

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE BAKWENA BA MOGOPA

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this chapter is to examine the history of the Bakwena ba Mogopa of the Ventersdorp district in order to understand their removal and its consequences. This chapter will among others refer to the origin of the Bakwena ba Mogopa, their relations with other Bakwena tribes, tribal migrations and settlements. The separation of the Bakwena ba Mogopa of the Ventersdorp district from the main tribe in 1868, the settlement on the farms Swartkop no. 605 IP and Hartebeeslaagte no. 82 IP (Ventersdorp district), as well as their political and economic structures and ensuing historical events, will also be discussed.

2.2 THE ORIGIN OF THE BAKWENA BA MOGOPA

The relations of the Bakwena ba Mogopa tribe with other Bakwena tribes actually necessitate a study of its own. Some of the tribes which had strong links with the Bakwena ba Mogopa are the Bangwaketse, Baphogole, Baphalane, Bakwena ba Modimosana, Bakwena ba ga Sechele and the Bafokeng.¹ The Bakwena assumedly crossed the Botletli (Zambezi) River from central Africa. This was before the eleventh century when the Bakwena was still part of the larger single Sotho group.² Later the Sotho group

¹ P.L. Breutz, *A history of the Batswana and origin of Bophuthatswana: A handbook of a survey of the tribes of the Batswana, S. Ndebele, Qwaqwa and Botswana*, p.268.

² National Archives Depository (NAD), Pretoria, N.J. van Warmelo Collection, K32/25, S.385: G.P.Sepeng, *History of the Bakwena ba Mogopa and the Baphalane*, 20 September 1939, p.1; P.L. Breutz, *The tribes of Rustenburg and Pilansberg districts*, p.84.

subdivided into a number of groups, namely the Bahurutshe, the Bakwena, the Bakgatla, Bakgalagadi, Bafokeng and the Barolong.³

The BaHurutshe-Kwena group's progenitor was Malope. Malope was succeeded by Masilo and it was during his rule around the 15th century that the Bakwena broke away and settled between the Marico and Crocodile rivers. Some of the Bakwena moved southwards across the Vaal River and settled at Ntsuanatsatsi near the Bafokeng. Some settled north of the Vaal River near Heidelberg. The groups under Tsetelo and Monaheng settled further south in the Orange Free State near Bethlehem and Fouriesburg respectively. Mophaheng was later succeeded by Moshoeshe in 1786.⁴

As the Sotho communities grew in numbers and their cattle increased, quarrels arose, and tensions and power struggles ensued. The different chiefs and subchiefs were continually locked in power struggles. This led to instability, affecting the entire region. The communities had either to protect themselves or attack their neighbours. This continued into the **Mfecane**.⁵

The Bakwena group which remained in the area between the Marico and Crocodile rivers experienced problems. There was competition for resources, which led to a subdivision of the group. Two chiefdoms, the Bangwaketse and the Bangwato, broke away and settled in the present Botswana.⁶ Another group broke away from the Bangwaketse. They migrated along the Marico River and settled at Rathateng, also known as Matlhare, on the lower reaches of the Crocodile River. The area consisted of different settlements, of which Bethanie and Makolokwe were the main ones. They were under chief Setlhare, the father of Mogopa. He renamed his tribe the Bakwena ba

³ H.J. van Aswegen, **History of South Africa to 1854**, p.60.

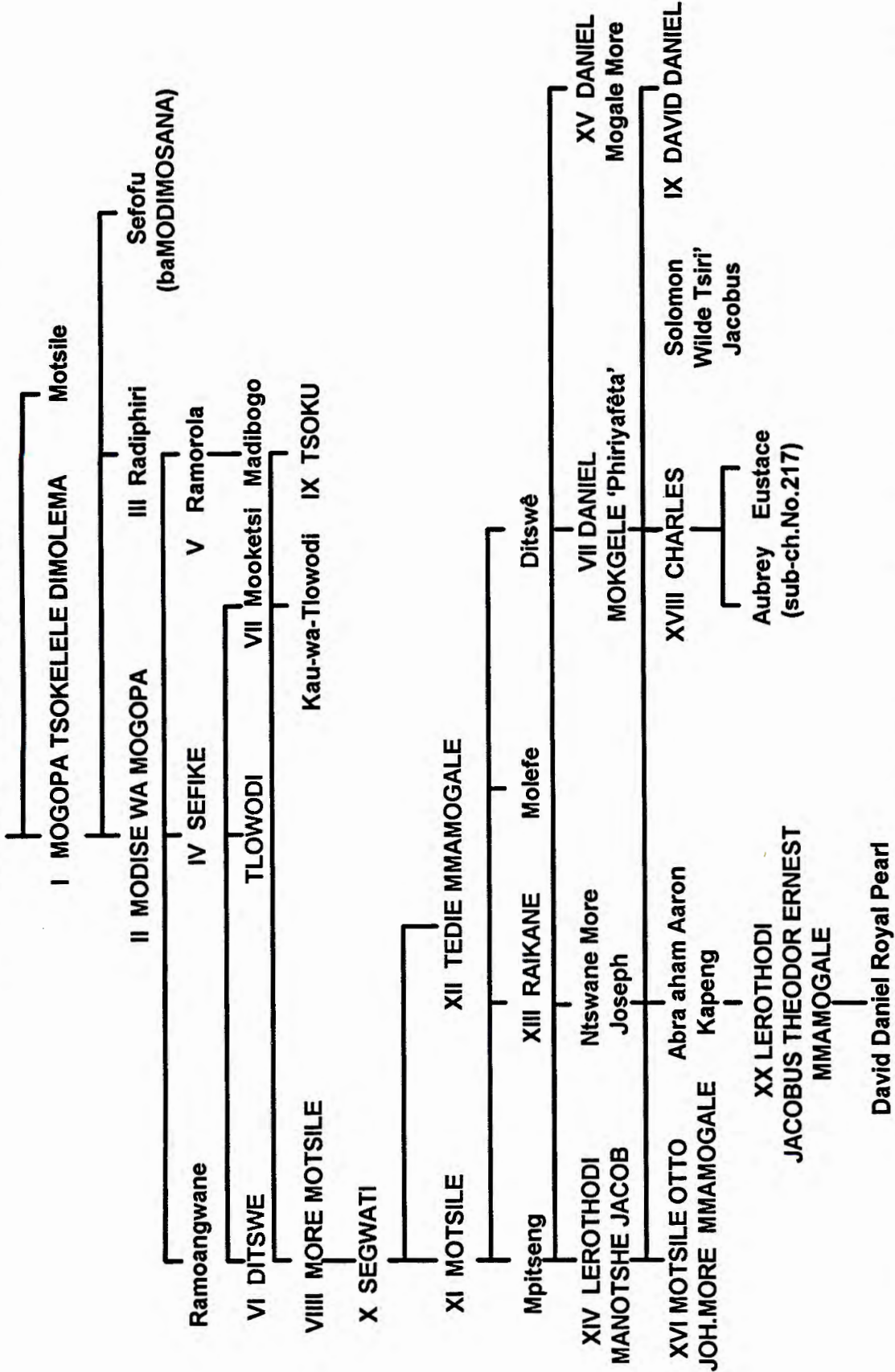
⁴ H.J. van Aswegen, **History of South Africa to 1854**, p.62; C.J. Maritz, **Voogbestuur en nasievorming by die Batswana van die RSA** (unp. Ph.D. thesis, PU for CHE, 1976), pp.236, 259.

⁵ H.J. van Aswegen, **History of South Africa to 1854**, p.62.

⁶ H.J. van Aswegen, **History of South Africa to 1854**, p.62; C.J. Maritz, **Voogbestuur en nasievorming by die Batswana van die RSA** (unp. Ph.D. thesis, PU for CHE, 1976), p.259.

SKELETON GENEALOGY OF CHIEFS, MORE/MMAMOGALE

Setlhare (younger son of NGWAKETSE)



Source: P.L. Breutz, A History of the Batswana and origin of Bophuthatswana: A handbook of a survey of the tribes of the Batswana, S. Ndebele, QwaQwa and Botswana, p.299.

Mogopa and claimed that it was the original name of the tribe.⁷ His claim might be based on the fact that the Bangwaketse were the offshoot of the Bakwena and the name Bakwena was restored to the tribe.

The tribe was politically organised into **dikgoro** (clans). A **kgoro** was usually composed of families that were in most cases closely related to their headman through descent in the male line from one common or assumed ancestor. These **dikgoro** formed the most important parts of the tribe as their **dikgosana** (headmen) formed the tribal council under the tribal chief. There was a distinction between the **dikgoro** of the nobility, i.e. those related to the chief, who had the **kwena** (crocodile) as their totem and the **dikgoro** of the commoners.⁸

By the beginning of the 19th century (\pm 1820s), the nobility had the following **dikgoro** listed in order of rank: Thekiso, Ramarola, Kgola, Masilo, Manare ba Makgowe, Manatshana ba Thuding, Madibo ba ga Seleele, Magaletlwa ba Kuwanyane, Masweu ba Sedupe, Masodimogolong ba Mmatedie and Digogotlo ba ga Mmadijo.⁹

The **dikgoro** of the commoners had their own **dikgosana** (headmen) and different totems (**diboka**). The commoners were mostly integrated into the Bakwena ba Mogopa from different tribes. Their totems indicated the tribes from which they branched. At around 1820, the following **dikgoro** with their **dikgosana** and **diboka** existed:

⁷ NAD, Pretoria, N.J. van Warmelo Collection, K32/25, S.385: G.P. Sepeng, History of the Bakwena ba Mogopa and the Baphalane, 20 September 1939, p.1; H.J. Redelinghuis, 'n **Onderzoek na die ekonomiese lewe van die Bakwena ba Mogopa** (unp. M.A. dissertation, University of Pretoria, 1968), pp.4-5.

⁸ T.J.J. Vermaak, 'n **Onderzoek na die sosiale organisasie en politieke stelsel van die Bakwena ba Mogopa** (unp. M.A. dissertation, University of Pretoria, 1966), p. 40; I. Schapera, **A handbook of Tswana law and custom**, p.20.

⁹ T.J.J. Vermaak, 'n **Onderzoek na die sosiale organisasie en politieke stelsel van die Bakwena ba Mogopa** (unp. M.A. dissertation, University of Pretoria, 1966), p.40; P.L. Breutz, **The tribes of Rustenburg and Pilansberg districts**, p.96.

KGORO	KGOSANA	SEBOKA
Mogajane wa Morare	George Mahuma	Thakadu (ant bear)
Mogajane wa Mosupatsela	Isaac Mahuma	Thakadu (ant bear)
Seregole	Isaac Madingwane	Phiri (hyena)
Morolong	Phillip Tshikane	Tlou (elephant)
Motlase wa Mongwato	Nti Moroko	Kwena (crocodile)
Motlase wa Molatsi	Rauwane Modibane	Kwena (crocodile)
Mabiletsa	J. Mabiletsa	Noko (porcupine) ¹⁰

Most of the **dikgoro** lived in different areas within the tribal land. These areas later developed into the present villages of the Bakwena ba Mogopa tribe in the Odi district, which stretches from Pretoria in the east to Rustenburg in the west. These villages are Bethanie (also known as Mokwena), Makolokwe, Hebron, Jericho, Barseba, Modikwe, Wonderkop and Rankelenyane.¹¹

The Bakwena ba Mogopa as indicated in this section, had broken away from the Bangwaketse of **kgosi** Seepapitso. They were led by **kgosi** Setlhare and settled at Rathateng. They were related to tribes such as the Baphalane, the Bafokeng, the Bakwena ba Modimosana, Bakwena ba ga Sechele and the Bangwaketse. The tribe was (for administrative purposes), organised into different **dikgoro**. The **dikgoro** occupied different areas within the tribal land and these areas eventually developed into different villages of the Bakwena ba Mogopa.

¹⁰ P.L. Breutz, **A history of the Batswana and origin of Bophuthatswana: A handbook of a survey of the tribes of the Batswana, S. Ndebele, Qwaqwa and Botswana**, pp.305-306; T.J.J. Vermaak, 'n **Ondersoek na die sosiale organisasie en politieke stelsel van die Bakwena ba Mogopa** (unp. M.A. dissertation, University of Pretoria, 1966), p.40; S. More, **personal interview, 28 September 1994**.

¹¹ P.L. Breutz, **A history of the Batswana and origin of Bophuthatswana: A handbook of a survey of the tribes of the Batswana, S.Ndebele, Qwaqwa and Botswana**, pp.305-306; D. Molefe, **personal interview, 10 April 1996**.

2.3 THE ATTACKS FROM MZILIKAZI AND DINGANE

The beginning of the 19th century saw the history of the Bakwena ba Mogopa being influenced by several important events. One of these was the **Mfecane**, which was a period of violent wars among the black tribes in Southern Africa. The wars started among the rising Nguni chiefdoms in Zululand, but spread to affect almost all the blacks, including the Bakwena ba Mogopa.¹² One of the strong leaders of the **Mfecane** was Mzilikazi, who rebelled against Shaka in 1821.¹³ The entry of the Matebele of Mzilikazi in the Transvaal around 1825 created problems for the Batswana tribes.

The Bakwena ba Mogopa experienced problems even before the arrival of Mzilikazi. They had split into two sections due to the feud between More and Tsoku over the chieftainship. More acted as a regent on behalf of Tsoku when Tsoku's father, Ditswe, died around 1758. More had succeeded Mooketsi, who was too old to act as regent. More refused to hand over the chieftainship to Tsoku when the latter was old enough to rule and broke away and led his section to Legwatladi. Tsoku became unpopular due to his arrogance, ruthlessness and cruelty. He slaughtered the people's cattle and confiscated all the grey animals to be his property. He also disregarded his neighbouring tribes and ill-treated the Batlase chief. The majority of the Bakwena ba Mogopa left him to join More.¹⁴ The tribe was also weakened by the wars against tribes such as the Bapo, Bakgatla ba Mosetlha, Bamako (Batlhako), Bahwaduba and Bapedi ba Mmalekutu around 1820.¹⁵ These wars arose partly as a result of disputes due to interaction, a desire for domination (power) and competition for the natural resources of the land.

¹² N. Parsons, **A new history of Southern Africa**, p.68.

¹³ J.D. Omer-Cooper, **History of Southern Africa**, p.62.

¹⁴ P.L. Breutz, **The tribes of Rustenburg and Pilansberg districts**, pp.85-86; P.L. Breutz, **Die stamme van die distrik Ventersdorp**, p.94; NAD, Pretoria, N.J. van Warmelo Collection, K32/25, S.385: P.G. Sepeng, History of the Bakwena ba Mogopa and the Baphalane, 20 September 1939, pp.5-6.

¹⁵ P.L. Breutz, **The tribes of Rustenburg and Pilansberg districts**, p.87.

Mzilikazi attacked the Bakwena ba Mogopa at Katutu (Silkaatsnek) between Brits and Pretoria in 1827. After two battles, the Bakwena ba Mogopa was defeated. **Kgosi** More and his son, Segwati, were killed during the attack. The livestock of the Bakwena ba Mogopa, particularly cattle, were captured. Some of the Bakwena ba Mogopa (young men and women) were taken captive to the camps of the Matebele near Tshwenyane. The young men were ordered to join the Matebele regiment on expeditions. The other Bakwena ba Mogopa people fled from Ramotlotlwe to Morutlwana near Soutpan (Hammanskraal) and Makapanstat.¹⁶

The Matebele attack left the Bakwena ba Mogopa scattered in a number of areas. They lived in areas such as Morutlhwane near Soutpan in the Hammanskraal district and Makapanstad among the Bakgatla and Matshakgame near Potgietersrus. Chief Segwati's sons, Motsile and Tede Mmamogale, ruled over the scattered remnants of the Bakwena ba Mogopa. Motsile returned to Ramotlotlwe and Tede Mmamogale ruled at Morutlhwane and later moved to Diditlwe near the Apies River.¹⁷

In 1830 the Bakwena ba Mogopa recognised Mzilikazi as their overlord or paramount chief. It should, however, be clearly stated that this was an imposed recognition. The Bakwena ba Mogopa were forced to adopt certain Zulu cultural values. They had to refrain from cutting their hair and were not allowed to wear their traditional dress, **mosugêlo**. Instead, they were expected to wear the Zulu **umutsha**. This imposed acculturation was not acceptable to the majority of the Bakwena ba Mogopa and eventually caused internal conflict. A small section of the Bakwena ba Mogopa under **Kgosana** Mogajane supported Mzilikazi. This was because **kgosana** Mogajane was not on good terms with **kgosi** Tede Mmamogale. When Tede and Mogajane

¹⁶ N. Parsons, *A new history of Southern Africa*, pp.87-88; P.L. Breutz, *A history of the Batswana and origin of Bophuthatswana: A handbook of a survey of the tribes of the Batswana, S. Ndebele, Qwaqwa and Botswana*, p.300.

¹⁷ T.J.J. Vermaak, 'n *Onderzoek na die sosiale organisasie en politieke stelsel van die Bakwena ba Mogopa* (unp. M.A. dissertation, University of Pretoria, 1966), p.40; P.L. Breutz, *The tribes of Rustenburg and Pilansberg districts*, p.90.

quarrelled, Mogajane left with his group to Matshakgame at the junction of Hex and Elands Rivers around 1830-1832.¹⁸

In 1834 Motsile died and Tedie Mmamogale was recognised as the tribal **kgosi** (supreme chief) of all the Bakwena ba Mogopa. This included a section of the Bakwena ba Mogopa that had been ruled by Motsile since the death of **kgosi** More and his son, Segwati. **Kgosi** Tedie Mmamogale, also known as Mmamogale, lived peacefully with the Matebele until the arrival of the Zulu army sent by Dingane.¹⁹

In 1835 Dingane sent his army to attack Mzilikazi as punishment and to recover the raided cattle Mzilikazi had refused to hand over to Shaka. Two separate battles were fought at Tshwane (Pretoria) and near the present Silwerkrans post office along the Tholane River in the Madikwe district. The Bakwena ba Mogopa were affected by these attacks, particularly at Tshwane, because they had to assist their overlord, Mzilikazi. They were, however, defeated by the Zulus of Dingane and some of them (men, women and children) were captured and taken to Zululand.²⁰ This crippled the tribe further.

The attacks by the two **Mfecane** leaders from Zululand, Mzilikazi and Dingane, crippled the Bakwena ba Mogopa. In the first place the attack by Mzilikazi led to the disintegration of the tribe into different groups, going their own directions and ultimately settling in different areas. Some of these areas were outside the tribal boundaries, such as Makapanstad, Morutlhwane and Matshakgame. The Matebele attack also caused internal conflict among the

¹⁸ P.L. Breutz, **The tribes of Rustenburg and Pilansberg districts**, p.90.

¹⁹ P.L. Breutz, **A history of the Batswana and origin of Bophuthatswana: A handbook of a survey of the tribes of the Batswana, S.Ndebele, Qwaqwa and Botswana**, p.301; P.L. Breutz, **The tribes of Rustenburg and Pilansberg districts**, p.90; C.J. Maritz, **Voogbestuur en nasievorming by die Batswana van die RSA** (unp. Ph.D. thesis, PU for CHE, 1976), p.261.

²⁰ P.L. Breutz, **A history of the Batswana and origin of Bophuthatswana: A handbook of a survey of the tribes of the Batswana, S.Ndebele, Qwaqwa and Botswana**, p.301; C.J. Maritz, **Voogbestuur en nasievorming by die Batswana van die RSA** (unp. Ph.D. thesis, PU for CHE, 1976), p.295.

Bakwena ba Mogopa, such as a quarrel between **kgosana** Mogajane and **kgosi** Tedie Mmamogale. The recognition of Tedie Mmamogale as the **kgosi** of all the Bakwena ba Mogopa in 1834 brought peace to the area. However, this peaceful existence was shortlived, as it was disturbed by Dingane's attack on Mzilikazi in 1835. The Zulu attack further crippled the Bakwena ba Mogopa.

2.4 THE BOER ARRIVAL AND MIGRATION TO BASUTHO-LAND (LESOTHO)

The Boer entry into the Transvaal from 1835 brought about some hardships for the Bakwena ba Mogopa. The Boers found the Bakwena ba Mogopa in the following areas: Bethanie, Makolokwe, Moruthwane, Matshakgame and other smaller areas in the Rustenburg district.²¹ In 1837 the Boer commandos, with the assistance of the Batswana, drove both the Matebele and Zulu warriors from the Transvaal. This brought some relief for the Bakwena ba Mogopa and other Batswana tribes. The defeat of the Mfecane warriors from the Transvaal was immediately followed by more Boer entrants into the Transvaal who came to settle permanently in the area. At that time the Bakwena ba Mogopa people were very poor. In order to survive, they had to take up employment with the white farmers (Boers). The Boers gave them cattle in return for their labour. Although this was a totally new concept for the Bakwena ba Mogopa, it helped them to rebuild their stock. Their stock increased, another relief brought about by the Boer entrants into their area.²²

The frustrating conditions under which the Bakwena ba Mogopa lived, gave the Boers the opportunity of penetrating the poor community with ease. When the Bakwena ba Mogopa showed unwillingness to continue to work for the white farmers, the white farmers (Boers) started to impose forced labour. The

²¹ T.J.J. Vermaak, 'n **Ondersoek na die sosiale organisasie en politieke stelsel van die Bakwena ba Mogopa** (unp. M.A. dissertation, University of Pretoria, 1966), pp.18-19.

²² P.L. Breutz, **The tribes of Rustenburg and Pilansberg districts**, p.9; P.L. Breutz, **A history of the Batswana and origin of Bophuthatswana: A handbook of a survey of the tribes of the Batswana, S. Ndebele, Qwaqwa and Botswana**, p.302; S. More, **personal interview**, 28 September 1994.

Boers demanded that **kgosi** Tedi Mmamogale should make his people available for work. It became difficult for **kgosi** Tedi Mmamogale to force his people to enlist with the Boers for work. This angered the Boers to the extent that they captured **kgosi** Mmamogale and assaulted him. He was accused of being unwilling to make his subjects work for the white farmers. The ill-treatment continued for some time until **kgosi** Tedi Mmamogale could no longer withstand it. Mmamogale then led his people to King Moshoeshe I's country, Basutholand, in 1845.²³ As stated earlier, the Basotho were the offshoot of the Bakwena, so it was easy for **kgosi** Mmamogale to negotiate a refuge for his people in Basutholand.

The trek of the Bakwena ba Mogopa to Basutholand was in most cases carried out during the night to avoid being captured by the Boers. They drove their livestock during the day and hid themselves in the long grass along the rivers and mountains, especially when they realised that the Boers were tracing them. The Boers followed them up to the Vaal River.²⁴

The Bakwena ba Mogopa continued their difficult journey through the plains of the Orange Free State until they reached Basutholand. They were heartily welcomed by King Moshoeshe I, who was originally a Mokwena of the Mokoteli clan. He gave them land to settle temporarily. Two years after their arrival in Basutholand, the Seqiti War broke out between the Basotho and the Boers. The war lasted four years and was accompanied by some of the worst famines. Moshoeshe I proposed a peace settlement which was accepted by the Boers, bringing the war to an end in 1866.²⁵

²³ NAD, Pretoria, N.J. van Warmelo Collection, K32/23, S.78: T.S. More, Additions to history of Bakwena ba Mogopa of Ventersdorp, 27 September 1938, pp.1-2; P.L. Breutz, **A history of the Batswana and origin of Bophuthatswana: A handbook of a survey of the tribes of the Batswana, S. Ndebele, Qwaqwa and Botswana**, p.302; D. Molefe, **personal interview**, 3 April 1996; C.J. Maritz, **Voogbestuur en nasievorming by die Batswana van die RSA** (unp. Ph.D. thesis, PU for CHE, 1976), p.261.

²⁴ NAD, Pretoria, N.J. van Warmelo Collection, K32/23, S.66: T.S. More, Additions to history of Bakwena ba Mogopa of Ventersdorp, 27 August 1938, pp.1-2.

²⁵ M. Kgatitsoe, **personal interview**, 3 April 1996; NAD, Pretoria, N.J. van Warmelo Collection, K32/23, S.66: T.S. More, Additions to history of Bakwena ba Mogopa of Ventersdorp, 27 August 1938, p.25.

After the war, **kgosi** Tedie Mmamogale sought permission from King Moshoeshoe I to return to his land in the Transvaal, which was granted. **Kgosi** Tedie Mmamogale led his people on another long journey to Matlhare in 1868. Due to the great famine experienced at that time, some of his people had enlisted with the white farmers as labourers. Those people lived on the white farms around the following towns: Heilbron, Vredefort, Kroonstad, Bothaville, Balfour and Heidelberg. These people remained behind when the main tribe returned home. They lived on those farms until 1913, when they became the eventual buyers and residents of Mogopa in the Ventersdorp district under **kgosana** Thomas Matladi More.²⁶

The Boer entry into the Transvaal also brought problems to the Bakwena ba Mogopa. Imposed labour on the Bakwena ba Mogopa by the Boers forced the tribe to leave their area and seek refuge in Basutholand. The Seqiti War of 1862 and the great famine experienced in Basutholand at that time forced the Bakwena ba Mogopa to return home. During the journey some of the Bakwena ba Mogopa separated from the main tribe and eventually became buyers and residents of Mogopa in the Ventersdorp district.

2.5 THE SETTLEMENT OF THE BAKWENA BA MOGOPA AT MOGOPA

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Bakwena ba Mogopa who remained dispersed in the Orange Free State, started facing problems. They were unhappy about the manner in which the Boers treated them. They clashed over cattle and land. They were paid in livestock in return for their labour and this helped them to build livestock numbers quickly. The Boers became concerned about the rapid growth of the livestock belonging to the Bakwena ba Mogopa living on their farms. This meant a need for more land for both the Boers and the Bakwena ba Mogopa. The Bakwena ba Mogopa had to reduce

²⁶ P.L. Breutz, **Die stamme van die distrik Ventersdorp**, p.95; NAD, Pretoria, N.J. van Warmelo Collection, K32/23, S.66: T.S. More, Additions to history of Bakwena ba Mogopa of Ventersdorp, 27 August 1938, p.3.

their livestock or they could no longer be paid in cattle. When this failed to resolve the problem, the Boers influenced the Government to impose cattle tax on the Bakwena ba Mogopa. It was felt that this would restrict the growth of the livestock numbers, as the Bakwena ba Mogopa would feel bound to reduce their livestock to avoid more tax. The Bakwena ba Mogopa did not accept this but instead started looking for their own land.²⁷

Kgosi Motsile Johannes Otto More Mmamogale, known as Motsile II, who became the **kgosi** of the Bakwena ba Mogopa in 1905, became concerned about the Bakwena ba Mogopa people who were scattered in the Orange Free State without land of their own. The Bakwena ba Mogopa heard that the Berlin Missionary Society was selling the farm Swartkop no. 605 IP in the Ventersdorp district and approached the Missionary Society to negotiate the buying of the farm.²⁸ **Kgosana** Thomas More organised the Bakwena ba Mogopa and several meetings were held to discuss the issue of buying land of their own. **Kgosi** Motsile II also assisted in the issue. The final resolution on the issue was taken at a meeting held on 3 March 1911 at Henningvlak in the Heilbron district. It was agreed to buy the farm Swartkop. All the people had to sell cattle to pay for the land. **Kgosana** Thomas More and Daniel More were responsible for the collection of the contributions from all the members of the Bakwena ba Mogopa under their jurisdiction.²⁹

After all the hard work by both **kgosana** Thomas More and Daniel More, the farm Swartkop no. 605 IP, 18 km north of Ventersdorp was bought for the resettlement of the Bakwena ba Mogopa who had remained scattered on the white farms in the Orange Free State and southern Transvaal (Heidelberg) when the main section of the tribe return home from Basutholand. The farm

²⁷ B. Pooe, **personal interview**, 3 April 1996.

²⁸ D. Molefe, **personal interview**, 3 April 1996; NAD, Pretoria, N.J. van Warmelo Collection, K32/23, S.78: T.S. More, Additions to history of Bakwena ba Mogopa of Ventersdorp, 27 September 1938, p.3.

²⁹ NAD, Pretoria, N.J. van Warmelo Collection, K32/23, S.78: T.S. More, Additions to history of Bakwena ba Mogopa of Ventersdorp, 27 September 1938, pp.3-4; A Boikanyo, **personal interview**, 3 April 1996.

was bought in 1911, however the tribe only occupied it in 1913 after it had been registered as their property. Then they started rebuilding a community. This coincided with the passing of the Native Land Act of 1913, which ironically later served as the basis for removing the tribe from the very same area. Their settlement became known as Mogopa.³⁰

By 1931, the tribe had increased and there was need for more land. The community raised more money from the farming enterprises on Swartkop and bought a second farm, Hartebeeslaagte no. 82IP, from the Lydenburg Gold Field Co. (Ltd). It was a fertile farm, good for both grazing and crop farming and adjacent to the first farm, Swartkop. The buying of Hartebeeslaagte orchestrated self-sufficiency and the building of a modest village.³¹ The two farms did not appear in the list of scheduled areas under the Native Land Act of 1913.³² This meant that they were outside areas reserved for black occupation thus placed at a disadvantage (see Chapter 3).

The hardships faced by the Bakwena ba Mogopa living on various white farms in the Orange Free State and in the southern Transvaal compelled them to buy land of their own. The farms Swartkop and Hartebeestlaagte in the Ventersdorp district were therefore bought with contributions from all the members of the Bakwena ba Mogopa in those areas.

³⁰ M. Kgatitsoe, **personal interview**, 25 September 1995; **The Sunday Press**, 4 December 1983; **Black Sash**, "Mogopa rebuilds the story of resistance", **Sash**, vol. 26, no. 4, February 1984, p.2; NAD, Pretoria, N.J. van Warmelo Collection, K32/23, S.78: T.S. More, Additions to history of Bakwena ba Mogopa of Ventersdorp, 27 September 1938, pp.3-4.

³¹ C.L. Peart, "Forced removals: One community's experience", **Arena**, 1994, pp.21-22.

³² Union of South Africa, **Statutes of the Union of South Africa, 1913**, pp.460-474.

2.6 THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ORGANISATION OF THE BAKWENA BA MOGOPA OF THE VENTERSDORP DISTRICT

2.6.1 Political organisation

The Bakwena ba Mogopa of Ventersdorp, like their senior Bakwena ba Mogopa of Rustenburg and other Bakwena tribes, consisted of **dikgoro**. By 1913, immediately after they had occupied Swartkop, they consisted of the following **dikgoro**:

KGORE	KGOSANA	SEBOKA
Mogopa (royal clan)	T.M.S. More	Kwena
Thekiso	P. Thekiso	Kwena
Ramorola	J. Matheko	Kwena
Motlase	M.J. Rathebe	Kwena
Kgatitsoe	J. Lekome	Kwena
Mpse	A. Mpse	Kgabo ³³

All the **dikgosana**, together with the chief, formed the **kgotla** (tribal council). In addition there was the **ntôna**, who was the chief's advisor. The first **ntôna** (advisor) to **kgosana** Thomas Matladi More was Isaac Kau. Although the **dikgosana** had access to Thomas More, the **ntôna** served as a link between them and Thomas More. Cases which could not be solved by **dikgosana** in their areas, were lodged with him and in turn he discussed them with Thomas More. Together they decided whether they needed to bring these cases before the tribal **kgotla**. The **ntôna**, together with the chief, decided the dates

³³ P.L. Breutz, *Die stamme van die distrik Ventersdorp*, p.91; J. Rampa, *personal interview*, 16 February 1994.

for the meetings of the **kgotla** and **dipitso** (general/public meetings). The **dipitso**, which were not regularly held, were attended by men only.³⁴

Headmanship among the Bakwena ba Mogopa of Ventersdorp was not strictly hereditary. It was not as in the cases of other Batswana tribes, including the Bakwena ba Mogopa of the Rustenburg district, where the **kgosi** nominated the **dikgosana** or even some inheriting headmanship from their fathers. In the case of this section, although they were ruled by the More family of the royal **kgoro**, the tribe had the right to democratically elect their **kgosana** from the More family. After the passing of the Black Administration Act, no. 38 of 1927, the elected **dikgosana** were officially recognised by the then Minister of Native Affairs. This was always done by the Native Commissioner on behalf of the Minister.³⁵

The first **kgosana** of the Bakwena ba Mogopa of Ventersdorp was Thomas Matladi More, who was nominated by **kgosi** Motsile II to look after the scattered members of the Bakwena ba Mogopa. He was nominated because he was of the royal family and was the only senior royalist among those members of the Bakwena ba Mogopa. He was born on 23 February 1875 at Doorndraai in the Heilbron district in the Orange Free State. He received primary school education, could speak Afrikaans fluently and was a Methodist Church elder. He married Selina of the Bakubung in 1901 at Molotestad according to Christian tradition. They were blessed with a daughter and six sons, namely Noah (1902), Isaac (1908), Lucas (1912), Nimrod (1915), Henry (1918) and Thomas (1921).³⁶

When Thomas Matladi More became **kgosana** of the tribe in 1905, they were still scattered over the Orange Free State. He assembled the Bakwena ba Mogopa and organised them to buy the land in the Ventersdorp district as

³⁴ P.L. Breutz, **Die stamme van die distrik Ventersdorp**, p.98; T.S. More, **personal interview**, 20 June 1994.

³⁵ J.R. More, **personal interview**, 8 January 1994.

³⁶ P.L. Breutz, **Die stamme van die distrik Ventersdorp**, p.97; T.S. More, **personal interview**, 20 June 1994.

stated earlier. He recognised **kgosi** Mmamogale as the tribal **kgosi** of all the Bakwena ba Mogopa. From 1916 to 1922, Thomas More took up employment with the Potchefstroom Municipality. For that period Piet Phiri More acted on his behalf as **kgosana**. Piet More died in 1922 and Thomas More had to return home to take up tribal headmanship. He ruled this tribe until his death in 1959.³⁷

After the death of Thomas More, the following people ruled the Bakwena ba Mogopa of Ventersdorp: Noah More, the oldest son of **kgosana** Thomas More succeeded his father as **kgosana** in 1959. He ruled for only three years and died in 1961. He was the only son of Thomas More who had ruled this tribe.

Diale Simon More ruled from 1962 to 1978. He was the son of Piet More. In 1978 he was accused of failing to execute his duties as the tribe leader and of mismanaging tribal funds. He was subsequently deposed as **kgosana** of the tribe.

Jacob Raseloko Lonki More, an ex-policeman at Carletonville, was appointed **kgosana** of the Bakwena ba Mogopa in 1978. He was appointed on behalf of T.S. More, the youngest son of **kgosana** Thomas More. T.S. More, a former school principal in Coligny, declined tribal headmanship and instead served the Bophuthatswana government as consul in Coligny. Jacob More ruled the tribe until the 1984 forced removals split the tribe into two factions.³⁸ He continued to rule one faction (see Chapter 4).

The tribe enjoyed political stability and existed peacefully for almost seventy years since their arrival at Mogopa. The appointment of Jacob More as

³⁷ P.L. Breutz, **Die stamme van die distrik Ventersdorp**, p.97; **The Sowetan**, 3 October 1982; Mogopa Tribal Office (MTO), Pachsdraai, Correspondence: Letter, Distriksverteenwoordiger: Binnelandse Sake (Lichtenburg)/Streeksverteenwoordiger: Departement van Ontwikkelingshulp (Soshanguve), 4 February 1986.

³⁸ J.R. More, **personal interview**, 8 January 1994; MTO, Pachsdraai, Correspondence: Letter Distriksverteenwoordiger: Binnelandse Sake (Lichtenburg)/Streeksverteenwoordiger: Departement van Ontwikkelingshulp (Soshanguve), 4 February 1986.

kgosana in 1978 disturbed this situation. The people complained that **kgosana** Jacob More violated the democratic principles of the tribe. He was accused of fining the people large sums of money and even cattle for offences which had never appeared before the tribal **kgotla**. It was further claimed that no receipts were issued for those fines and that there were no records that such monies were deposited into the tribal account. This is cited as one of the reasons why the tribe split into two main factions immediately before the removals.³⁹ These allegations were dismissed by B. Rampou, the secretary of the planning committee for the removal of the Bakwena ba Mogopa. He explained that the people who accused Jacob More had failed to attend the **dipitso** to discuss the issue and give evidence.⁴⁰ The Government appointed a committee to investigate the allegations. The investigation report cleared **kgosana** Jacob More from the allegations as there was no evidence.⁴¹

In this section it has been shown how the Bakwena ba Mogopa of Ventersdorp, like their senior Bakwena ba Mogopa of Rustenburg, were organised in different **dikgoro** for governmental or administrative purposes. The heads of the **dikgoro** formed the tribal **kgotla** under the leadership of **kgosana** Thomas More and those who ruled after him. It also became clear that headmanship for this tribe was not strictly hereditary, even though elected leaders were drawn from the More clan only. There was political stability and peaceful existence at Mogopa.

³⁹ Black Sash, "Mogopa rebuilds a story of resistance", **Sash**, vol. 26, no.4, February 1984, p.2.

⁴⁰ B.M. Rampou, **personal interview**, 24 May 1995.

⁴¹ Land Affairs Department (LAD), Pretoria, Mogopa Case Correspondence, T8/7/2/2/V13/9: Memorandum, responding to Lauren Gower (Sunday Press) by the Department of Co-operation and Development, 9 December 1983, p.1; J. Rampa, **personal interview**, 16 February 1994.

2.6.2 Economic conditions⁴²

The village was divided into family plots (**ditsha**) for building. There were also fields (**masimo**) for cultivation belonging to different families. The grazing land was divided into camps but were communally used. The community practised farming by integrating cattle farming and dry land crops. The main crop was mealies although sunflower and beans were extensively cultivated. The dry land crops in the Maize Triangle had a short agricultural cycle and it gave the community a greater advantage over the communities in the bushveld farming areas. The area was well-watered and did not need irrigation schemes.⁴³

Some families combined cash income from to migrant labour with the benefits of subsistence crops. They left their homes to work in the cities and towns and came home occasionally. They became migrant workers and played an important role in the funding of community developments such as schools, water supply and other projects.⁴⁴

There were clearly-defined economic responsibilities and labour differentiation for members of families and for the community in general. Young people or teenagers helped with the cultivation of the family fields. As young adults, they would obtain employment in towns and remit cash incomes. As wage earners, they would help to pay for development projects of the community. The middle-aged adults continued to be migrant workers in towns such as Johannesburg and Potchefstroom. They would build up cash reserves to be used for agriculture on their return home after their service in towns. People in their late-middle age would return home to take up full-time

⁴² Although H.J. Redelinghuis wrote about the economy of the Bakwena ba Mogopa, his work, '**n Ondersoek na die ekonomiese lewe van die Bakwena ba Mogopa** does not include the Ventersdorp group.

⁴³ Cheadle Thompson and Haysom Attorneys (CTH), Johannesburg, Mogopa removal papers: H. Winkler, Land proposal for Mogopa, Annexure 2, July 1990, p.5.

⁴⁴ CTH, Johannesburg, Mogopa removal papers: H. Winkler, Land proposal for Mogopa, Annexure 2, July 1990, p.6; J.R. More, **personal interview**, 10 January 1994.

farming. These were the people who owned tractors and sold surplus products to co-operatives.⁴⁵

The old people, not capable of farming anymore, were cared for by their family members. In cases where they had no family members to support them, they would let their fields to others on a share-cropping basis. These were usually let to the more ambitious and capital intensive farmers who needed more land. This assured the old people of mealies and beans which formed their staple food. This system had great benefits in terms of social cohesion and care for the aged and those incapable of working.⁴⁶

The division of the tribe into **dikgoro** facilitated communal labour, which was highly needed during planting and harvesting. The families of each **kgoro** worked together during those times. Those who were not co-operative, and were not prepared to participate in communal labour, were denied access to community resources. Access to such resources was based on a contributory basis and this policy applied to the community as a whole.⁴⁷

Allocation of resources such as fields to new families (who were allowed to settle at Mogopa), was done under strict control of the special committee of the tribal council. Such allocations were determined by the availability of sufficient grazing and arable land. Tenant farming did not exist as a practice. The community strongly believed that agricultural utilization of land was in any case more economical than renting it out.⁴⁸

Although the Bakwena ba Mogopa of Ventersdorp did not prefer to rent land to other people, there were cases where some unused land benefitted the

⁴⁵ CTH, Johannesburg, Mogopa removal papers: H. Winkler, Land proposal for Mogopa, Annexure 2, July 1990, p.6; Black Sash, "Mogopa rebuilds a story of resistance", **Sash**, vol. 26, no.4, February 1984, p.2; Transvaal Rural Action Committee (TRAC), **Mogopa: Now we have no land**, p.1, 46; S. More, **personal interview**, 14 September 1994.

⁴⁶ S. More, **personal interview**, 14 September 1994.

⁴⁷ CTH, Johannesburg, Mogopa removal papers: H. Winkler, Land proposal for Mogopa, Annexure 2, July 1990, pp.6-7.

⁴⁸ CTH, Johannesburg, Mogopa removal papers: H. Winkler, Land proposal for Mogopa, Annexure 2, July 1990, p.7.

tribe by being rented to other people. Land was rented to businessmen who started shops at Mogopa. This helped the Mogopa people with their basic consumer goods and also created employment opportunities for some of the residents. The renting of some land became an additional source of income for the tribe.⁴⁹

In 1945, a site was rented to Mohamed Essop, an Indian businessman to establish a shop. He paid an annual rent of eighty pounds and the contract could be renewed annually up to 30 October 1950. The annual renewal was done with the written approval of the then Minister of Native Affairs on the basis of section (1) of the Native Land Act, no. 27 of 1913.⁵⁰

The tribe also sold 80 morgen of land for diamond prospecting to Johnny Chidrawi of the Alluvial Diamond Diggings for three hundred pounds in 1952. This income was paid over to the Ventersdorp magistrate to transfer to the tribal fund. The deed of sale was signed on 5 July 1952 in Ventersdorp between **kgosana** Thomas More as the seller and Johnny Chidrawi as the purchaser.⁵¹

The sale of that portion of land for diamond digging led to another agreement. Chidrawi had to draw water from the Hartebeeslaagte farm, which was Mogopa's property. For this, he had to enter into a leasing contract and had to pay one hundred pounds for the use of water annually. He was also allowed to put up additional facilities such as engines, pipes and storage tanks. These would remain his property and he would be free to remove it at the expiry of the contract.⁵²

The community brought a variety of facilities into being with capital generated from the above-mentioned rentals. They built two schools for their children,

⁴⁹ J.R. More, **personal interview**, 20 June, 1994.

⁵⁰ NAD, Pretoria, Bakwena ba Mogopa, Ventersdorp, URU/2298/3605: Prime Minister's office, Minute no. 3605, 3 December 1945.

⁵¹ NAD, Pretoria, Bakwena ba Mogopa, Ventersdorp, URU/2298/3605: Deed of sale, T. More/J. Chidrawi, 5 July 1952.

⁵² NAD, Pretoria, Bakwena ba Mogopa, Ventersdorp, URU/2298/3605: Deed of lease, T. More/J. Chidrawi, 5 July 1952.

the Swartkop Primary School and Kutlwano Secondary School. The latter catered for Form I to Form V (Matric). These schools even accommodated children of neighbouring farms and black areas. The community also built a health clinic for its members and their neighbours.⁵³

The community generally had a stable economy. This was to a large extent due to the diversified and mixed economic system which ensured survival. The balance between migrant wages and subsistence crops gave assurance that if either of them suffered a setback, the people could survive until the next rains. Leasing some land to other people for business purposes also contributed to the sound economy of the tribe.

2.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, it was shown how the Bakwena ba Mogopa separated from the Bangwaketse who are also of Bakwena origin and how they are related to other Bakwena tribes. It was further indicated how, for administrative purposes, the tribe was divided into different **dikgoro**. The areas occupied by different **dikgoro** eventually developed into the present villages of the Bakwena ba Mogopa.

The attacks by the two **Mfecane** leaders, namely Mzilikazi and Dingane, crippled the Bakwena ba Mogopa. This led to the disintegration of the tribe into groups which took their own directions and ultimately settled in different areas. The attacks further caused internal conflict among the Bakwena ba Mogopa, dividing the tribe further. This was followed by the Boer entry into Transvaal, who imposed forced labour on the Bakwena ba Mogopa. The Bakwena ba Mogopa fled their land and sought refuge in Basutholand to avoid this imposed labour. They remained there until the Seqiti War of 1862. After the war, the majority of the tribe returned to their ancestral land in the Rustenburg district, while some individuals remained in the Orange Free

⁵³ CTH, Johannesburg, Mogopa removal papers: H. Winkler, Land proposal for Mogopa, Annexure 2, July 1990, p.5.

State. In this way the Mogopa section of Ventersdorp separated from the senior Bakwena ba Mogopa.

The political organisation of the Bakwena ba Mogopa was also indicated. Both the senior Bakwena ba Mogopa of Rustenburg and the Bakwena ba Mogopa, section of Ventersdorp were divided into **dikgoro**. There was only a slight difference with regard to tribal leadership. Headmanship among the Bakwena ba Mogopa section of Ventersdorp was, unlike chieftainship among the senior Bakwena, not strictly hereditary. Although they were ruled by the More family, the tribe had the right to democratically elect their **kgosana** (headman).

The economic stability among the Bakwena ba Mogopa of Ventersdorp was due to the diversified and mixed economic system. This system ensured survival by combinig migrant wages with subsistence crops. Additional income was also derived from leasing some unused land to other people for business purposes.