

Chapter Four

Sculpting the Warrior Traditional Leaders

4.1 Introduction

This chapter views the sculptors' designs for the various Warrior Traditional Leaders' Monuments within the full spectrum of Limpopo provincial government's approach. An investigative analysis of the sculptors' proposals offers insight into the Warrior Traditional Leaders' significance as historical figures and reveals a remarkable consistency in the interpretation of their characters. The designs also provide a rich resource with which to evaluate sculptural interpretations of Wars of Resistance as conceived almost a century after the wars were fought. The chapter also considers the Ubuntu Memorial Monument—a collaborative project of the NHC and the Limpopo provincial government erected in honour of the same select group of traditional leaders.

Viewing the sculptors' designs in context, further reveals that the Warrior Traditional Leaders' Monuments embodied an iconography that differed from others in its presentation of the results of violent warfare. Changes in the interpretation of the Wars of Resistance, as embodied in the Warrior Traditional Leaders' Monument reveal the existence of important connections between these sculptural expressions and the varied ways in which military leaders, politicians, and the South African public viewed the nation and its future. The meanings of Wars of Resistance thus, came to be more tied to shifting implications of the historical event than the event itself. The wars and the images of popular, yet previously marginalised warrior traditional leaders represented a rich and eminently usable past when put into the service of uniting the plural Limpopo community.

The plurality of the Limpopo province requires some qualification. The population of the province consists of several ethnic groups distinguished by culture, language, and race. Based at least on the 2001 census statistics, BaPedi/Northern Sotho speakers make up the largest number, being nearly 57 per cent. The Tsonga/Shangaan speakers comprise 23 per cent, while the Venda speakers make up 12 per cent. Afrikaans speakers make up 2.6 per cent while English-speaking whites are less than half a per cent. Compressed within the borders of the province are the four previous administrations which were created during the apartheid era: Lebowa; Gazankulu;

Republic of Venda; and Transvaal Administration (Provide Project 2005: 2).

In this chapter the many layered significance of the Warrior Traditional Leaders' Monuments in Limpopo province will be analysed. The objective is to gain a clear understanding of both the nature of public sculptures in South Africa during the first years of democracy and the culture that underwrote the endeavour. The chapter will therefore consider the following in the proper analysis of the sculptures: form; function; symbolism and location; provision of space; motivation; and inventive resources for continued engagement.

First, to understand the importance of the Warrior Traditional Leaders' Monuments, one must understand the high esteem and reverence with which black South Africans still hold the memories of these selected traditional leaders in the present time. They are especially significant as symbols of reconciliation with a difficult past. The expression of that esteem culminated in the decision to commemorate their role as pioneers of the liberation struggle by launching the costly public theme, "Wars of Resistance against Colonialism and Imperialism" in the Limpopo province. It is the costliest heritage project which the provincial government had thus far underwritten.

Plaster models submitted by sculptors competing for the opportunity to create the statues were no longer available, however, the erected statues themselves and their designers' descriptions were available to enable the author and researcher to re-construct the vision with the designs. These documents provide not only an artistic and philosophical context in which to view the designs that were chosen, but also a comprehensive picture of the ways in which some of the country's leading commemorative sculptors perceived the traditional leaders' characters and significance.

The Project Team issued their programme of competition in 2003 and asked prospective entrants to create designs that would represent the character and individuality of each selected traditional leader or kgoši. When the models were finally approved, there was virtual consensus about the proper expression of each traditional leader's persona by members of the Project Team and members of the kgoši's respective royal houses (Mulaudzi 2013).

The six selected warrior traditional leaders were all males. As explained above, only four statues were eventually erected due to the absence of a picture of Kgoši Mokopane as well as due to the unavailability of the Makgoba statue which was not yet installed at the time of collection of the data.

4.2 Designing the statues

Most visible about the designs of the Warrior Traditional Leaders' Monuments is the dominance of two types of composition: the statue of a traditional leader sitting (see statues of Makhado and Malebogo) and the statue of a traditional leader standing in a posture as if ready for war, with a weapon in the one hand (see the statues of Ngungunhane and Sekhukhune). The emergence of these forms of icons suggests the extent to which the responsible people in Limpopo, with the power to shape commemorative plans, reached an agreement about how to look back at the Wars of Resistance. This sort of pose (at least where the four are concerned) represents the idea of 'vigilance' (Brown 2004: 26).

"Vigilance" seems to have also been the "typical idea" represented by several Civil War monuments in the United States of America (USA). As products of independent decisions in that country, some Civil War monuments inevitably took a wide range of forms, however, more striking than that variety, is the dominance of one type of composition: the statues of a uniformed standing soldier, holding the barrel of a rifle that rests upright on the ground in front of him. Contemporaries often read these as depictions of soldier at "place rest" or "parade rest". However, when the 1861 Civil War commenced, the Seventh Regiment Memorial in Central Park, New York City—an early example of the same pose that had become standard—was said to be on Guard, prepared for immediate action and ready to take its place as a watchful *Sentinel* in front of the Picket line (Brown 2004: 26).

The designers of the Limpopo Warrior Traditional Leaders' Monuments seem to have taken a leaf out of the examples from the USA and replicated, if not copied the design and interpretation thereof, even if not officially acknowledged. While the warrior traditional leaders seem to be resting, they however, remain on guard, prepared for immediate action and ready to take their place as leaders of their warrior troops. This is represented with the arms in their hands (see all the photographs below with Malebogo still holding some bullets in his left hand).

The physical characteristics no less than the pose, expressed ideas about the warrior traditional leader—clearly appearing to represent a traditional African leader. The perception, particularly in view of the assortment of arms held, (assegai/spears in the case of Sekhukhune and Ngungunhane; knobkerrie in the case of Makhado) and traditional attire worn, is that the typical Warrior Traditional Leader / Kgoši's monument illustrated the patriotism, self-sacrifice, bravery,

and devotion which traditional leaders in the mould of Shaka, Moshweshwe, and Sekhukhune to name a few, have always displayed and therefore would, in the words of former President Thabo Mbeki, inspire viewers to follow their example.⁷

The traditional leader at rest was evidently an image that appealed to the Limpopo provincial government as sponsors of the monuments (Mulaudzi 2013). The convergence of these kinds of commemorative designs did not result from a lack of alternatives. The level of consensus is easy to exaggerate. Disagreement often took place as debates between the advocates of monuments and proponents of utilitarian memorials posed the most basic choices. Names of streets, towns, and cities and other geographic features were also being touted and changed at the time. Thus, Pietersburg changed to Polokwane, Potgietersrus was renamed Mokopane, Bochum changed to Senwabarwana, Nylstroom changed to Modimolle, as well as the highly contested Louis Trichardt renamed Makhado and later changed back to Louis Trichardt, just to mention a few examples (Thotse 2010: 176).

Arguing in support of name changes, the NHC noted that South Africa has suffered a long history of typologies of colonial conquest not only in a material sense, but also in the form of psychological plundering, and of the distortion and obliteration of the history and heritage of African people that often is inscribed on ancestral land and cultural landscapes. Volumes of historical accounts, ranging from popular travel writings to racial science (anthropometrics), would partially narrate the early European experiences of Africa and encounters with its peoples, where the European travellers and historians often depicted territorial places of African people as open, depopulated vast tracks of barren land, while in contradiction, describing Africans as noble savages occupying the territory. The NHC contends that colonialism and later apartheid shared a particular obsession with territorial acquisition and the obliteration of the indigenous African names of places occupied by indigenous African people. The deliberate intention here was to displace African people and render them landless without a sense of belonging except in the carefully constructed tribal reserves. Indeed, more than three centuries of colonial and apartheid domination resulted in the subjugation, denigration, and marginalisation of languages, cultures, customs, and traditions of the indigenous communities (Mancotywa 2010).

⁷ In his celebrated speech delivered on the adoption of the Constitution, former President Thabo Mbeki, paying homage to the heroes and heroines, the forebears of liberation struggle, said, 'I am the grandchild of the warrior men and women that Hintsa and Sekhukhune led, the patriots that Cetshwayo and Mphephu took to battle, the soldiers Moshoeshe and Ngungunyane taught never to dishonour the cause of freedom.'

The obliteration of original African names of places gained prominence through the dispossession of land and colonial occupation where a flurry of European names replaced indigenous names of places that were previously there in pre-colonial times. The marginalisation of pre-colonial geographical names in favour of the new colonial names that were institutionalised and formed part of the dominant political discourse, defined and characterised South Africa's social, political, and heritage landscapes. Such colonial reconfiguration impacted and still impacts on human psyche (Mancotywa 2010).

It is against the background sketched by Mancotywa and the total extent of the marginalisation of the indigenous communities in the past, that a public discourse around the changes of place names was framed and conceived. As South Africa emerged from a deeply fragmented and unforgettable painful past under the siege mentality of colonial and apartheid domination, the advent of a democratic government ushered in the hope for social transformation and restorative justice (Mancotywa 2010).

A survey found that the Limpopo community had dedicated libraries, town halls, or other public buildings to warrior traditional leaders. Overall, however, support for remembrance of the Wars of Resistance through museums was weaker than the momentum behind monuments or statues (Mulaudzi 2013).

The warrior traditional leader statues offered more as a strategy for remembering collective effort and sacrifice. Their inscriptions reflected on in Chapter Five, featured the message of the provincial leader, Sello Moloto. The iconographic shape of the individual statue and the prominence of such visual symbols was in effect, the casting of a political vote in favour of a specific notion of what the province was meant to be all about (Rausch 2007: 74).

4.3 Position

The positioning of the Warrior Traditional Leader statue was crucial. It was essential that the commemorated *magoshi* (plural form of *kgoši* (traditional leaders)) should be seen by the respective communities as occupying their rightful position, that is of leadership. It was important that the artists produced figures that were representative of not just a traditional leader / *kgoši*, but of warrior traditional leaders. Consequently, the declared representations of warrior traditional leaders in commemorative war monuments could not be placed flat on the ground, but had to

be elevated on a higher locality, for example, on the hill in the case of Kgošikgolo Sekhukhune or on a high plinth / pedestal in the case of the other three leaders, as a sign of respect to the traditional leader. To some extent the positioning reveals a metaphorical association of height and power as theorised by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 56). Drawing on Arnheim's theories on the visual composition of works of formal art to develop their semiotic theories on the information value of left / right, centre / margin composition of image on the page, Kress and Van Leeuwen show how angles can realise power relationships between that which is represented and the viewer. However, a display of the metaphorical association of height with reverence warrants a further investigation, which is not the topic of this work. Suffice to indicate in this chapter that, what the two authors indicate is that social distance, closeness, and attitude can all be suggested by the angle from which the subject on the statue is viewed. Thus, a low angle that forces the viewer to "look up to" the subject puts the balance of power in favour of the subject and not the viewer, whereas an equal angle that allows the viewer to see the subject at eye level would suggest equality. For the analysis of statues in the commemorative Warrior Traditional Leaders' Monuments, this aspect of the theory also relates to the question of the height of the monument. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 140) explained that: 'If the represented participant is seen from a low angle, then the relation between the interactive and represented participant is depicted as one in which the represented participant has power over the interactive participant.'

As with angles in art or photography, this analysis demonstrates how looking upwards to view a sculpture that is placed on a plinth that allows it to tower high above its viewer achieves the placement of the figure into the ideal position; thus, achieving the unequal power relationship between the viewer and the traditional leader represented in the statue (Abousnnouga 2012: 8). Corroborating this view from a different angle, Marschall suggested that all relocated statues in Durban were to be taken off their pedestals and lowered to the ground to stand on their feet. While literally and metaphorically signifying a 'deposing' of these grand leaders of the past, this measure would simultaneously render them more human, allowing people to confront them face to face and 'look them in the eye' (Marschall 2009: 149).

These new monuments in Limpopo province were expected to exemplify a new breed of Warrior Traditional Leaders' Monuments and reflect an expression of changing ideas about the object of war (of resistance) and its place in the life of African traditional leadership, ideas that found considerable sculptural expression after 1994 in South Africa. The appearance of the new iconographic type seemed to have established a tradition which will continue to influence sculptural commemoration of African traditional leadership, particularly in South Africa (Marshall 2009: 149).

All four statues made a spectre of peacetime the guiding principle of their design, and they did so in realistic terms, partly explaining the choice of the “statue of the traditional leader at rest” pose. The bronze warrior traditional leader had become an *icon* in the Limpopo province. The provincial government had funds available and a desire to erect monuments of greater originality, hence intended to avoid the prospect of receiving a standard fare warrior traditional leader representation. Each statue had to reflect the true nature of the warrior traditional leader soldier as was perceived by the sensitivities of the first decade of the new millennium in the Limpopo province. In a circular sent to the prospective competitors for the Warrior Traditional Leaders’ Monuments, the Project Team stipulated that it would not accept a figure that looked as if he were ashamed that he was a royal soldier (Mulaudzi 2013). Similarly, an observer of the model designs in Polokwane lamented that some of the entries lacked ‘that original and earnest force so much needed in a Warrior Traditional Leader’s Monument of this nature’ (*Seipone/Xivoni/Tshivhoni* 2004).⁸

An editorial in *Seipone* newspaper commended the selected designs as examples of a new breed of memorials in the province which better reflected the values and aspirations of African traditional leadership. Harry Johnson’s models were put forth as examples of statuary that convey meaning, or emphasise a quality not only of human nature, but one of traditional leadership which shall teach a lesson for all time. Instead of being yet another of the “simple effigies” which were “but models depicting ordinary soldiers”, Johnson’s Sekhukhune model designs presented for contemplation, edification, and emulation of the viewer, ‘the character of an African warrior leader—endurance, devotion, [and] heroism’ (*Seipone/Xivoni/Tshivhoni* 2004). Sekhukhune’s monument was the first of the four to be erected in 2004. The writer concluded the editorial in *Seipone* with a plea for the creation of more of these assertive and didactic monuments, a call that other sculptors heeded.

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An African warrior monument should give place to some originality, wherein the warrior’s deeds could be extolled, not by meaningless effigies, but by single statues or groups, in which virtue or idea connected with the warrior traditional leader might be handed down in imperishable material, not only in ‘memoriam’ of the deeds performed, but suggestive of what kind of a man the warrior leader of the Wars of

⁸ Extract from: Constructing a collective memory: monuments commemorating warrior kings and name changes in Limpopo province South Africa.

Resistance was among his people. These monuments successfully represent the patriotism, self-sacrifice, bravery and devotion which our traditional leaders have always displayed. These works hopefully exalt present and future generations of South Africa to emulate the deeds of their forebears during the Wars of Resistance. (*Seipone/Xivoni/Tshivhoni 2004*)⁹

Most importantly, the Limpopo provincial government noted that, since some of the wars had been fratricidal, nothing in the monuments' conception should suggest any war's cruelty or atrocities. Such a portrayal, it was believed, would have only served to perpetuate disunity not only in the province, but in the country at large. In keeping with this view, the seemingly reluctance of the statues were also hoped to assert that the province stood on the eve of a new era, when there is to be great harmony between all the resident cultures (Mulaudzi 2013).

4.4 Location

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Sculptor Frederick Wellington Ruckstuhl, in 1902 delivered a lecture at the Boston Public Library in the USA entitled "The Proper Functions of the Open-Air Statuary", as one of a series of lectures on the aesthetic development of cities. He told his audience that open-air statuary had only four possible functions: to delight; to refine; to console; and to stimulate. Ruckstuhl ranked these in order of ascending importance, explaining each of them in turn. The Warrior Traditional Leaders Monuments would in all probability, fall in the third and fourth categories of Ruckstuhl's ranking, in particular, that of consolation, which likened statues to private monuments found in cemeteries. Private cemetery memorials and most traditional public monuments to battle casualties or martyred figures serve largely to console the viewer. While admitting that 'the function of consoling is one of the most important in life; Ruckstuhl believed that a far more important function of open-air statuary was to 'stimulate the nation to action' (Monumental News, as cited by Montagna 1987: 153). To convince his listeners that a 'fine public monument is a powerful stimulus to mankind', Ruckstuhl described how that stimulation might occur:

⁹ Extract from: Constructing a collective memory: monuments commemorating warrior kings and name changes in Limpopo Province South Africa.

Let any father take his son out walking on a spring Sunday and he will soon see that as he approaches a monument his boy will ask him: 'Papa, what is that?' Papa will have to explain, of course. He will be compelled to tell his boy the story of the life and achievements of the man monumented. In the very process of doing this he will be newly fired to dedicate himself once again to the task of emulating the hero whose noble life he has been allured to describe to his son—and, in that new self-dedication, resolve to push his boy as far as he can on to a finer manhood, and to make him his votive offering to his country and thus enrich mankind with the most royal gift a father can offer (Monumental News, cited in Montagna 1987: 153).

Ruckstuhl's declaration that a public sculpture's highest calling is a stimulus to the present and future action on behalf of the nation, is in perfect harmony with the objectives of the Limpopo government when the decision was made to erect the Warrior Traditional Leaders' Monuments.

4.5 Warrior Traditional Leaders' statues

4.5.1 Kgošikgolo Sekhukhune

Sekhukhune's lonely bronze statue stands three meters high on the hills of Tšate village, which is also called Ntswaneng. At the foot of the hill is the mass grave of thirteen British soldiers who were killed by Sekhukhune's warriors during a battle in 1879. Sekhukhune is characterised as a brave warrior traditional leader. Sculptor Harry Johnson (2009) proposed that Sekhukhune be presented as 'quiet and thoughtful' and that he should be portrayed in his war regalia, holding his assegai and shield. Such armaments would have been in keeping with those used at the time of Sekhukhune wars with the Boers and the British as well as those still found among some older generations of the BaPedi households who would identify with the traditional leader. This design also embodied the calm determination and deep thought shown in the attitude and facial expression of Sekhukhune (Johnson 2009).



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Photograph 8: Kgošikgolo Sekhukhune's statue at Tjate. Photo by Mahunele Thotse.

Question: What aspects of this design commended it to the leaders of the project?

Harry Johnson (2009) strove to create an iconic portrayal of Sekhukhune. To achieve this ideal, he proposed that the statue should be marked by its 'calmness' and 'deep thought'. Johnson also said that the guiding motive of the model he designed for Sekhukhune was that the greatness of the traditional leader is equalled only by his simplicity. The figure of Sekhukhune is treated in a

very straight-forward way, standing with the sharp point of his assegai or spear in the right hand stuck into the ground, his shield in the left hand dropped a bit. He is thus not in a defensive mood, while the face tilted over his right shoulder is expressive of the absence of self-consciousness and the earnest direction of his character. This, the sculptor said, was an instruction from the Limpopo provincial government that indicated that all war between cultures is over. Johnson also wished to render Sekhukhune's character and disposition as a plain *MoPedi* (singular) by representing the leader in a quiet and dignified pose avoiding all manner of flamboyant action (Johnson 2009).

4.5.2 Khosikhulu Makhado

Of all his comments regarding the characterisation of his subjects, Johnson was the most explicit about Makhado. Johnson (2009) stated, 'I had carefully borne in mind the character and individuality of traditional leader Makhado, which are the essence of his Venda greatness and simplicity'. To best communicate these virtues, Johnson depicted Makhado wrapped in a royal cloth, sitting quietly at ease on a rock with a knobkerrie in his left hand tucked between his legs on the ground, rather than with a rifle, even though Makhado was known to be an expert at handling rifles after he had been exposed at a young age to game hunting by white friends of his father. In striving for such a conception, Johnson sought to approximate the characterisation of Makhado provided by informants from the royal household and the readings he did on the traditional leader. The sculptor admitted that he did not claim any originality for the conception of Makhado's quietness and reserve of power. Johnson in fact conceded that he read books and was also informed by people who were close to the Makhado family (Johnson 2009).

The sculptor said that he initially imagined Makhado as a solemn figure on a wooden chair. He later, from a standpoint of characterisation of the traditional leader from the readings, imagined the traditional leader as quiet and reserved. Describing the idea behind the posture that was finally approved, Johnson said that members of the royal house and the Project Team chose the moment when Makhado was considering a proposal from ZAR Commandant-General Piet Joubert regarding the taking of census among his people, for their motif.

The statue also zoomed in on a moment when Makhado was gazing at his warriors pondering what the next move would probably be. 'We endeavoured in the statue of Makhado to give something of the latent force of the traditional leader, manifesting itself through perfect passivity.

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If the statue impressed the beholder by its force as having character and stillness, it would have fulfilled its mission' (Johnson 2009).

Makhado's positioning and the knobkerrie signifies wisdom; one who knew when to attack, hence his nickname "*Tshilwavirusiku*" literally meaning one who fights during the night (Johnson 2009).



Photograph 9: Khosikhulu Makhado's statue in Louis Trichardt. Photo by Mahunele Thotse.

Question: What traits of Makhado's leadership did Johnson suggest in this statue?

4.5.3 Kgoši Malebogo

Information on Kgoši Malebogo was obtained from Professor Lize Kriel of the University of Pretoria's Department of Historical and Heritage Studies and photos were obtained from Kgoši Malebogo's family and the Limpopo province's DSAC before work on the model commenced. Available information confirmed that Kgoši Malebogo fought the Boers and finally surrendered. He was taken to jail in Pretoria and released after the Anglo-Boer war ended (Minnaar 2010).



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Photograph 10: Kgoši Malebogo at BaHananwa Tribal Offices, Blouberg. Photo by Mahunele Thotse. **Question:** What qualities of traditional leadership does this monument identify in Malebogo?

The statue shows Malebogo sitting defiantly and proud on a rock with his favourite toy—a rifle which is facing down with bullet shells around his feet. Thamagana Mojapelo¹⁰ noted that Kgoši Malebogo held a rifle in his hand which was a demonstration of his bravery as well as how he used it during the war. The rocks forming the base of the statue are a sign that shows he used the rocks on top of the mountain as his fort. The sculptor Phil Minnaar said in his interview, that this portrayal was an instruction from the government to symbolise that all war between all cultures in the country were over. This monument, while reflecting a relaxed traditional leader, also recalls to the mind the patriotic pride and the consciousness of sufficient strength which animated and sustained his people until that supreme hour of surrender. With the possession of arms, the monument also primarily illustrates events that had taken place on the battlefields. Minnaar said it was an honour and achievement for him to have sculpted some of the world's greatest leaders and royalty. He believed this will help future generations learn more about history's heroes (Minnaar 2010; Nthite 2006).

¹⁰ Narrator for 'Ntwa ya Kgoši Malebogo le Maburu (Malebogo-Boer War) – a documentary written by Tlou Setumu commissioned by the NHC.

4.5.4 Hosinkulu Ngungunhane



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Photograph 11: Hosinkulu Ngungunhane's statue in Giyani. Photo by Mahunele Thotse. **Question:** How would you compare the ideas expressed in this bronze design with those in the fibreglass design of Ngungunhane?

The supreme quality of quiet strength of Ngungunhane was also foremost in the sculptor Harry Johnson's mind as he designed the model of that Warrior Traditional Leaders' statue. When the DSAC called on Johnson to bring forward a statue of Ngungunhane, among their reasons was

because they were uncertain that his portrayal of Ngungunhane would embody the nobility and reserve power that it should possess. Unlike the other traditional leaders who have always been resident in Limpopo, Ngungunhane's residency in Limpopo is questioned and contested. He is largely commemorated in Mozambique, where he had ruled most of the time and where he fought his wars against the Portuguese, which also explains his capture by the Portuguese and exile to Lisbon where he died in 1906. Ngungunhane's statue, therefore, was not readily welcomed without question in Giyani. Given this background, the DSAC did not believe that the sculptor could achieve the necessary characterisation of the traditional leader as was expected (Johnson 2009).

However, as in the cases of Sekhukhune and Makhado, Johnson brought to a higher degree of finish a quiet strength as the key ingredient for proper portrayal of the *Hosi* and was also confident that the product mirrored the reposeful, however, uncompromising character of Ngungunhane. The life-size bronze statue portrays Ngungunhane in traditional Zulu-like apparel, standing with his assegai held in both hands with its sharp point facing upwards. He is depicted as firm and astride on the ground, supposedly observing a stirring scene unfolding some distance before his very eyes (Johnson 2009).

4.5.5 Kgoši Mokopane

It has been mentioned in Chapter Two that the Project Team were unable to locate any pictures of Kgoši Mokopane. The Project Team then negotiated with the Kekana Ndebele royal family. At one stage it was suggested by members of the royal family that pictures of Mokopane's son Vaaltyn (also known as Piet to his former Boer keepers, since they did not know his actual name) could be used instead. This suggestion was set aside as agreeing to it would have meant that it was his son Vaaltyn who was being honoured and celebrated, and not the father Mokopane.

A further argument against the use of Vaaltyn's picture in the place of that of his father was that as pictures and images play a vital role in civic education and provide examples to live by as well as a rich source of moral inspiration, Vaaltyn would have come forth as the hero to be emulated. Moreover, images also evoke loyalties as well as attachments not only to the persons portrayed, but also to the larger collectives that those persons represent, thus they are important agencies of integration and solidarity.



Photograph 12: A memorial commemorating the 1854 Siege of Makapan (Lithole 2010: 51). Photo supplied by Donald Lithole. **Question:** How did placement of this monument at the declared world heritage site reinforce its intended themes?

Eventually, an agreement was reached between the Project Team and the Kekana Ndebele royal family that a monument be built in Mokopane's honour (see photograph above) and that a tombstone rather than a statue be placed at his gravesite which was located somewhere on a cattle farm. These two commitments have since been fulfilled. The memorial plaque or tombstone (see below) is 1.7 m high, located in the thickest of bushes in the vicinity of the Makapansgat valley, exactly inside the declared world heritage site near the Cave of Hearths-Historic Cave Complex (Mulaudzi 2013).



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Photograph 13: A tombstone commemorating Kgoši Mokopane at his gravesite. Photo sourced from Mogalakwena Municipality, Mokopane, on August 13, 2014. **Question:** How would you compare the representations of Mokopane at his gravesite and at the declared world heritage site?

The tombstone was unveiled by the Premier Sello Moloto on Heritage Day 24 September 2005. The plaque was unveiled in collaboration with SAHRA. SAHRA acknowledged its role in the building of both memorials in their official report for the year which ended in 2006 as follows:

SAHRA joined the people of Limpopo and the Provincial Department of Sports, Arts and Culture in celebration of Heritage Day. The focus of the celebration was the inscription of Makapan Valley on the World Heritage List. As part of the activities SAHRA and the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture collectively built the memorials, in commemoration of the 1854 siege which took place in Makapan's cave and the memorial for Chief Mokopane Setswamadi (Kekana) respectively. Traditional health practitioners from all over the province conducted a cleansing and healing

ritual at the cave as it is a practice in African culture to appease the ancestors (South African Heritage Resources Agency 2006: 49,79).

Makapansgat was declared a World Heritage Site in 2005 by SAHRA on account of its rich and multi-layered heritage extending in an almost unbroken record from Ape-man times approximately three million years ago to the present (Maguire 2007: 40). The Historic Cave wherein Mokopane and the Kekana were besieged has been declared a national monument since 1936.

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DEPARTMENT OF SPORT, ARTS & CULTURE	
LAUNCH OF HERITAGE MONTH : MAKGABENG 02 SEPTEMBER 2005	
CALENDER OF EVENTS	
2 SEPT 05 (07h00)	Site visit by media and VIP'S to selected rock Art sites (MEC: Sport, Arts & Culture)
(10H00)	Public address and media launch at the village of Ga/Hlako (MEC : Sport, Arts & Culture)
(13H00)	Lunch, music and entertainment
3 SEPT 05 (11H00)	Launch of the monument at Batlokwa to commemorate forced removals, (MEC: Sport Arts & Culture)
8 SEPT 05 (01h00- 06h00)	Cleansing ceremony
(09h00 – 12h00)	Launch of the Dzata museum in Nzhelele Valley (Premier: Limpopo)
8 SEPT 05 (13H00 – 14h30)	Unveiling of the statue in honour of Khosi Makhado at the Tourism centre, Makhado. (Premier: Limpopo)
(14H30)	Public address and entertainment at Makhado Rugby Club. (Premier: Limpopo)
24 SEPT 05	HERITAGE DAY CELEBRATIONS at Moshate, Mokopane.
(06H00)	Cleansing Ceremony _ Makapans Valley World Heritage Site (MEC: Sport, Arts & Culture)
(08H00)	Unveiling of Memorial in honour of Kgosi Mokopane (Premier: Limpopo Province)
(09H30)	Unveiling of the Tombstone of Kgosi Mokopane. (Premier: Limpopo)
(11H00)	Public address and entertainment at Moshate, Mokopane (Premier: Limpopo)

Photograph 14: Heritage month programme (2005) of the Limpopo province, please note that 24th September 2005 was reserved for Mokopane.

Question: How has Heritage Day been observed in your town over the years?

A few inconsistencies have been noted with the title of the honoured Kgoši. On the one panel he is addressed as Kgošikgolo Mokopane—an equivalent of Paramount Chief Mokopane, while on the other panels he is referred to as simply Chief Mgombhani and *Koning Mgombhani* in English and Afrikaans versions respectively, for a simple Kgoši. There is no evidence that Mokopane ever ruled over other chieftaincies which would have justified him the paramouncy. It is also interesting to note that some of the inscriptions on the monument are written in Afrikaans, which is the “supposed” language of the coloniser against whom Kgoši Mokopane fought and by whom he was besieged.

Unfortunately, both monument and memorial plaque are not being maintained and are in a bad state of disrepair due to rain, heat, and other bad weather conditions. This is as evident as can be seen from the above photographs. It is worth noting though that due to rains and other conditions, the palisade security fence surrounding the memorial has lost paint and its condition appears to be deteriorating further. The uncontrolled grass and shrubs surrounding the monument is also evidence that these are not being well maintained. The most plausible rationale is that the grave site is on a private farm which is reportedly not always accessible.

This, however, does not necessarily mean that the project is a failure. Some Ndebele people conduct their annual rituals at the heritage site just as the Mogalakwena Municipality, if not the provincial government celebrates Heritage Day at the heritage site every year. Some individuals interviewed by Lithole believed that the practicing of rituals at the heritage site brings ordinary people into contact with something great, even sacred, and that allows them to reaffirm those precepts around which the community is constituted (Lithole 2010: 51).

4.5.6 Kgoši Makgoba

The Limpopo provincial government commissioned sculptor Andre Otto from Pretoria to sculpt the statue of Kgoši Mamphoku Makgoba. Information from officials of the Limpopo government reveal that the statue was complete and ready for unveiling. However, due to factional squabbles among the BaMakgoba people, the statue could not be unveiled unless such factional problems were resolved. Unfortunately, the researcher was taken from pillar to post, and nobody seemed interested in taking him to the chambers where the statue was said to be stored in wait for the day of erection. In the attempt to get clarity regarding the nature, form, structure, and symbolism

of the statue, the researcher contacted the sculptor Andre Otto for an interview regarding his work. The sculptor, however, was not prepared to share any information regarding the statue of Makgoba until such time that his work was put up by the province. Since the statue was never installed, there was consequently no comment from the sculptor.

There was a bust of Kgoši Makgoba in Limpopo province, however, that did not form part of the Warrior Traditional Leaders' Monuments project. It was well-meaning local white businessmen who in 1999 erected a monument for Kgoši Makgoba at the hotel that bears his name – Magoebaskloof Hotel.



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Photograph 15: Bust of Kgoši Makgoba commissioned by well-meaning local white businessmen at the Magoebaskloof Hotel. Please note reference to King Mamphoku Makgoba instead of Kgoši or Chief Mamphoku Makgoba on the inscription. Photo by Mahunele Thotse. **Question:** What meaning would you appropriate to be the intention with a bust rather than a life-size statue of “King” Makgoba?

Changuion (2009: 8) himself conceded to carrying the responsibility for creating the belief that such a monument was necessary. Changuion admitted to being the one who coined the phrase ‘Lion of the Woodbush’ that was later used by other authors including Makgoba’s own grandson Prof. William Makgoba (Makgoba 1997). That might have culminated in creating a much bigger image of the man than he really was. Eventually, when the monument was erected, Kgoši Makgoba was now elevated to a King. Makgoba was never a paramount chief—an equivalent of “king” (Changuion 2009: 8).

4.6 The Ubuntu Memorial Monument



Photograph 16: The Ubuntu Memorial Monument in Musina. Photo forwarded by Siseko Ntshanga of the NHC. **Question:** How did the placement of this memorial in Musina reinforce its intended themes?

The NHC of South Africa, in partnership with the Limpopo provincial government, unveiled the Ubuntu Memorial Monument in honour of the same six warrior traditional leaders at an event that was held during heritage month at Musina Municipal premises on 25 September 2008. The monument, built of stone, carries the names of all the six traditional leaders, namely Makgoba, Sekhukhune, Ngungunhane, Mokopane, Malebogo, and Makhado which are inscribed on it. It was unveiled by the Premier of Limpopo province Sello Moloto, in the company of six traditional leaders from the different tribes represented and descendants of the honoured, namely Khosikhulu Vho Toni Mphephu Ramabulana (Venda of Makhado), Hosi Eric Xumalo (Shangaan of Ngungunhane), Kgoši Joseph Malebogo (Bahananwa of Malebogo), Kgoši Kenneth Kgagudi Sekhukhune (BaPedi of Sekhukhune), Kgoši Vaaltyn Mokopane (Ndebele of Mokopane), and Kgoši Mokopa Makgoba (BaMakgoba) (De Wet and Marolen 2008).

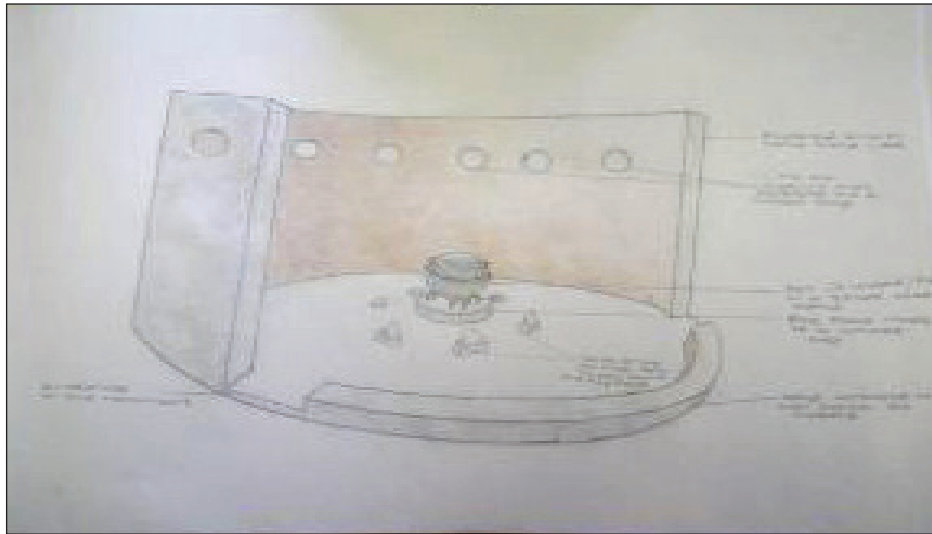
In his address on the occasion, the Premier said that heritage month served to remind the people of the importance of the past as well as the present. Moloto also warned that Heritage Day should not only be relevant to historians, archaeologists, and anthropologists because 'to do that will be denying the youth of the country their past and their present' (Matlala and Makana 2008; Muthambi 2008).

The chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders in Limpopo, Kgoši Sefogole Makgeru, who attended the unveiling, said that he appreciated the good work which the NHC and the Limpopo provincial government had done in honouring and recognising the warrior traditional leaders. The monument would help the younger generations to understand the values and customs of the history and different cultures of Limpopo (Muthambi 2008).

The Ubuntu Memorial is made from stone. Stone monuments are said to represent part of the world's cultural heritage. In the past, stone monuments were used to commemorate individual rulers and their ceremonies associated with specific dates. Stones were imbued with a sense of making permanent, an elapsed moment in time. The traditional leaders depicted on the *Ubuntu* memoriam also embodied overlapping ideas involving time, the material of the stones, and the royal person celebrated. In the past, material stone, often media for royal portraits and ceremonial scenes, could occupy even a central role in the ideology of rulership. The *Ubuntu* Memorial has therefore been created to embody a particular period during which the traditional leaders had to defend their peoples' land and possessions (Levinson 1998; Muthambi 2008).

In its conceptualisation, the *Ubuntu* monument also contained several general claims that might shed some light on the motivations of its sponsors. The monument was uniquely designed to encompass several important religious ideas. The monument was designed by Ramadwa

Building Construction at a cost of R6 000.00. It resembles an African architecture of communal living around a fireplace with a pot from the local Royal House of the Venda people. Boulders (rocks) from the domains of the six traditional leaders were brought from their royal residences to be incorporated into the half-moon shaped wall (see above photograph) of a traditional hut to symbolise unity of cultures and traditions.



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Photograph 17: Draft initial design of the half-moon *Ubuntu* Memorial Monument with labels depicting the original religious ideas, NHC 2008a. Photo supplied by Helene Vollgraaf of the NHC. **Question:** What significance do you attach to the depiction of a pot on the fireplace in this draft proposal?

There are round openings under each of the boulders that protrude through the smooth wall on the one side paved with cow dung and on the other side with stones that were used to build what are now ruins of the early rulers in the Venda region. The openings reflect hope for cultures

to reach-out to each other and open conversations among each other.¹¹ It was declared that the stones represent the Royal House of the six traditional leaders as written on the inscription of the monument.

The occasion of unveiling was also used to honour Cuban President Fidel Castro, a recipient of the *Ubuntu* Award, with a memorial plaque. Due to ill health, the Cuban President could not attend the occasion, hence the award and the plaque were received and unveiled on his behalf by a representative of the Cuban government, Acting Ambassador, Mr Enrique Orta. As inscribed on the granite stone of the memorial, President Castro was honoured for ‘his sterling role in the liberation of South Africa and Africa’.¹²

Advocate Mancotywa of the NHC emphasised that the monument was erected as a way of showing appreciation for the heritage contribution made by the six traditional leaders of Limpopo. ‘The six traditional leaders expressed the spirit and values of *Ubuntu*. They have distinguished themselves as an embodiment and champions of the values and principles of humanity, in a manner consistent with *Ubuntu*’, (Mancotywa 2010) he said. Mancotywa also reiterated that ‘it is high time that people started to revive the African values of *Ubuntu* to assist in nation building and also creating a South African identity and social cohesion’ (Muthambi 2008).

The erection of the *Ubuntu* Memorial Monument formed part of the NHC’s *Ubuntu* in Nation Building programme. In a document entitled *An Update of Heritage Programmes: reference Period August – October 2008*, the “*Ubuntu* in Nation Building” was described as a strategic programme which derived from the mandate of the NHC, that of integrating living heritage with the functions and activities of the Council and all other heritage authorities and institutions at national, provincial, and local level. Engaging with the broader society on this programme, a strong view was expressed that required strategies for cultivating ways of ensuring that communities be organised around *Ubuntu* in a way that would translate to a change in behaviour and attitude of individuals, families, and communities, in an attempt to restore the lost values and morals in the South African society (NHC Symposium 2008b). Employing Limpopo province’s six warrior traditional leaders can be regarded as a meaningful contribution to this programme.

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11 See artist impressions of the ‘Design of the memorial’ attached to a fax with the subject: *Memorial* sent by Pedron Nndwa on behalf of Musina Local Municipality to the attention of Thabo Manetsi on behalf of NHC on 11 September 2008 at 15:31.

12 See inscriptions on the monument; also see *Heritage Unit Programmes - An update of heritage Programmes: Reference Period August – October 2008*.

4.7 Functions and form

The idea of the traditional leaders' characterisation in the various proposals and the eventual sculptural statues erected in their honour is noticeably consistent. In all four statues, the traditional leaders' images are those of reluctant heroes who were reticent. They all possessed quiet strength, a plain and direct manner, thoughtfulness, imperturbability, and calm determination. These qualities also appeared in several appraisals in the dedication and commemorative speeches mostly by black political leaders, which may have served in large part, as the basis for the sculptural interpretations of the traditional leaders. The perception of these selected traditional leaders as pioneers of the liberation struggle who launched and fought wars of resistance against colonialism, dispossession, and imperialism in the second half of the nineteenth century gave rise to concerted popular interest in the lives of these then little-known heroes, which culminated in the launching of the commemorative theme "Wars of Resistance against Colonialism and Imperialism" and the subsequent erection of the statues in their honour.

128 Looking at the producers of Limpopo's commemorative Warrior Traditional Leaders' Monuments, one finds that they were multi-produced; the end product was not solely shaped by the designer, that is the sculptor, but by a chain of agents. These agents were both elitist (politicians), in the sense of their powerful positions in government, and ordinary individual members of the community (some members of the royal families of the honoured traditional leaders) that did not occupy influential positions; each of whom had a different input into the final product.

The Limpopo government, in developing the ideas of monuments, did not necessarily overlook other subtle, interrelated aspects that may enhance community building and identity. While they focused on broadening audiences, public programme, collections, and exhibitions that formed part of discussions enclosed with the decision to declare heritage sites as described in Chapter Two, they also did not make a mistake of regarding physical spaces as necessarily armature, however, as catalysts in themselves. Although there is no demonstrated evidence of formal plans, there seems to have been a thought at least to allow some subtle, interrelated and essentially unexamined ingredients to play an enhanced role in the building of community and a people's collective social life.

Underlying this argument is the notion that the monuments and the memorial spaces surrounding them, whatever their overt mission may be, are becoming an important agent in the creation of a more cohesive community. Increasingly, government leaders and specifically town

planners in Limpopo, are asserting that these memorial spaces can become safe spaces for meeting grounds for diverse peoples, and neutral forums for discussing issues of the day. Proponents hold that to build a functional sense of community and civility, (town) planners should fashion spaces that foster a sense of place, and offer a mix of activities which appeal to the common people. They maintain that the juxtaposition of spaces that form mixed-use environments must be present if community building is to succeed (Lithole 2013).

The South African government, through the national Department of Arts and Culture, has for some time been pursuing initiatives that support the contribution of arts, culture, and heritage to drive social cohesion and economic growth in recognising the increasing evidence that arts, culture, and heritage make a positive contribution to the liveability of places. Investment in heritage sites, along with support for vibrant and diverse arts programming are among others, ways of enhancing the reputations and attractiveness of areas as places in which to live, work, and invest (Mzansi Golden Economy Strategy n.d.).

From that perspective, the declared heritage sites are expected to provide a conducive and enabling environment for the consumption of arts, culture, and heritage, thereby attracting visitors and tourists to the neighbourhood. The government believes that the identity of a place generally has more to do with the quality and diversity of its cultural activities and services than with its economic or commercial functions. At the same time, a vibrant cultural / heritage sector as well as a good place for residents to work, live, and play is from an economic perspective, a place to invest in and make money. The government further recognised the considerable contribution made by these traditional leaders to the South African story of liberation struggle which is both of national and international interest and believes that telling these stories will contribute towards building greater social cohesion, promoting community healing and thus, paving the way for prosperity in the community. It is in this context that the heritage sites were envisaged and declared at the sites of the battlefields (Küsel 2008; Tlouamma n.d.).

Indeed, the Tjate battlefield, where Kgošikgolo Sekhukhune fought some of his battles against the Boers and the British, as well as Malebogo battlefields where Kgoši Malebogo fought against the Boers, have since 2007, been declared Provincial Heritage Sites (Grade 2) by the Limpopo Heritage Resources Authority in terms of section 27 (6) of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999) (Limpopo Heritage Resources Authority n.d.). Owing to the richness of the histories of resistance battles, the Limpopo provincial government recommended that these battlefields be developed into resourceful heritage sites while other resources may include the graves of warrior traditional leaders, missionary buildings, and other related heritage resources.



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Photograph 18: Tjate (Tšate) has, since 2007, been declared a heritage. Photo by Mahunele Thotse, 31 August 2013. **Question:** What would you say is the cultural significance of this site for it to be declared?

The statues of both Khosikhulu Makhado and Hosinkulu Ngungunhane are located at the Tourism Information Centres in Louis Trichardt and Giyani respectively. This is also an acknowledgement of the role these leaders of the past can still play today. The following photographs of the two information centres demonstrate that even their buildings in terms of structure, have been standardised and collectivised. Both are thatch roofed and painted in the same yellow colour.



Photograph 19a: Makhado statue at Tourism Info Centre: Louis Trichardt. Photo by Mahunele Thotse.



Photograph 19b: Giyani Tourism Info Centre where Ngungunhane statue is located. Photo by Mahunele Thotse.

Inclusivity of affected communities into cultural tourism and heritage programmes was one of the key motivating factors for supporting the declaration of heritage sites on the battlefields. In almost all the sites, particularly with Sekhukhune and Malebogo, the sites are underdeveloped and economically depressed with little if any amenities. The declaration as heritage sites will enhance the values and principles inherent in heritage. It was anticipated that these initiatives would encourage redevelopment of the areas to be vibrant and safe places to live and work, while the spaces would also be allowed to be celebrated and enjoyed.

Indeed, the Limpopo provincial government had plans to enhance the inclusion of communities in cultural tourism and heritage programmes using of statues. In an interview for a documentary titled 'Ntwa ya Kgoši Malebogo le Maburu (Malebogo-Boer War)', Limpopo Premier indeed noted that:

Our government has just started campaigning to communities about the importance of cultural tourism and heritage and how it can be used to benefit the communities. When you visit other countries, you will realise that their heritage sites and icons are being used to promote their leaders and emperors. We have not done much in this regard and I think that as a government it is our responsibility to have places like

these declared as heritage sites. This should benefit our people... We have unveiled the statue of ruler Malebogo as a sign of respect to him and his people and also to grow cultural tourism. What can we improve to make sure that the area attracts more people in terms of product offerings? There should be other forms of entertainment to attract more visitors to this place (Moloto n.d.).

The BaHananwa, therefore, found it necessary to erect the statue of Kgoši Malebogo at the entrance of the tribal offices to welcome visitors to the Buffelshoek premises of the BaHananwa local government. A skin of a baboon hangs on the side of the statue during special occasions which it is said symbolise the origins and culture of the BaHananwa people. The office building is also a sign of triumph and success of the tribe. Many of the residents have since descended the mountain to the village below to access basic services.

Of significance regarding all the envisaged heritage sites in the Limpopo province is that they were intended to benefit local communities taking advantage of the linkage that exist between arts, culture, heritage, and tourism. To this end, Tlou Makhura, on behalf of the Freedom Park, indicated that people who died fighting the wars of resistance would be honoured at Freedom Park. Makhura said:

‘The people paid a very huge sacrifice because the wars of resistance relate to part of the struggle for the liberation of black people. The wars of resistance were against colonialism, colonial forces, colonial domination and the purpose was to defend land, to defend resources, and to defend political independence.’ (Makhura n.d.)



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Photograph 20: Wall of Remembrance at the Freedom Park on which people who fought the Wars of Resistance would be honoured. Photo by Mahunele Thotse on 27 September 2014. Kgošikgolo Sekhukhune’s name already appears on one of the panels. **Question:** What does this Wall of Remembrance offer in design, in theme, and the experience it offers to visitors?

Explaining the funding of the documentary on *Ntwa ya Kgoši Malebogo le Maburu* (Malebogo-Boer War), Sonwabile Mancotywa¹³ of the NHC stated that the story of Kgoši Malebogo fitted well with the mandate of the NHC, more especially in the context of preserving intangible cultural heritage. The story also linked up well with one of the NHC’s pinnacle projects, unsung heroes and heroines. These were stories that must be mainstreamed.

¹³ Chief Executive Officer of the NHC.