; Kriel 2003: 88; Makhura 1993: 162-163; *Sechaba* 1982: 18; Smith 1969: 237-252).

Further, Kriel also attempts to answer the question whether the Wars of Resistance can be said to have been fought collectively or not. Kriel, in her discussion, noted that the African communities, who had been incorporated, for example, the Ndebele Empire of Mzilikazi after previous conflicts, as well as some neighbouring communities eager to settle old scores, gave the invading force (whites) convenient passage through their territories toward the crisis on the new periphery. For example, Kibi not only allowed the ZAR forces to attack Malebogo from the side of his (Kibi's) territory, but also offered human resource support to the attacking Republican forces. The same can be said about the Choape who supported the Portuguese against Ngungunhane; and the Swazis who fought on the side of both the ZAR and the British against Sekhukhune. The Swazis again helped Joubert by killing Makgoba. Furthermore, by cooperating against other resisting African chiefdoms, these communities were put to good use as carriers, road builders,

and even soldiers. The white campaigns against rebel African chiefdoms were also meant to serve as examples and a warning to other communities still hostile to white governments for those communities to take note of what would happen to them had they also decided to rebel. Kriel noted that these communities also did not join in the fighting against the white forces. While it is true that this most certainly made it a lot easier for the Boers as it did also for the British and the Portuguese to conquer, it perhaps also demonstrated that the African chiefdoms never fought their Wars of Resistance as a collective (Kriel 2003: 88).

Benjamin Talton (n.d) shares the same observation when he highlighted that rapid imperial expansion did not necessarily change relationships among African communities. Those in conflict with one another tended to remain in conflict, despite the impending threat from other powers. There was, moreover, no broadly accepted African identity to unite around during this period. The complexity of Africans' political relationships among themselves influenced the nature of their resistance to colonial rule. Much to the detriment of African societies, the enmity between them often fostered alliances between Africans and Europeans against the common threat by indigenous polities. As they resisted European invasions, they confronted both European and African soldiers. That is, they confronted a political hierarchy imposed by Europeans that included African proxies. The power was European, however, the face of it on the local level was often African (Talton n.d.). Thus, even the British made, in an ironic twist, extensive use of black soldiers against the Boers during especially the latter phases of the Anglo-Boer war of 1899-1902.

In an interview for a documentary on the war between Malebogo and the Boers, local expert on Blouberg, Phophi Raletjena also stated that the reason why 'African people were actually defeated was because they waged this struggle against the ZAR divided at different stages' (Setumu n.d.).

Despite these military losses and the subsequent subjugation of Limpopo's black African communities, the provincial government saw it prudent to honour the defeated leaders with statues to preserve their memories. The social memory of the military subjugation of (black) African communities reveals that the fact that the black Africans lost, was less important than the knowledge that they had offered courageous resistance. In all the cases (except for Makhado who died before he was defeated), the defeat on the battlefield was converted not into a memory of humiliation, but a landmark representing the pride and courage of a people and the defiance of their leaders. As the story of resistance, rather than defeat, nourished imagination in other African nations and provided the yarn for determining an identity which Kriel summarised, so was the imagination of the provincial leaders of Limpopo also nourished (Kriel 2003: 88).

The erection of public art in honour of these warrior traditional leaders as vehicles of their

remembrance, absolves the futility of the failure of their resistance against colonialism and dispossession by their white conquerors. Indeed, several strategies were employed to deal with the enemy. Some, like Makgoba, fought from the onset and resisted until the end; others, like Sekhukhune, Malebogo, Mokopane, and Ngungunhane fought and only surrendered when defeat was inevitable. Still others, like Makhado, tried to bargain the terms of cooperation. Had this select group of leaders surrendered peacefully before the white man, if remembered at all, they would most probably have been regarded as collaborators who had sold out their people's land to the invading white forces. Their resistance, although unsuccessful, provided a point of departure for a story of continued resistance that culminated in the liberation struggle and the resultant democracy in 1994 (Kriel 2003: 88). Kriel's thoughts are corroborated by Levinson when in reference to Hungary's Millennium Monument, the author indicated that the memorial ironically was dedicated to the soldiers of a war in which they had lost everything they had been fighting for. Like many other societies, the Hungarians proved themselves thoroughly capable of organising their public psyche around a "lost cause" (Levinson 1998: 8). Almost always, a monument is an attempt to interpret an event in which those who have erected it take pride. They are ways by which a specific culture names its heroes, those 'people who made us what we are in a prideful way' (Levinson 1998: 65).
