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# Investigating the significance of a heritage site : the case of Witsies Cave in Qwa Qwa.

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# CHAPTER 1

## 1.1. GENERAL OVERVIEW

This chapter is a general overview of the study. It provides the aim of the study, the literature review, as well as the research methodology employed. This study is an attempt to contribute to the processes of transformation and to interpret heritage not only in the form of monuments but also through commemorating those places with intangible heritage attached to them. The intention is to utilize literature that deals with issues around heritage and cultural landscapes, the history of the Southern Sotho (Basotho) as well as oral tradition and cave battles.

Oral tradition research methodology will be used as a means to interpreting information gathered in this study. This is mainly because the events of Witsie's Cave took place over a century ago and are not recorded anywhere.

The National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999 formulated a new meaning of heritage that included space and places with cultural significance such as the cave alluded to in this study. The act also called upon the redress of the heritage landscapes of South Africa. As a result the interpretation of the Battle of Blood River, the 1820 Settlers Monument and Makapan's Siege were revisited and redressed. There has been tremendous work done on these sites that adds to the tapestry of South African history. Instead of removing old monuments from the public arena, other memorials or monuments were erected alongside the existing ones. This is because now they are recognized as forming part of history and are supposed to be balanced. The new ones are intended to tell the other side of the history that was never told before.

Paragraph one of chapter five of the White Paper in Arts, Culture and Heritage states the following:

> "Countries preserve their heritage through permanent collections of various kinds, and through restoration and care of sites having religious, political,

cultural, scientific, archaeological or environmental significance. In so doing, they declare what has value for them, what they seek to preserve as evidence of their own as well as other's development and achievement."

Deliberations of legal documents have been commented on by Heritage guru Professor Mathole Motshekga who, in a paper presented at the 4th National Annual Local Government Conference on Traditional Leadership and Local Governance in a Democratic South Africa in Durban highlighted that: "In Africa, land, forests, mountains and caves are sacred. There are also sacred plants, caves and mountain tops which require special protection. Some of these places are used for spiritual and cultural festivals such as rain-making ceremonies and national prayers. Traditional leaders and healers are custodians of these sacred spaces." (Motshekga, 2007:13).

With the dawn of the new democratic South Africa and under the new constitution, diverse communities of South Africa were given the right to use the language of their choice and to participate in the cultural practices and traditions of their choice. A lot of people came forward to reclaim their positions and cultural spaces in the new South Africa. Communities started to take advantage of the newly implemented National Heritage Resources Act 25, of 1999 that replaced the old National Monument Act of 1968. Unfortunately but not surprisingly, it has been found to be frustrating. Perhaps informed by diverse cultures of South Africa, what is worth preserving for one community may not be of importance to another and this complicates the entire issue of heritage. The example that this case study concerns is that of the Makholokoe, which is one of the groups that took advantage of the National Heritage Act 25 of 1999 to reclaim their position in Qwa Qwa (formerly known as Witsie's Hoek).

According to information presented by Mr. L. Moloi during *Mokete wa Mokopu*-Makholokoe cultural event March 14, 2009, Makholokoe originated from the Khatla (Bakhatla) Community that lived in Magaliesburg known as *Thabeng tsa Mohale* around the 1600s. They are the offspring of the second wife of Chief Tabane who

was the Chief of Bakhatla. The first wife bore his first son Modise who became the successor of Chief Tabane. The second wife of Tabane called Mathulare, who came from Bafokeng community, gave birth to five sons. Each of her sons is associated with a grouping of people as follows:

Mopeli - Bapedi

Khetsi - Makholokoe

Mophuthi - Baphuthing

Motlokwa - Batlokwa

Mosia - Basia

Things did not go well during the chieftainship of their half brother Modise who had taken over from his father as a chief. The five brothers (sons of Tabane and Mathulare) decided to leave Magaliesburg and create their own sovereignty with their followers, as indicated above. (History of Makholokoe presented by Mr. L. Moloi during *Mokete wa Mokopu*-Makholokoe cultural event March 14, 2009).

The community of Makholokoe that is found in the Eastern Free State is the second generation after Oetsi who was the grandson of Polane. This group of people arrived in Qwa Qwa around 1800 led by Oetsi. The group left Thaba Kholokoe near the present town of Standerton (J. Dreyer 1992:81) and settled at Thaba Kholo near Bethlehem while Oetsi went alone to investigate the area that came to be known as Witsieshoek. (History of Makholokoe presented by Mr. L. Moloi during *Mokete wa Mokopu*-Makholokoe cultural event March 14, 2009).

In Qwa Qwa, Makholokoe first settled at the foot of the mountain known today as Fika Patso (Split Rock) before moving to settle at Mohlomong near where the government buildings and Parliament of the former Qwa Qwa Government are situated. It was while living in Mohlomong that Oetsi discovered a cave near Monontsha Village. The cave was first used as a cattle post during dry seasons and

later as a hiding place when Makholokoe were attacked by Boers and fled to the neighbouring Lesotho and Natal (Interview with Toeba Moloi December 2008).

The Makholokoe are steadily trying to re-establish themselves as one of the Traditional Authorities in the Eastern Free State taking advantage of the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act of 2003 that recognises traditional communities that are subject to a system of traditional leadership in terms of the community's customs and observes a system of customary law. This study is meant to examine their claim in an attempt to understand and evaluate it.

The Makholokoe's plan is to reclaim their heritage through Witsie's Cave - a place, which they believe, has strong attachment to them and through which they could celebrate their arrival and existence in Qwa Qwa. They believe that through the cave they could tell their own side of the story. They believe they were never given a chance in the past to state their side of the story; hence history texts portrayed them as raiders of livestock (P. Sanders *Moshoeshoe Chief of Sotho,* 1975:209). It is also a strong belief of the Makholokoe that their participation in this study will assist in restoring the cultural / spiritual values that they believe could be preserved in the caves and mountains as part of their heritage (Interview with Chief Lesia Moloi December 2008). On several occasions the researcher has been asked to take part in a mission that is meant to reveal other parts of land that are claimed to be forming part of Makholokoe, the researcher agreed to take part but stated clearly that it was going beyond the scope of the study and therefore that endeavor has to be treated separately.

During the pre-colonial era, issues of heritage could not be alienated from traditional leadership as this formed the base from which heritage sites and sacred spaces could be preserved for generations to come. This role of traditional leadership in society was adversely affected by colonialism and the Apartheid era when a number of leaders were dispossessed of their positions and were substituted by collaborators, while some of them decided to collaborate with the Apartheid government. (Oomen 2005: 16,17) Oomen also noted that through the installation of

state appointed chiefs that the government explicitly tried to shield Africans from the 'onslaught' of modernisation through the codification of custom. As a result of this system, in the 21st century there is contestation between Local Government and Traditional Leadership over the ownership of heritage assets. There is also a power struggle between councilors and chiefs. The councilors believe that once the status of chiefs can be fully restored, they will lose their positions. This can mainly be due to remuneration involved in those positions. Despite the acknowledgment of traditional authorities in the constitution and legislation to modernise chieftainships, the role of traditional leadership is not recognised fully in the current governance system where the bulk of community work is still performed by councilors. A councilor's term of office is temporary and every time when a new political party comes into office, it comes with a new set of ideas and strategies that may affect developments that were already in place. A Traditional leader's position on the other hand is permanent and may be preferable to ensure that projects embarked upon are completed.

Mothole Motshekga (Traditional Leadership and Local Governance in a Democratic South Africa, 2007)**,** points out that local government and institutions of traditional leadership both operate where people live and have to work at meeting people's basic needs. The current restructuring of institutional leadership in relation to local government addresses political, rather than cultural, social and economic needs of communities.

Over and above this, it has been established that the legislation has not made provision regarding management for cases where there is contestation over sacred sites, taking into consideration the context of the ways in which local government functions. It is in this regard that while trying to find the significance of Witsie's Cave as a Heritage site through claims made by the informants who participated in this study, the role of local government and traditional leadership will be examined in the light of the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act 41, 2003. Living heritage associated with the cave will be explored and the lineage of the

Makholokoe as a community associated with the cave will be incorporated in this study.

## 1.2. AIM OF THE STUDY

It is evident that 16 years after the implementation of the White Paper in Arts Culture and Heritage and 11 years after the proclamation of the National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999, there have not been a lot of changes in transforming heritage and interpreting this heritage in a new way (giving it a new meaning). In the Free State, the Provincial Heritage Resources Authority (Institute of the National Heritage Resources Act 25, 1999) was only established in 2006 and there was a delay in declaring heritage sites and awarding permits for alteration of structures older than 60 years. No site has yet been declared. The Provincial Heritage Resources Authority in the Free State is faced with challenges such as an insufficient budget hence the slow pace in declaring heritage sites. Witsie's Cave is one of the places that are acknowledged as heritage sites. It has tourism potential but because of controversies surrounding it, the process of awarding this site its official status has been dragging on.

The study will seek to investigate the significance of Witsie's Cave as a heritage site in line with the requirements of the National Heritage Resources Act 25, 1999 and the general interpretation of heritage as presented through scholarly research. The fact that the Act does not give sufficient guidelines especially with regards to practical terms has been taken into consideration.

## 1.3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The National Monument Act (Act No. 28 of 1969) was replaced with the National Heritage Act (Act No. 25 of 1999) on the basis that the term "Monuments" was narrow. It was replaced by the term "heritage resources" which was broader and preferred as it covered the broad aspect of all that is inherited from the past.

In order to reach a conclusion relating to the implied significance attached to Witsie's Cave, the study will have to explore (and may accept definitions of) concepts such

as oral history and, or tradition, in order to determine why a particular group lays claim to the cave and on what grounds. To obtain greater insight it is helpful to know the literature on oral tradition and oral history arguments that are shaped by the interests of the tellers and the reception by the audience. For this study, literature is categorised into the following three themes;

1. Heritage & cultural landscapes:
2. Oral history and cave battles:
3. Histories of the Basotho:

### 1.3.1. HERITAGE AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

#### 1.3.1.1. Definition of Heritage

Heritage has been dubbed “the commercialised representations of history that is aimed at simplistic stories to make money” (Lowenthal, 1998:97). Lowenthal (1998:97) has warned heritage practitioners that “heritage is sacred; peddling it affronts decency, and no one should profit from it”. Perhaps as a way forward it is important to start off with how scholars define heritage and how they distinguish it from history.

Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996:01), in what they term ‘expanding meaning‘ from the book *Dissonant Heritage*, took note of the changes that happened in England in 1983 as a result of the National Heritage Act that expanded the list of what was initially known as heritage. Initially, the meaning of heritage according to Tunbridge and Ashworth was simply the individual’s inheritance from a deceased ancestor. This meaning was ‘expanded’ to include sites that have no surviving physical structures but were associated with past events or personalities.

George Abungu (1996:01) defines heritage as “a terminology which refers to a nation’s resources being either cultural or natural; cultural resources are those tangible and intangible”. These may include sites, architecture and any remains of cultural historical, religious, archeological or aesthetic value, tangible evidence of a

people's past. Other forms of cultural heritage also include song, dance, language and religion or belief. This has been a typical statement about the value of cultural resources in the mid-1990s.

According to Davison (1991:01) heritage is the property which parents handed down to their children but she too makes the point that the word could be used to refer to an intellectual or spiritual legacy as well. This point seems to have special relevance in this case study because in the culture of the Basotho, one person would be selected in the family to look after property that was handed down from their parents.

The above definition of heritage can be used in this study to assess the state of Witsie's Cave as to whether it fits these definitions or not

**1.3.1.2. History and heritage:**

According to Lowenthal in *Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (1998:104), heritage is closely linked to history even though the two serve quite different purposes. Historical study is not aimed at glorifying one's ancestors nor anyone else's ancestors (Lowenthal 1998:103). Heritage on the other hand is said to pass on exclusive myths of origin and continuance, endowing a select group with prestige and common purpose (Lowenthal 1998:128)

Even though History and Heritage make selective use of the past for current purposes and transform it through interpretation, Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996:06) draw a line between "history as what historians regard as narratives and events worth recording, and heritage as what contemporary society chooses to inherit and to pass on". This distinction suggests that whatever claims the Makholokoe will make over Witsie's Cave as a heritage site may be seen as of importance to them but other communities may not see the cave worth preserving. At the same time heritage as opposed to history is in most cases a commercial industry that can also be used for political motives.

Forced removal is another element of the heritage landscapes of South Africa. This came in the form of eviction of labour tenants and farm workers, the dispossession

of peasants through betterment and other land allocation schemes in the Bantustans and the seizure of freehold land in 'black spots' only formalised in the 60's and the 70's according to the observation made by Unterhalter (1987: 93). The case of Witsie's Cave suggests that the practice came long before the implementation of the Group Areas Act of 1950.

As the study also touches on traditional leadership in Qwa Qwa, it was important to revisit the factors affecting traditional leadership in the area. Barbara Oomen (2005:54) in the *Chiefs in South Africa – Law, Power & Culture in the Post – Apartheid Era,* traces the rebirth of traditional leadership as a result of the new constitution of the Republic that was followed by the processes that led to the drawing up of the White Paper in traditional leadership and the proclamation of the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act 41, 2003. This can assist in establishing the kind of management processes in a place where local government and traditional leadership are still the order of the day.

Corsane (2005:30) provides a guideline for displays and interpretation of heritage resources. His book *Heritage Museums and Galleries an introductory reader* has a detailed model that outlines all the stages of heritage management from collection to communication. This is a tool that can guide the interpretation of events of Witsie's Cave even though there are no readymade answers.

#### 1.3.1.3 Human remains

In light of the interpretations of Heritage above, Witsie's Cave was seen by the researcher as one of those cultural or natural resources as alluded to by Abungu (1996) Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) as well as Davison (1991). Due to the nature of Witsie's Cave and the events that led to this study, it is important to also review aspects relating to human remains as claims were made that people were killed in the cave and until recently, it is claimed, "some remains were still found". The arrangement of the cave with a pile of stones at the entrance can make the spectator think that people may have been trapped and died in the cave. Suspicions about the fate of people who may have died in the cave are reinforced by the

knowledge of atrocities elsewhere, probably most famously at the cave at Makapan. The truth about the existence of remains in the cave is not known but it was important with regards to human remains  to refer to the work of Simpson (1996:183) entitled *Bones of Contention, Human Remains in Museum Collections*, which deals with the issue of displaying human remains in museums. The argument here is that human remains provide educational aspects to scholars at the expense of the heritage of a cultural group; Due to the general ways in which human bodies have been abused by racial science, people have come to believe that the remains were taken from the cave to be used by scientists.

Legassick and Rassool (2000:18) bring a South African perspective into the picture in their book, *Skeletons in the Cupboard – South African Museums and the Trade in Human Remains 1907-1917*. This book traces the history of the abuse of science where people who had died even recently were dug up, sometimes their bodies were boiled to extract the bones, and their bones were sold to scientists and landed up in museums. The book proposes the “reburial of at least some of the remains that can be traced to specific areas – as an attempt at least to appease the spirits of the ancestors of those remains and as an institutional gesture of repentance for the crimes and the errors of the past”. (2000:55) In the course of this study the researcher discovered that this is also what some informants believe should happen for spiritual purposes. The researcher was told to look for bones at Wits University as the informants believed institutions such as Wits University could have an idea of what happened to the bones.

### 1.3.2. ORAL TRADITION AND CAVE BATTLES

It has been noted that before the nineteenth century, sources of information were almost exclusively of foreign origin, they are few in number and deal chiefly with areas along the seaboard (Ki-Zerbo. 1990:46). For this reason most of the researchers that investigated the cave battles such as Makapan’s Cave relied heavily on oral tradition. Most recently oral tradition has been supported by

archaeology as in the study done by Amanda Esterhuysen (PhD thesis 2006) on Makapan's Cave.

In the book *Oral Tradition as History*, Vansina (1985:03) defines oral tradition with reference to both the process, as the transmission of oral messages by word of mouth and the product, being oral messages. Messages are categorised into two major groups being news and interpretation. News as one group of oral tradition is not concerned about the past, rather with informing the audience about something that happened resently. The audience is categorised into small groups known as "eyewitnesses, Hearsay, vision, dreams and hallucination" (Vansina 1985:04).

Interpretation on the other hand is concerned with original messages and deals with reminiscences, commentaries linguistic expressions (verbal art) (Vansina1985:07) goes on to state that if there are contradictions in a tradition or if it goes against established facts from other sources, then it must be regarded as unreliable. This method could be of assistance in this study as during the preliminary interviews there were already contradictory 'facts' about Witsie's Cave that were presented by the informants. But it was not always easy to establish what the facts were and the methodology is not as clear cut as it seems.

Oral Tradition and oral History may differ in the sense that oral tradition is a way of recording historical narratives that span beyond the generation of the informants. According to Vansina (1985:13) oral tradition is not contemporary as the narratives can be diluted as stories are reconstructed when passed through word of mouth from one generation to another. This could be the case with this study as the event of Witsie's Cave took place more than a hundred years ago. Thus oral tradition is unlike oral history that is contemporary and may be narrated by people who participated and or witnessed the events (Vansina 1985:13).

While a lot of scholars still maintain that oral tradition requires archaeological research to validate the testimonies and Historians argue that oral tradition has a kernel of historical truth that makes it difficult for them to establish what is true and what is false, Vansina (2006:03) in *Oral Tradition: A study in historical methodology,*

defends this old method by quoting Bernheim who identified that the freer the manner of transmission [of oral history], the greater will be the number of divergent versions. On the contrary the more mechanical the transmission, the more trustworthy the tradition is. Because there are no archaeological findings to support the case of Witsie's Cave as a heritage site the claims presented by informants are going to be based on this method of interpretation. The study is intended to encourage the expression of as many divergent versions as was possible within its scope.

Furthermore the dynamic processes of oral tradition are also illustrated. These processes, (Vansina, 1986:15, 17) can be distinguished between 'Memorised speech' (prayers and poems) and 'Narratives or Accounts'. Accounts are transmitted as historical gossip, personal tradition which will be reminiscences of a person, a group account which are oral traditions of many authors as well as traditions of origin and genesis. The former applies in the case of Witsie's Cave where a group of people (the Makholokoe) come up to claim their position in Qwa Qwa through events that took place at Witsies Cave.

Even though Vansina makes it clear that all oral sources are not oral traditions, to some extent oral history and oral tradition are intertwined and principles may apply to both approaches. It is on this basis that the work of Isabel Hofmeyr (*We spend our years as a tale that is told": Oral History Narrative in a South African Chiefdom)* and Stephen Semela (The Namoha Battle, Qwa Qwa – 1950: A case study of the significance of oral history-PhD thesis 2006) are employed. Hofmeyr was selected because her study reveals how stories can be crafted when people lay a claim to a site which is similar to what this study intends to discover. On the other hand the Semela study is conducted in Qwa Qwa where this study is carried out. Both researchers have applied a form of oral history where people are interviewed on a selected topic rather than focusing on one topic for every interviewee. The former is going to be applied in this study.

Hofmeyr (1993:131) applies oral history to interpret events at Makapan's Cave while simultaneously bringing the issues of chieftaincy and the importance of genealogy to the fore. She draws a line between men as story tellers and their female counterparts. The stories told by women differ from those told by men in the sense that women told folklore that was meant to shape and provide guidance to growing children - stories that are important for the understanding of cultural values, while men told historical stories that always touched on issues of genealogy. Through the art of Oral History, Hofmeyr shows how historical events can be reconstructed to lay claim to historical events. She argues that there may be a skeleton of basic fact against which narratives can be tested. In this case she makes an example of the Makapan siege event, "…the capital did indeed move from Chidi, or Pruissen as it is sometimes called after the farm that now covers the area, to the hill Sefakaola. Seen from the point of view of the chiefdom, this move was one of the major consequences of the of the Gwasa siege and, by including the idea of a conquest in their narration, tellers are able to signify this crucial result…" (1993:118). The highlights that include place names come to suggest that the narrators have a legitimate position in claiming the land. This is the case in the naming of Witsieshoek where the participants claim that the area was named after Witsie.

With reference to a battle that took place in Qwa Qwa in 1950, Semela (2006), in his PhD thesis, reveals the nature of oral history, collection and management as well as the inherent challenges of oral history. The way Semala collected and managed oral testimonies during the research of the Battle of Namoha is one comprehensive work that will be useful in this study. More so because the battle took place in the same area where the study is conducted, thus similar aspects such as language and belief were instrumental in this study.

Even though there is very little literature about Witsie's Cave, books and articles with similar cases were found. An article by Coplan (2003) entitled '*Land from the Ancestors: Popular Religious Pilgrimage along the South African-Lesotho Borders*', provides insight into the historical and religious values of the sandstone cliff overhangs found along the border of Lesotho and South Africa. Coplan (2003:981)

provides information and the historical values of Nkokomohi Cave where spiritual healers gather for religious purposes. The article traces the occupation of the so-called 'conquered territory', the Free State land that was distributed to white farmers without the participation of the Basotho or even their trusted French missionary advisers. Interesting though is how those Basotho who identified themselves as the '*sacred to ancestors*' came to re-occupy this land in the 20th century. However, in a situation like this, there is bound to be conflicts as the farmers still hold the title deeds of the land where the caves are situated. Chief Oetsi was said to be a traditional healer and rainmaker. Because of this, it might not be far-fetched to think that the cave that he used in the past might house spiritual powers. On the other hand, there could be contestation over Witsie's Cave. Even though the events of Witsie's Cave are linked to the Makholokoe, it is situated in the area that is ruled by another traditional council, the Bakwena. At the time when Mopeli Mokhachane came to settle in Qwa Qwa around [1866], he occupied the area of Monontsha near the Witsie's Cave (City press April 2004:11).

Because of the praise songs that were mentioned by the informants, it was necessary to also explore this art form that forms part of oral tradition. This was mainly to reveal the nature of praise singing that is performed today as compared to that of the past when there was no influence of Western culture.

Damane (1963:10) introduces poetry as one of the oldest art forms through which heroic deeds of chiefs and warriors at war were narrated by those who participated in those wars. Damane is quick to dismiss those who say that Sesotho poetry does not have any form. He has revealed that Sesotho poetry has *pulo* – introduction, *mpa ya ditaba*- body and *qetello*-conclusion. Poetry as part of oral tradition may be influenced by western norms and western education, thus it could be important for the current study, to find out if poetry narrated today still has the original form as revealed by Damane.

While analysing the poetry about migrant miners from Lesotho, Mokitimi (1998) in *Lifela tsa Litsamanya naha poetry: a literature analysis* noted that there was a

change in today's poetry as compared to that of the pre-colonial and colonial periods. According to Mokitimi (1998:10) pre-colonial and colonial poetry tended to focus on deeds of bravery, while the contemporary poetry tends to focus on circumstances and experiences. This distinction of trends in poetry will be of use in establishing the kind of stories that are told by the Makholokoe through poetry and how the stories can be interpreted, whether it be praises of Oetsi as their leader or revealing current experiences. Furthermore, Mokitimi reveals how important audience involvement is in oral performance; "…the artist deliberately works to evoke the response from the audience by the dramatic technique". It is important to remember when trying to interpret them that these are performative modes and that thinking or oral tradition in terms of performance might contribute to the eventual presentation of the heritage site (Mokitimi 1998:17).

### 1.3.3. HISTORIES OF THE BASOTHO

From the interviews with identified informants it was discovered that there was a relationship between the Boers and the Makholokoe of Chief Witsie. Casalis (1955:155) in the book entitled *The Basuto* gives a narrative about the way of life of the Basotho. He thoroughly explains the system of loaning cattle known as *mafisa*; the system is explained with the legalities around it. Herds of cattle that were captured in war became the property of the chief; and the subjects regarded it as a favour to become the depositaries and guardians of these new acquisitions. They were allow to use oxen as a beast of burden and could use milk but they must always hold themselves in readiness to present the flock to their real owner when he wished to inspect them (Casalis 1955:155). This was the system that was allegedly misinterpreted and led to the war between the Makholokoe of Oetsi and the Boers in the area of Qwa Qwa.

*History of the Basuto – Ancient and Modern* by Fred Ellenberger, (1992:199) has a brief history of the Makholokoe, a tribe known to have occupied the area of Qwa Qwa after the San people. The area is still known as Witsieshoek named after the Chief of the Makholokoe.

In his book *Moshoeshoe Chief of Sotho,* Sanders (1975:209) wrote that Orpen's (Joseph Orpen) was a member of the Volksraad under Major Warden) first visit to Thaba Bosiu was in April 1854 and was occasioned mainly by complaints that in the North East the Kholokoe (Makholokoe) of Chief Oetsi were encroaching on the [Afrikaaners'] farms and plundering their stock. Because the Makholokoe were Sesotho speakers the Boers initially thought that they were Moshoeshoe's subjects. It was discovered later that they were independent. The book also states that the Makholokoe once assisted the Zulus during the Difaqane before coming to settle near the borders of Moshoeshoe of the Basotho. Perhaps this could be a reason why there is a Zulu influence in the language of the Makholokoe (Sanders, 1975:209).

### 1.3.4. Similar Cases

The researcher visited the following similar cases:

- The Battle of Blood River
- Makapan's Valley World Heritage Site:
- The 1820 Settlers collection housed in the Albany Museum in Grahamstown

Websites and documents were also assessed where necessary. This was for the purpose of following up on how heritage was presented prior to 1994 and to ascertain the state of interpretation of events as a way of transformation and redressing the past imbalance. The researcher discovered that to some extent there has been transformation and redress around how historical narratives are interpreted in the above-mentioned heritage sites (see chapter four). Such interpretation assisted in the interpretation of events at Witsie's Cave.

In order to conclude that Witsie's Cave indeed stands a chance to be recognised as a heritage site the interpretation of heritage was crucial and the information gathered was analysed alongside the above literature.

## 1.4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE

When the National Heritage Resources Act 25, 1999 replaced the National Monument Act 1968 it was with the intention of reinventing the meaning of Heritage and as a way of addressing the imbalance around the issues of Heritage. Through the National Monument Act, a number of national assets that were granted National Monument status seem to be those embracing heritage as perceived from a western point of view. This is evident in architectural styles and monuments erected to commemorate colonial rule and or leaders of the Apartheid era. Related documents also seem to be biased and only convey one side of the story. Attempting to address this situation the researcher applied the oral tradition research methodology in order to arrive at the informed conclusion about the significance of Witsie's Cave as a heritage site.

The research was conducted in Qwa Qwa and was supplemented with the occasional visit to the cave in the village of Monontsha.

### 1.4.1. ORAL TRADITION RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Oral tradition was used as the principal source for the study, informed by the insights in the literature discussed above.

Only a few documents focusing on the Makholokoe and Witsie's Cave were found. They seemed to be similar to those of the Colonial and Apartheid eras that reflected the ideology of the elite society of those times by diminishing other communities. In most of the documents, the Makholokoe and Oetsi were presented as thieves that stole cattle from the Boers on the nearby farms. No textbooks were found to reflect the point of view of the Makholokoe.

The above is attested by KI-Zerbo (1990), *In Methodology and African Prehistory,* who acknowledges that before the nineteenth century, sources are almost exclusively of foreign origin, are few in number and deal chiefly with areas along the seaboard. In an attempt to bring balance to this situation the oral tradition research methodology was employed in this study.

The informants that took part in this study were suggested by the Makholokoe Tribal Authority in February 2007 during the time when the Provincial Heritage Resources Authority (PHRA) was compiling a database of all the heritage sites found within the Eastern Free State, and under the protection of different Traditional Authorities. The team of data collectors was made up of officials from PHRA, the South African Resources Authority and the Basotho Cultural Village – where the researcher works. Most of the informants that were suggested were believed to be fit to narrate the history of the Makholokoe and the events of Witsie's Cave accurately as they were descendants of Oetsi. In the words of Hofmeyr (1993:107). The informants were "the cultural heroes or founding fathers that inhabit oral tradition". Perhaps one can assume they were selected in an attempt to add weight to their case as Makholokoe.

It is also important to note that this research came after a time when the community of the Makholokoe was still fighting for their position as one of the traditional authorities in Qwa Qwa. It was also a time when a number of land claims were submitted to the Land Claims Court, taking advantage of the Restitution of Land Act No. 22 of 1994 that provided for the restitution of rights to land which persons or communities were dispossessed of under any race based discriminatory law, or for the purpose of furthering the objects of any such law.

Due to the fact that this group of informants was suggested by the traditional authority of the Makholokoe, it was clear that the researcher was expecting the kind of institutionalised messages that are also referred to as group accounts by (Vansina 1986: 19). These kinds of narratives embody the messages which express the identity of the group in which they are told. They can also be used to substantiate rights over land, resources, office and herds. In this regard one interview guide was drafted and the informants were asked the same questions. There was a specific topic that the research focused on. Those who did not specifically belong to the Makholokoe community were asked unstructured questions and their interviews were not as formal.

The researcher discovered that it is difficult for one to tell if the messages transmitted through oral tradition are true or false. However, the intention of this study was not to validate what the informants told the researcher but rather to use informants' claims to highlight the complexity of the issues around heritage sites. The study examined the nature of tradition that the messages contained. It was discovered that the messages contained both memorised messages and narratives or accounts type of oral tradition. These categories will be dealt with in **Chapter two** where messages are going to be analysed.

The researcher was conscious of his position as researcher – informants viewed him as someone with influence and he tried to bear this in mind while listening to their stories and interpreting them. They were often trying to give him particular messages. The important task was to be able to identify what the messages were and to analyse the ways in which they were framed in relation to historical accounts.

The process of this study followed the steps of interviewing and recording informants, transcribing recordings, and analysing the findings. Hofmeyr (1994: 105) notes that narrative is a form of oral tradition that is concerned with individuals not circumstances, descriptions not analysis and the particular rather the collective. In this regard it was important to identify the kind of messages that the informants were bringing out.

However, it has been discovered by Vansina (1985) that those techniques used in Xhosa *ntsomi* using mnemonic kernels or core cliché could still be applied in historical narratives even though historical narratives are looser in general and more baggy than a form like *ntsomi* and they are more difficult to pin down.

The study was guided by the principles and ethics of oral history research methodology where the purpose of the interview was mentioned beforehand. It was made clear to the informants that they were selected because of their in-depth knowledge of the history of the Makholokoe and the fact that because they resided in the area of Monontsha they might have heard stories of the cave told by their

parents. Most importantly, they were told that they are participating voluntarily and were free to withdraw their participation at any stage.

When describing the historical narratives presented by informants of the Makholokoe about Witsie's Cave, the study was guided by techniques presented by Hofmeyr (1993:113) where those descriptions were grouped into the following three categories:

- Firstly, a backbone of the story arranged around core clichés or core images were identified.

- Secondly, a set sequence of action was also identified.

- Finally, unstable elements comprising episodes, transitional images, details and motifs that come up frequently but in highly diverse forms were also singled out.

According to Hofmeyr (1993:113), the object of these groupings is not simply to categorise the material but also to highlight its technique and method since it is through these that we can begin to understand how historical themes and information are forged.

It was on this basis that the messages of informants of Witsie's Cave were interpreted in order to reveal historical meaning.

## 1.5. BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF ORAL TRADITION

There are a number of benefits and challenges that were revealed during the investigation into the significance of the Witsie's Cave as a heritage site.

### 1.5.1. BENEFIT OF ORAL TRADITION

#### 1.5.1.1. Performance

Praise singing became one of the elements that made up the interview process. On two occasions (with Mr Toeba Moloi and Mr Lentshanyana Moloi) the informants

offered to narrate praise songs during the interview.

At the time when one started narrating a praise song, his tone of voice changed; one even changed sitting position. Tsiu (2008:108) notes that “effectiveness of words spoken by seroki (praise singer) at the public gatherings are enhanced by his visual accoutrement which creates a mood for excitement in that particular occasion. In this sense it was common practice for the praise singer to raise his voice in order to be heard.

According to Damane (1963:12) repetition is one of the elements making up Sesotho praise singing. This is one of the elements that contribute towards performance in praise singing. The following praise song narrated by Mr. Lentshanyana Moloi shows how this art form still has the characteristics of traditional poetry:

> My name is Lentshanyana. I was named after my grandfather Lentshanyana Moloi. I am Lentshanyana who was born from Mokiba, Mokiba of Lentshanyana, Lentshanyana of Phutsisi, Phutsisi of Ntake, Ntake of Maphale, Maphale of Matsemela. I am Lekgolokoe.

The above performance was also noted by Mokitimi (1998:18) while documenting *Lifela tsa Litsamaea-naha*-poetry of the migrant labourers who left Lesotho to work in the mines of South Africa. According to Mokitimi, praise singers would not only use dramatic techniques such as facial expressions and gestures, but they also chanted in a different tonal style from that used in everyday conversation.

The performance that is embodied in praise poetry seemed to add value to the interviews The interviewer somehow got more than he anticipated and as for the interviewee, the praise singing became a chance to express his innermost emotions.

#### 1.5.1.2. Relationship

A relationship was created between the researcher and the informants while the research was conducted. During the second round of interviews, the informants seemed to be more relaxed and welcoming than in the previous round of interviews.

Even before the start of the interview, Toeba Moloi first asked the researcher about the meaning of Qwa Qwa (Witsiehoek). He then elaborated on its meaning by saying that there are cliffs just above Lefika High School and in 1972 there were a lot of vultures that were nestling there and the cliffs were always white because of the faeces. The Prime Minister (TK Mopeli) would then peep through the Parliament buildings window and remark about the white substance on the cliffs and say, "*Hore qwa! qwa! qwa!* (Its white, white white). In most cases during research interviews people tend to talk in response to the questions they are asked according to the interview schedule and avoid initiating questions themselves, this becomes minimal when the informants become familiar with the researcher. The meaning of Qwa Qwa was not an issue included in the interview schedule but somehow the relationships that were created between the researcher and the informants, facilitated the revelation of the meaning of Qwa Qwa

### 1.5.2. CHALLENGES OF ORAL TRADITION

#### 1.5.2.1. Means of communication

The area of Qwa Qwa is still disadvantaged with regard to modern technology. It was difficult for the researcher to make appointments with the informants because most of them did not have telephones or cellular phones. Where there are cell phones available, there was problem of the poor reception. On multiple occasions the researcher arrived at the home of an informant only to find that the informant was not at home.

#### 1.5.2.2. Modern technology

The problem that the researcher encountered during the study as far as technology is concerned was when an electronic device was used. The informants tended to concentrate on making themselves audible on the machine. Thus they would talk more formally and technically and sometimes struggle to remember things that they wanted to talk about. This happened as they believed that they were going to be heard on radio. The problem was minimised by using a cellphone for recording.

### 1.5.2.3. Lack of female informants

The researcher applied a *snowball sampling* method by asking informants to refer him to other people who may have information relevant to the study, more so to come up with names of women who may have relevant information. The informants however mentioned that women married into the family of the Makholokoe and therefore may not be able to give accurate accounts of events. Unfortunately none of the informants put forward the name(s) of women as potential informants. Thus it was left to the researcher to find women in order to hear the stories that they could provide, if any. The name of Mathuto Moloi who is the Project Leader of a group of women making crafts at Witsie's Cave was suggested by a Heritage Officer at the Basotho Cultural Village. It took about five months for Mathuto to eventually agree to be interviewed. She did not want to be interviewed as she mentioned that those elderly men of the Makholokoe did not want her to continue telling the history of the Makholokoe as they said that it was incorrectly narrated. The researcher became even more interested to find out her side of the story, believing that Mathuto, like the male informants could have got the story through word of mouth just like those elders.

### 1.5.2.4. Overlapping of events

Another challenge that was experienced was an overlap of events that took place. According to Toeba Moloi the events of Witsie's Cave took place in 1950. The researcher however is aware that the event which took place in 1950 was the Namoha Battle (See Semela 2006). Moloi may have confused the two. Perhaps because these events took place in the same area, it is also possible that the recent date of 1950 came quickly to his mind and was associated with the events at Witsie's Cave.

Toeba Moloi also linked the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck in 1652 with the arrival of the Boers in the Free State. This creates some confusion. During the interviews about the Battle of Namoha as recorded by Semela (2006), occurrences were linked to historical events. For example instead of saying 1933, one informant referred to

this period as the time of "*Lerole le lefubedu"* – the time of drought in South Africa. Toeba Moloi may have used Jan van Riebeeck to refer to all the Boers. Semela states that the ordering principle here is not time, but the emotional associations that the people have with the events and the persons being described (Semela 2006:36).

### 1.5.2.5. Language

The issue of language was also a source of problems during the study. The interview questions were drafted in English and then translated into Sesotho during the interview. The word "declaration" was one word that caused a problem. Declaration means to make known or to announce, it is not familiar in the area of Qwa Qwa as not a single site has ever been declared. In Sesotho to declare means *ho phatlalatsa*. The use of *ho phatlalatsa* during the interview confused the informants who thought that the cave would be publicised through advertising and marketing. In this regard one informant even mentioned the sign boards that were erected to direct the visitors to the cave.

The issue of language difficulties during research has been experienced by many researchers. Semela (2006:41), in his Ph.D. thesis, gives an example of this using the word 'drugs' which may be understood under South African context as illegal pharmaceutics while an American might possibly understand a drug as any medicine.

### 1.5.2.6. Influence of the west on oral tradition

According to Semela, (2006:36):

> "In the western way of understanding the past, it is common to order the past according to dates or period. However, for most ordinary African people, places and events are more important in their accounts of what took place in history while time is not inherently crucial".

The informants' accounts about Witsie's Cave seemed to reflect a western influence in terms of understanding the past. On a number of occasions the informants would

mention dates of when the events at Witsie's Cave took place. This suggests that they might have read written accounts of history to supplement their knowledge.

When asked about the number of people that were in the cave, Chief Lesia Moloi and Lentshanyana Moloi were quick to respond: "about 2000 people." They were the only people out of all those who were interviewed to talk about the number of people in Witsie's Cave. This information is similar to some of the written documents that state the number of people that were in the cave as well as the livestock.

In addition Lesia Moloi mentioned that there were other people in the cave,

> *…Makholokoe in there [in the cave] and other nations who were in there like Komakos, Mosikidis and Malakwanes etc. after their brutal killing, the animals were taken by the Boers and Chief Oetsi escaped to the neighbouring Lesotho*.(Interviewed on 28/12/2008*).*

This narration supports the archive material that suggests that;

> *The numbers of his subjects remained small, but changed after the British government took over the reins. Then all the "lost" tribe members came home. Their numbers were also increased by fugitive Zulus to whom he offered refuge and protection. By around 1850 they had grown to about 12 000 people.* (Buidendhorst.1944:15).

Both Lentshanyana Moloi and Lesia Moloi are literate. In his interview Lentshanyana Moloi mentioned that he had been a learner at Orlando High School. Lesia Moloi on the other hand is a history teacher at Phetha Primary School (named after one of Oetsi's sons). They could have acquired their historical knowledge through oral tradition but again there is a possibility that their knowledge has been supplemented by written records.

### 1.5.2.7. Division of gender in storytelling

When the informants and the traditional authority were asked by the researcher to nominate females to participate in the study they were reluctant to do so. One of the reasons that were cited was that women could not come up with the correct narration as they were married, and come from other clans or families. The interview

with Mahout Moloi happened after she was persuaded by the researcher for a long time. In her interview she did not narrate the historical background of the Makholokoe very well but managed to answer other questions. This lead the researcher to conclude that perhaps the issue of division of gender around storytelling had not changed much in the area of Qwa Qwa. It has been noted by oral historians such as Hofmeyr that there is a huge gap between storytelling performed by men as well as that performed by women. Hofmeyr (1993: 28-29) highlights the experiences of Alfred Lesiba Kekana who states that “At the *kgoro*, men taught boys the law, obedience, not to fight, stories of their forefathers, what happened in wars, family and kin relations”. This differed from stories that were told by women. These stories were said to touch on topics such as local history and appropriate social conduct for girls and women. The story that had to do with the historical background and lineage could have been difficult for Mathuto to narrate due to her respect for elderly men. In fact she mentioned that they (women) had been instructed to stop narrating stories surrounding Witsie’s Cave because they did not have adequate information.

The exclusion of women from storytelling can be attributed to the traditional cultural practices and beliefs of Basotho that are still the order of the day in the area of Qwa Qwa. It is unlike modernised society, more especially in big cities, where it has been noticed that there has been a change in who tells which stories as women also occupy roles that were previously put aside for men. The researcher had anticipated that this would be the case with Mathuto as she is the Project Manager of a group of women making crafts at the cave.

### 1.5.3. ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter one has given an overview of the study. It focuses on the aim, literature review and the research methodology.

Chapter two is where interviews with the informants are interpreted.

In Chapter three the socio-political background of Qwa Qwa is discussed.

Cases similar to Witsie's Cave such as the Makapan's Cave, the Battle of Blood River as well as 1820 Settlers Monument are revisited in chapter four.

Chapter five will cover observation made through the study.

Chapter six deals with the recommendations and conclusion.

## CHAPTER 2

### 2.1. ANALYSIS OF ORAL INTERVIEWS

The period of the events of Witsie's Cave is that of the 19th century that was characterised by the Difaqane and the Great Trek. During this period, Boers were moving inland and saw 'empty' land that they could make their own. Meanwhile the Africans had a system of land tenure and recognition of territory as well as seasonal migration that the Boers did not understand. In the time of the Difaqane, there was a great deal of upheaval and movement of people, which further complicated the situation. Occasional hunting was still common amongst black nations. It was a time in Southern part of Africa when strong nations seized cattle from weaker ones so that young men could pay *lobola* for their wives. This is what the Boers exploited. Cattle raiding was a form of accumulation. Boers saw this as another source of wealth.

When the Boers arrived in the north eastern part of the Free State, they were looking for labourers to work on their farms. It is said that Oetsi and his followers were not subject to any ruler. Initially, because they spoke Sesotho, the Boers believed that they were part of the Basotho of Moshoeshoe which is why Moshoeshoe was called to intervene when there were misunderstandings between the Boers and the Makholokoe. Oetsi and his followers proved not to be suitable candidates as farm labourers; as they were said to be stubborn (Ashton 1955:20).

In most cases black people were labeled as cattle raiders by Boers, who came to occupy the land that was first inhabited by those people. This came to apply in the case of Oetsi and his people who were living in Qwa Qwa.

According to Buidenhorst: (1944:15),

> *"…By around 1850 they had grown to about 12 000 people. At the same time stock thefts increased. Not satisfied with the good income he received from his activities as a medicine man and rainmaker, Oetsi encouraged his*

*followers to fill his kraals with herds that were stolen from his neighbours, who mostly were Boers, but also included other native tribes"*

A number of written records such as *Moshoeshoe Chief of Sotho* (Sanders.1975:209) state that Oetsi and his people were constantly taking live stock from the Boers and they trespassed on the land that belonged to the Boers.

This chapter intends bringing out the side of the story that was not told before. It is in this chapter that information gathered from the informants will be interpreted in order to establish how stories have been used to lay a claim on the significance of Witsie's Cave as a heritage site.

Following Hofmeyr's (see previous chapter) interpretations of oral tradition, testimonies have been grouped into a number of themes that came out during the interview process.

In the first place, the stories around the **significance of Witsie's Cave** and that form part of the **name behind the area** that was occupied by Oetsi form the backbone from which the study was based. Furthermore a set sequence of action was also identified through **genealogy** that seems to be preserved through the cave. Lastly, unstable elements comprising episodes came up in the form of **cultural beliefs.** Other interpretations came to suggest that there were **relationships** between Oetsi and the Boers.

The above themes are explored in detail subsequent sections.

### 2.1.1. Significance of Witsie's Cave

Collectively, the informants believed that the cave indeed has cultural significance that is worthy of preserving. Lesia Moloi (see appendix 2), Lentshanyana Moloi (see appendix 3) and Mathuto Moloi (see appendix 5) believed that due to the fact that their ancestors were killed in the cave, it serves as a grave. In the culture of the Basotho or many African nations, a grave is a respected memorial site of past relatives. This is simply due to the fact that African nations or the Basotho in

particular believe that they can communicate with God through their ancestors. In other words ancestors are more like mediators between God and living souls.

Secondly, the cave has been referred to as a “fortress” or a “stronghold” of the forefathers of the informants. Toeba Moloi (see appendix 4) implied that he respected Witsie’s Cave a lot, “… when I go there I always narrate a praise song, I narrate a praise song because this is a place of my grandfather as it was used as a fortress during wars”.

Witsie’s Cave can be compared to Thaba Bosiu that is said to have been a fortress where Moshoeshoe effectively defended his people from attacks by the Batlokoa, the mighty Shaka Zulu soldiers and Afrikaners until 1868 when he sought protection from the British. Today Thaba Bosiu is a World Heritage site.

### 2.1.2. The name behind the area

The informants revealed that the area was first known as Phofung (place of the elands) due to herds of elands that were found in the area. The name Witsieshoek was popularised by the Boers. Witsieshoek is derived from the Afrikaans language “Witsie se Hoek”. The name ‘Witsie’ is directly derived from the name of the leader of the Makholokoe in Qwa Qwa known as Oetsi. ‘Hoek’ or ‘Corner’ refers to the area that was occupied by the Makholokoe and Oetsi which is locked in the mountains.

The fact is that the area where Witsie’s Cave is situated is still called Witsieshoek, and there is still a post office known as Witsieshoek Post Office. This suggests or proves that indeed Oetsi and his followers once occupied the area that is today known as Qwa Qwa.

The cave was not known by any name before it was called Witsies Cave. This suggests that it was named after its founder Oetsi or Witsie.

### 2.1.3. Preservation of genealogy in oral tradition:

According to Peires (1981) genealogy is the essential proof and only necessary proof of chiefship. In referring to the history of the Xhosa People in the book entitled

*The House of Phalo* Peires (1981:4.), he discusses his discovery that each Xhosa belonged to a lineage; that is a group of people who could trace their descent back to a specific forefather. This seems to be a similar case with the Makholokoe.

The informants have been able to preserve their genealogy in three ways;

**Firstly**, in their introduction, informants have at least been able to recite their genealogies with reference to where the Makholokoe originated.

Chief Lesia Moloi and Lentshanyane Moloi stated that the Makholokoe were the descendants of Chief Tabane who is said to have had five sons and the second son, Khetsi gave birth to the Makholokoe.

Toeba on the other hand only traced his descent back to a place called Makgason. This place is also called Thaba Kholokoe. It is near Standerton in Mpumalanga and was discovered by Chief Kgetsi after leaving Magaliesburg which is believed to be the original place of the Makholokoe. It was the place that Chief Tabane ruled over before his first son Modise. Modise was the first and only son of the first wife of Chief Tabana. It is said that he did not like his five half brothers who eventually left Magaliesburg; each created his own sovereignty with his followers. Perhaps Toeba Moloi only talked about Makgason as that was the place where Oetsi was born. He claimed that he is the great grandson of Oetsi.

**Secondly,** genealogy is preserved in the sense that it is believed that Chief Oetsi managed to escape and went to Lesotho with his first wife and his headman. Lesia Moloi confirmed this in saying that: "…he [Chief Oetsi] is not the only one who escaped, he escaped with his wife and one of the head men."

The chief escaping with the first wife may suggests that the informant was stressing the point that the lineage is still intact in the culture of Basotho since the first wife is the one who is supposed to bear the heir to the throne. With this he is saying that the lineage continued from that generation onwards.

**Thirdly**, genealogy has also been preserved through praise songs that were narrated by informants. According to Peires (1981) praises form part of oral tradition together with genealogy and tales. Oplan (1983:34) has also noted that poetry can be based on the individual in home and everyday life. It can also be about clans or can be associated with chiefs or prominent leaders.

The following two praise poems are testimony to the above;

> *My name is Lentshanyan. I was named after my grandfather Lentshanyana Moloi. I am Lentshanyana who was born from Mokiba, Mokiba of Lentshanyana, Lentshanyana of Phutsisi, Phutsisi of Ntake, Ntake of Maphale, Maphale of Matsemela. I am Lekholokoe…*

An observation made by Tsiu (2008:22) is that a clan is distinguished by a particular name known as *seboko*, which may take the form of an animal emblem commonly known as a totem, an object or taking the name of the founder of that clan as in the case of the Makholokoe who are praising their founder Mokholokoe. This is also noted in the emphasis of Lentshanyana on Makholokoe - Lekholokoe for singular.

> *… Magaliesberg is where we come from we were born there with Bapedi. We are related to Mapeli. It is Mapeli, then Makholokoe, then Maphuthing, then Batlokwa and Basia, we are five* (Lentsanyana Moloi recorded on the 28/12/2009).

As noted by Damane (1963:10), for the Basotho, the family lineage plays a central role in their lives and their sense of identity. This is one of the reasons that in most cases the praise songs of Basotho are about the living and their ancestors. This was evident in the praise song that was narrated by Lentshanyana Moloi. In his praises he has positioned himself as part of the Makholokoe clan by narrating the genealogy from his branch of the family to the origin of the Makholokoe linking them to other nations such as the Mapedi, Maphuthing, Batlokwa as well as Basia.

The following praise poem by Toeba Moloi was slightly different from that sung by his fellow informant Letshanyana

> *Ene ele leraka raka labo Masonyane*

*Leka raka tlou thubana,*

*Na tlou tsena dikae ha esale di honyella mokhohlaneng,*

*Ya ngangabala tau tona,*

*E fihlile Malonjene esale hosasa,*

*Ya puruma tau ya kgale ya kena Maluting a Phofung,*

*Ya fumana kganyapa e tola,*

*Bare ngwana tlhapi oa thella,*

*Ho bolela ba moapesa [meope]*

*Ya puruma tau ya kgale yaba ya tsamaya le maluti yaba*

*Ya kena le lehaheng Mononstha. (Toeba Moloi 28/12/2009)*

In a nutshell, Moloi is narrating the story of the arrival of Chief Oetsi in Qwa Qwa until he eventually discovered a cave in Monontsha. Through this poem he alludes to the bravery of Chief Oetsi by comparing him with an elephant and a lion.

From the praise poem above, one also notes that there are some words that appear to be Zulu in origin. The word '*malonjene*' above is actually spelled '*emlanjeni*' which is Zulu for 'valley'.

Sekere (2004:47) in her Masters of Arts thesis in African Languages noted that the language of the Makholokoe resulted from contact with other various groups such as the Amazulu. This was also because there was intermarriage between the Makholokoe and Amazulu, suggestive of a scale of interaction in the past and now, note the way in which Shaka is often recalled and their relationship with him in the 19$^{th}$ century shows that this is not a pure 'ethnic' story. (History of Makholokoe presented by Mr. L. Moloi during *Mokete wa Mokopu*-Makholokoe cultural event March 14, 2009).

### 2.1.4. Cultural beliefs

Different accounts of whether Chief Oetsi was in the cave or not when it was blasted came up during the interviews. Some informants said that the Chief was not in the cave, while others said that he managed to escape through a tunnel to Lesotho. The latter may have added another meaning. The Makholokoe believed in not burying their chiefs or leaders in daylight. This burial normally takes place at dawn when no one can see where the chief is laid to rest. They believed that if their enemies had this information they could easily defeat and destroy the whole community by digging up the bones and applying *muti* on them. Thus the distorted information about whether the chief was in the cave or not could have been deliberately conveyed to mislead the enemies.

The same distortion was encountered by Hofmeyr (1994) with regards to the case of Makapan's Cave when the Boers wanted the chief of the Ndebele (Mandebele) so that they could avenge the killing of their leader Potgieter. It is said that one man offered to parade as Chief Makapan, he wore a robe of the chief and appeared with the chief's wife. This deception of the Boers was done with the intention of keeping the 'heart' of the social order intact as the chief was central to society, if anything happened to him it might have been the end of the Mandebele.

### 2.1.5. Relationship with the Boers

Through various narratives it appears that the Makholokoe and the Boers had some kind of relationship. This relationship was established through the system of *mafisa* that is preserved in the narrations of the informants.

According to the *mafis*a system, a rich man owning many cattle, would lend cattle to a poor man who could use the milk of the cattle and keep the calves, thus obtaining cattle of his own. In return he took care of the rich man's cattle and owed him loyalty. Also, by lending his cattle out a rich man safeguarded them. If some of his cattle died from disease or some other disaster, or were stolen, he did not lose all his cattle as he might have if they were all in the same place. This system was

popularised by Chief Moshoeshoe during the Difaqane. According to Toeba Moloi, the Boers did not keep to the promise of returning the cattle that were loaned to them by the Makholokoe. This is said to have been the cause of the conflict that also spoiled the relationship between the two parties.

## 2.2. CONCLUSION

It has been difficult to find the balance between what was known to the researcher prior to this study through written records and what has been discovered during the process of interviews. The researcher experienced difficulty in the sense that there was a clear side presented by written records that claimed that the conflict between the Boers and the Makholokoe was caused by the continuous stealing of Boers' cattle by the Makholokoe and that the Makholokoe trespassed on the farms of the Boers. The Makholokoe on the other hand came to suggest that the livestock that was said to have been stolen was in fact theirs.

When one compares the written records about the events surrounding Witsie's Cave with oral narratives of the same subject matter, one comes across a picture of two worlds with different backgrounds and different interpretative practices converging. However, trying to establish the truth in the written and spoken accounts is beyond the scope of this study. The purpose of the study was to make use of oral tradition in order to find the significance of Witsie's Cave as a heritage site as it is presented by members of the Makholokoe.

# CHAPTER 3

## HISTORICAL, ECONOMICAL BACKGROUND AND SYSTEMS OF GOVERNMENT IN QWA QWA

### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

In order to get a clearer sense of the context in which the claims are made, this chapter provides the socio-political background of Qwa Qwa and the Maluti A Phofung Local Municipality. The historical and economic background of Qwa Qwa is revisited. The chapter also covers a brief introduction to the Local Government System that governs the area, as well as revisiting the traditional leadership institution of the Free State Province. The genealogies of the three traditional authorities found in Qwa Qwa are also incorporated into this chapter.

### 3.2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Rock art found in most of the caves in Qwa Qwa suggests that the area was once occupied by the San. It is believed that around 1800 other groups of black people arrived and occupied the land separately or together at various points in time. Sekere (2004:19) refers to Thompson who mentioned that there was room for all and each profited from the other's special talent such as rock painting, hunting and knowledge of medicinal herbs. There has also been linguistic influence by the San. An example of this is the name Qwa Qwa which is pronounced in the click sounds that are characteristic of San languages.

Around 1839 a group of the Makholokoe lead by Oetsi arrived in Qwa Qwa. This group stayed in the area until 1858 when they fled to seek refuge in the neighbouring Lesotho and Natal. This was caused by the conflicts that ensued between the Makholokoe and the Boers who had also arrived in the area.

After the conflicts between the Boers and the Makholokoe, Qwa Qwa was left unoccupied for almost 10 years (between 1858 and 1868) when it was declared a reserve administered under the government of the Orange Free State. In 1868 Chief

Paulus Mopeli, Moshoeshoe's half brother, arrived in Witsiehoek. This was after an agreement signed between the government of the Orange Free State and Chief Mopeli.

In the early seventies, the Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act of 1970 and the Bantu Homelands Constitution Act of 1971 were introduced. This legislation prepared the way for transforming Witsieshoek into Qwa Qwa. This led to Proclamation R203 that came into effect in 1974. This proclamation converted Witsieshoek into a self-governing territory of the Basotho. Following this arrangement was the general election that took place in 1975 that saw T.K. Mopeli and his Dikwankwetla Party winning 19 of the 20 available seats in the Legislative Assembly. T.K. Mopeli was then elected as Chief Minister and he ruled Qwa Qwa until 1994 when the new democratic government came into being in the Republic of South Africa (Quinlan 1986:36).

According to Quinlan (1986:37), during the time of TK Mopeli, traditional leadership of Qwa Qwa was reduced to tribal councils that were made up of the resident chiefs and elected headmen who, amongst other things, had to advise ministries on matters of duties and appointment of chiefs and headmen. The close relationship between the tribal councils and the Apartheid government undermined the former.

### 3.3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The economy of Qwa Qwa is shared around Tourism, Agriculture and Manufacturing industries with tourism becoming increasingly central. The Tourism industry already boasts attractions such as the Golden Gate Highlands National Park, the Basotho Cultural Village, Sterkfontein Resort, Witsieshoek Mountain Resort as well as the Maluti Hiking trails. (Nodal economic profiling project, Business Trust & dplg, Maluti - A- Phofung 2007:65).

Live stock, crops and vegetable farming have the potential of being successful in Qwa Qwa. However there is a challenge around skills amongst black farmers. Most of the farmers sell their products direct to the consumers taking advantage of better

prices (Nodal economic profiling project, Business Trust & dplg, Maluti -A- Phofung. 2007:56).

There were about 184 factories making up the three industrial areas. The factories manufacture clothing, furniture as well as food and chemicals. These gave jobs to 17 000 residents of Qwa Qwa (Nodal economic profiling project, Business Trust & dplg, 2007. Maluti -A- Phofung). However about two thirds of the factories were shut down in 1994 when government administration was shifted to Bloemfontein and Kroonstad.

Due to the high rate of unemployment in the area, in 2004 Qwa Qwa was declared a nodal area by the former President of the Republic of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki. It has since seen some development with two shopping malls built, thus providing limited employment to the community.

### 3.4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM

Qwa Qwa together with Harrismith and Kestell form the Maluti A Phofung Local Council and are governed through the local government system. The establishment of local government comes through a long process that eventually saw the establishment of 283 municipalities with the first local government elections in 2000. As a result of this, Maluti A Phofung was established on 5 December 2000. It was established in terms of the Provincial Gazette No. 14 of 28 February 2000 issued in terms of section 21 of the Local Government Notice and Municipal Demarcation Act No. 27 of 1998.

It is the objective of the local government to:

Provide democratic and accountable government for local communities; ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner; promote social and economic development; promote a safe and healthy environment and encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government.

The urban centre in Qwa Qwa, Phuthaditjhaba serves as the administrative head office of the Municipality. It has the largest population compared to other local municipalities forming part of Thabo Mofutsanyana District Municipality.

## 3.5. SYSTEM OF TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP AND GENEALOGY OF LEADERS IN QWA QWA

Qwa Qwa is one of the places in South Africa that is still dominated by traditional leadership. There are three traditional authorities, namely, the Bakwena Ba Mopeli, Batlokoa Ba Mokotleng and the Makholokoe Traditional Authorities.

Cultural practices of the Basotho dictate that the first son of the first wife of the chief should inherit their position as chiefs. The first wife is normally married with cattle contributed from all members of the traditional authority. In cases where the first wife did not have children or a son, a surrogate wife is married to bear an heir to the throne.

### 3.5.1. Bakwena Traditional Authority:

The Bakwena are the descendants of Morena Paulos Mopeli who after being dispossessed of land during wars between the Basotho and the Voortrekkers (1865 - 1868) while residing in Mabolela east of Ladybrand, was granted the then deserted Witsieshoek in 1868 after agreeing to remain a subject of the government of the Republic of the Orange Free State. Upon realising that Oetsi and the Makholokoe had been expelled from Qwa Qwa, Morena Paulos Mopeli Mokhachane requested permission to occupy the area from the Boers and was granted permission under the condition that he reimburse the cattle that were taken by Oetsi. He was recognised as a chief of the Bakwena. The Bakwena are now ruled by Chief Thokoana Mopeli who in 2008 took over from his mother Mofumahadi Mathokoana Mopeli. Chief Thokoana is the eldest son of the late Chief Motebang Mopeli who passed away in 1993.

Genealogy of Bakwena

| | |
|---|---|
| Mopeli Paulus Mokhachane | 1868 – 1897 |
| Ntsane I Mopeli | 1898 – 1918 |
| Charles Ramatshediso Mopeli | 1918 – 1962 |
| Ntsane II Arthur Mopeli | 1963 – 1965 |
| Mof. Mampoi Mopeli (regent) | 1965 – 1978 |
| Motebang Mopeli | 1978 – 1993 |
| Mof. Mathokwana Mopeli (regent) | 1993 – 2008 |
| Thokwana Mopeli | 2008 to date |

The dates were put together by consulting the Traditional Authority, visiting the statue of Paulus Mopeli Mokhachane as well as from the book written by Dr. T.K. Mopeli about the History of Qwa Qwa.

### 3.5.2. Batlokwa Traditional Authority

The Batlokoa ba Mokotleng are known by their leader Manthatisi who is said to be the first black woman to rule and lead a regiment while acting as a regent for her minor son Sekonyela. The Batlokwa lived in many places like Jwalaboholo near Ficksburg, where under the leadership of Sekonyela they were attacked and defeated by Moshoeshoe. They also lived in Bergville in Natal, Sefate near Harrismith and Escourt. They were given a portion of land in Witsieshoek in 1874 after assisting the Boers in three battles: the battle of Senekal in 1858, the battles of Seqiti in 1865 and Wepener in 1865. They established themselves as one of the traditional authorities in the area. With the head office in Moeding Village, the Batlokoa are ruled under the leadership of Paramount Chief Lekunutu Mota who succeeded his father Wessels Mota in 1988.

Genealogy of Batlokwa (in Qwa Qwa)

| | |
|---|---|
| Manthatisi | : 1800 – 1845 |
| Mota | : 1846 – 1868 |
| Moropotsana Koos Mota | : 1874 – 1931 |
| Silas Mota | : 1931 |
| Eva Mota | : 1932 – 1942 |
| Wessels Mota | : 1942 – 1988 |
| Lekunutu Mota | : 1988 – date |

The dates were sourced from the Traditional Authority of the Batlokwa. They are also available on the stone erected at the monument at Tsheseng Village in Qwa Qwa.

### 3.5.3. Makholokoe Traditional Authority

About 20 kilometres north east of Qwa Qwa on the way to Harrismith is the rapidly growing village of Makholokoeng. Makholokoeng is regarded as the royal village of the Makholokoe who are the descendants of Chief Oetsi. This community is ruled by Chief Paulus Moloi. The leadership of the Makholokoe was threatened for many years and is only after 1994 that it has reclaimed its position as one of the traditional authorities in the Eastern Free State. There are also numerous villages such as Mafikeng in Qwa Qwa that are under the leadership of the Makholokoe. According to the genealogy of the Makholokoe, Oetsi was not a chief but was born the fourth son of Chief Polane. Oetsi became famous because he was a great warrior and medicine man.

**Genealogy of Makholokoe**

Polane (Oetsi’s grandfather)

Tshohisi

Letlatsa I

Letsitsa I

Dikgang

Kgadinyane (Letsitsa II)

Letlatsa II

Paulus

The Genealogy of the Makholokoe was compiled by Chief Lesia Moloi. However dates of succession were not available.

Three traditional authorities and another two (the Barolong found in Thaba Nchu and Batlokoa Ba Mokhalong) are represented in the Free State Provincial House of Traditional Leaders. The Free State House of Traditional Leaders has 14 members elected from the five traditional authorities. It was established in terms of Chapter 12 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa that recognises the institution, status and roles of traditional leadership according to customary law. It is governed by the Free State Traditional Leaders and Governance Act No. 8 of 2008.

According to the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act 41 of 2003, Traditional councils are tasked with a broad range of responsibilities. The roles are listed as:

1. Administering the affairs of the traditional leaders in the performance of customs and tradition;

2. Assisting, supporting and guiding traditional leaders in the performance of their functions;

3. Supporting municipalities in the identification of community needs;

4. Facilitating the involvement of the traditional community in the development or amendment of the integrated development plan of a municipality in whose area that community resides;

5. Recommending, after consultation with the relevant local and provincial House of Traditional Leaders appropriate interventions to government that will contribute to development and service delivery within the area of jurisdiction of the traditional council;

6. Participating in the development of policy and legislation at local level;

7. Participating in development programmes of municipalities and of the provincial and national spheres of government;

8. Promoting the ideals of co-operative governance, integrated development planning, sustainable development and service delivery;

9. Promoting indigenous knowledge systems for sustainable development and disaster management;

10. Alerting any relevant municipality to any hazard or calamity that threatens the area of jurisdiction of the traditional council in question, or the well-being of people living in such an area of jurisdiction, and contributing to disaster management in general;

11. Sharing information and co-operating with other traditional councils; and

12. Performing the functions conferred by customary law, customs and statutory law consistent with the Constitution.

One of the most important roles traditional leaders are required to fulfill is to deal with the legacy of Colonialism and Apartheid. Traditional leadership has been affected by Imperialism and Colonisation as well as the Apartheid system that undermined this institution by assuming that Africans were not familiar with any system of government and they started imposing their systems. In 2004, a

commission of enquiries (known as the Nhlapho Commission) headed by Professor Nhlapho was appointed by President of the Republic of South Africa. This commission was established in terms of section 22 (1) of the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act 41 of 2003 in order to restore the dignity of the institution.

The outcomes of the Nhlapo Commission included the dismissal of a number of claims around kingship that were submitted from different traditional authorities. The investigation that was conducted to find out if either the Bakwena ba Mopeli or the Batlokwa ba Mokotleng could claim kingship in the Free State came to suggest that neither the Bakwena nor the Batlokwa could claim Kingship.

The commission discovered that both the Bakwena and the Batlokwa form part of branches of traditional authorities. The Bakwena of Mopeli are directly linked to the Basotho of Lesotho. The Bakwena ba Mopeli still share cultural and linguistic elements with their counterparts in Lesotho. To some extent leaders from this traditional authority are still buried in Thaba Bosiu-Lesotho.

The Batlokwa on the other hand, are closely related to the Batlokwa ba Mota, Batlokwa ba Mokgalong, Batlokwa ba Morakadu, Batlokwa ba Makalakeng, Batlokwa ba Nasatse Patso, Batlokwa ba Lehana and Batlokwa ba Masene.

Based on the above information and according to the findings of the commission a splinter group cannot claim secession from the rest. Therefore the Batlokwa and the Bakena in Qwa Qwa cannot claim kingship.

The investigation was not conducted on the Makholokoe but when looking at the methodology that was applied on the Bakwena and the Batlokwa, it is evident that the Makholokoe also cannot claim kingship. The historical background of the Makholokoe suggests that they are related to the Bapedi, Baphuthing, Batlokwa and Basia.

## 3.6. CONCLUSION

The importance of the genealogy in African culture has been identified in this chapter. All the traditional authorities that form part of Qwa Qwa had their genealogies ready on paper when they were approached by the researcher.

This chapter also included an outline of the role of traditional leadership and the objectives of the local government were perused in order to guide the observation of this study and to provoke recommendation thereof. Neither the local council nor any other traditional council in Qwa Qwa seems to have incontestable grounds for their claim. This perhaps informs the urgency with which the Makholokoe lays the claim to Witsie's Cave.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## 4.1. SIMILAR CASES

The study looked at three sites which are similar because they commemorate conflicts between settlers and black people and have had to be modified with the new democratic legislation mandate. The Battle of Blood River, Makapan's Valley / Caves as well as the 1820 Settlers Monument have been identified as heritage sites characterised by similar interpretation and events. These three sites came about due to contact between black people and white people in South Africa. The events associated with these three sites also happened at around the same period, that is, (1800).

Prior to the democratic era in South Africa there was a bias towards erecting monuments at these sites that commemorated the Boers and, or British (in the case of 1820 Settlers). After 1994, the interpretation of events leading to erection of these sites was revised. This chapter will trace the process of erecting monuments at these sites and how they were transformed to suit today's interpretation of events.

### 4.1.1. Blood River Monument

The Blood River Monument is a tribute to the Battle of Blood River that took place on December 16, 1838 near the small river between Dundee and Vryheid known as Ncome in Isizulu and Bloedrivier in Afrikaans. (Girshick 2008:38)

It is said to be the only battle in human history where more people were killed than there were shots fired. About 3.500 Zulu warriors were killed and only 3 Voortrekkers were slightly wounded. The site is the only one in South Africa where two institutions are presented on the battlefield (www.places.co.za/html/bloodriver.html:20/08/08).

The battle started when a group of Boer trekkers led by Piet Retief, Piet Uys and Andries Pretorius crossed into Natal with the hope of getting land from the Zulu king, Dingaane. Instead they came into conflict with the King and war broke out (Girshick 2008: 39). According to Girshick (2008:39), the Boers are said to have vowed to build a church if God delivered them from the hands of the Zulus.

Almost hundred years after the Boers made their vow to build a church should they be delivered from the Zulus in what became known as the Battle of Blood River, a massive granite ox-wagon was built on the river side where the Boers were during the Battle with the Zulus. Following this in 1971 a replica of the laager that was put in a 'D' shape to defend the Boers during the battle, was constructed on the eastern side of the Blood River. This life-size sculpture is made of bronze. Near the sculpture is a church that was built as promised by the Voortrekkers. It has been turned into a museum housing Voortrekker artifacts. The site was declared a National Monument in 1967. The Vow is commemorated every year on the 16th of December at the site. (Girshick 2008:40)

After 1994, an agreement was reached between the Kwa-Zulu Monument Council, the Voortrekker Museum and the Blood River Foundation about adding a Zulu Component on the eastern side of the river, thus the Ncome Monument came into being (Girshick 2008:40)

It is through the Ncome Museum that the killing of the Zulus during the Battle of Blood River is also remembered. The museum depicts the traditional architectural styles of Zulu huts with cultural items ranging from household utensils to traditional attire housed in the museum. The open air exhibition displays 18 shields that represent regiments (*amabutho*) that fought against the Voortrekker. Also on exhibition is the famous cow horn attacking formation that was introduced and made famous by King Shaka. This is one of the elements that recognise military formation and tactics of the Zulus, proving that they were not just a mass of savages and that they have a history. However the Old Blood River Site does not show any sense that the Zulus were people. This new monument in a way gives humanity to the Zulus.

### 4.1.2. Makapans Valley World Heritage Site

The valley known as Makapan's Valley is one of the cases similar to the cave of

Witsie and is world renowned. Makapan's Valley is today a World Heritage site because of its cultural landscapes as a result of layers of occupation and the

conflicts between the Ndebele (Mandebele) and the Boers. The Mandebele were made to starve in the cave also known as Makapan's Cave.

The history behind the Makapan's Cave states that the cave was used as a hideout by the Ndebele after the killing of 28 Boers including the trek leader Hermanus Potgieter by Ndebele troops. In avenging the gruesome killing, the Boers attacked the cave and killed the Mandebele who were also resisting the Boers' demands for tribute, labour and land (Esterhuysen, 2006: 02).

In her PhD thesis Amanda Esterhuysen (2006) has reviewed how different scholars have interpreted the siege event of Makapan. According to Esterhuysen (2006: 06), the interpretation recounted an elaborate mythology that produced heroes, portrayed the trekboers as a 'chosen people' and Africans as treacherous and uncivilised, thereby producing a rationale and imperative for the separation of 'races'.

However after the changes that were brought about in 1994, this heritage site was also affected by transformation. In 2002 the name of the area that covers where the site is situated was changed from Potgietersrus to Makopane (named after the chief of the Tlou nation who had not been recognised as a hero in the past). A new plaque has been erected in the valley above the historic cave and a new gravestone placed on Mugombane's (Mokopane's) grave (Esterhuysen 2006:147).

Makopan's Cave is today one of the major tourist attractions in Limpopo, contributing to the economy and job creation in the province. The African heroes have now been included in the interpretation of events with the idea that there were people who lived there prior to the arrival of the white settlers.

### 4.1.3. The 1820 Settlers

The interpretation of events in the story of the 1820 Settlers have been revisited and redressed by the research team of the Albany Museum. The following is a narrative from the1820 collection housed in the Albany Museum, Grahamstown.

> *In the [cold] winter of 1819 – 1820 some 400 men, women and children left Britain to make new lives for themselves as settlers on the turbulent Eastern*

*Frontier of the Cape of Good Hope. The Immigrants were organized into 60 parties, each of 10 or more families whose leaders were granted free farming land.*

*In the difficult first years of the Albany settlement the immigrants had to contend with the poverty of the soil, the failure of their crops, and the incursions of Xhosa cattle raiders from across the Great Fish River. Many of them left Albany; most of those who remained turned from agriculture to cattle or sheep farming, or to trading inside and outside the colonial boundary.*

*The arrival of the settlers changed the character of the colony by more than doubling its English-Speaking population as travelers and traders, teachers and missionaries, artisans and administrators; they spread their cultural tradition and institutions throughout South Africa*

The settlers are said to have contributed to the economy of South Africa and were commemorated through the erection of a monument. A collection of objects that were used during the times of the settlers is housed in the Albany Museum in Grahamstown. The above narrative is displayed on a white approximately 4 x 2 metre cloth, hanging in the museum. The bronze plaque is also visible on the 1820 Settlers monument in Grahamstown.

**The plaque on the 1820 settlers monument in Grahamstown**



Perhaps some scholars did not agree with the above as there has been an outcry from residents of Grahamstown to reassess and rewrite 1820 Settler history in a manner unlike the biased and inaccurate colonial viewpoint of history.

The article “Grahamstown wants to seduce tourists” sourced from the Grahamstown website (www.grahamstown.co.za accessed on the 13th July 2009) states that there have been steps to redress the historical imbalance of Grahamstown. On February 24, 2001 there was an unveiling of the Egazini Memorial that is situated near Makana Hill opposite the1820 Settler’s monument. The Egazini Memorial is aimed at recognizing the Xhosa heroes. It is said that the Egazini Memorial is where Chief Makana shouted his war cry before attacking the British in 1819.

The conflict between the Xhosas and the British was part of the ongoing battles fought between the Settlers and the Xhosa until 1819. The battles were fought over the control of the area’s rich grazing lands.

Also in 1999, the exhibition entitled ‘Contact and Conflict: The Eastern Cape – 1780 – 1910’ was launched in an attempt to bring about new debates about the occupation and development of the Eastern Cape. The exhibition takes one through the early occupation of the Eastern Cape from the Stone Age to Iron Age, the period of the Amaxhosa, the Xhosa’s early contact with the Settlers, the conflict over land to the beginning of a united resistance, and the process that led to the formation of the African National Congress and Black Consciousness movements (contact and conflict: The Eastern Cape – 1780 -1910. Exhibition mounted in 1999. Albany Museum Grahamstown).

In contrast with the plaque of the 1820 Settlers, the new exhibition plaque reads as follows:

> “*This exhibition provides a brief summary of the complex history of the Eastern Cape from 1780 until 1910. The contact amongst the people of The Eastern Cape led to conflict and conquest, which in turn Contributed to the making of modern South Africa.*
> *People depending on their particular social, economic, cultural and Political background, will perceive and record what they see around*

> *Differently. Historians are also influenced by their own world views. This exhibition relies mostly on quotes, pictures and objects to tell a story. It is merely a stepping stone for your own interpretation. (*Contact and Conflict: The Eastern Cape-1780-1910. Exhibition mounted in 1999. Albany Museum Grahamstown).

This exhibition does not try to tell us what to think. It encourages open interpretation, seeing the artifacts as prompts for visitors to make their own interpretations.

## 4.2. CONCLUSION

The democratic government in South Africa dawned with the introduction of new buzz words such as 'redress' and 'transformation'. To a number of people redress and transformation meant doing away with the past and introducing the new. This meant removing statues of past eras (Colonial and Apartheid) from public view and erecting new statues. In Qwa Qwa for example, the bust of former Chief Minister T.K. Mopeli was removed in 1994 and the bust of the veteran freedom fighter and the man the district is named after Mr. Edwin Thabo Mofutsanyana was erected in 2008. It now stands opposite to where the statue of the Chief Minister used to be.

However, with the Battle of Blood River, Makapan Heritage Site as well as the 1820 Settlers Monument, earlier monuments or commemorative artifacts have not been destroyed. African heroes and perspectives are presented alongside those of the white Settler representations. In the latter exhibition, scholars invite visitors to make up their own minds on the basis of a fuller representation and also in the knowledge that historical narratives are influenced by the world-views of those who tell them. Perhaps this idea of presenting the past as open to several different interpretations which the visitors are exposed to and in which they are invited to make up their own minds could be employed at the Witsie's Cave site in the future. Although, as was noted in the previous chapter, potential for conflict still exists in the area of the cave.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## 5.1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of the study was to investigate the significance of a heritage site. In this case Witsie's Cave was used as a case study. Through the study it has been discovered how people can lay claims to a site they believe may speak for them or their history. Key informants of this study are the descendants of Oetsi. Historical records show that the Makholokoe under the leadership of Oetsi are the first people to occupy this area that came to be known today as Qwa Qwa. All was well until around 1856 when war broke between them and the Boers over land and livestock (Moloi V. 2008:01). It has been noted that Oetsi was a powerful and proud man who loved and cared for his people and would do anything to defend them (see History of Makholokoe by Vusi Moloi 2008) as a result of this he refused to bow to the Boers and fought back retreating to the cave that served as a stronghold. During the winter of 1856 the Boers with the assistance of the Batlokwa captured the land and handed it to the Orange Free State Government. The land became unoccupied for about ten years until it was given to the Bakwena in 1866. In 1873 the other potion was given to the Batlokwa as a reward for their assistance in defeating the Makholokoe and in other battles. The Makholokoe were not recognized as a traditional council. It was around the late 1990's that they were also recognised as another nation in Qwa Qwa.

Though it was difficult to conclude whether the claims made by informants as alluded to in this study were true of false, the researcher made some observations around Witsie's Cave as a heritage site. The observations were based on the information provided by the informants and the requirements of the National Heritage Resources Act 25, 1999.

## 5.2. OBSERVATIONS

### 5.2.1. Spiritual powers

Caves found on the borders of South Africa and Lesotho seem to possess some kind of spiritual power as they are frequented by many spiritual healers who visit them in order to reconnect with their ancestors. These are places where the secrets of the departed ancestors are communicated to those chosen to assist the living.

Caves like Badimong or Mautse near Rosendal and the Motouleng caves near Clarens have for some time been used as pilgrimage sites for healers from all over South Africa and Lesotho, black and white alike. Moving along the cliff forming part of the Drakensburg / Maluti Mountains, one even finds rock art shelters in these caves, proof that these caves were once used by the Bushmen who were respected for their medicinal knowledge. For the reason that Witsie's Cave forms part of the Drakensburg / Maluti range and was once used by Oetsi who is said to have been a powerful medicine man and rain maker, one could conclude that Witsie's Cave is one of those caves that still need to be recognised as a spiritual cave. However, two traditional healers that were interviewed for the study have dismissed this thinking.

Traditional Doctor Mosesi Morabe (interviewed on 20/10/2009) said Witsie's Cave does not have powers such as those found in caves such as Badimong and Motouleng. Traditional Doctor Thabo Mathobisa (interviewed on 20/10/2009) also mentioned that he knows of people who visited Motouleng and Badimong with major problems and when they came back they were healed. He added, "I never heard of such a thing happening in the case of Witsie's Cave" (see appendix 6). Perhaps this can be the case as Witsie's Cave is not frequented by spiritual healers like the other two caves (Motouleng and Badimong).

Both traditional healers believed that Witsie's Cave would never have healing powers because it is 'mourning' the death of those who died in the cave. They share this understanding with the Makholokoe who also believe that there is a need for a

cleansing ceremony in the cave. Cleansing, they believe, can open the channels that will see the cave being used as a heritage site.

### 5.2.2. Forced Removal

The Witsie's Cave event is yet another case of forced removal in South Africa. It is the wish of the Makholokoe to be recognised through the cave, as it happened with the community of District Six in Cape Town where a piece of land that was already built was reallocated for renewal and was reserved for white residents (Bohlin 1998:170). A museum commemorating the brutal removal of the community of District Six was opened in 1994 and the community takes pride in the museum that houses evidence of what life was like in the District Six after the abolition of slavery.

The following is written in archive material concerning Witsie's Cave;

> Hereupon Orpen and Nauhaus submitted the following proposal:
>
> > *"To no followers of Witzie will permission be granted to assemble in the Free State and such remnants of his followers that at this moment find themselves in Witzieshoek will immediately be driven out." This proposal was accepted' (Buidendhors, 1944:29).*

Though the event of Witsie's Cave took place at a different time from that of the forced removals of District Six, Lady Selborne and Sophiatown, a period in General Smut's government when segregation was introduced, the basic principle is the same and demands the same treatment. When one looks at the case of Witsie's Cave, one finds a story where the Boers wanted to occupy an arable piece of land and were prevented from doing so by the Makholokoe who were already occupying the land. The only way to could successfully occupy the land was to chase the Makholokoe out of Qwa Qwa.

In a letter written to the President of the Orange Free State T.P. Hoffman in 1956 J.M. Orpen stated the following;

*"As soon as I have taken the remainder of his property I shall consider the punishment complete and grant him peace on condition of his never returning to his former residence. I wish to see him so utterly ruined that he may not for some time be able to collect his people together but that he must beg his food from you as from us. I have no confidence in that cowardly drunkard." (Buidendhors,1944:27).*

The Boer's strategy was to compel Oetsi and his followers to surrender to the rule of the Boers so that they could provide labour on the farms.

The Restitution of Land Rights Act, No. 22 of 1994, provides for the restitution of rights in land in respect of which persons or communities were dispossessed under or for the purpose of furthering the objects of any racially based discriminatory law. Because of this law, a piece of land has been allocated to the Makholokoe between Qwa Qwa and Harrismith where a community of about 5000 people is trying to make ends meet under poor conditions. According to informants the most important act would be the recognition of Witsie's Cave as a site that is linked to the Makholokoe (interview with Mr. L.S. Moloi – 28/12/2009). At the moment it is not clear whether this site forms part of the Traditional Authority or is part of the Local Municipality. For the reason that there is lack of clear borders between the jurisdiction of both the Traditional Council and the Local Municipality, this in itself complicates the whole situation and may hinder the process of declaration. However the Makholokoe have made the request to gain complete ownership of the cave through a submission made to the former President of the Republic of South Africa on 16 May, 2008. (See appendix 10).

### 5.2.3. Involvement of other ethnic groups

Because of forced removals where a group of people would be given a piece of land to live on, one would think that the culture of the group would remain untainted, however it has been discovered that the story of the Makholokoe is not a pure ethnic story as other nations form part of the story. It has already been seen that there is an influence of IsiZulu in the language of the Makholokoe in Chapter 2 and the claims

by Mr. Lesia Moloi who mentioned that the Makholokoe were with other groups of people in the cave. Written records also show that the number of the Makholokoe rose because of the AmaZulu who came to Witsieshoek to join the chief of the Makholokoe. As a result, this warrants the cave being declared as a heritage site that is not dedicated to one group of people but for many ethnic groups. Nonetheless, the Makholokoe might not be ready to accept this idea of the multi-ethnic ownership as they are planning to use the cave as a tool through which they are hoping to reclaim their recognition as a legitimate authority in the area. Multi ethnic ownership might interfere with their persuasion of ownership. Also the system of *mafisa* that is recommended for preservation and listing in the national inventory as well as for future research was common among Basotho and may have been adopted by the Makholokoe when they came into contact with them (Toeba Moloi interview 28/12/2008).

### 5.2.4. Oral tradition attachment

According to the information gathered during the research, it is clear that Witsie's Cave is not just a piece of land but a heritage site with cultural values that can position it as a Provincial Heritage Site if not a National one. According to the National Heritage Act 25, of 1999, Witsie's Cave meets the requirements of being a national asset in the sense that it has been described as a site through which oral tradition is accessed. Through what was revealed by the participants in this study, one can conclude that Witsie's Cave falls under section 3 subsection 2 b. that states that places to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage are of cultural significance for the present community and for the future generation, must be considered part of national estate. The study has taken into cognizance that the idea of community may be too broad. It has been established that not only the Makholokoe may lay claim to Witsie's Cave even though it is clear that they have positioned themselves as the custodians of Witsie's Cave, other parties should also be given a chance to tell their side of the story, in this regard the idea of community may refer to all South African who were affected by events at

Witsie's Cave. There are some people who fled to Natal when chased out of Witsieshoek for example.

### 5.2.5. Grave of ancestors

Participants have revealed that the cave serves as a grave where their ancestors are buried. Even though it could not be established if this claim that people were killed in the cave is true or not, because they believe that the cave is associated with the big losses brought about by colonialism is enough. The notion of heritage by Lowenthal's (1998:02) can be taken into consideration, as he states that "…the religious analogy extends to modes of belief: heritage relies on revealed faith rather than rational proof. We elect and exalt our legacy not by weighing its claims to truth, but in feeling that it must be right".

The National Heritage Resources Act 25, 1999 accommodates those places or burial grounds that are classified as graves of ancestors and graves of victims of conflict as places worthy of preserving. Witsie's Cave is in a sense a grave of the ancestors of the Makholokoe as they believe that their ancestors were killed in that cave. Furthermore it is a grave of conflict due to the conflicts that led to the demolition of the opening of the cave. It is evident that the demolition did not happen due to natural causes but as a result of a powerful distractive weapon. At the moment the cave is one element that links the Makholokoe with their past.



**Pile of rocks at the opening of Witsies Cave**

### 5.2.6. Redress

Witsie's Cave is an icon that can commemorate the existence of the Makholokoe in Qwa Qwa. The participants of this study and some written records have revealed that Oetsi was a distinguished medicine man and a rainmaker who assisted Shaka and Moshoeshoe during the Difaqane. This part of history was never popularised and the study of Witsie's Cave came to reveal this history. It can be used as part of the heritage that can contribute towards redressing past inequities. It has been noted that somehow the stories of the Makholokoe were never told on a platform where they could be heard alongside those told in written records. This study can be a platform to also tell their stories through the cave of Oetsi.

### 5.2.7. Educational purposes

Through Witsie's Cave education programmes can be conducted to highlight the historical events of Qwa Qwa, natural heritage through rock formations as well as the cultural heritage that is inherent in the beliefs of the Makholokoe. It has been discovered that there was a system of *mafisa* that was applied in the olden days and this forms part of the history of the cave. According to Toeba Moloi (Interview on 28/12/2008), Boers were given *mafisa* cattle when they arrived in Qwa Qwa because they were hungry. Students and tourists can be afforded an opportunity to learn more about this system that is said to have been misunderstood by the Boers and led to conflict between them and the Makholokoe.

Gone are the days when stories of the past were told to children around the fire. The only way of telling these stories now is through structured educational programmes. Fortunately enough, arts and culture programmes form part of the school curriculum. In this regard Witsie's Cave can be included in the Learning Area content in different grades.

The teaching about the events surrounding Witsie's Cave may be conducted in many ways. Flyers and booklets about the site and other related heritage sites can be made available by the custodians of the site. Road shows meant for awareness

can also be organised and scholars can be encouraged to conduct research around heritage subjects.

### 5.2.8. Empathy and nation building

Witsie's Cave will also contribute towards deepening the understanding of society and encourage the whole country to empathize with the experience of the Makholokoe as a way of facilitating healing and symbolic restitution.

The Makholokoe are trying to rebuild the community that was in despair after being attacked by the Boers. A number of indigenous communities were once affected by the Colonial and the Apartheid eras where they were driven away from their land. Many of them still feel lost and do not know where to start in reclaiming their position. The case of Witsie's Cave can be used as a guideline to restitution and nation building for similar communities around the country.

### 5.2.9. Protection and promotion

The cave is faced with the challenge of people who visit it and leave graffiti on the walls. This spoils the natural state of the cave and can be prevented with awareness campaigns that can be presented to the community.

Once the cave is recognised as a heritage site, there will be funds that will be put aside for the protection and promotion by relevant organizations such as SAHRA and PHRA. It is a mandate of bodies like South African Heritage Resources Authority (SAHRA) and Provincial Heritage Resources Authority (PHRA) to ensure that those places worthy of preserving for future generations are protected and promoted.

### 5.2.10. Economic and job creation purposes

Heritage sites are accessed through tourism activities. Tourism is one of the largest employers in the world. The researcher has also discovered that institutions such as the Basotho Cultural Village, an open air museum that depicts the lifestyle and the architectural styles of the Basotho from around the sixteenth century to present days

have been conducting tours from the village to heritage sites in Qwa Qwa. Witsie's Cave is one of these sites that are visited. At least 300 school children are taken to the cave on a monthly basis. With good marketing, the cave has the potential of being one of the major tourist attractions in the Free State. Thus it can be used to create jobs and contribute to economic upliftment of the area.

These days the concept of homestays is becoming popular and affordable to establish. This is a way of allowing visitors to experience how other people live in their real homes. It can be one of the businesses that members of community of Monontsha Village can embark on.

Arts and Crafts can be made in order to provide souvenirs for visitors. For example a group of women has started making bead work and grass items on the site near Witsie's Cave. Camping near the cave can be one of the activities visitors can experience with a fee that can boost income at Witsie's Cave.

### 5.2.11. Listing of living heritage

Draft intangible heritage policy calls upon communities to list those elements of their living heritage that they feel may be endangered. The policy also encourages communities to begin their own measures to safeguard their heritage until the process of listing living heritage is completed. Systems such as *mafisa* are those ideas of the past that are no longer in use. It can be one effort of trying to eradicate poverty in the area of Qwa Qwa. The system can be brought back and emerging farmers can be loaned cattle as a form of startup capital. Through the process, knowledgeable people possessing oral tradition can also be identified. According to draft intangible cultural heritage policy (2009) the plan is to recongnise these people as living national treasures who are persons who possess to a very high degree, the knowledge and skills required for performing or recreating specific elements of the living heritage. Some of the people who were involved in this study already fit the above description.

This study revealed that Oetsi was not born a chief but because of his gift of rainmaking and knowledge of traditional medicine he eventually gained fellowship. Both rainmaking skills and knowledge of traditional medicine are also elements of living heritage that can be listed in the national inventory for preservation.

## 5.3. CONCLUSION

Observations made by the researcher during the course of this study suggest that Witsie's Cave has the values to meet the requirement of grade (ii), as specified by the National Heritage Resources Act 25, 1999. Some of the findings that were uncovered during the research have lead the researcher to conclude that Witsie's Cave is not a small community project with only the intention of identifying its significance as highlighted in this project. It is rather a broad project that can eventually lead to the positioning of Witsie's Cave to the level of a National Heritage site. In actual fact the whole area of Qwa Qwa because of historical layers has chance of being declared a World Heritage site. The layers of occupation in Qwa Qwa from the Bushmen to Oetsi and the time when it formed part of the 10 Bantustans, as well as its landscapes and natural features can be elements that can be used to support the case of the area of Qwa Qwa being recognised as a World Heritage site.

There is a strong belief that Witsie's Cave was once used by the San people. Rock paintings are found in most of the caverns in the area. About 15 kilometers south and 20 kilometers north of Monontsha Village (where Witsie's Cave is situated) there are caverns with rock art suggesting that indeed the San inhabited the area. This leaves the question of why Witsie's Cave does not have any rock paintings. There is a need for archaeological research at the cave for the purpose of "digging deeper" in order to establish layers of occupation of Witsie's Cave through the centuries. It has been noticed how Makapan's Caves were revisited through archaeological research by Esterhuysen (2006). This further research will come to tell if indeed the cave was once occupied by the Bushmen and whether there were people who died in the

cave. If so, this could then suggest reburial as has been requested by the Makholokoe.

Nonetheless however, even though it was a wish of the researcher to see the Witsie's Cave declared at some stage, there are some potential barriers that could hinder the process. In the firsts place, it was revealed that there could be other people that could emerge as claimants as they were also affected by the events at Witsie's Cave. The Zulus are featured in this report for example. There can be strong resistance from the Makholokoe as they might think that the inclusion of other ethnic groups might affect their claims as the custodians of Witsie's Cave. It has also been noticed how a group of women operating at Witsie's Cave were prevented from telling the stories of the Makholokoe to people visiting the cave as it was said that they were not giving a true reflection of the story.

On the other hand there seems to be a conflict within the Makholooe. The submission that was made to the President was made by Morena Lesia Moloi who is not the chief but the headman at Mafikeng Village. This is the same person who when interviewed claimed that the Makholokoe are not recognised in the House of Traditional Leaders (see appendix 3) whereas at least three people from Makholokoe Traditional Council form part of the House of Traditional Leaders in the Free State. The researcher's concern was around why the submission was not made by the recognised chief of the Makholokoe Morena Paulos Moloi but by Lesia Moloi (see appendix 10). When defending himself he explained that it is because Paulos Moloi was only recognised around 1994, while other descendants of Oetsi were still living in Qwa Qwa. This complicated the matter even further as the submission was made in 2009 which is 15 years after Paulos Moloi was recognised as the rightful chief of the Makholokoe. This clearly shows that there are some conflicting issues among the Makholokoe.

The cave is situated in Monontsha Village that falls under another chief, Chief Sebatli Mopeli of the Bakwena Traditional Council. There is a possibility that he can

also claim a share over the cave, as there is a community group from the same village that is already operating at the cave.

When the submission for ownership of the cave was sent to the PHRA in the Free State in May 2009, it was expected that they would resolve the crisis, whereas theirs was to advise in terms of the act more especially because the site is not yet listed as a heritage site.

As a result of this, the PHRA could not come up with any solution as theirs is only to advise in terms of the Act. In the light of this, the agreement that was reached was based on joint management between the Makholokoe and the Local Municipality – Maluti A Phofung. Both parties agreed that further investigation should commence and the Department of Land Affairs should be brought on board to assist in the issue of ownership of the cave. Maluti A Phofung recognises the Makholokoe as the custodians of the history linked to the cave.  The local council believes that they also have authority as the cave falls within their area of operation. The involvement of the community group already working at the cave was not entertained

Where there is no clear ownership of the site, it could also be difficult for either SAHRA or PHRA to execute its mandate as stipulated in the Act, namely, Section 27, (8) of the National Heritage Resources Act. 25 of 1999. The Act states that the heritage resources authority must notify the owner, the mortgage holder and or the occupier of the site about the declaration. The heritage authority must also allow at least 60 days for the owner to respond to the submission. In the case of Witsie’s Cave no party is in possession of a title deed.

# CHAPTER SIX

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter concludes this study. However, before that can be arrived at, a number of proposals in line with management and interpretation of the site are put forward. This is done firstly by revisiting the background of the National Heritage Resources Act 25, 1999, and the challenges facing heritage resources management in the Free State.

### 6.2. BACKGROUND OF THE ACT

Section 8 (1) of the National Heritage Resources Act 25, 1999 states that there is a three tier system for heritage resources management in which national level functions are the responsibility of SAHRA, provincial level functions are the responsibility of PHRA and local functions are the responsibility of the local authority.

In the Free State, there are no local heritage resources authorities; only SAHRA and PHRA exist. In areas such as Qwa Qwa, there are heritage committees that are not recognised and only operate within traditional councils. These committees only look after those sites that fall within their jurisdiction.

### 6.3. CHALLENGES FACING MANAGEMENT OF HERITAGE SITES

Qwa Qwa is one of those areas that do not have local heritage resource authorities. It is as a result of this that in 2009 a letter was written by the Makholokoe to the then President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr. Thabo Mbeki (see appendix 9). The letter was then sent to the then Premier of the Free State and finally taken to the Free State PHRA.

In this letter the Makholokoe are concerned about the developments that are taking place without their knowledge near Witsie’s Cave. When the PHRA intervened, it

was discovered that the development was carried out by the Local Municipality – Maluti A Phofung - with financial assistance sourced from the National Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism. The solution to this matter is still pending. Thorough research into it has been proposed. This is one example of an uncoordinated project due to lack of communication and proper management systems.

In the previous chapter it was discussed that the area of Qwa Qwa is ruled through the system of local government and traditional leadership still exists. According to participants in this study, it was not clear as to who owns Witsie's Cave. Some people mentioned the local government and other said the cave belonged to the Makholokoe.

### 6.4. PROPOSED MANAGEMENT PLAN

Should Witsie's Cave be recognised as a heritage site, there is going to be a need for a clear management plan that will ensure sustainability of such a valuable site because of different parties contesting for management of the cave. Bramwell et al (1994:08) have noted that with environmental issues, the prospective partners – non-profit sector, governmental and business are different in so many ways and implementation is equally problematic as a result.

There are a number of parties contesting for the cave. Currently there is a community group from Monontsha Village (where the cave is located) that makes crafts at the bottom of the mountain where the cave is situated. This group also runs tours to the cave for a fee. The reception area, craft market and ablution facilities have been built by Maluti -A- Phofung Local Municipality with funds from National Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism. The Makholokoe Traditional Authority on the other side is claiming that the cave belong to them.

In view of the above, the ideal management plan is one which proposes a partnership approach that will ensure that all stakeholders benefit from the site. The partnership would require the involvement of the traditional council of the

Makholokoe and the community of Monontsha Village as well as the Local Municipality.

One of the responsibilities of traditional leaders, according to the White Paper on Traditional Leadership and Governance (July 2003), is to promote indigenous knowledge systems, music, oral history and commemorative events, and promote the preservation of heritage resources. Section 5, (4) of the National Heritage Resources Act 25, 1999 stipulates that heritage resources form an important part of the history and beliefs of communities and must be managed in a way that acknowledges the right of affected communities to be consulted and to participate in their management. The researcher discovered that the Makholokoe were affected by the events of Witsie's Cave and in this regard can be offered a big stake or major responsibility in its management as a heritage site.

It is also important not to leave out this community group as one of the partners in the management of the heritage site. The involvement of the community is supported by Neluvhalani (2006: 80) who while working for the South African Parks realised that "…the past becomes heritage when we connect with it emotionally and when it becomes a place of remembrance for present day communities. This is only possible with increased community participation in processes involving the management and development of cultural heritage sites within Parks. Community participation in such processes also ensures cultural relevance and sensitivity".

However, the proposed plan is one that can take the form of a Cultural Institution Act 119, 1999, where the declared institution must have a council. In the case of Witsie's Cave the proposal is to position the traditional council as the council to which the community group will account. The community group will then be tasked with the day- to-day operation of the cave like the making of crafts as well as conducting tours to the cave. Provision is made in the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act of 2003 for promotion of partnership between the municipality and traditional council where a service delivery agreement can be entered into. The local Municipality can in this case still be involved through financial support for further

development and maintenance of current infrastructure but leaving the Traditional Council and the community group to run the project.

The proposed plan is arrived at as a way of transforming the past imbalances. This will revive the old system of heritage management that used to be the responsibility of community. This practice is seconded by Abungu (1996:01) who states that traditionally heritage was managed communally or through elders in the community. This system was altered by colonial rule with the intention of placing the management under state function. The idea here was to dictate what had to be presented as heritage. Heritage was again used to forge identity in most African countries after such countries gained independence from colonial rule. Following this independence a huge part of heritage was then reconstructed from memory. This is in a way trying to restore pride and dignity in the system of traditional leadership. This is also attested to by one of the heritage gurus of the Republic of South Africa, Mathole Motshekga who believes that 'Traditional leaders and healers are central to the practice of African Culture and Religion' (Motshekga 2007:12).

It is not yet known whether Witsie's Cave will be graded at level 1 or 2 but taking for granted that it will at least be grade 2. This is a result of the fact that there is no local authority responsible for heritage resources. The PHRA can be another party that can be called on board to advise in terms of management and protection.

The International Cultural Tourism Charter (ICOMOS) has principles guiding the management of heritage sites.

Principle 4.1 reads as follows:

> "The rights and interests of the host community, at regional and local levels, property owners and relevant indigenous peoples who may exercise traditional rights or responsibilities over their own land and its significant sites, should be respected. They should be involved in establishing goals, strategies, policies and protocols for the identification, conservation, management, presentation and interpretation of their heritage resources,

cultural practices and contemporary cultural expressions, in the tourism context."

Moreover, Smith (2003:111) has also recognised the uniqueness of heritage sites and has come up with the suggestion that they should be treated differently. "Each World Heritage site is required to have a management plan, which outlines its policy towards conservation, visitors and local issues."

A partnership in the management of Witsie's Cave would ensure that all stakeholders' interests are looked after. It is obvious that the partners might come on board with different expectations, but it is through mutual understanding of those interested parties that hopefully a common understanding can be reached. Furthermore this facilitates the goal of ensuring Witsie's Cave is a heritage site taking account all relevant cultural values and indigenous knowledge systems, and the material or cultural heritage value with the least possible alteration or loss of it.

## 6.5. PROPOSED INTERPRETATION OF EVENTS AT WITSIE'S CAVE

The process of interpretation of heritage resource starts with the collection of those resources. What follows then is the documentation of the resources and their selection and preparation, in other words packaging. This is followed by interpretation. At this stage heritage resources are presented to the consumers. Other people prefer to call this stage the communication stage. Communication may come in many ways, either in the form of a display or exhibition, educational activities and publication, guided tours as well as information services. All these processes are supposed to involve the relevant stakeholders. In the case of Witsie's Cave the stakeholders involved will be all those identified in the previous section.

Guided tours are preferred by the researcher for communication of events of Witsie's Cave as they provide interaction between the presenter and the consumer. Given the nature of the physical environment, it is also crucial to have a guide accompanying visitors at all times for safety reasons.

It could be interesting to present all sides of the story around Witsie's Cave given the fact that Chapter Three outlined how other heritage sites were transformed to accommodate stories that were not told in the past.

According to Thabethe, (2008:09) one possibility of presenting different interpretations of controversial issues is to include both interpretations in the exhibition so that the visitor can see them and weigh them against each other.

Corsane (2005:09) has also noted that rather than being monovocal, outputs should allow for a polyvocality with representation being focused on all, no matter what their age, gender, class, ethnic background, religious persuasion or political allegiance. He argues that all these voices are significant in terms of the construction of individual, community, national and transnational identities. Furthermore the National Heritage Resources Act 25, 1999 has also positioned heritage resources as a platform for nation building. However, based on the fact that a group of women working at Witsie's Cave was prevented from narrating the stories of the Makholokoe, there is a possibility that other nations that may come up with their stories may not be welcomed but this should not be the case as it could hamper development of the cave.

**6.6. CONCLUSION:**

The area of Qwa Qwa is divided into three districts namely: Namahadi of the Bakwena, Phomolong of the Batlokwa and Makholokoeng that belongs to the Makholokoe. Both the Bakwena and the Batlokwa have since commemorated their centenaries. The Bakwena erected a statue of Chief Paulus Mopeli (half brother of Moshoehsoe who led the group that came to settle in Qwa Qwa in 1866) at Namahadi Village. The Batlokwa on the other hand established a monument enclosing artifacts that were used at the time of their arrival in Qwa Qwa

Both the Bakwena and the Batlokwa take pride in the heritage sites that belong to them. Perhaps the findings of this study will help restore the dignity and significance of Witsie's Cave and the Makholokoe will have a reason to celebrate their heritage

and mark their existence in Witsie'shoek. It can only be fair to also grant the Makholokoe ownership of Witsies Cave since the stories associated with the cave are those of the Makholokoe. Perhaps in future the next *Mokopu* (Pumpkin) Festival of the Makholokoe can be held at Witsie's Cave.

The recognition of Witsie's Cave as a heritage site would promote new and previously neglected research into the oral traditions and customs of the Makholokoe as per requirement of the National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999.

Nonetheless, there are quite a number of challenges that await the implementation of the new legislation that is meant to bring about transformation in the heritage sector. As it used to be in the Colonial and Apartheid eras, lives of most communities are still determined by other people. They are still faced with the cases where the leaders are still called traditional leaders instead of chiefs or kings. Doctors cannot be defined in African terms hence African doctors are only referred to as traditional doctors and sometimes witch doctors. Some structures are called houses and others huts and when the National Heritage Act recognises those structures over sixty years, the interpretation is only those western structures like Georgian and Victorian styles not taking into consideration *mohlongwafatshe* 'hut' in the mountains of Qwa Qwa with the qualities of being warm in winter and cool in summer.

In many ways the Apartheid system has succeeded in ensuring that customs and knowledge systems are not developed hence the slow pace of heritage transformation and that is why the idea of positioning traditional leaders and healers as custodians of the sacred spaces that form part of heritage still sounds very good in theory, but in practice different players still contest the sites.

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