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**THE ATTEMPTS BY MAKHADO  
TO REVIVE  
THE VENDA KINGDOM  
1864-1895**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis, by tracing the development of the Singo dynasty from its earliest possible beginnings right through the ages up to and including the times of Makhado and his contemporaries, presents the Venda as a people of Southern Africa. For the history of Makhado would be without foundation and therefore meaningless, if it is treated in isolation from his dynasty. Accordingly, the study reflects a process of protracted informal and formal research which started during the beginning of the second half of the 20th century.

The person who set the ball rolling and who therefore deserves credit in this respect, is my grandmother Mavhungu Masithi Ravhura, a gifted narrator of events from Dzata to Makonde. Her personal recollections initiated me into Venda history from the earliest days of my life. When she passed away in 1954, at an advanced age, a foundation had already been laid for my future research. Next to her were my mother Mafunise Nemudzivhadi and my beloved aunt Helen Mauda who continued the informal work begun by my grandmother, as they too, were interested in relating events of the past.

During my high school and university studies, I came into contact with J.J. Marivate, C.A.R. Motsepe, Proff. Theo van Wijk, B.J. Liebenberg and M.C. van Zyl as well as my supervisor for the Master's Dissertation, Prof. S.B. Spies. These teachers, academics and scholars undoubtedly left an indelible mark in my mind.

Side by side with these people were Khosi E.F.N. Mudau and F.N. Ravele who turned my attention from world history to Venda history. From their talks and writings, the history of the Venda people appeared before me like an uncultivated field waiting to be debushed, cleared, cultivated and planted. These two patriots who were interested in the history of the Venda and their position in Southern Africa, instilled a historical sense into my mind which set in motion a chain of thoughts which opened my eyes to the Venda as a people - a people who despite their weaknesses, shortcomings, successes and failures, managed to inhabit one of the most beautiful parts of the land north and south of the Vhembe (Limpopo).

As far as the typing of the first and second drafts of the thesis is concerned, my thanks go to Major F.J. van Deventer of the Defence Force and Khathutshelo Sikhitha, a lecturer from the University of Venda. The language used in these drafts was edited by D.M. Dennett of Louis Trichardt and Keith Maker of the University of Venda. As English is their mother-tongue, they saw to it that the language conforms to the required standard. C. Conerly, who read the drafts, motivated me by indicating shortcomings, presenting challenging situations and by pointing out recent publications on the topic.

This study would have been a difficult undertaking, if it was not for the assistance of the officials of the Transvaal Government Archives, Unisa and State Libraries. I wish to express my gratitude for their patience, sympathetic understanding and untiring efforts. Research at these institutions was a pleasure.

The Human Sciences Research Council is thanked for their ad-hoc Grant without which travelling and subsistence expenses would have exhausted my purse.

Regarding the approach and methodology followed in this research, a combination of oral and written information, from primary documentars, secondary sources and fieldwork interviews were used freely and extensively. In this respect several people were interviewed formally and informally from 1963 onwards. Most of these 'village professors', have been called to rest, but their contributions will remain shining stars in the darkness of this world until the end of time. They happily and willingly opened their minds and laid the course of events before me.

Although secondary sources by writers of Venda history are recorded versions of oral sources, the thoughts and opinions expressed are my own, as the intention was not to prove anybody right but to present the Venda as personified by Makhado, as a people of Southern Africa with their shortcomings and virtues, and how they reacted to internal development and external influence and aggression.

My thanks go to my wife Dorothy, my father-in-law N.R. Masekela and our family for their moral support. As my father Elias Lavhelani Nemudzivhadi expressed the wish to send me back to university for post-graduate studies, three weeks before he

was called to eternity in 1968, when I was 37 years old, this thesis is a realisation of his dreams, as he was interested in nothing but my academic advancement.

To Prof. J.C. Aucamp, who guided me from the beginning of the first draft, I wish to thank him for all the trouble he took in directing the course of this thesis. My appreciation of the efforts of those who assisted me, will be incomplete, if I do not express my gratitude to the typist, Miss C. Tilson, who stepped in and completed the thesis within a short space of time.

Last but not least, this study would not have been what it is without the scholarly guidance and the penetrating mind of my promoter, Prof. J.W.N. Tempelhoff. When he came in, he found me tired and discouraged but he shook me up, motivated and inspired me to such an extent that I felt elevated. I wish to express my gratitude for his patience, dedication, clear understanding and constructive comments. Through his positive and pleasant attitude, I felt encouraged, strengthened, inspired and motivated. My youthful years returned to me so that I felt rejuvenated once more to complete this research. Had it not been for him, this would not have happened. In short, I say to Prof. Tempelhoff and the Head of the Department of History, Prof. Pieter de Klerk, "A vha ntshileli", long life.

## PREFACE

During the course of my previous research dealing with the conflict between Mphhephu and the South African Republic, 1895 - 1899, it was realised that there was still much to be written on the history of Vhavenda/the Venda, from the earliest beginnings to the present. It was the Venda who, during the Empire Exhibition in 1936, demonstrated that despite the encroachments of western civilisation, they alone, of all the Black peoples of Southern African could still smelt iron. It was written:

As the South African Iron and Steel Industry pavilion displays union products, it was felt desirable, to show union natives at their work, and this has been found possible by going to the Zoutpansberg district to the country known as Venda, occupied by the Vhavenda. Among this people one can even now find old men who in their younger days took part in smelting operations and who with tactful handling are willing to recall and revive this almost dead art ...

The exhibition idea began to dawn upon them clearly and they realised that while almost every South African Bantu tribe smelted iron in the past, a compliment had been paid to the Vhavenda in that they had been chosen to demonstrate on a great occasion.<sup>1</sup>

It was on this occasion that the smithing and manufacturing of traditional Venda weapons and implements were demonstrated. But during the beginning of this century, George M. Theal, the leading 19th century historian commonly referred to as the "father" of South African historiography,<sup>2</sup> acknowledged, in no uncertain

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1. J.B. Bullock, Primitive iron smelting in South Africa, *Empire Exhibition in South Africa*, 1936, p. 97. Manufactured articles such as hoes, axes, adzes, knives, carving tools, spears and battle-axes, as well as small sickles and other items were produced.
  2. S. Marks, The Khoisan resistance to the Dutch in the Seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, *Journal of African History*, Vol. XII, no. 1, 1972, p. 56; C. Saunders, *The making of the South African past, major historians on race and class*, 1988, p. 9.

terms his unfamiliarity "... with this section of the Bantu family and ... (the fact that he) was ... therefore indebted to other authors for the information concerning the Bavenda".<sup>3</sup>

Similarly, S.M. Molema,<sup>4</sup> in his exposition of the Black people of South Africa, was under the impression that he had discussed all the Black peoples South of the Limpopo/Vhembe River and his omission of the Venda indicates that he was unaware of their existence as a nation.

G.P. Lestrade, one of the early ethnologists on the Venda, states that, "... the question of the ethnographical position of the Bavenda in the family of Bantu tribes is one of the extreme difficulties about which it is impossible to speak except in a series of surmises". According to him their history "... is a record mostly of petty internecine strife and need not be gone into here".<sup>5</sup> The views expressed above reveal ignorance on the part of early writers of Venda history.

Sequentially the, lack of early western knowledge or significant amounts of written materials does not in any way imply that the Venda kingdom did not exist, or was not developing. Wars were fought, kings passed away, and their successors were enthroned. Evidence that these events did occur was (and continues to be) found scattered about in the minds of the people in the form of praises, songs, tales, and proverbs, as well as in the names of people, objects, mountains and rivers. Had these earlier writers approached their fields of study from this angle, and against this background, much more valuable information would have been preserved for posterity.

It is therefore the intent of this thesis to delve into the early history of the Venda to the transformation of centralised political authority in the kingdom, which then ultimately, led to the life and times of Makhado, the latter being that to which the body of this research will be dedicated. This justifies the relevance of the first

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3. G.M. Theal, *Ethnography and conditions of South Africa before A.D. 1500*, 1919, p. 188.

4. S.M. Molema, *The Bantu, past and present*, 1920. The Venda do not appear in this work.

5. G.P. Lestrade, The Bavenda, A.M. Duggan-Cronnin, *The Bantu tribes of South Africa*, pp. 14 - 16.

chapter which forms the basis for this period. Therefore the purpose of this chapter is to examine historiographical data. It is by addressing these several troublesome issues that weaknesses in traditional Venda internal structures as well as the effects of both internal and external interference in the affairs of the kingdom will be brought to light. It is hoped that these efforts will clarify past misconceptions and further enlighten readers about one of the more significant aspects of the history of both the Venda and the South African Republic, for the events in which these people and their Thovhele (Supreme King) participated should assume their correct and rightful place in the history of not only Southern Africa, but that of the world.

It will be shown that those occurrences described by at least one writer of Western European origin as "... mostly a record of petty internecine strife ..."<sup>6</sup> were, indeed, significant happenings in the history of Southern Africa. They led to the emergence of a Venda leader, Makhado, who was the representative and personification of an era in which the Venda regained a sense of national identity and pride in the face of great adversity. It was under Makhado's firm leadership that, for more than thirty years, the Venda successfully countered countless efforts by the South African Republic to regain those areas they cunningly occupied, and thereafter lost, after the destruction of Schoemansdal by Makhado's forces in 1867.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps it should be noted here that, between 1899 and 1902, this self-same Republic involved the British Empire in one of the most expensive wars in its history. Therefore, Makhado's diplomatic and intelligent leading of the Venda resistance thwarting Boer efforts to subjugate and place them within the South African Republic's sphere of influence and power is indeed an important event in the history of, not only its own peoples, but of those throughout the world involved in their own struggles for recognition, freedom and equality.

Additionally, and because of the very nature of Venda society, it is necessary to discuss events in territories other than the Venda kingdom, for to treat the Venda in

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6. *Ibid.*

7. R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 323; M. Nemudzivhadi, *When and What, an introduction to the evolution of the history of Venda*, 1985, p. 21.

isolation from the overall circumstances in Soutpansberg at the time under discussion, would deny that these events influenced Makhado and his subsequent actions in either a positive or negative manner rather; it was precisely these various circumstances which shaped Makhado's character and prepared him for the role of leadership he assumed before and after ascending the throne in 1864. Such events include Boer incursions, the arrival of Christian missionaries, the struggles for succession at Dzimauli, Lwamondo and Tsianda, as well as his encounters with Ligeise Tshivhase, Ranwedzi Mphaphuli, Magoro and neighbouring Sotho tribes. All these events fashioned Makhado's leadership of the Venda and his reactions to both internal and external interference in the affairs of the kingdom.

What will be evident from the outset of this particular project is the lack of documentary evidence, felt so necessary for the writing of a history, a major prerequisite in historiographical collations of the histories of first world countries. Therefore, extensive use will be made of oral sources, just as was done in the reconstruction of the past of Western, Middle and Far Eastern history beyond the 6 000 years period.<sup>8</sup>

This must be done for, just as the Germanic races were establishing themselves in Europe during these times, so also were the Blacks establishing themselves in Africa.<sup>9</sup>

It is because of the restrictions found within the constructs of Western historiography that earlier writers on the Venda, like Lestrade for instance, were not expected to go further than they did in their investigations despite the opportunities they had at their disposal. His successor in the field of ethnology, N.J. van Warmelo, has conducted research, as well as produced more works on the Venda than any other writer. After examining the scope of Venda history, Van Warmelo concluded that:

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8. F.A. van Jaarsveld, *Theory of History*, Unisa Honours Lecture Notes, 1969, p. 4; *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 8, 1973 - 1974, p. 984.
  9. J.W. Thompson and E.N. Johnson, *An introduction to Medieval Europe*, 300 - 1500, 1965, pp. 64 - 116.

The time has not yet arrived for a complete history of all the Venda tribes for sufficiently reliable material is not available. It is only with information of equal value from other sections that some measure of correlation would be possible and, the next stage, that of separating earlier and later immigrations and attempting a complete survey, can be entered upon. But, not before ... What is known today from actual tradition does not throw much light on the linguistical situation nor on the actual beginning of history in Venda, which naturally interests us most. This I fear must largely remain a matter of conjecture, but I think it is better to admit this than to guess at random on slender evidence, in lieu of history.<sup>10</sup>

The problem facing these earlier historiographers is clear and understandable as, according to their backgrounds and training, a true and reliable history could be compiled from nothing other than written sources acquired from legitimate archival sources and libraries. They expected to come across written sources about the Venda, a people who had yet to devise a means of recording the events and day-to-day happenings of their immediate present, much less their near and distant past. After all they should have realised there were peoples existing in Southern Africa about which they had no knowledge, the arm of the Empire was not that encompassing. Consequently these writers missed a golden opportunity to obtain valuable oral information from the people they met, people who were acquainted with some of the personalities or actually involved in events which modern historians are attempting to assess for a more enlightening reconstruction of their past.

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10. N.J. van Warmelo, *Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual*, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 3, 1932, p.1. Van Warmelo implies by usage of the term Venda "tribes" that in Venda there are 28 separate entities living in separate areas, each of which is led by a chief (khosi). This view, which appears in the majority of South Africa's official documents, is misleading because many of these mahosi (chiefs), e.g. Mphephu, Tshivhase, Rammuda, Sinthumule, Kutama, Nesengani, Nthabalala and Rasikhuthuma are the direct descendants of Velelambeu.

Well before Lestrade and Van Warmelo's entry on to the scene there were the early missionaries in the region, such as S. Hofmeyr,<sup>11</sup> R. Wessmann,<sup>12</sup> and E. Creux,<sup>13</sup> whose Christian background appears to have opened their eyes to only one side of a people they considered to have no knowledge of God. The impressions they committed to paper could not, therefore, be anything but negative as this treatise will eventually illustrate. It is through these missionaries' contacts with both local and central government and officials, that some information originates in official government documents which reveal either Makhado's obedience or disobedience to Boer authority. These also reflect the lack of understanding of those writers, as well as the political biases and machinations they were involved in to remove Makhado from the throne.

A more positive picture of Makhado was, however, sketched by G.G. Munnik<sup>14</sup> who, although a government official saw much more in Makhado a human being and leader of his people than some of his contemporaries. It was also unfortunate that J.S. Cooksley, a trader, and Terence Fitzgerald,<sup>15</sup> a farmer and merchant both of whom were Makhado's intimate friends, appear to have left behind no records whatsoever.

Further, Lestrade and Van Warmelo did not realise that there was a core of understanding to be sought, since they were not concerned with the people themselves, or the possibilities of a more comprehensive and sophisticated history. This was not even within the realm of their considerations as they conducted their research. They did not consider the Black to be educable beyond a certain level, so they delved into their customs and traditional history only to emphasise the lack of sophistication in the Venda.

Of course there was a great deal of scientific curiosity, because of the differences in the language from other indigenous groups, but even then it was only based on the

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11. S. Hofmeyr, *Twintig jaren in Zoutpansberg*, p. 123.
  12. R. Wessmann, *The Bawenda of the Spelonken*, pp. 142 - 183.
  13. G. Bridel, Extracts from Album de la Mission Romande, pp. 30 - 33.
  14. G.G. Munnik, *Memoirs of Senator the Honourable G.G. Munnik*, pp. 145 - 148.
  15. D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(2) June 1957, p. 4.

excitement of being involved in scientific research. They felt the Venda were as uncivilised as other natives. They did not care about the people. Therefore, their short-sightedness in this respect, influenced their attitudes in the presentation of their material, in some instances in a most unscientific manner. They could have acted otherwise, as Munnik and Junod did.

Van Warmelo had his own axe to grind with the Venda, since they drove out his grandfather who was the minister at Schoemansdal. There is evidence throughout his writings of his abhorrence for some Venda customs. He would not look for positive things, other than something which tied in with the movement of a people southward as well as early contact with the Boers. His attitude was one of assumed paternalism and condescension toward the Venda.

This is, unfortunately still the case. For instance, in the Benso/Rau publication on the eve of the independence of Venda in 1979, the layman who undertook to write a brief history of Venda, against the background of only written secondary sources, came face to face with another form of Venda history - a history based on both written and oral sources. He expressed his displeasure by inserting in a footnote the following statement:

This chapter is based on a draft by the author, Venda's Secretary for Education at the time. Since the conventional interpretation of Venda history (was) not acceptable to the Venda Government.<sup>16</sup>

As a layman, the author was unaware that not a single South African historian has devoted a meaningful chapter or two of any book to Venda history based on oral and written sources. Accordingly, it is this background of highly specialised subject-intensive offerings, in the sense that ethnographers, anthropologists, archaeologists and historians, recorded only those things which applied to their individual disciplines or fields of study, that determines the need for a multidisciplinary approach to the writing of this dissertation.

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16. M.H. Nemudzivhadi, History, Benso/Rau, *The Independent Venda*, p. 17.

The impression created by the writer quoted above, is that a history based on both oral and written sources, is unconventional. A similar objection to a history imposed from outside and based primarily on written secondary sources was voiced by the Bophutatswana Legislative Assembly when it resolved that,

Contrary to the propaganda of the South African Government that we came to this part of the Southern African continent together; they were travelling down from the south, and we from the north; it is known that by the year 450 A.D., the Tswana were already settled where they are today and where they have been displaced.<sup>17</sup>

The passage says "it is known", it does not say, "it is written", or inscribed in any document. In other words, investigations on behalf of the Tswana, based on both oral and written sources, led the Legislative Assembly to adopt this resolution in order to rectify existing errors in their history. After all, what is history if it is not "... historian's experience ... made by nobody save the historian ..."<sup>18</sup> and the only way to make it, being to write it, after careful research and systematic investigation.

This brings to light the fact that there are great advantages in working from within a society; and it is, indeed, the historian's good fortune when he is exposed to a variety of both oral and written sources. In this instance, and because of the limitations found in existing written histories, it is providential that a few people who knew Makhado, including one of his daughters, Mutshena Ramovha of Mulenzhe,<sup>19</sup> were still living in 1989 and have provided oral testimony about conditions during the time of his leadership as well as shared their personal knowledge of the man himself.

The paucity of written material on the Venda, as well as the vagueness and insufficiency of that which has been recorded, compels the writer to lean heavily on

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17. Bophutatswana Legislative Assembly, *Concise History of the Bophutatswana People*, p. 1.
  18. M. Oakshott, Experience and its modes, as quoted by E.H. Carr, *What is History?*, p. 22.
  19. Mutshena was the wife of Mukhwantheli Ramovha. Her mother, Muditambi and sixteenth wife of Makhado, was the daughter of Makhado's friend and hunting companion Funyufunyu.

oral information. Furthermore, it should be noted that this is not peculiar to studies of Venda history only. D.N. Beach, who has devoted most of his work on this aspect of the historical process, asserts that more and more scholars dealing with topics which are Euro-centric in nature, are now beginning to realise the importance of oral tradition and personal recollections not merely because fieldwork is 'trendy', but because archival records, after all, represent only a portion of the sources of our understanding of history.<sup>20</sup>

Pursuing this further, Beach says that perhaps the greatest challenge faced in the future is research, depending of course on the project undertaken,<sup>21</sup> which is conducted within the dual constructs of the written and oral collection of data. As documentary studies proliferate, it is becoming less easy to base new theses on documentary evidence alone, and in the compiling of an African history especially, fieldwork is essential.<sup>22</sup> In lieu of the above, it becomes quite obvious that any meaningful studies of the early history of the Venda, like that of any other, "Third world people", has to be based to a large extent on oral sources. After all many of the written offerings are recorded versions of an orally related past as well.<sup>23</sup>

Therefore, for the purpose of this thesis, the Venda, some of them known as the Senzi, moved southward through the course of the centuries until they settled in the land known as Venda. This study of conditions during the life and times of Makhado, springs from the background of the origins and embodiment of the Senzi, which in turn, frames and opens the gate to the entry of this major actor into the historical arena, an area of profound political, social and economic change in the history of Venda and Southern Africa.

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20. D.N. Beach, *Historical research south of the Zambezi, Mbire 2*, pp. 1 - 2.

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*

23. M. Mainga, *Bulozi under the Luyana kings*, p. 217.

## GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

- EVR: Argief van die Sekretaris van die Eerste Volksraad van die Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek.
- EVRB: Eerste Volksraadsbesluit.
- GOV PS: Archives of the Private Secretary of the Governor of Transvaal Colony.
- KG: Argief van die Kommandant-Generaal van die Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek.
- NK: Argief van die Naturelle Kommissaris van die Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek.
- OI: Oral information.
- SN: Argief van die Superintendent van Naturelle van die Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek.
- SS: Argief van die Staatsekretaris van die Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek.
- TA: Transvaal Argiefbewaarplek.
- UG: Union Government.
- UR: Uitvoerende Raad.
- VRB: Volksraadsbesluit.

## BRIEF EXPLANATORY NOTES ON KINGSHIP

## Kingship

1. *Thovhele* King, sovereign, highest royal title, national leader, symbol of national unity. Apart from being supreme head of the nation, he has his own territory which he reigns through Mahosi.
  
2. *Khosi khulu* Paramount Chief(s). Territorial leaders. Rule territories through Mahosi. Their territories are defined by natural boundaries, e.g. rivers, mountains etc. This level of kingship is occupied by two Mahosi Mahulu.  
*Mahosi Mahulu*
  
3. *Khosi/Mahosi* Chiefs(s). Mahosi rule lands (mashango), each with its own name and defined by natural boundaries.
  
4. *Gota/Magota* Headman/headmen. These rulers are in charge of defined entities called Zwisi (districts) which together constitute shango (land). They operate under Mahosi.

This traditional royal arrangement was interfered with when the colonial and South African authorities lowered the status of the first two, raised some from the fourth level and dumped them into the third level.

## GLOSSARY OF A FEW IMPORTANT VENDA PLACE NAMES

1. Lumbelule: Olifants.
2. Luonde: Goedewensch.
3. Luvhombo: Lebombo.
4. Luvuvhu: Levubu.
5. Mavhambo: Soutpan area.
6. Muhohodi: Doorn.
7. Phahwe: Pisanghoek.
8. Tshabwa: Klein Spelonken.
9. Vhukalanga: Zimbabwe.



FIGURE 1: *THOVHELE* MAKHADO IN 1873

## CHAPTER 1

### CONDITIONS IN VENDA PRIOR TO MAKHADO'S REIGN 1836-1863

As a prelude to events which dominated the period 1864 - 1895, it is necessary to highlight geographical, social and demographic conditions in Venda before the enthronement of Makhado. This exposition will shed light on the motives and challenges which impelled Makhado to act as he did. The Venda, he found, faced numerous problems which he wanted to change, in order to restore memories of the golden past when central authority prevailed in the kingdom. It covered ostensibly the reign of Dambanyika, Dyambeu and Thohoyandou.<sup>1</sup> The country had undergone several changes in the course of time. Politically, the kingdom was no longer ruled from Dzata. Demographically it had been infiltrated by foreign communities.

The Vhavenda or the "Venda" as they are popularly called, are perhaps the only Black nation south of the Vhembe River (Limpopo River), whose country was not named after the people. The name "Venda" means land or country.<sup>2</sup> It has no prefix or suffix to indicate that it is a land inhabited by a certain people. That is why its inhabitants are Vhavenda or the Venda, meaning the people of Venda. The country became a kingdom when Dambanyika, established himself at Lwandali in 1688.<sup>3</sup> He consolidated the kingdom and became the first Thovhele of the modern Venda society. This happened at a time when most, if not all, Black nations in the sub-continent were still living in scattered communities. From the time of

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1. J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda natie*, p. 10; G.O.V. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 138/06, p. 2. Report of Native Location Commission. History. The Makhado (Magato) Ramapulana Tribes, 23-03-1907.
  2. C. Beuster, *Das Volk der Vawenda*, *Gesellschaft für Erdkunde*, 14, 1879, p. 239.
  3. D.N. Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe, 900 - 1850: An outline of Shona History*, pp. 212, 260 - 261.
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Dambanyika to Thohoyandou, the kingdom included lands north of the Vhembe River and stretched as far south as the Lumbelule (Olifants) River.<sup>4</sup>

As developments took place, the borders of the kingdom were the Vhembe River in the north, the Tavhafulu (Great Letaba) River in the south, the Luvhombo (Lebombo) mountains in the east and the Mahalagwena River in the west.<sup>5</sup>

The country as a whole was characterised by several ranges of mountains stretching from Mavhambo (Soutpan) in the west to Luvhombo in the east. These mountains of Venda, each with its own name, are today admired for their scenic beauty. In the past they provided refuge in times of external aggression.<sup>6</sup>

The perennial streams and rivers like the Vhembe, Luvuvhu, Mutale, Muungadi, Tavhafulu, Muhalagwena, Muhohodi, Mutshindudi and Mutungudi flowed across large parts of the country on their way to the Indian Ocean.

Diversity in climatic conditions placed the country in a favourable position for horticulture and pastoral farming. Since the earliest times and during Makhado's time, the country was noted for an abundance of game - hence elephant hunting in the nineteenth century turned the Schoemansdal settlement into an ivory centre and the country as a whole into a hunting frontier.<sup>7</sup>

Economically the country produced salt at Mavhambo, copper in Musina, iron ore at Tshimbupfe, gold at Tshinavheni<sup>8</sup> while there were coal deposits in the north-east. Some of the minerals were mined by the Venda themselves.

The first four monarchs Dambanyika, Dyambeu, Thohoyandou and Tshisevhe whose reign covered the period 1688 - 1800, ruled over a centralised state from

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4. *Ibid.*, p. 213; J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda natie*, pp. 9 - 10; War Office, *The native tribes of the Transvaal*, p. 60.

5. N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 3, 1932, p. 22.

6. J.P.F. Moolman, Die Boere se stryd teen die Swart stamme in en om die Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, 1864-1871 (D. Litt. et Phil., Unisa, 1982), pp. 267 - 268.

7. R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and Society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 315.

8. Northeast of modern day Giyani.

Dzata. Tributes poured in from all over as this kingdom that extended its influence from Vhuxwa, north of the Vhembe River, to the Lumbelule River.<sup>9</sup> As the population increased, the monarch was no longer in a position to exercise effective control throughout the kingdom. The mighty kings Dambanyika, Dyambeu, and Thohoyandou were able to maintain a strong centralised form of government, but during Tshisevhe's reign, the kingdom became unmanageable. The lack of transport and difficulties with communication further added to the problems. These made co-ordination between Dzata and outlying areas difficult. Faced with these problems, Tshisevhe found it practical to decentralise the monarchy. He then posted his brothers to certain outposts to rule in strategic areas.<sup>10</sup>

The kingdom was divided into three territories. Mpofu, his Ndumi (deputy) was posted at Sunguzwi. His territory stretched from Dzindi-Mahebe-Musama Rivers in the east to Tavhafulu River in the south and Muhalagwena-Vhembe Rivers in the west and north. The third son, Raluswielo Tshivhase was posted at Deperi. His territory stretched from Nzhelele to the Vhembe and Luvuvhu Rivers in the north-east. Mphaphuli, a prominent figure at Dzata was posted at Tshitomboni in the south-east. He ruled the whole territory from Luvuvhu-Mahebe-Musama Rivers to Luvhombu mountains. He later moved to Miluwani and eventually settled at Mbilwi.<sup>11</sup> Tshisevhe himself remained at Dzata. Each territory consisted of lands with defined borders under *mahosi* and *magota* who had to pay homage to the newly installed *mahosi mahulu*. Tshisevhe himself remained leader (*Thovhele*) of the national kingdom, while the other two were *mahosi mahulu* with administrative and judicial authority. The emergence of three monarchies or kingdoms should however

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9. J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda natie*, p. 9; G.O.V. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, p. 2. Location Commission No. 138/06, p. 2. Report of Native Location Commission. History. The Makhado (Magato) Ramapulana Tribes, 23-03-1907.
10. S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, p. 25; L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, p. 13; War Office, *The native tribes of the Transvaal*, p. 60.
11. L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, p. 30; S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, p. 41; ORAL INFORMATION (Forthwith O.I.), Khosi Tshikonelo Mphaphuli (about 83 years), Soni, 20-12-1979.

not be seen as a division of the country into three independent states.<sup>12</sup> It was an arrangement that was peacefully introduced in order to face the challenge of external threats to the perpetuation of the monarchy. Thus the monarchy had to decentralise itself in order to survive. It was a horizontal development as it was no longer ruled from one capital, Dzata.

After the untimely death of Tshisevhe in 1800, Dzata, the centre of the kingdom, was evacuated and the title of *Thovhele* passed to Sunguzwi where Mpofo had established his royal residence. Mpofo, the third son of Dyambeu and Tshisevhe's *ndumi* (deputy) became the titular head of the kingdom.

It should, however, be understood that the concept of several kingdoms in one state was not exclusive to Venda. Long before, in about 600 A.D., England had ten separate kingdoms which were not necessarily independent as they were nominally subject to one overlord - the king of Wessex. This kingdom of Wessex eventually unified the English monarchy during the reign of Egbert, 802 - 839, who became the first king.<sup>13</sup> The difference with the Venda kingdom was that Venda started as a unified kingdom, reigned by a single monarch. Three generations later, the monarch arranged the kingdom into territories in which he installed his brothers. These brothers continually aspired to greater autonomy. By the time of Makhado, they had become autonomous monarchs, and the country appeared fragmented and divided for people who were not part of the Venda nation. Yet in reality the country was still united but territorially diversified as it was still ruled by the same house. At the time of accession, Makhado's objective was to revive the kingdom by asserting the idea of single authority over autonomous territories.<sup>14</sup>

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12. L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, p. 30; J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda natie*.
  13. E.R. Delder, *Kings and Queens of England and Great Britain*, pp. 13 - 14.
  14. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg*, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 162.
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This state of affairs may seem strange to those who by intuition maintain that the Venda were a tribe under independent chiefs,<sup>15</sup> while ignoring the fact that the country was a single and independent state up to 1898. It is interesting to note that officials and private individuals who were contemporaries of Makhado in the nineteenth century addressed him differently. In some documents he was addressed as “Kapitein”, “Hoofdkapitein” or “Opperhoofd”, while in other works he was referred to as “king”.<sup>16</sup> These differences in interpretation may be ascribed to ignorance of Venda culture, customs, traditions and political infrastructures.

Commandant-General Piet Joubert of the South African Republic on one occasion acknowledged that Makhado was king.<sup>17</sup> It is interesting to note that N.J. van Warmelo who edited and translated “Ramabulana”, by M.M. Motenda, purposefully omitted one important statement, “Thovhele muswa wa Venda”, (“recently installed Supreme King of Venda”), referring to Makhado’s grandson, George Mmbulaheni Mphephu Ramabulana. This did not appear in the English version because he knew what it meant.<sup>18</sup> This is just one example of how the Venda monarchy was not accorded the place it deserved in some documents and published works.

This decentralised system was unique but unfortunately it led some historians to believe that the country consisted of independent entities and therefore it did not

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15. J.C.A. Boeyens, Die konflik tussen die Venda en die Blankes in Transvaal, 1864 - 1869, *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis*, 53(2), 1990, p. 1; R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and Society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 323.
  16. TA SS1364, p. 81. R1526/87, Superintendent van Naturellen, Cooksleys Plaats, aan Kapitein Magato, 24 February 1887; TA SS3062, p. 108. R108/83, Commandant Zoutpansberg, Boschkopys, aan Hoofdkapitein Magato, 26 February 1883; TA SS3062, p. 60, R1764/83, Ernest Creux, Zendeling, Boschkopys, Antwoord van het Opperhoofd Makhatu aan den afgevaardigde aan hem gezonden door den Speciale Commisjaris, 3 April 1883.
  17. R. Wessmann, *The Bawenda of the Spelonken*, pp. 117 - 118. R. Wessmann wrote this following P.J. Joubert’s letter which he personally delivered. The letter was dated 15 December 1894. It could not be located in SS4485, R1190/95. It should have been located between pp. 52 and 56. On page 118, Wessmann said it was attached to a long pole and publicly derided.
  18. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department* 8, 1940, p. 168.
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justify the status of a kingdom. Yet, in reality the people remained as one, united, sharing common laws, customs and language. Only the administration was decentralised. The people were free to live in any territorial kingdom, if they wished to do so as the rulers originated from the same royal house. Thovhele had no administrative control. Political power was delegated to the mahosi mahulu in their respective territories. This apparent diversity was one of the problems with which Makhado had to contend in his attempts to revive the Venda kingdom.

On the eve of Makhado's reign in the nineteenth century, Venda was infiltrated by foreigners, coming from the south and the east. The Coloured Buys family and the Tlokwa had already respectively settled at Mara and Mphagane between 1820 and 1825.<sup>19</sup> Not far from Ramabulana's royal residence Tshirululuni were the Tau of Machaba. When the Voortrekkers settled at Thivhalalwe in 1848, they were accompanied by João Albasini and his Tsonga followers who had fled from Manukosi.<sup>20</sup> On the western and south-western parts of Venda were the territories of Malebogo, Matlala and Moloto. These people were resident in Venda. Those who lived on the borders will be discussed separately to show how the Venda lived with them and how some resisted Makhado's attempts to revive the Venda kingdom.

The Buys people were the descendants of Coenrad Buys, who was reported to have fled from justice in the Cape Colony. He married a Black girl and after the death of his wife on the Vhembe River, he disappeared and left his sons Gabriel and Michael among the Venda. They married Black women and continued the Coloured community. Relations between the Buys people and Ramabulana were amicable.<sup>21</sup> When the Boers arrived and settled at Thivhalalwe, the Buys' were used as

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19. M. Nemudzivhadi, When and what, an introduction to the evolution of the history of Venda, p. 19; R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and Society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 321.
  20. R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 325.
  21. War Office, *The native tribes of the Transvaal*, pp. 70 - 71; M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department* 8, 1940, p. 160.
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intermediaries as they knew the Venda language. Later on some became tax collectors.

As far as the Tlokwa were concerned, they lived happily together. The relationship, however, became strained after Ramavhoya murdered their king, Mmamokotopi.<sup>22</sup> This was before 1836. It was this event which compelled them to assist Ramabulana in his bid to regain his throne. Once Ramabulana took control, friendly relations with the Tlokwa were again restored. It remained so until Makhado assumed control.

The Kone of Matlala, the Kwena of Moloto and Malebogo also acknowledged Ramabulana's suzerainty. The term suzerainty is used here to imply that the Venda monarch, although he was the *de facto* ruler in the region, acknowledged the right of the other peoples to govern themselves without direct Venda interference. When Ramabulana was driven from Tshirululuni by Ramavhoya, he sought refuge at Mount Rida<sup>23</sup> where he lived amongst the Sotho-speaking people. Malebogo remained on friendly terms with Thovhele but Matlala and Moloto later promised the Boers assistance against Makhado.<sup>24</sup> In this way they became an obstacle to Makhado's attempts at reviving the Venda monarchy. The Lobedu of Modjadji remained on friendly terms with the Vhavenda as they shared a common past. Modjadji, the Rain Queen,<sup>25</sup> had a special place of honour among the Venda aristocracy in which she was considered a great aunt (*makhadzi*). No outsider could succeed in creating a spirit of animosity between the Venda and the Lobedu.

Then came the Tsonga under João Albasini who arrived with the Boers in 1848 and thereafter settled at Luonde in 1855. Luonde became a sanctuary for Tsonga fugitives from Mozambique. Soon a large community developed and Albasini

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22. O.I. - K. Nesengani (about 95 years), Davhana's Location, 14-06-1971; M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, Ethnological publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 159; O.I. - A. Ramavhoya (about 100 years), Rabali, 29-12-1982.
23. Close to present day Kalkbank in the Bochum area.
24. O.J.O. Ferreira, *Stormvoël van die Noorde: Stephanus Schoeman in Transvaal*, pp. 335 - 336.
25. Modjadji, herself is a Mukwevho whose totem is a pig. Her fellow Vhakwevho of Luvhola, Luonde, Ngwenani, Lwandali are in Venda.
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became their chief. He built up an army which was later used by the Boers against the Venda. He played an important role in the Boer subjugation of Venda. Albasini's subjects became government people.<sup>26</sup> Thus he constituted a threat to the Venda monarchy. This became worse when he provided refuge to ousted Venda princes. In the process he divided the Venda nation for his own political ends.

In about 1829, Mpofu, the ruler of Western Venda at Dzanani,<sup>27</sup> passed away. This death of *Thovhele* created a vacuum and succession became an issue. His three sons were Ramabulana, Ramavhoya and Madzhe. The elder brother Ramabulana was timid and peace-loving while Ramavhoya was brave and fearless. Meanwhile the kingship Mpofu had established at Dzanani had to be protected and developed. It was for this reason that he organised a group of young men, placed them under Ramavhoya and posted them at Muraleni.<sup>28</sup> His mother Nyamulanalwo also accompanied him. The purpose was to guard the western frontier. This arrangement fitted in well with his ambitions as Ramavhoya started to develop a desire to ascend the throne in the event of his father's death.<sup>29</sup>

After Mpofu's death, Ramabulana ascended the throne. That was at least what the people expected. However, his mother, whose candidate to the throne was Ramavhoya, urged him (Ramavhoya), to rise against his elder brother. As a result of this Ramavhoya became confident that he was the one to succeed his father. With this in mind he hurried to Tshiriluluni, the royal residence together with his

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26. J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda natie*, p. 11; M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg*, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 178; J.B. de Vaal, *Die rol van João Albasini in die Geskiedenis van die Transvaal*, *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis*, 16(1), 1953, p. 66; War Office, *The native tribes of the Transvaal*, p. 64.
27. This is the area around Louis Trichardt. The White people pronounce it as "Tzaneen", hence the town of Tzaneen.
28. O.I. - Alilali Ramavhoya (about 100 years), Rabali, 29-12-1982; D. Möller-Malan, *Die donker Soutpansberg*, *Historia*, 1(3), February 1957, pp. 224 - 225.
29. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg*, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 159; O.I. - A. Ramavhoya (about 100 years), Rabali, 29-12-1982; O.I. - K. Nesengani (about 95 years), Davhana's Location, 14-06-1971.

supporters. When the newly installed Thovhele, saw him with his followers, he subsequently gave way and fled to Mafhishi,<sup>30</sup> or Mutholini, as he could not face his younger brother on the battlefield. From Mafhishi, he proceeded further and ultimately settled at Mount Rida.<sup>31</sup> Nyamulanalwo's support for Ramavhoya constituted interference in matters of kingship. Since the beginning of the royal dynasty, no generation had experienced this, as a mother had no say in matters pertaining to succession. A situation of this nature, in which the mother intervened in matters of succession by favouring one of her sons, was unique and unheard of amongst the Singo. It was traditionally accepted that in matters relating to the identification and enthronement of a monarch, the mother had to be voiceless as she is a stranger in the royal household. Consequently, Ramabulana's flight, leaving the throne vacant, paved the way for the usurpation of kingship by Ramavhoya, who immediately enthroned himself at Tshirululuni. Thus the people who had once rejoiced in the ascension of Ramabulana, now turned from him to support Ramavhoya. This shifting of allegiance from one leader to the other, underlies the characteristic human element of looking for advantages and personal gain. In keeping with this the Mahosi paid tribute to Ramavhoya, and others even sent their daughters to be his wives.<sup>32</sup> The struggle for supremacy between Mpofo's sons is an important historical event. It accounts for the struggle for succession between Makhado and Davhana. Undoubtedly Ramavhoya would have remained king had he not failed to comprehend and interpret the intentions of neighbouring rulers who forced him into a situation which reversed the course of events.

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30. Bandelierkop.

31. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 160; N.J. van Warmelo, Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department* 3, 1932, p. 22; D.M.K. Davhana, Personal Notes, p. 12. (He compiled these notes from the information supplied by his father Khosi Kingi Nesengani. Kingi Nesengani had a wonderful memory. As Davhana was his grandfather, nobody could have supplied this information other than himself. A set of photocopies are in the possession of the author.)

32. D.M.K. Davhana, Personal Notes, p. 12.; O.I. - A. Ramavhoya (about 100 years), Rabali, 29-12-1982.

While Ramabulana was at Rida, having given up hope of regaining the throne, his eldest son Davhana, who had accompanied him there, made several abortive military attempts to enable his father to return to power. As Ramavhoya's defences were impenetrable, the attacks failed. Davhana, in an effort to convince his father of how serious and earnest he was in his intentions and the possibility of defeating Ramavhoya, cut off the heads of his victims and presented them to his father.<sup>33</sup>

Ramavhoya, despite the pomp and the glory which accompanied his usurpation of power, could not, however, rule out the possibility that one day his brother, the true and lawful successor to the throne, would return. This fact, aggravated by Davhana's minor attacks, forced him into a state of restlessness.<sup>34</sup> Something had to be done to prevent the return of Ramabulana and secure permanently his place in power. He felt compelled to consult traditional doctors and diviners. They advised him to look for a physically strong man, a courageous man with whose flesh a medicine could be made for the coming sowing season. There had to be a fresh medicine with which to sprinkle the warriors to make them strong.<sup>35</sup>

Such an opportunity presented itself when Mmamokotopi, the Tlokwa ruler, requested a state visit, during which the two most powerful leaders in the region would undertake a hunting expedition into the sub-tropical jungles of Vhukalanga. The objectives included, *inter alia*, improving relations and capturing cattle. Mmamokotopi also had ulterior motives. He was aware that the news of Ramabulana's passing through Botlokwa, as a fugitive seeking asylum on his way from Mafhishi to Rida, had reached Ramavhoya.<sup>36</sup> In order to extricate and dissociate himself and curry favour with Ramavhoya, he decided on the state visit and hunting trip. On the other hand Ramavhoya who had been waiting for an opportunity of this nature, responded in a positive manner to Mmamokotopi's

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33. D.M.K. Davhana, Personal Notes, p. 13.; O.I. - K. Nesengani (about 95 years), Davhana's Location, 14-06-1971.
34. O.I. - M. Ravele (about 69 years), Mauluma, 21-01-1983.
35. D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, I(3), February 1957, pp. 224 - 225; O.I. - A. Ramavhoya (about 100 years), Rabali, 29-12-1982.
36. O.I. - M. Ravele (about 69 years), Mauluma, 21-01-1983; O.I. - A. Ramavhoya (about 100 years), Rabali, 29-12-1982.
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proposal and decided that he and the Tlokwa leader would meet at the confluence of the Khwivhila and Litshovhu Rivers.<sup>37</sup>

Mmamokotopi, however, was not without advisors. His councillors, suspicious of Ramavhoya's intentions, vehemently objected to the proposed meeting, and against their wishes, the Tlokwa ruler left to meet Ramavhoya under a fig tree at a place owned by Raluombe who was under a certain *khosi* called Liswoga. The place later became a farm of a White man whom the Venda called Langwane.<sup>38</sup> As instructed by Ramavhoya, his bodyguards hid their spears in their clothing. The plan was to kill Mmamokotopi at an opportune moment.

In the midst of great rejoicing and jubilation, when nothing untoward was suspected, one of Ramavhoya's men, stabbed Mmamokotopi in the heart. His subjects, finding themselves caught up in a horrible situation, scattered in a state of fear in all directions, fleeing homeward, leaving their fallen leader at the mercy of Ramavhoya's men, who immediately and carefully removed parts of his body in order to prepare *phamba*.<sup>39</sup>

At the time, this incident, although cruel and treacherous, was seen as a great event in ensuring Ramavhoya's continued, unchallenged leadership of Venda. In actual fact, it was the beginning of the end of Venda sovereignty. The survival of the man, Ramavhoya, who appeared to be the fittest of them all, was in fact from that point in time, confined to only a few months.<sup>40</sup>

Heartbroken and leaderless, the Tlokwa refused to leave the matter there. Furthermore, Davhana's abortive attempts at storming Tshirululuni, created the impression that Ramabulana was still interested in having his throne back. At Rida the Tlokwa approached Ramabulana who was already aware of Mmamokotopi's

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37. O.I. - Ramavhoya (about 100 years), Rabali, 29-12-1982. Of all the informants, he was the only one who could remember the place where the meeting took place.

38. O.I. - Ramavhoya (about 100 years), Rabali, 29-12-1982. He was a great grandson of Ramavhoya.

39. D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, I(3), February 1957, pp. 224 - 225. Phamba is a sort of medicine prepared from the life-giving portions of a powerful man's body.

40. O.I. - Ramavhoya (about 100 years), Rabali, 29-12-1982.

tragic death. By deposing his brother from the throne as well as assassinating Mmamokotopi, Ramavhoya had brought the Tlokwa and Ramabulana together. Ramabulana now had allies among the Tlokwa. They offered to provide Davhana with military assistance in his bid to remove Ramavhoya from Tshirululuni. Ramabulana doubted their sincerity.<sup>41</sup>

As the Tlokwa continued to persuade him, Ramabulana finally changed his mind but before he could act, he ordered them to set Lunoni and Muthadzheni (villages which supported Ramavhoya) alight in order to test the sincerity of their promises. He said he would stand on Mount Rida to watch the smoke from the burning villages. Upon seeing the smoke rise, Ramabulana became convinced that the Tlokwa meant to honour their promise. He then ordered them to drive Ramavhoya out of Tshirululuni, which they did, again proving to him they were sincere. Consequently, Ramabulana moved nearer Tshirululuni and settled at Machaba from where he watched and awaited further developments between the Batlokwa and Ramavhoya.<sup>42</sup>

Van Warmelo records that Ramabulana moved to Tshirululuni after Ramavhoya had been dislodged. This was not the case. Ramavhoya had not yet been defeated, and it was known that Ramabulana would not dare live next to his brother as long as the latter was still alive. As Ramabulana was still hesitant about returning to Tshirululuni, fortune played into his hands. A group of Voortrekkers arrived in the area.<sup>43</sup> They were under the leadership of Hans van Rensburg who in 1835 approached the country from the west through Mavhambo and proceeded to the Lowveld and eventually disappeared from the scene, without having any contact with Thovhele. Shortly thereafter many more Whites arrived under Louis

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41. D.M.K. Davhana, Personal Notes, p. 15; M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg*, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 159.

42. N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department* 3, 1932, p. 19.

43. D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, I(3) February 1957, p. 228; J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda natie*, p. 10.

Tregardt.<sup>44</sup> They encamped at Gogobole.<sup>45</sup> There is speculation that before the arrival of Louis Tregardt, there had been communications between the Voortrekker leader and Ramabulana, while the latter was still at Rida, probably through Doors Buys, who had accompanied him there and with whom he was on good terms.

In this way Tregardt and Ramabulana are believed to have reached some understanding by which the former was promised land and elephant tusks, in exchange for helping Ramabulana's bid to regain his throne.<sup>46</sup> The two of them then travelled together to encamp at Gogobole. Van Warmelo described this episode under the title of "White man's interference".<sup>47</sup> It does not create a good impression, for it would appear as if the White man forced himself into the dispute. In fact it was not the case. Tregardt was actually asked to assist. Had he not helped Venda royal history would have taken a different course.

Tregardt then sent for Ramavhoya. The Venda ruler's mother, reacting to a premonition she had had the night before, warned Ramavhoya against going. In her premonition she saw her son Ramabulana and her grandson Davhana with a group of White people. It was an ominous sign, she thought. Consequently Ramavhoya relegated the task of visiting the Voortrekker leader to Funyufunyu and Madzhie. Tregardt however sent them back with the request to see Ramavhoya in person. Reports from the people of how they had been received and entertained, and the

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44. N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department* 3, 1932, p. 19, mentions that a White man, who was from Mamabolo and now in Botlokwa, was sent for. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 159, records that Ramabulana sent Buys to Potchefstroom to ask for assistance. By this time only two groups of Voortrekkers were in the Transvaal as H. Potgieter was still at Winburg. At any rate, what is significant here is that messengers were sent to solicit the assistance of the White people who in this case were the Voortrekkers under the leadership of Louis Tregardt.

45. A place to the south of the future Schoemansdal.

46. N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 3, 1932, p. 20; D.M.K. Nesengani, Personal Notes, p. 16; O.I. - Kingi Nesengani (about 95 years), Davhana's Location, 14-06-1971.

47. N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department* 3, 1932, p. 20.

news that Ramabulana and Davhana were not amongst them, created a feeling of optimism in Ramavhoya's mind. He defied his mother's warning and decided to meet with Tregardt the following day. His councillors encouraged him to go.<sup>48</sup>

Meanwhile Davhana's warriors and the Tlokwa allies who were bent on revenging the treacherous assassination of Mmamokotopi, were lying in ambush along the Litshovhu and Gogobole Rivers. Ramabulana and Davhana hid in a wagon covered with canvas. On their arrival, Ramavhoya's group was well-received and entertained in a fitting manner. He was then asked to climb into the wagon in order to see the White man's king, whom he was told only appeared during the night time. The canvas was uncovered. When Ramavhoya saw Ramabulana, he immediately attacked him. In the fray that ensued, the elder brother was unable to withstand the strength of the younger Ramavhoya. Davhana too, assisted the father. In the midst of this tussle, Tregardt pulled the trigger, firing a shot into the air, thereby arousing the warriors in hiding who descended upon Ramavhoya and his men.<sup>49</sup>

The Tlokwa urged Ramabulana to kill Ramavhoya after the clash. The legitimate ruler of the Venda could however not kill his mother's son. The Tlokwa then threatened to kill him instead. Faced with this dilemma, Ramabulana ultimately yielded and strangled his younger brother with a cord.<sup>50</sup> According to the prevailing tradition it was held that royal blood should not be spilt. If it happened, the Venda believed, evil would befall the country.

As he died Ramavhoya clung to the ground, thus implying the taking of the fertility of the land with him, saying, "Ha mukomana vuhosi u nga si vhu dzule, hu do bvelela vhusunzi vhutswuku vhu no do u mona" (One cannot be rest assured in brother's kingship, red ants will come and wither you down). In this way the tall, robust and strong figure of Ramavhoya disappeared from the historical scene.<sup>51</sup>

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48. O.I. - Kingi Nesengani (about 95 years), Davhana's Location, 14-06-1971.

49. *Ibid.*

50. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department* 8, 1940, p. 160.

51. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department* 8, 1940, p. 160. "One cannot be rest assured in brother's kingship, red ants will come and wither you down."

This was the man who, if it were not for his anxiety, suspicion and short-sightedness, could have started his own line of kingship. The name Ramabulana and his successors Makhado and Mphephu would have been unknown. After this cold blooded murder, Ramabulana regained his throne, assisted by the White men and the Tlokwa; an event which set a precedent in the political development of Venda, especially with regard to the transfer of authority from one monarch to another.<sup>52</sup>

Wagner's assertion that Ramabulana was a weak candidate in Venda law,<sup>53</sup> should not have been directed at Ramabulana as he was a legitimate heir to Mpofo's throne. His assumptions are however based on incomplete information. The oral record suggests that Ramabulana was in fact the legitimate ruler. How could Ramabulana be a weak candidate in Venda law which had made provision for his succession as he was the eldest prince? Furthermore when Wagner wrote that Ramabulana had slain the then Chief Ramavhoya, he was not aware of the preceding events which followed Mpofo's death and the fact that in Venda law there is no provision for brothers of the same mother to fight for kingship. Therefore the events of 1836 which removed Ramavhoya from the political arena, led to the return of Ramabulana to the throne.

Another issue which requires clarification is Ramabulana's contact with Louis Tregardt. According to Venda oral sources Ramabulana approached Tregardt for assistance in order to win his throne back. Tregardt agreed and made all diplomatic arrangements for Ramavhoya to meet him.<sup>54</sup> Yet Tregardt did not enter this in his diary. He could have avoided this in order to extricate himself from the events surrounding Ramavhoya's death. His diary does indicate his friendship with

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52. A.M. Ncube, *The Venda and Mphephu War of 1898*, Unpublished History Seminar Paper, University of Rhodesia, Salisbury, 1971-2, p. 4.

53. R. Wagner, *Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867*, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and Society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 329.

54. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg*, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department* 8, 1940, p. 160; O.I. - K. Nesengani (about 95 years), *Davhana's Location, 14-06-1971*; N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual*, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department* 3, 1932, p. 20.

Ramabulana and his enmity towards Ramavhoya. Of course he was under no obligation to record all events as a diary is a personal document. This is the shortcoming of a diary as a historical document. As the event of Ramavhoya's death happened before the Tlokwa and the Vhavenda who were present, there was no way of concealing it to history.<sup>55</sup>

As already pointed out, after Ramavhoya had firmly established his grip on the nation, many Mahosi showed their loyalty and obedience by sending him tributes, including young girls as prospective spouses. One of them, Matumba, a Mukwevho of Tshitavhadulu, had already sent his daughter Mutumbe. When Ramavhoya assassinated Mmamokotopi, Mutumbe was already married. It is recorded that, when Ramavhoya returned, he found that Mutumbe, his senior wife had died suddenly, without having produced an heir.<sup>56</sup>

Ramavhoya then sent word to Matumba's family, pointing out that their daughter, who was a *dzekiso* (betrothal) wife, died without having fulfilled her obligation. Of course, in a case of this nature, should a wife die without fulfilling her obligations, it was customary that her father or his family, if he was no longer alive, send another daughter as a replacement. This could also happen when the wife was barren. Under such circumstances her husband's family would give out additional cattle, as it was considered a new marriage.<sup>57</sup> The child born from this marriage would have the right of ascending the throne. The Matumba family responded positively, promising Ramavhoya that Limani, their younger daughter, approximately eight years old at the time, would replace Mutumbe, her Makhadzi.<sup>58</sup> Had Ramavhoya lived, he would have had to wait until Limani reached womanhood before the marriage could take place. Unfortunately fate intervened before the arrangement materialised.

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55. A.M. Ncube, *The Venda and the Mphophu war of 1898*, Unpublished History Seminar paper, University of Rhodesia, Salisbury, 1971-2, pp. 4 - 5.
56. D. Möller-Malan, *Die donker Soutpansberg*, *Historia*, I(3) February 1957, p. 227; O.I. - A. Ramavhoya (about 100 years), Rabali, 29-12-1982.
57. O.I. - A.R. Makaulule (about 82 years), Vuvha, 29-12-1982.
58. Father's sister, an important personality in matters of succession to the throne. O.I. - A.R. Makaulule (about 82 years), Vuvha, 29-12-1982.

As young Limani was looking after her father's cattle, she was spotted by *Thovhele's* men. They immediately conveyed word to Ramabulana that Matumba's beautiful daughter was seen in the veld.<sup>59</sup> In this way she came to the notice of His Royal Highness Ramabulana. It is possible that he was unaware that she was promised to Ramavhoya when he fell in love with her. At any rate, whatever might be said of the circumstances surrounding Limani's position in the royal hierarchy, she would have been Ramavhoya's wife, had he not died while she was still too young to marry. Consequently she was married to Ramabulana, who did not pay betrothal cattle to her parents, as she was a replacement.<sup>60</sup>

Limani's grandfather, Matumba, was a younger brother of Matidze of Luonde. The latter was angry after he had entered a circumcision lodge at Mavhambo, in Tshivhula's territory. On his return Matidze refused to accept him as he had deviated from the custom of the Vhakwevho for whom circumcision was taboo.<sup>61</sup> Matumba after having been declared an outcast, then felt he was no longer safe at Luonde and fled to Tshitavhadulu, where he was out of reach of his brother. His village at Luonde was left deserted. It fell into ruins and was called 'Matumba'.<sup>62</sup>

As will be shown, this incident, the entry of Matumba into the circumcision lodge, had important historical consequences for Makhado, particularly in respect of his accession to the throne. Because of the mother's influence and the prevailing conditions during his teens, it is not surprising that Makhado had no hesitation to enter the circumcision lodge himself, just as his maternal grandfather had done earlier.

Limani, as the youngest wife of Ramabulana, gave issue to Makhado, Manzwida and Ndalambi. Through her charm and intellectual capacity, coupled with her beauty and happy disposition, Limani became her husband's most favoured wife.

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59. *Ibid.*

60. N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department* 3, 1932, p. 25.

61. O.I. - M. Matumba (about 70 years), Tshikombani, 23-01-1983.

62. Matumba is a Venda word for ruins. Thereafter the Matumbas became known as circumcisors. This tradition persists until this day. O.I. - M. Matumba (about 70 years), Tshikombani, 23-01-1983.

The nation looked upon her as the mother. In accordance with Venda law and custom, where there is no provision for automatic succession, the character of the mother of the aspirant to the throne counted largely in his ability to rally the nation behind him.<sup>63</sup>

Twelve years after Ramabulana resumed ruling at Tshirululuni, further far-reaching developments took place. This was the arrival in 1848 of Boer settlers under Andries Hendrik Potgieter at the foot of Soutpansberg. Before the arrival of these emigrants, Ramabulana informed the people of Moletsi that the Boers were his friends. Therefore they should not be molested.<sup>64</sup> Unfortunately he had no idea of their number and intentions. He thought of a few people who would come and live under his authority. He was soon surprised to see more than three hundred families with many wagons and cattle. This frightened him, especially as Ramavhoya's last words about the "red ants" were always ringing in his ears.<sup>65</sup> For the Venda take very seriously the words spoken by a person before his death. Information had also reached him that the Boers were putting up a laager, building up structures, planting trees and making furrows. These were clear indications that they intended to settle at Thivhalalwe for a very long time - perhaps even permanently. He also heard that they were seen going around the country, surveying it as if they wanted to settle all over.<sup>66</sup>

This situation frightened Ramabulana and he avoided a meeting with the Boers. The Boers who anticipated his arrival, waited in vain. Instead he sent his son Davhana

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63. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department* 8, 1940, p. 161; O.I. - A.R. Makaulule (about 82 years), Vuvha, 29-12-1982.
64. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department* 8, 1940, p. 159.
65. D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(1) June 1957, p. 39; M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 159.
66. D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(1) June 1957, p. 39.
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who told them that *Thovhele* could not come. He was too old to travel long distances.<sup>67</sup>

After the Boers had settled at the new village called Zoutpansbergdorp, economic activities increased and expanded. Farms were surveyed, demarcated and allocated. By settling on the farms with their flocks, the Boers expanded their area of settlement.<sup>68</sup> This new development, which implied the penetration of Venda by the Boers, increased Ramabulana's anxiety. He felt unsafe in their proximity. In the midst of this situation, Davhana was arrested for allegedly stealing a farmer's cow.<sup>69</sup> He however managed to escape from imprisonment and fled to his father. As a result of this incident Ramabulana left Tshirululuni for Nngwekhulu. He later returned to Mauluma and resided with one of his wives, Limani. As Nngwekhulu and Mauluma were under his jurisdiction he was no exile or fugitive as some writers allege.<sup>70</sup> Ramabulana felt secure and was cared for by Limani.<sup>71</sup> The warmth and kindness displayed by this good and intelligent woman towards Thovhele at a time of great distress, counted heavily in her son's favour during the disputes over the succession to Ramabulana's throne. In other words, by doing as she did, Limani paved the way for the succession of her son Makhado, to the throne. The royal family and all the subjects were aware of this.<sup>72</sup> Because of the inaccessibility of mountainous Mauluma, Thovhele felt safe. He believed the Boers would be unable to trace his whereabouts. Actually it was alleged that the Boers were anxious to

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67. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 39; S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, p. 32.

69. N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department* 3, 1932, p. 22.

70. Thovhele or khosikhulu or khosi could establish himself in any part of his territory or land. Such a place became his royal residence. J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda Natie*, p. 11; N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 3, 1932, p. 22.

71. N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department* 3, 1932, p. 23; O.I. - M. Ravele (about 69 years), Mauluma, 21-01-1983.

72. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana; N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department* 8, 1940, p. 161.

assure him of their goodwill as he did not pose any danger to their settlement in Venda. Who they actually wanted was Davhana, who had escaped from detention.

As economic activities increased, the Boers felt the need for labour on their farms. Seven years after their settlement in Venda, on 27 February 1855, in a meeting chaired by Commandant-General Stephanus Schoeman, it was decided that certain Venda leaders had to supply labour to farms and also work as gun carriers. This arrangement affected Ramabulana's territory. The new White farms were carved out of his lands. It was also decided at the same meeting that *mahosi mahulu* and *mahosi* whose territories were far from White settlers, had to pay tribute. This tribute or 'opgaaf' consisted of five head of cattle or five elephant tusks, as well as a goat and a sheep or four hoes per hut. If these were not available, the *mahosi* had to pay 25 pieces of copper or 20 leopard hides.<sup>73</sup>

The Boers considered the tribute to be the "price" the Venda had to pay for the protection they supposedly enjoyed from Mzilikazi. It was said the Venda, like other Blacks in the Transvaal, were "freed by the Whites" when they broke the "power of Mzilikazi". Colonel Stanford put this very clearly when he maintained the Venda developed and increased after Mzilikazi, the great lion of the country was defeated. This implies that there was once a 'Mzilikazi Empire' which stretched from the Free State to the Vhembe River.<sup>74</sup> Yet in reality Mzilikazi never attacked the Venda because by that time he had been driven away from Mosega. The Venda had not yet experienced any outside attack. Moreover, when he fled across the Vaal River he was already a defeated man who could not have attacked the Venda as the Boers had defeated him.<sup>75</sup>

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73. TA SS7, p. 476. R774/55, Besluit van vergadering van Stephanus Schoeman, Zoutpansberg, 27-02-1855; See also D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(1), June 1957, p. 44; J.B. de Vaal, *Die rol van João Albasini in die geskiedenis van die Transvaal, 1813 - 1888*, 16(1), 1953, p. 64; O.J.O. Ferreira, *Stormvoël van die Noorde, Stephanus Schoeman in Transvaal*, p. 55.

74. U.G. 22-'16, p. 381. Report of the Native Land Commission, Volume 2.

75. J.P.F. Moolman, Die Boere se stryd teen die Swart stamme in en om die Z.A.R., 1864 - 1871, (D. Litt. et Phil. Unisa, 1982), p. 235; J.P.F. Moolman,

Die Boer se siening van en houding teenoor die Bantoe in Transvaal tot 1860 (M.A. Verhandeling, Universiteit van Pretoria, October 1975), p. 53 - 54.

It was however, in 1839 and 1840 that Venda was attacked by the Malema of Sekwati and the Swazi of Ngwane but they managed to repulse these attacks.<sup>76</sup> As for Zwangendaba and Manukosi on their way from Zululand, they just passed through Venda without attacking the people.<sup>77</sup>

The Boers ought to have advanced different reasons for demanding labour and tribute. They could have said they regarded themselves as superior. Or they could have maintained that they were worthy of having work done for them and receiving tribute. If the Venda refused, they could have told them they would meet the same fate as Mzilikazi. This was in effect the underlying reason for the demands they imposed.<sup>78</sup>

On the basis of the above assumptions the Venda were obliged to supply labour to the Boers. This undoubtedly led to the later outbreak of hostilities with the Venda. Thus, when the Boers demanded labourers, Ramabulana, who was still at Mauluma, welcomed this as an opportune moment and used it to his own advantage, despite the fact that it infringed on tradition and customs. He ordered Limani and Makhado to return to Tshirululuni where they would reside at Vhutuwangadzebu.<sup>79</sup> Here they worked for Hans Kloppers, a farmer in the vicinity. It was here that he came into contact with Terence Fitzgerald who frequented the farm. Fitzgerald was interested in one of Kloppers' daughters. He was a young Irish soldier who joined the

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76. TA, V.O.G. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission, No. 138/06, pp. 2 - 3. Report of Native Location Commission. History. The Makhado (Magato) Ramapulana Tribes, 23-03-1907; S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau Vha Tshakhuma*, pp. 44 - 45; M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, pp. 158 - 159; J. Flygare, *Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda natie*, p. 10.
77. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department* 8, 1940, p. 164.
78. N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department* 3, 1932, p. 24; O.J.O. Ferreira, *Stormvoël van die Noorde, Stephanus Schoeman in Transvaal*, p. 55.
79. Situated above present day Louis Trichardt.

Potgieter group after the Battle of Boomplaats in 1848. He and Makhado developed a friendship.<sup>80</sup>

Makhado and Limani's presence on Klopper's farm was necessary as Mauluma was far from Schoemansdal. In addition to what has been said above, Ramabulana felt there had to be someone near the Boers who would be his reliable eyes and ears. Therefore, Limani was his logical choice as she had proved to be an honest and trustworthy ally. Like the young Moses in Pharaoh's palace, Makhado acquainted himself with the lifestyle of the White men. He learnt to understand their way of thinking. This served as a preparation for his future career when he had to preserve the country from further incursions by the Boers. This definitely contributed to his success as a leader of his people. Perhaps it was during his acquaintance with the Boers at an early age that he learnt the military organisation which he would later introduce in his territory.<sup>81</sup>

Meanwhile the love which Ramabulana displayed to Makhado, evoked jealousy and hatred among his elder brothers, Davhana, Khangale and Rasikhuthuma. Makhado was therefore like Joseph amongst his brothers. As Ramabulana's love for Makhado was not only confined to the royal house, it became apparent to the people that the latter could be the next Thovhele. Therefore, the Vhakwevho of Matumba thought of increasing the number of Makhado's supporters.<sup>82</sup>

They advised him to enter the circumcision lodge at Tshamatangwi in Mashau's area. The intention was to render him acceptable to the initiates of the circumcision tradition. It would strengthen his position in disputes over succession to the

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80. N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department* 3, 1932, p. 24; D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2 (1), June 1957, p. 41.
81. D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(1), June 1957, p. 46; D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 147; F.A. Cuendet, *Rivoningo emunyameni*, p. 28.
82. O.I. - M. Matumba (about 70 years), at Tshikombani, 23-01-1983. He knew much about this event and related it with pride.

throne.<sup>83</sup> His mother's influence, ties, and teachings of her father, played an important role. Once the plans had been made Makhado and Nndwayamiomva secretly entered the circumcision lodge circa 1854. The age group with which he was circumcised was known as Madali.<sup>84</sup>

The oral information surrounding Makhado's circumcision gave substance to two supposedly historical ideas. The first being that Makhado entered the circumcision lodge under the influence of the Lemba. The second was that he was the first Muvenda to be circumcised. These assertions are incorrect. The suggestion that Makhado be circumcised, came from his maternal uncles, whose descendants even today, are known as "circumcisors".<sup>85</sup> They were themselves circumcised before Makhado was born. It should have been recorded that of the many princes of Ramabulana, Makhado was the only one circumcised, and therefore the first circumcised prince of the Singo royal house to ascend the throne. Had Makhado not become *Thovhele*, his circumcision would have remained unknown. In fact it would have carried no historical significance in the over-all picture of the time.

Turning to the White community, Zoutpansbergdorp (later known as Schoemansdal), became an important settlement on the northern frontier. Many local settlers resorted to hunting, either in a part-time or full-time capacity. The purpose was to obtain ivory which was an important item of trade. The hunting season stretched over the winter period for five months (April to August), up to the commencement of Spring (towards the end of September). During the summer

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83. L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, pp. 17 - 18; M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg*, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department* 8, 1940, p. 176; N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual*, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 3, 1932, p. 25.

84. "Madali" was the age group name of Makhado and he was their leader; W. Grant, Magato and his tribe, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 35, 1905, p. 267.

85. O.I. - M.Matumba (about 70 years), Tshikombani, 23-01-1983; M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg*, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department* 8, 1940, p. 176; L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, 1966, pp. 17 - 18.

months (October to March), malaria was prevalent and a very dangerous disease for the Whites.<sup>86</sup>

As hunters, accompanied by their Venda labourers, combed the area, shooting many elephants, considerable quantities of ivory were brought back and stored at Schoemansdal.<sup>87</sup> Traders from the Cape Colony and Natal came to buy this important commodity of trade. The traders supplied the hunting community with necessary provisions which were not freely obtainable locally. In this way Schoemansdal became a flourishing centre of trade and developed rapidly.<sup>88</sup>

Although the Venda men participated in the hunting trade, first as gun-carriers and later as "Swartskuts", the rulers were not at all happy. These activities interfered with the traditional way of life.<sup>89</sup> Meanwhile, Makhado returned from circumcision lodge. He found himself rejected by his elder brothers. He felt isolated and then went into hiding. He was then approached by Rasivhetshele and Funyufunyu who had already joined Boer hunting parties. They told him that instead of hiding, he should join them as an assistant in hunting elephants.<sup>90</sup>

There being no other viable alternative open to him, Makhado agreed to this arrangement and joined the hunting parties. It was under these circumstances that Makhado received instruction in the handling of firearms. It enabled him to shoot his own elephants independent of supervision. Later on Rasivhetshele and Funyufunyu found another White man. Makhado now assisted him as a gun carrier. Others were also appointed to help Makhado in this job. In this way the future ruler of the Venda, also became a leader of men - rather than a mere follower of others.<sup>91</sup>

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86. TA, A17, Accession J.F. Churchill 1856-1857. R.H. Gage, *Historiese skets van Noord Transvaal*, by J. Fleetwood Churchill, Rhenosterpoort, 13-09-1856.
87. R. Wagner, *Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867*, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and Society in pre-industrial South Africa, 1987*, p. 313.
88. TA A. 17, Accession J.F. Churchill 1956 - 1857. R.H. Gage, *Historiese Skets van Noord Transvaal*, by Fleetwood Churchill, 13-09-1856.
89. O.I. - M. Ravele (about 69 years), Mauluma, 21-01-1983.
90. O.I. - M. Ravele (about 69 years), Mauluma, 21-01-1983.
91. N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual*, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 3, 1932, p. 27.

In Summer the White men stopped all hunting activities. The heavy rains caused transport difficulties. Added to this the White men were not used to the climatic conditions of the region. The excessive heat of the sun and slippery ground on rainy days, mosquitoes and tsetse flies, compelled them to remain at home. It was as a result of these adverse factors that the gun carriers were given firearms to go and hunt the elephants. Consequently supervision over hunting activities declined as more and more hunting groups were formed. This gave the Venda greater freedom in generating their own income. In this way Makhado and his men hunted independently. It enabled them to keep some of the tusks they brought back from the hunting fields. Makhado, however, did not keep the tusks for himself. Instead he sent them to Ramabulana who in turn gave them to the Boers to pacify them.<sup>92</sup> The Boers accepted these as presents and conveyed to Ramabulana the fact that they had nothing against him. Despite these assurances, Ramabulana did not go back to Tshirululuni. Instead he went to Vuvha where he established his royal residence at Bambalani.<sup>93</sup> Here he could relax as the place proved to be safe and out of reach of the Boers. His younger brother, Madzhie, remained in charge of the Tshirululuni royal residence.<sup>94</sup>

While Ramabulana had made Bambalani his headquarters, Makhado and Limani continued to live at Vhutuwangadzebu. The purpose of residing on the specific site was to keep continuous watch on the activities of the Boers.<sup>95</sup> Moreover, it was not safe for Makhado to actually live at Vuvha because of the attitude of his elder brothers.

At Schoemansdal, the Boers continued to demand labour and tribute from *Thovhele*, *mahosi mahulu* and *mahosi*. This approach on the side of the Whites had important implications.<sup>96</sup> It was fundamentally strident with Venda tradition and custom. For

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92. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

93. O.I. - A.R. Makaulule (about 82 years), Vuvha, 29-12-1982.

94. O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986. He was Makhado's grandson.

95. D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2 (1), June 1957, p. 41.

96. R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and Society in pre-industrial South Africa*, p. 322.

in Venda society only subjects and headmen could render tribute to *mahosi* while the *mahosi* themselves who occupied the apex of the political pyramid, rendered theirs to *mahosi mahulu* and *Thovhele* and not to anybody else.<sup>97</sup> The demand for labour and paying of tribute to the Boers became obstacles for Makhado in his attempt at reviving the Venda kingdom.

As Ramabulana was consolidating his hold on a nation that had been torn asunder by civil war, while the Boer settlement at Schoemansdal was prospering, fate intervened. He suddenly became ill. His illness continued unabated despite attempts by Maines<sup>98</sup> to save his life. As there was no sign of recovery, Davhana secretly removed his father from the palace, and accommodated him in a humble residence outside the royal headquarters. Davhana had given instructions for the dwelling to be erected, specifically for this purpose. Thus Ramabulana could receive treatment in isolation.<sup>99</sup>

Ordinary people and relatives, including *makhadzi* and *khotsimunene* were forbidden to visit him. As the closest relatives were not told why they had no access to their ruler, an aura of suspicion surrounded the prevailing situation. Davhana, who had accompanied his father to Rida and had actively participated in his reinstatement, had not forgotten the popular support his uncle, Ramavhoya, enjoyed. That was his reason for keeping his father isolated.<sup>100</sup> This showed that he loved his father.

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97. In Venda society, Thovhele's position is on top of the pyramid. He is above everybody. Under Thovhele are mahosi mahulu who are in charge of mahosi. These mahosi are in charge of magota. Under Magota, there are Vhakoma who are directly attached to the subjects. So the rendering of tribute starts from the subject to Mukoma, then to gota, to khosi and to khosi khulu. This tribute was in the form of possessions or labour as a sign of loyalty. This set-up was interfered with as the Boers demanded tribute from everybody including Thovhele. The status of Thovhele was reduced to that of an ordinary subject.

98. A physician or herbalist who uses bones to find out the cause of the disease and thereafter applies medicine as a remedy.

99. D.M.K. Davhana, Personal Notes, p. 27; O.I. - K. Nesengani (about 95 years), Davhana's Location, 14-06-1971.

100. D.M.K. Davhana, Personal Notes, p. 27; O.I. - K. Nesengani (about 95 years), Davhana's Location, 14-06-1971; M.M. Motenda Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 161.

Consequently, as he was haunted by the anxiety that Ramavhoya's supporters and followers might use the illness and take revenge by assassinating Ramabulana, he decided to keep everybody away from his sick father. Naturally his father's subjects did not like this as they were not informed of the reason behind Ramabulana's seclusion. Of course, Davhana had forgotten the Venda royal expression: "A i na hayo ya musanda, kana wa i swoga kana wa i litsha, Zwothe ndi u khakha" (It is difficult to please when you are next to the king).<sup>101</sup>

Although no information is available as to the cause of the illness, it can be presumed that exhaustion, resulting from his movements from the royal headquarters to Nngwekhulu, Mauluma and ultimately Vuvha, coupled with his advanced age, could have sapped Ramabulana's vitality, reducing him to an invalid, susceptible to disease. It would appear that even the other sons of Ramabulana were not allowed to see their father as Davhana had forbidden everybody.<sup>102</sup>

Eventually Thovhele passed away at the beginning of 1864,<sup>103</sup> and it seems likely that in accordance with Venda custom, his passing away was kept a secret. Ordinary people were not informed, while the day to day activities of administration of his territory was conducted by his councillors.<sup>104</sup>

As he was still at Vuvha, Ramabulana was laid to rest there. His remains were later disinterred and removed to Gaza in Sunguzwi by his son Makhado. The place has, up to this day, remained the burial place of the Ramabulana monarchs.<sup>105</sup>

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101. It is difficult to do the right thing where matters of kingship are concerned.

102. D.M.K. Davhana, Personal Notes, p. 27; O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986; M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 161.

103. G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872*, IV, p. 47; ANON., Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War, *The Transvaal Argus*, 18-03-1868; J.B. de Vaal, Die rol van João Albasini in die Geskiedenis van die Transvaal, 1813 - 1885, *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis*, 16(1), 1953, p. 75.

104. S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, p. 20.

105. O.I. - M. Radzilani (about 95 years), Vhulaudzi, 12-07-1971; Thovhele and Mahosi of Ramabulana dynasty are buried here at Gaza. Each has his own hut for this purpose. W. Grant, Magato and his tribe, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 35, 1905, p. 267.

The peace-loving Ramabulana did not only "... seem to have a wide repute, (but was) "held in considerable reverence by other nations", according to a report in the *Transvaal Argus*.<sup>106</sup> Ramabulana's name, it transpired, was known throughout Southern Africa. The *Transvaal Argus* referred to him as a "great kaffir chief residing in the caves of Zoutpansberg".<sup>107</sup> This report, which seems to have been derived from the writer's imagination, rather than from personal observation, conjures up the illusion that Ramabulana and his subjects, the Vhavenda, were a race of primitive cave dwellers. In actual fact, men no longer lived in caves at the time. Ramabulana's royal residences Tshirululuni and Bambalani were noted for their beautiful localities. The royal residences of *Thovhele*, *mahosi mahulu* and *mahosi* have always been places of beauty and splendour.

Concerning the monarch's death, G.G. Munnik wrote that Ramabulana went on an expedition to the place where his ancestors had come from, but never returned. Perhaps he was killed.<sup>108</sup> Munnik clearly confused Ramabulana with Thohoyandou whose demise remains unknown up to this day.

The death of Ramabulana marks the end of an era and the beginning of another. It was these circumstances which determined Makhado's programme of action in order to revive the Venda state in the face of adversity. In the next chapter the discussion will reflect on how Makhado ascended the throne and established his grip on the nation in order to face the challenge of the future. It will also consider the impact of settlers from the east and the south.

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106. ANON., Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War, *The Transvaal Argus*, 18-07-1868; M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana (editor); N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 158.

107. ANON., Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War, *The Transvaal Argus*, 18-07-1868.

108. G.G. Munnik, *Memoirs of Senator the Hon. G.G. Munnik*, p. 110. Owing to the sacred status of the Venda monarch, the words u fa (die), u vhulaha (kill), u lovha (perish) are not used in connection with him. They are used for the ordinary people. When the monarch has passed away it is said he has secretly left (o nenga), or Mativha o xa (pools have dried up) or o dzama (he has been transformed).



## CHAPTER 2

### MAKHADO CONSOLIDATES HIS POSITION, 1864-5

Ramabulana's death, like that of any Venda monarch, left a vacuum, the filling of which caused political storms and upheavals which engulfed the whole nation. The reason behind this conflagration being the traditional view that, "A vhu newi vhukoma ha ha Ramabulana, a si vhuswa". Translated it means: Kingship of Ramabulana cannot be dished out like porridge.<sup>1</sup> This expression has become a thread which runs throughout all successions to Venda thrones. N.J. van Warmelo came nearer to this when he writes:

The chieftainship is like a dish of porridge, held in the grasp of the chief and a few elders of the royal family, but for the benefit of all the members. Needless to say, there is endless intrigue and scheming to secure the major part of the benefits for one branch of the family or another, for it must be realised that a chief's household with its thirty or more wives, is at once the meeting point and the battle ground of the families of these wives.<sup>2</sup>

This view would have been correct if the writer had been specific about the 'royal family', and how the new king is identified and installed. For, according to Venda customs and traditions, kingship is not a personal property of the king. It belongs to the royal house. Therefore the people who are charged with the responsibility of

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1. O.I. - Tshivhidzo Musekwa, (about 100 years), Tshihanane, 12-07-1971; M.M. Motenda Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, pp. 159, 165.
  2. N.J. van Warmelo, *Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship*, 1940, p. 13

identification and installation are *makhadzi*, *ndumi/khotsimunene*.<sup>3</sup> This process of identification and installation is known as, “u vhumba vhukoma”, (meaning moulding, processing, making of kingship). There is no provision for automatic succession in Venda law. Without the blessing of these two important personalities in the royal household, no installation is valid.

This exposition of the nature of Venda kingship and installation will help in explaining the struggle for succession among the princes of Ramabulana, which further divided them. The White settlers were quick to notice the division and sided with different groups, thereby weakening the royal family. It made it easier for them to settle permanently in Venda territory.

Ramabulana had many children, among whom were Davhana, Rasikhuthuma, Nthabalala, Khangale, Ramalamula, Liswoga, Ramaru, Ramanala, Raliphaswa and Makhado.<sup>4</sup> Although Ramabulana died at an old age, the people still looked for the culprit ‘who killed him’. This was because in Venda custom it was maintained that for every death there should be a cause. They did not think a person could merely die. Traditionally they resorted to diviners, imbued with supernatural powers, who had to explain to them what had in fact happened. In the case of Ramabulana’s death the people suspected Davhana of having killed his father.<sup>5</sup> There were numerous grounds to believe it. At the time of his death, Ramabulana was confined to a dwelling erected by Davhana outside the royal kraal, where he, Davhana, nursed his father. This prevailing opinion amongst the Venda people had an influence on Davhana’s accession to his father’s throne. It is discussed in greater detail below.

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3. Makhadzi is the king’s sister with whom he is installed (*khadzi*). Khotsimunene is the king’s younger brother with whom he is installed (*Ndumi*).
  4. N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 3, 1932, p. 29.
  5. E. Gottschling, The Bawenda, A sketch of their history and customs, *British and South African Association for the advancement of science*, III, London, 1905, p. 367; ANON., Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War, *The Transvaal Argus*, 18 March 1868; TA G.O.V. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 138/06, p. 6. Report of Native Location Commission. History. The Makhado (Magato) Ramapulana Tribes, 23-03-1907: SS56, p. 86, R287/64, Schoemansdal, Drie maandeliks verslag, S.T. van Rensburg 19-5-1864.

The death of Ramabulana ushered in a new era, which Möller-Malan explains as follows:

(N)ou het daar 'n stryd om groot kapteenskap gevolg wat verreikende gevolge op die geskiedenis van Zoutpansberg sou hê.<sup>6</sup>

A struggle for succession to the throne of Ramabulana and a civil war ensued. In the process the youngest prince was to become the new *Thovhele*, while his elder brothers failed. In order to understand precisely how this happened, it is necessary to look at certain royal Venda customs which have remained in force right up to the present day.

Van Warmelo claims that the unhappy state of affairs after the death of Ramabulana, can be ascribed to Ramabulana's strangling of Ramavhoya - a bloody deed which, according to him, set a precedent of violence for his descendants.<sup>7</sup>

This view, although it contains some elements of truth, is not entirely correct. The struggles for succession are not confined merely to the house of Ramabulana. Bloody and violent feuds are frequently the order of the day, also in other royal families of Venda society. In order to understand the motives behind the civil wars that precede each succession to the throne, it is necessary to examine the nature of kingship itself as an institution. In this regard we must turn to N.J. van Warmelo, who writes:

In ancient times the Vhavenda had the so-called 'sacred kingship', a system depending entirely on magical and religious sanctions. The person of the chief was surrounded by taboos and mystery. The common people were his subjects, not his fellow tribesmen.<sup>8</sup>

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6. J.B. de Vaal, *Die rol van João Albasini in die Geskiedenis van die Transvaal, 1813 - 1888, Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis*, 16(1), 1953, p. 46.
  7. N.J. van Warmelo, *Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship*, 1940, pp. 51 - 54.
  8. Van Warmelo, *Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship*, 1940, pp. 51 - 54. This statement, outlining the nature of Venda kingship, is accepted by Vhavenda themselves.

Over and above these qualities, there are also the roles of the father figure and the supernatural personality, believed to be possessed by a king. The *Thovhele* cannot merely marry any woman. Factors such as origin and parentage also have to be taken into consideration.<sup>9</sup> Van Warmelo explains:

The ruling families of Vendaland constitute a small governing class closely knit together through innumerable marriages. Probably nowhere else in the Southern African sub-continent will one find such a tangle of family ties.<sup>10</sup>

They even have a language and vocabulary of their own. In some initiation schools, their children do not mix with those of their subjects. That is why kingship is highly prized among the Vhavenda. For a prince to succeed his father, he has to struggle in mobilising the people behind him. In historic times this led to civil wars in Venda society. Today these have become court interdicts.<sup>11</sup>

The exposition given above was necessary in order for us to get to a better understanding of the struggle for supremacy between Davhana and Makhado in the nineteenth century.

Of the many sons of Ramabulana, Davhana was the eldest. In advancing his case for succession, Van Warmelo states:

Whether he had the strongest claim to succeed is difficult to decide.

Some say his mother was a Tshiozwi wife.<sup>12</sup>

Had Van Warmelo investigated this matter more deeply, he would have discovered that Davhana in fact, held the strongest claim. All those interviewed for the purpose of this thesis were unanimous in their opinion that Davhana was Ramabulana's

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- 9 . These traditions have prevailed right up to the present in Venda society.
  10. Van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 13.
  11. The case of succession to the Tshivhase royal family in 1984 serves as one recent example.
  12. Van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 54; O.I. - Tshivhidzo Musekwa (about 100 years), Tshihanane, 12-07-1971; O.I. - K. Nesengani (about 95 years), 14-06-1971.
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heir.<sup>13</sup> But the support he anticipated from the royal family was of even greater significance than the position of Davhana's house in the royal household.

It must however, be pointed out that the practice adopted by the Vhavenda of leaving the door open for succession, rules out the concept of automatic succession and appointment, which is common to other Southern African nations. The result of this was the many disputes and differences which numerous native commissioners tried to settle in terms of existing legislation between 1902 and 1979.

Coming to Davhana again, he being the eldest son and nursing his father the king, alone outside the palace, did not doubt his right to succeed. This was shared by most of his siblings. Van Warmelo writes that the younger brothers of Davhana approached *Makhadzi* Nyakhuhu, Ramabulana's sister, to have him installed. Although this was contrary to accepted custom, as the sons could not install one of their own, she directed them to bring all the sons together. They did so, but excluded Makhado and when the *makhadzi* wanted to know why they had done so, they said he was no longer one of them, as he had forfeited his rights. (He had entered a circumcision lodge).<sup>14</sup>

Their king-to-be was Davhana. As they were adamant in their demands, the *makhadzi* was at last forced to bow to their pressure. In this way Davhana forced himself into the position of *Thovhele*. He literally usurped the throne. He had no overt support from the *makhadzi*.<sup>15</sup> Kingship of this nature could not be valid and in modern terms, can be regarded as null and void.<sup>16</sup>

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13. O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986; R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 329.
  14. N.J. van Warmelo, Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 3, 1932, p. 30; O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986; O.I. - M. Ravele (about 69 years), Mauluma, 21-01-1983.
  15. N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 54; O.I. - A. Ramabulana, (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986.
  16. O.I. - M. Ravele (about 69 years), Mauluma, 21-01-1983.
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Davhana's period of self-installed kingship was however short-lived. Kingi Nesengani estimates that he ruled for one year,<sup>17</sup> but this cannot be correct as subsequent events will prove. Furthermore this was done without the blessing of the royal family with whom the *makhadzi* had to act in consultation.

Davhana could not be accepted to command any support from the royal household for a variety of reasons: his apparent complicity in the death of Ramabulana caused him to be regarded as a pariah. He could not exonerate himself, as people having presumed his guilt, could not ask him for an explanation.<sup>18</sup> He was also unpopular on account of the high-handed and violent actions of having commoners slain without his father's authority.<sup>19</sup>

Although his personal courage was never in question, there were other aspects of Davhana's character which alienated him from those around him. These traits were probably shaped by experiences he had early in life while affording protection to his timid and cowardly father. History appears to have forgotten these events, for it denied him the secure occupancy of the very throne for which he had fought on behalf of his father. Without Davhana at his side Ramabulana would probably not have succeeded in regaining his throne.

As if the accusations against Davhana were not enough, the people complained about his cruelty. This character trait manifested itself after he had failed to ascend the throne. He gave vent to his feelings by killing *Makhadzi* Nyakhuhu, as she did not support him in his claim for kingship.<sup>20</sup> Oral informants exaggerated this when they contend that after murdering the *makhadzi*, he skinned her and dressed himself

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17. O.I. - K. Nesengani (about 95 years), Davhana's Location, 14-06-1971.
  18. E. Gottschling, The Bawenda: A sketch of their history and customs, *British and South African Association for the advancement of science*, III, London, 1905, p. 367; J. Flygare, Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda natie, p. 11; *The Transvaal Argus*, 18 March 1868.
  19. This was also explained in Chapter 1. N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 54; O.I. - A. Ramabulana, (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986; O.I. - K. Nengovhela (about 100 years), Khumbe, 24-08-1980, 31-12-1982.
  20. R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 329.
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in her skin. They also assert that he moved around with Ramabulana's skull.<sup>21</sup> It is true that Davhana killed *Makhadzi* Nyakhuhu but the fact that he skinned her and dressed himself in her skin, is an allegation. The same applies to moving around with Ramabulana's skull.<sup>22</sup> These could have been allegations from his opponents to make him appear inhuman before the community in order to scare the people.

Davhana was also alleged to have murdered people cruelly and to have had their corpses hidden in maize storage pits.<sup>23</sup> Motenda also records that Ramabulana himself who was not on good terms with Davhana, once said, "u nga si vhu dzhene hanga vuhosi".<sup>24</sup> Thus with a record of cruelty and a good measure of fictitious allegations surrounding him in his personal and public capacity, Davhana was isolated from the people. He did in effect have very little support. Van Warmelo explains that it was traditionally so, that if a ruler's son goes about as if he were already installed, it was very unlikely that he would succeed his father afterwards.<sup>25</sup> Seen against this background, it is evident why Davhana could not succeed his father. The Venda people as a rule prefer a fairly mild and amenable person as leader.

The other princes Rasikhuthuma and Khangale, like Davhana, failed to muster support from the people on account of the character of their mothers. In Venda custom, the personality of the mother is an important factor in the community's perception of the son.<sup>26</sup>

As Davhana, Rasikhuthuma and Khangale vied for supremacy, Funyufunyu and Rasivhetshele approached the *makhadzi*, asking her to identify the next king. The

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21. O.I. - P. Ramabulana, Personal notes, found in possession of the late P.R. Ngwana.
22. *Ibid.*
23. O.I. - M. Ravele (about 69 years), Mauluma, 21-01-1983.
24. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Department of Native Affairs*, 8, 1940, p. 161. "You will not succeed me".
25. N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 26.
26. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 161.

*makhadzi* informed them that Makhado was the right prince to ascend the throne. She, however, advised them not to take any step before Madzhie, Ramabulana's younger brother was approached for his opinion on the matter. This was done and Madzhie confirmed the *makhadzi's* assertion that Makhado should be the *Thovhele*.<sup>27</sup>

Davhana's objection to Makhado was based on his assertion that, "Makhado ndi Ranndwana, ndi nwana wa mutanuni", meaning: Makhado's house is a minor house and he was the son of a young wife.<sup>28</sup> After Davhana had imposed himself upon the nation as a king, Makhado was called upon to eat *mafa*<sup>29</sup> with other princes, but his supporters objected, and he remained hidden at Ndouvhada.<sup>30</sup>

The fact that Makhado's mother, Limani, was meant to replace Mutumbe, Ramavhoya's wife, was known. Thus, although Makhado was biologically Ramabulana's son, his elder brothers could not have expected him to aspire to the throne. Makhado on the other hand did not doubt his eligibility as he, like his elder brothers, was the son of Ramabulana. There was no objection to this fact.<sup>31</sup> Makhado's claim had the support of Ramabulana whose wish was that he should succeed him.<sup>32</sup> His mother Limani, apart from looking after Ramabulana at Mauluma, was also a good-natured and popular person.

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27. N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 3, 1932, pp. 31 - 32; R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 339; TA V.O.G. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 138/06, p. 6, Report of Native Location Commission. History, The Makhado (Magato) Ramapulana Tribes, 23-03-1907.
28. O.I. - A. Ramabulana, (70 years), Makwarela, 19-10-1986.
29. Food medicinally prepared after the passing away of important personalities.
30. A place near Mara. O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years),. Makwarela, 29-10-1986.
31. R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 329.
32. N.J. van Warmelo, Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 3, 1932, pp. 24 - 25.
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Her good disposition earned her the love of the inhabitants of the territory, as everyone who visited the royal residence was well received and well cared for.<sup>33</sup> For more information on the character of the king's mother and its influence on her son's succession to the throne, Van Warmelo writes as follows:

This would seem a minor point, yet not so minor but that in actual practice, some candidates for the chieftainship have found themselves handicapped by the unpopularity of their mothers. Moreover the chieftainship amongst these people has the function of being a distributing centre and any stinger is therefore entirely out of place. On the other hand a generous mother who has consistently built up a large number of friends, supporters and well-wishers by lavish gifts, is a tremendous asset to a candidate for the throne.<sup>34</sup>

This was exactly what Limani did and she played her role well. Her son's chances of accession were so enhanced that he had a host of followers and supporters at his disposal. It must be borne in mind that, like any Venda wife, Limani was an outsider. Her only tie with the royal household being the *Dzekiso* (cattle) her father had received from her husband's family, and she had no other part to play in matters of succession.

After the royal family had finalised the arrangements for installation, Funyufunyu, Rasivhetshela and Makhado were asked by Madzhie to call in their supporters.<sup>35</sup> The fact that *Khotsimunene* Madzhie and *Makhadzi* Nyakhuhu were on his side, strengthened Makhado's case. Over and above this, the number of his supporters was swelled by the Vhakwevho of Matumba and those who had been circumcised.

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33. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.) The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 161.

34. N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, pp. 25 - 26; See also M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p.161.

35. N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 3, 1932, p. 32; O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986.

To finalise royal ceremonies which preceded his installation, Makhado was again called upon to eat *mafa* but Makhadzi Nyakhuhu objected, saying it was not necessary for him to do so. Instead she said she had a *maalo*<sup>36</sup> with her, on which he would slide backwards on his buttocks until he was outside the ceremonial hut. In addition to the fact that Davhana had been rejected by the *makhadzi* and *khotsimunene*, he was reported as having been at loggerheads with his cousin Maphaha, the ruler of Phahwe. Meanwhile Makhado remained in hiding at Ndouvhada in order to stay out of reach of Davhana. Davhana's failure to locate him, created an atmosphere of restlessness as he could not join the other brothers to have *mafa*, during which ceremony he intended to get rid of Makhado in order to pave the way for himself.<sup>37</sup>

Arrangements for Makhado's installation had been finalised but before this could be done, Davhana had to be ejected. His councillors advised Makhado to embark on making ritual preparations under the direction of *maine* (a physician). This ritual preparation is known as *tshirovha*.<sup>38</sup> These medicinal preparations were intended to strengthen and fortify the army. After Makhado had gone through all the ritual preparations considered necessary under these circumstances, it is reported that heavy rains fell. The army then went to evict Davhana from Vuvha under the cover of these heavy rains. Davhana's supporters could not withstand this onslaught, they hurriedly fled, leaving the *zwitungulo* behind. These were then taken by Makhado who handed them over to Makhadzi.<sup>39</sup>

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36. O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986, "Maalo" is a mat specifically set aside for the purpose. This ceremony has to be undergone by the sons of the deceased in order to free them from the effects of the death of their father.
37. O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986.
38. O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986. "Tshirovha" is a medicinal preparation made by Maine during the outbreak of wars, in order to strengthen the army and frighten the enemy.
39. O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986. "Zwitungulo" are traditional instruments of each family, and in this case of kingship kept in the custody of each king. Compare this event with information contained in J.C.A. Boeyens, *Die konflik tussen die Venda en die Blankes in Transvaal, 1864 - 1869, Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis*, 53(2), 19, p. 8; N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual, Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 3, 1932, p. 32.
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A great meeting was convened with Madzhie concerning these *zwitungulo*. A better gift could not have been presented to Makhadzi than the "*zwitungulo*" of her ancestors. As she could not control her joy she jumped up and performed a ritual dance. Thereafter she took the *zwitungulo* and placed them before Makhado.<sup>40</sup>

The *makhadzi's* joy was not shared by her brother, Madzhie, who registered his objection to the *makhadzi's* behaviour. According to him Makhado ought to, and could only receive instruction from him. At any rate Makhado had been installed. What Madzhie did together with his sympathiser Funyufunyu was to avoid going to the *musanda* (royal residence) when all the people were summoned to show their loyalty. Makhado did not tolerate this. He immediately despatched an army to discipline them. The method which the punitive force adopted was to destroy their mealies before they reached maturity. This forced the dissenters to become more humble. Thereafter they joined the others in displaying their loyalty at the Musanda.<sup>41</sup> The coldness displayed by the people towards Davhana and other princes, is understandable. Davhana, Rasikhuthuma and Khangale, had to struggle for succession unaided as they did not enjoy the support of either the *makhadzi* or *khotsimunene*. Without the backing and support of these two leading personalities of the royal household, no prince could hope to succeed in ascending the throne.

Makhado's accession to kingship was widely acclaimed. Even the Boers at Schoemansdal were satisfied with him as Venda ruler. He had, after all, grown up working on their farms. Stephanus Schoeman recognised Makhado as *Thovhele*.<sup>42</sup>

As far as the inhabitants of Dzanani were concerned, the accession of Makhado was welcome. In addition to the qualities which he possessed as a prince, he was also considered to be brave. In him they saw the leader who would bring together the warring factions and consolidate the territory which had undergone difficult times

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40. O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986. This informant who was Makhado's grandson, could have heard this inside information from his father Tshikhudo.

41. O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986.

42. D. Möller-Malan, The chair of the Ramabulanas, p. 146; D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(1), June 1957, p. 46.

during the father's reign. Makhado had already proved this to them when he drove away his elder brothers.<sup>43</sup>

As there was nobody at Vuvha after he had driven away his elder brothers, Makhado placed his mother there, with her headquarters at Bambalani. "Limani ... nyamuomva wo fela nzwalo, ndi dzana li malofha", meaning: Limani is a she-banana which died in order to produce, she is a big bloody child.<sup>44</sup> Although Limani accepted the offer, she felt she could not rule as she was a woman. She then handed Vuvha to her brother, Mutheiwana, the father of Tshipfulambwa who became known as an expert on the institution of circumcision lodges.<sup>45</sup>

As Makhado was establishing himself firmly on the throne, Davhana was reported to have fled to Tshivhase. This implies that he might have gone to Luaname, Tshivhase's royal residence. However, Tshivhase it was said, had driven him out because he (Tshivhase) was Makhado's ally.<sup>46</sup> The logical conclusion that can be drawn from this is that Davhana, on leaving Vuvha, fled to Tshakhuma where he remained a while. To be out of reach of Makhado, Davhana proceeded further south-east and crossed the Lutanandwa and Luvuvhu Rivers. He ultimately arrived at Nngwekhulu (Ysterberg). From Nngwekhulu, he proceeded north-eastward and arrived at Dzivhe,<sup>47</sup> one of Mphaphuli's areas. This rectifies S.M. Dzivhani's contention that Davhana went as far as Madzimbanombe (near present day Giyani).<sup>48</sup>

As there was no possibility of going back to Dzanani, Davhana decided to go to Tsongaland (Mozambique). In the midst of this dilemma, he was found by

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43. N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 51; M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 161.
44. O.I. - K. Nengovhela (about 100 years), Khumbe, 31-12-1982.
45. O.I. - A.R. Makaulule (about 82 years), Vuvha, 29-12-1982.
46. N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 3, 1932, p. 32.
47. D.K.M. Davhana, Personal Notes, p. 30.
48. S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, 1958, p. 30. There are three spellings with different meanings for Madzimbanombe/Madzivhanombe/Madzimanombe.
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Ranwedzi Mphaphuli who persuaded him to accompany him to Mbilwi where he was settled at a place called "Muhuyuni wa ha Tshilambuvhe", close to Iveni, his royal residence (in present day Sibasa).<sup>49</sup> Here Davhana was well looked after and enjoyed everything that was bestowed on him as a senior prince of Venda.<sup>50</sup>

Before Davhana relaxed at Mbilwi, after the long flight, information as to his whereabouts reached Makhado, who immediately despatched a messenger to Ranwedzi enquiring whether it was true that Davhana had sought asylum there and threatening that, if that were so, he, Makhado, would send an army to destroy him.<sup>51</sup>

Ranwedzi Mphaphuli, who had heard about Makhado's formidable military strength, did not want Mbilwi to become a battlefield, while Davhana himself felt unsafe. In order to avoid a confrontation with Makhado, Ranwedzi approached Albasini, requesting him to allow Davhana to settle near his *tshikantsi* (farmstead derived from the Dutch word *schanz*) at Luonde. Albasini was only too pleased to receive Davhana. He allowed the Venda ruler to establish his kraal along the banks of the Luvuvhu River, next to his own farmstead.<sup>52</sup> Here under the custody of Albasini, Davhana and his followers at last felt safe.

Davhana's settlement at Luonde under the protective wings of Albasini engendered a feeling of suspicion and hatred in Makhado against the white settlers of the Soutpansberg. He was under the impression that the Whites had made Davhana

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49. S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, p. 30; V.O.G. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 138/06, p. 6. Report of Native Location Commission. History. The Makhado (Magato) Ramapulana Tribes, 23-03-1907; D.K. Davhana, Personal Notes, p. 30.
50. S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, p. 31.
51. S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, p. 31; D.M.K. Davhana, Personal Notes, p. 30.
52. S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, p. 31; N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 54; R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 329.
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*Thovhele*.<sup>53</sup> This is one of the reasons, why relations between Makhado and the whites along the Soutpansberg deteriorated in the months after Makhado became *Thovhele*.

As Davhana was finding his feet in the new place of residence, Makhado began to establish his ascendancy at Tshirululuni. His stay there was short-lived, as he moved to the base of the Luatame mountain, where the family *maine*, Lishivha, had already surveyed the area and laid out the foundations for the new royal headquarters.<sup>54</sup>

The reason why Makhado left his father's residence remains a mystery. None of the sources consulted in this regard could supply an answer. Of course, this does not exclude the possibility that, as Tshirululuni was long deserted, houses and huts had become dilapidated with time. Furthermore, Tshirululuni was not strategically situated as in addition to being adjacent to the Boer settlement of Schoemansdal, it could be easily rounded up by the enemy. Over and above this a *maine* like Lishivha could have instilled some sense of fear in the young *Thovhele* so that he felt insecure. At any rate he had to move. It started with the construction of a new cattle kraal. This was later followed by a comprehensive settlement which comprised the royal palace, huts and the necessary facilities befitting a Venda ruler.

As was traditional and customary, Makhado launched a military invasion of Vhukalanga (Zimbabwe) in order to capture cattle. An event of this nature following the installation of a new ruler is known as "mmbi ya u tanzwa mapfumo", meaning: the army meant to initiate a series of wars.<sup>55</sup> Vhukalanga became a testing ground for the new king and his army to determine their relative strength. As was expected the army came back victorious.

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53. TA SS56, pp. 101 - 106. R. 292/64, Copy van Memorandum door den Superintendent van kafferstammen, Zoutpansberg, 26-5-1864 - 9-6-1864; SS55, pp. 49 - 55. R. 183/64, Copy Verslag van den Superintendent van kafferstammen, Zoutpansberg, 2 April - 25 Mei 1864.

54. P. Ramabulana, Personal Notes. He was the eldest son of Tshamaano, Makhado's son, who was used by N.J. van Warmelo in supplying information on Ramabulana and Makhado.

55. O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986.

It stands to reason that his stature immediately took on a new identity after the first military success. There were certain qualities of character, which have remained alive in the Venda historical traditions up to the present day. M.M. Motenda, in his writings, has portrayed Makhado as a man who was brave, courageous and fearless. His bravery was comparable to that of a lion or leopard. His face was always twitching like that of a lion.<sup>56</sup> William Grant who visited Makhado towards the end of the Venda ruler's life in 1894, observed in him a man with a "quiet, thoughtful expression, giving the idea of solidity and conservatism." He was about 5 feet 8 inches (1,73m) in height and "slightly corpulent".<sup>57</sup> This was the man who was to shape and determine the course of the history of Venda from his accession in 1864 to his untimely death in 1895.

Within a short space of time he had succeeded in establishing his ascendancy within the territory over the Mahosi who had turned against his father. They were subjugated by the power of the gun, as Makhado had long before learnt how to handle a rifle. Once he had consolidated his position a period of relative peace and prosperity followed. This enhanced his popularity with his subjects. The initial reign of terror which he instituted, was intended to assert his supremacy and authority over a people whose loyalty had diminished during his father's absence from Tshirululuni.<sup>58</sup> As his military strength and influence permeated throughout the territory, even those people who were opposed to him before his assumption of power, changed their attitude and offered their loyalty, as they feared persecution and punishment.<sup>59</sup>

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56. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 161.
57. W. Grant, Magato and his tribe, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 35, 1905, p. 267.
58. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 162.
59. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The Copper Miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 161.

Thus with all the people under his firm control, jubilation and war dances reigned at Luatame. The people had found the ideal leader in Makhado. Horns and trumpets were blown, ululations were heard resounding in the ravines and mountains, while war dances were performed at leisure. This was accompanied by gunshots which were fired at intervals to proclaim the joy of the populace.<sup>60</sup>

As Davhana was at Luonde enjoying Albasini's protection, Rasikhuthuma at Tshitungulu,<sup>61</sup> Nthabalala at Vari<sup>62</sup> and Ramaru at Shehe,<sup>63</sup> Makhado embarked upon a campaign of ferreting out the existence of opposition, active and passive, and forcing loyalty from his contemporary rulers. When he undertook this fact-finding expedition, he was accompanied by twelve trustworthy men, who may be regarded as a cabinet.<sup>64</sup> Although their names are not mentioned, it can be safely presumed that Funyufunyu, Nndwayamiomva and Rasivhetshele, might have been amongst them, as they were important personalities, and were his closest companions and supporters during the early hunting expeditions.

On the fact-finding tour Makhado left Luatame and arrived at Tshakhuma, where Raluthaga Madzivhandila was the ruler. Recorded information by E. Mudau suggests that a Ramabulana came to Tshakhuma to determine the loyalty of the people. It was necessary because since the disappearance of Thohoyandou, some *mahosi* no longer paid homage to Thovhele.<sup>65</sup> This Ramabulana could not have been anyone else but Makhado who was intent on establishing his ascendancy in order to revive the Venda kingdom. Mudau's information further brings to light the fact that a war ensued between the Vhasenzi and Vhadau, in which Ramabulana solicited the assistance of the Buys volk and eventually won the war.<sup>66</sup> This war, if

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60. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg*, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 162.

61. The present day Levubu settlement.

62. The area around Lovedale Park- Sweetwaters.

63. Elim Hospital area.

64. O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986.

65. S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, p. 83.

66. S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, p. 83 - 84.

ever it did take place, did not occur in the era of Makhado. Strong as he was, he could not have solicited the assistance of the Buys volk, as the Vhadau of Tshakhuma being his subjects could not have been expected to offer any resistance to Makhado's powerful army.

Further light on this was thrown by one of Makhado's grandsons, who contends that Makhado went to Tshakhuma and established himself at Mount Madzhoni overlooking Lwamondo, and called upon Raluthaga Madzivhandila to pay tribute. Madzivhandila complied with the request. He even, over and above the ordinary tribute, presented one of his daughters, Dombo, to *Thovhele* as a prospective wife.<sup>67</sup> This girl was the sister of Khangale. She became the mother of Sinthumule. Madzivhandila's display of loyalty and his generous gifts pleased Makhado, who immediately left Madzhoni.

Makhado and his *entourage* then proceeded through Tshavhavha, probably to Madefule,<sup>68</sup> where Maboho Nelwamondo, the ruler of Lwamondo had established his headquarters. Here Makhado called upon Netshivhale. As Madefule and Tshivhale were adjacent to one another, the ruler of the whole territory *Khosi* Maboho Nelwamondo made his appearance, and enquired why Netshivhale had been called. Makhado's reply was that Netshivhale had insulted him, and for that reason he was demanding tribute.<sup>69</sup> Realising that *Thovhele* had visited Lwamondo in person, Nelwamondo felt humbled and, in order to wipe out the curse inflicted by Netshivhale, offered Makhado one head of cattle as a recognition of his royalty. It was accepted and Makhado resumed his journey, crossing the Dzindi River, passing through Tshivhase's territory into Mbilwi. No information is available about the place at Mbilwi where Makhado stopped and called upon Ranwedzi Mphaphuli to pay him tribute. *Khosi khulu* Mphaphuli complied with Makhado's demand and presented him with a head of cattle.<sup>70</sup> Satisfied that Mphaphuli had shown and proved his loyalty, despite the animosity he had displayed earlier when

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67 O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986.

68 . Through the mountains on the way to Lwamondo.

69. O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986.

70. *Ibid.*

he gave Davhana sanctuary, Makhado left Mbilwi and crossed the Mutshindudi River through Gondeni into Mukumbani. He went up the Luaname Mountain and encamped at Tshamanyatsha, above Tshivhase's royal residence. He then descended to *Khosi khulu* Ligegise Tshivhase's royal residence and there he demanded a show of loyalty.<sup>71</sup> Although no mention was made by the informant consulted about the nature of the tribute offered, it can be assumed that it was in the form of cattle, as Makhado would not be satisfied with anything less. The travellers again returned to Tshamanyatsha, where there is a place known as Tomboni la Makhado, meaning: the resting place of Makhado. As Tshivhase was second in royalty to Ramabulana, his willingness to submit to Makhado, undoubtedly enhanced the latter's popularity.

Leaving Tshamanyatsha behind, Makhado's *entourage* proceeded northwards over the Tshidzivhe Mountains and across Mutale River into Dzimauli. Here Makhado found Bele, the eldest son of Vele Rammbuda. This Bele refused to acknowledge the royalty of Makhado and denied him his rightful praise.<sup>72</sup> Makhado would not tolerate this, and on enquiring who Bele was, he was told that this was the eldest prince, and that Bele did not respect or fear him. Bele would, however, pay dearly for this act of insubordination, as subsequent events will indicate.

After this long tour which took him several weeks and which included visits to *Mahosi Mahulu* Tshivhase, Mphaphuli and Rammbuda, who did not resist the demands imposed upon them to show their loyalty, Makhado returned home to Luatame. He was fully satisfied that he was *Thovhele* of Venda, as there was nobody above him.<sup>73</sup>

Makhado's success in demanding loyalty from *mahosi mahulu* and some *mahosi* reached João Albasini, possibly through his protégé Davhana. He twisted this to suit his plans. He identified Makhado, and those rulers Makhado had visited, as enemies of the White settlers. The eight so-called "chiefs" as he did not distinguish between *Thovhele*, *mahosi mahulu* and *mahosi*, were Makhado, Tshivhase,

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71. *Ibid.*

72. *Ibid.*

73. O.I. - K. Nengovhela (about 100 years), Khumbe, 31-12-1982; L.T. Marole, *Makhuluku*, p. 19.

Madzhe, Maphaha, Neluvhola, Matidze, Nelwamondo, and Madzivhandila. They had allegedly conspired to help each other in case of an attack by the Whites. They were also said to have conspired to murder the White settlers.<sup>74</sup> The effect of these allegations became apparent once Albasini started attacking some of the Venda rulers. Many of the Whites were under the impression that Albasini was taking steps against a bellicose people, intent on eradicating all traces of a White presence.

The next step for Makhado to embark upon was to start asserting his authority over his subjects throughout Venda. The position of *thovhele* he had acquired in society now required of him to secure his political position, especially against Davhana who, as long as he was under the wings of Albasini, would still constitute a great threat. When Davhana was driven from Vuvha, he was alleged to have left behind 45 head of cattle, 11 girls and 12 elderly people. This creates the impression that Davhana had a separate kraal, yet in reality, he was living at Bambalani with his deceased father. De Vaal states:

As gevolg van hierdie ontvlugting van Davhana en die beskerming wat deur die Republiek aan hom verleen is, (was) daar 'n toestand van vyandskap tussen Makhado en die Blankes.<sup>75</sup>

Against this background and owing to the threat posed by the growing and prosperous Boer settlement of Schoemansdal on the doorstep of his royal residence, Luatame, Makhado started to initiate improvements and changes in his military organisation. *Mahosi mahulu* were commanders-in-chief, while *ndunas* and *magota* were generals. If *Thovhele* was strong, brave, bold and warlike, he had a strong army. The same applied to *mahosi* and *magota* who were leaders in their respective areas. Hence the Venda proverb, “*khosi ya tudza na vhalanda vha a tudza*”, meaning: The weaker the king the weaker the subjects.

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74. TA SS67, p. 16. R528/65, J. Albasini, Superintendent van kafferstammen, Goedewensch, aan Uitvoerende Raad, Pretoria, 2-5-1865; See also J.C.A. Boeyens, Die konflik tussen die Venda en die Blankes in Transvaal, 1864 - 1867, *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis*, 53(2), 1990, p. 10.

75. J.B. de Vaal, Die rol van João Albasini in die Geskiedenis van die Transvaal, 1813 - 1888, *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis*, 16(1), 1953, p. 73.

In most cases, armies were mobilised and organised only in times of emergency, immediate danger and the outbreak of warfare. There was however a saying of long standing in Venda society which held “Ngoma madzula wo vhambwa musu wa mmbi a u dihwi”, meaning: Be in a state of readiness as the day of attack is unknown. Makhado, once he came into power, started to reorganise his territorial armies altering the traditional Venda set-up. That is why one of the early historiographers of Venda history, E.N. Mudau, said on one occasion that Makhado was a “reformer”.<sup>76</sup>

Whether the idea emanated from outside, nobody knows, but pressures engendered by wave after wave of Swazi invasions, as well as the encroachment of Venda by the Boer settlers, could have led him to think of better ways of defending his country. For those were the days of lightning attacks with no declaration of war, and consequently a king had to keep his nation in a state of readiness.

His predecessors Vele and Thohonyandou, had depended on the use of their magic drum, Ngomalungundu, whose sound terrified the enemies of the time, but alas, those days had passed and the new enemies with their short stabbing spears (the Swazis, the horse and fire-arms (Boers) were more dangerous.

To start with, Makhado organised and established military battalions along geographical lines. The first area he started with was Dzanani which consisted of Tshirululuni,<sup>77</sup> Vhutuwangadzebu, Tshitopeni, Gaza,<sup>78</sup> Malimuwa, Lutame and Sunguzwi.<sup>79</sup> The battalion for this area was known as the Mavhoi. Whenever a member of this Mavhoi batallion performed an act which displayed bravery on his part, he used to say, “Mavhoi wee!”.<sup>80</sup> This army, known as *Mmbi ya Thondo*,<sup>81</sup>

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76. O.I. - E. N. Mudau (about 73 years), Tshakhuma, 25-01-1977.

77. The rising where the Louis Trichardt gaol is situated.

78. The area just behind Hangklip, where the Ramabulanas, up to today are buried.

79. The places described constitute the general area around Louis Trichardt.

80. “A praise of Mavhoi”. O.I. - M. Sitholimela (about 100 years), Mauluma, 13-07-1971.

81. Royal Guard.

was composed of very brave warriors. The leader was an *nduna*<sup>82</sup> attached to the royal residence. The proximity of the Mavhoi battalion to the residence made it available to the service of *Thovhele* at any time.

The next battalion consisted of the inhabitants of Makwatambani<sup>83</sup> and Phahwe.<sup>84</sup> The local leaders were Makongoza and Maphaha. This was the Vhalube battalion of the Vhalaudzi clan. Maphaha appears as "Pago" in the writings and documents of the Whites.<sup>85</sup> These rulers, Makongoza and Maphaha had an exceptionally strong battalion. This was evident from military encounters, especially Maphaha had with local Whites.

Another battalion was established under Nndwayamiomva, Makhado's brother on his mother's side, who was posted to Mauluma<sup>86</sup> in the place of Tshivhututu, who was removed. Nndwayamiomva, specifically had to keep an eye on the activities of Davhana, and to keep a watch on the marauding bands of Swazi, as they usually invaded the country from an easterly direction. This was the Maunavhathu or simply Mauna battalion.<sup>87</sup> After Nndwayamiomva was killed at Vhukalanga while hunting elephants, this battalion was led by his son and successor Ravele.<sup>88</sup>

Further west and to the north of Schoemansdal, at Vhulorwa<sup>89</sup> under Funyufunyu, there was a battalion known as Vhaingamela and the place was called Vhuingamela.<sup>90</sup> Its leader Funyufunyu appears under the name 'Tromp' in the Whites' documents and books. He is described as the fighting general of the Makhado tribe.<sup>91</sup> He was actually one of the strong supporters of Makhado's

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82. Leader of the army.
83. In the vicinity above Tshikota township, near present day Louis Trichardt.
84. In the vicinity of Piesanghoek.
85. G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872, IV*, p. 484.
86. A settlement near Barotta, west of Tshakhuma.
87. O.I. - M. Sitholimela (about 100 years), Mauluma, 13-07-1971; T. Nemaulumela (about 105 years), Tshivhulani, 13-06-1971. He was a younger brother of Nndwayamiomva.
88. O.I. - M. Sitholimela (about 100 years), Mauluma, 13-07-1971; T. Nemaulumela (about 105 years), Tshivhulani, 13-06-1971.
89. The mountain peaks to the north of Schoemansdal.
90. The name is derived from the word *ingamela*, meaning 'to watch'.
91. *The Pretoria Press* (Weekly Edition), Saturday 19-11-1898.

accession, and later he became one of the generals of Makhado's forces. Funyufunyu gave the Boers great problems.

The last, but not the least important battalion was that of Tshihanane<sup>92</sup> under the leadership of Mavhasa Musekwa who appears in the Rhodesian documents as 'Mabasha Mushake'.<sup>93</sup> It was a very strong battalion which as a result of its locality, had become a northern bulwark of safety. This battalion was known as Manenu-Manena-Misipha or simply Manenu.<sup>94</sup>

These battalions of territorial field forces, played an important role during the reign of Makhado. They were mobilised for defensive and offensive purposes, a strategy which was exclusive to Makhado.

It is possible to constitute that Makhado was probably influenced in his military planning by the White frontiers people at Schoemansdal. He had literally grown up in the White community, as was explained earlier. He was exposed to their organisational traditions, and circumstantial evidence suggests that in the planning of his battalions, the idea of the Boer commando, probably played a significant role. One of the outstanding examples, which will be dealt with in greater detail later, is the fact of the Venda's use of firearms. This technology enabled them to organise themselves militarily, very much in the same way as their white neighbours at Schoemansdal.

On the occasion of a military victory, the armies would come back joyfully singing war songs (*mudalo*). As the people danced and rejoiced, to the tune of the war songs and praises, the warriors demonstrated how they had knocked down their enemies. Each battalion had a sign, a symbol, or a mark of identification.<sup>95</sup>

The Thondo regiment, the Mavhoi, while performing their dancing activities, followed their leader who raised the head of a fallen enemy on a spear, showing

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92. In the vicinity of the farm Overwinning, north of present day Wylliespoort.

93. R.A. Documents with reference to "Mpefu", 1898 - 1899, R.A. 11, Telegram to High Commissioner, 15-12-1898.

94. O.I. - Tshivhidzo Musekwa (about 100 years), Tshihanane, 12-07-1971. He was the son of Mavhasa Musekwa. His exposition of the history of Makhado was clear and logical.

95. O.I. - M. Ravele (about 69 years), Mauluma, 21-01-1983.

what they had done. Demonstrations of this nature gained momentum if the head raised was that of a *nduna* or *khosi*. The Manenu of Tshihanane danced with the hand of a fallen enemy raised, showing how they had cut it across through the muscles, as their name implies.<sup>96</sup> The Maunavhathu of Mauluma danced with the leg of one of their victims raised high above their heads.<sup>97</sup> Occasions of this nature were widely acclaimed as they were performed after heavy fighting with concomitant loss of life on both sides.

Before the times of Makhado, the Vhavenda had age-regiments groups which were intended to initiate the youth into the affairs of manhood. They were trained to endure hardships and to persevere. This initiation was carried out at the *thondo*, an institution intended for the purpose. This was common throughout Venda. On completion of the training each group was given a specific name like Mahuhu, Manngwe, Manala, Mauvha, Mangoma, Mabulana and others.<sup>98</sup>

This was the state of affairs when Makhado appeared in the historical arena. The age group to which he belonged, originated at the circumcision lodge. This was the Madali age group. The other Madali who received their name from their respective *thondo* were Makwarela Mphaphuli and Ramaremisa Tshivhase.<sup>99</sup>

After the accession of Makhado, the first circumcised prince to ascend the Singo throne, a radical and revolutionary change took place at Dzanani. The change from *thondo* to the *murundu* (the circumcision lodge) was inevitable because, by combining the two traditional institutions, Makhado hoped to produce strong, honest, reliable and physically fit young men, who would serve in the armies with which he wanted to bring the whole of Venda effectively under his control.<sup>100</sup>

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96. O.I. - M. Ravele (about 69 years), Mauluma, 21-01-1983.

97. O.I. - M. Ravele (about 69 years), Mauluma, 21-01-1983.

98. N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 104; O.I. - T. Musekwa (about 100 years), Tshihanane, 12-07-1971.

99. O.I. - T. Musekwa (about 100 years), Tshihanane, 12-07-1971; O.I. - M. Sitholimela (about 105 years), Mauluma, 13-07-1971.

100. TA V.O.G. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 138/06, p. 7. Report of Native Location Commission. History. The Makhado (Magato) Ramapulana Tribes, 23-03-1907, Native Location Commission on proposed location for the Chief Mpefu, 23-3-1907.

From 1865 onwards, circumcision lodges were introduced throughout Dzanani at different times every five years. This is confirmed by Marole when he says:

Huno a imisa mirundu shango lothe la Dzanani. Ha wela na Vhakalaha na Magota na dzinduna dza shango la Dzanani.<sup>101</sup>

At each circumcision lodge there was a *mukololo* (prince) who was regarded as a leader. Such lodges which were instituted produced the different age groups, such as Marundela, Mazulu, Ngomakhosi and Mavhegwa. The leaders of Mavhegwa and Ngomakhosi were Makhado's *vhakololo* (princes) Mphephu and Sinthumule respectively.<sup>102</sup> Thus the four age groups cited above, indicate that there were four circumcision lodges during the reign of Makhado.

The institution of military battalions and the replacement of the *thondo* by the circumcision lodges, changed the social, economic and political outlook of the people of Dzanani, the so-called Vhailafuri, named after their geographical area, Vhuilafuri.<sup>103</sup> These military innovations instilled a sense of loyalty and patriotism towards *Thovhele* and their territory. They also became proud of their newly acquired institutions, to such an extent that they were feared by their fellow Vhavenda in other parts of the kingdom. The people of Tshivhase and Mphaphuli were looked down upon and regarded as "Mahihi",<sup>104</sup> as they were believed to be incapable of handling firearms.<sup>105</sup>

In this way a new Dzanani emerged with its battalions and age regiments which, while defending their territory, could also launch attacks on any territory or country without any fear. Möller-Malan comes close to this in her investigation when she writes:

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101. L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, p. 19. "He raised circumcision lodges throughout the territory of Dzanani. Old men, Magota and Dzinduna entered".

102. O.I. - T. Musekwa (about 100 years), Tshihanane, 12-07-1971.

103. The western parts of Venda - including present day Louis Trichardt.

104. "Mahihi" is a derogatory term which refers to the Vhaphani, i.e. people of Vhuphani under Tshivhase and Mphaphuli.

105. O.I. - Mavhunga and Jack Ramatsitsi (about 95 years), Tshiomvani, 13-07-1971.

Die Thondo of skool vir seuns van kapteins en ander hooggeplaastes aan die hof, tussen agt en 11 word in ere herstel. Leerlinge ontvang onderrig in hulle eie vorm van godsdiens en sake rakende die lewe en hulle geskiedenis.... Sluheid word beoefen in die uitvoering van waaghalsige ondernemings wat met die grootste stoutmoedigheid uitgevoer word en is alleen strafbaar as hulle faal of uitgevind word.... Hulle gaan uit om te steel - van die blankes of selfs die kaptein of hulle eie ouers.... As hy uitgevra word antwoord hy volgens wat die vraer graag sal weet, om hom te vlei - dis beleefdheid.<sup>106</sup>

This passage does throw some light on the process, and on the purpose of the training which young people had to undergo in order to prepare them for future hardship in the defence of their country and that which was theirs by birth.

From the above exposition it is clear that the age regiments and military battalions were important devices in Makhado's plans to revive the Venda kingdom. It was a blend of tradition and new innovations in order to contend with external and internal threats which were the order of the day under new and changing circumstances with which the Venda people found themselves daily in confrontation.

The successes, glories and achievements of Makhado meant nothing as long as Davhana was still under Albasini's protection, where he had fled. Albasini grasped this opportunity to widen the rift in the Venda dynasty.<sup>107</sup> Up to that time the division proved impossible. To strengthen Davhana's position Albasini recognised him as the successor of Ramabulana.<sup>108</sup> In other words, Davhana was a *Thovhele* "outside the royal residence". Makhado, at least as far as Albasini was concerned, was of little political significance.

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106. D. Möller-Malan, Die Donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(1), June 1957, p. 46.  
 107. O.I. - K. Nesengani (about 95 years), Davhana's Location, 14-06-1971; J. Albasini III, *João Albasini*, p. 18.  
 108. TA SS193, pp. 16 - 21, R1822/75, D.S. Maré, landdrost, Zoutpansberg, 17-08-1875; SS55, pp. 45 - 56. R183/64, J. Albasini, Superintendent van kafferstammen, Goedewensch, 25-05-1864.

These circumstances forced Makhado not to feel comfortable before completely defeating Davhana. Makhado's advisers, especially members of the royal family, complained that when Davhana was ousted from Vuvha, he took with him the properties of *vuhosi*, which by right belonged to *Thovhele*. Makhado at first hesitated to take any action against Davhana. He was aware that an attack on Davhana would bring Albasini and his Tsonga warriors into the conflict. If this could happen as he anticipated, his army would meet formidable resistance. As pressure from his people started mounting Makhado became more assertive. He however first had to make substantive arrangements. Albasini had to be kept out of the conflict. Consequently he despatched a messenger to Albasini, informing the White chief of the Tsonga he intended to fetch the property of *Thovhele* in the possession of Davhana.<sup>109</sup>

The messenger assured Albasini that nothing would happen to him or his subjects. Makhado did however intend attacking Davhana. Albasini who had already heard much about the apparently contending claims to the leadership position of the Venda of Makhado and Davhana, decided to keep his warriors in a state of readiness. For Albasini the coming of Davhana to Luonde, was a blessing in disguise. It reduced the number of Makhado's subjects. It also implied a numerical gain for Albasini. As long as Makhado and Davhana were at loggerheads, his stay at Luonde was secure. Therefore an attack on Davhana, whose presence at Luonde was sanctioned by the Executive Council of the South African Republic,<sup>110</sup> was tantamount to an attack on Albasini.

Albasini was also an important person amongst the Black people. The Executive Council had appointed him as Superintendent of Natives in the Northern Transvaal. He was empowered to maintain law and order and to collect tribute.<sup>111</sup> Therefore

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109. J. Albasini III, *João Albasini*, p. 18; R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 329.
110. TA SS56, p. 160. R316/64. J. Albasini, Goedewensch, aan J. Vercueil, Schoemansdal, 3-06-1864.
111. J. Albasini III, *João Albasini*, p. 18; R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 329.

Makhado's attack on Davhana would lead to a violation of peace and order. According to J. Albasini III, Makhado sent messengers to Albasini with a veiled request for permission to attack and destroy Davhana, conveying it as follows:

Hunters are following the blood spoor, so if you hear dogs barking at night do not allow it to disturb your rest.<sup>112</sup>

It would appear as if Makhado's request was delivered on more than one occasion. Albasini's replies have been reported in different ways in oral history. Albasini was reported to have said Davhana had no people and the children were starving, and this had forced them to go to the diamond fields of Kimberley to look for employment.<sup>113</sup> He also apparently said there were some kraals in his area which should not be interfered with in the impending wars.<sup>114</sup>

Albasini III, maintains his Albasini's reply was:

I will shoot all strange dogs that worry my cattle.<sup>115</sup>

Despite this warning, Albasini informed Makhado that there were certain kraals which must not be attacked. These were to be identified by a piece of white cotton material attached to the doors. The people to be protected were Albasini's Tsonga women and children. These civilians were ordered not to go out should they hear anything which sounded like people fighting.<sup>116</sup>

In preparation for the attack on Davhana, Makhado despatched his envoy Matshavha to investigate the situation. Davhana was not at home. One of his wives Mathugula entertained the envoy with food.<sup>117</sup> He then left. When he returned Davhana was told about Makhado's envoy. He immediately knew what was coming and told his

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112. J. Albasini III, *João Albasini*, p. 18.

113. This is clearly an incorrect tradition which has been passed down. The Diamond Fields of Kimberley were only opened up in 1871 - after the time of the conflict discussed here.

114. D.M.K. Davhana, Personal Notes, p. 35; O.I. - K. Nesengani (about 95 years), Davhana's Location, 14-06-1971.

115. J. Albasini III, *João Albasini*, p. 18.

116. D.M.K. Davhana, Personal Notes, p. 36; O.I. - K. Nesengani (about 95 years), Davhana's Location, 14-06-1971.

117. *Ibid.*

followers that Makhado would attack him that night. According to Flygare Makhado was determined to punish Davhana for “mudering” their father.<sup>118</sup> This may have been a contributing factor when Makhado had to make up his mind about attacking his brother. More important was however the consideration that as long as Davhana was living under the protection of Albasini, it would create the impression that he was undefeated. It could imply the territory had two *Thovheles*. This he, Makhado, could not allow. There was to be one *Thovhele* only.

Davhana, being aware of the possibility of attack at any time, immediately placed his army in a state of readiness. His area of residence was fortified with some of Albasini’s Tsonga warriors to forestall Makhado’s aggressive plans. Albasini’s line of reasoning was clearly that, if Davhana had to be defeated, he Albasini, would be next in line.

Meanwhile, Makhado’s army under the command of Funyufunyu, had instructions to go to Luonde and drive Davhana out.<sup>119</sup> Funyufunyu, after all, had previously driven Davhana from Vuvha. Makhado, evidently misinterpreting Albasini’s attitude in the approaching conflict, thought the attack on Davhana would be a walk over.

Although the purpose of the military expedition was to crush Davhana, the warriors were warned not to harm him, as it had become traditional and customary that, “Malofha a khamba ha fhaladzwi”.<sup>120</sup> The tradition determined that should such a thing happen, some evil would befall the nation. The army could only annihilate his supporters and take him prisoner.<sup>121</sup>

Two respected historians have attempted to relate this military encounter. However they appear to have been unable to place it in the proper perspective. It appears as if there is some confusion between the first conflict at Vuvha and the second at

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118. J. Flygare, *Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda natie*, p. 11.

119. S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, p. 31.

120. The tradition is also discussed in the previous chapter, in respect of Ramavhoya.

121. D.M.K. Davhana, *Personal Notes*, p. 39.

Luonde.<sup>122</sup> This confusion can probably be ascribed to the fact that they had no access to the Venda oral history on the events. They relied on written reports and letters to and from Albasini. The latter was determined to prove to the Executive Council of the South African Republic he was more efficient in dealing with the Black people than the Boer officials at Schoemansdal.<sup>123</sup> The voice of the officials at Schoemansdal was not heard. Had the government listened to them, there might have been more perspectives - and more accuracy in reports regarding the correct intentions of Makhado.

Makhado's army rushed to Luonde and surrounded Davhana's kraal at night on 3 June 1864. The following day they attacked. The combined warriors of Davhana and Albasini's Tsonga, retaliated by launching a counter-attack. As the fighting became more intense, Makhado's warriors retreated leaving behind them many fallen soldiers.<sup>124</sup> Makhado sustained great losses.<sup>125</sup> His troops were confused and demoralised. They had not anticipated any possible setback. It was all a matter of being under the impression that they would only face Davhana's warriors. The remains of what was regarded as a strong Venda army, congregated at Mount Tshingwe, to review their situation. The general consensus was that they could not reverse the tide, and consequently returned to Luatame.<sup>126</sup>

The failure of this attack on Davhana which concludes this chapter, left the matters unresolved in the war of supremacy between the two brothers. The presence of the

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122. J.C.A. Boeyens, Die konflik tussen die Venda en die Blankes in Transvaal, 1864 - 1869, *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis*, 53(2), 1990, p. 9; J.B. de Vaal, Die rol van João Albasini in die geskiedenis van die Transvaal, 1813 - 1888, *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis*, 6(1), 1953, p. 75.
123. TA SS56, p. 178. R328/64. J. Albasini, Goedewensch, aan Uitvoerende Raad van de Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 9-6-1864.
124. J.B. de Vaal, Die rol van João Albasini in die Geskiedenis van die Transvaal, 1813 - 1888, *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis*, 16(1), 1953, p. 75 - 76; D.M.K. Davhana, Personal Notes, p. 40; R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 329.
125. S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, p. 31.
126. D.M.K. Davhana, Personal Notes, p.40.

fugitive Davhana at Albasini's camp, strengthened the Albasini's following amongst blacks in the Soutpansberg region. The situation was now one in which Davhana was a pivotal figure. In any conflict between Albasini and Makhado, Davhana would be there. Davhana's survival, on the other hand, also depended on the favour of Albasini. By protecting Davhana, Albasini had become an obstacle in Makhado's attempts to revive the Venda kingdom. The Whites in the Soutpansberg grabbed this opportunity as their peaceful existence depended on the weakening of the Venda monarchy. In the next chapter the further developments of this situation will be discussed. Makhado would experience great difficulty in achieving his goal of uniting the Venda people.

## CHAPTER 3

## MAKHADO FORCES THE BOERS OUT OF VENDA, 1865-7

As Chapter 2 indicated, Makhado's attack on Davhana was a failure. This unsuccessful attempt to crush Davhana was a constant source of anger and frustration to Makhado, the legitimate ruler of the house of Ramabulana. In addition, the fact that Davhana was living under the protection of Albasini was a further source of annoyance to Makhado. By providing sanctuary to Davhana, Albasini involved himself in the struggle for supremacy between the two sons of Ramabulana.

Concerning Davhana's flight to Albasini to seek asylum, there are different accounts. According to oral information from Davhana's descendants, Ramabulana had requested Albasini and Ranwedzi Mphaphuli to look after Davhana, after his death.<sup>1</sup>

The reason for this was that Davhana was not liked by Ramabulana's brothers and sisters. If this information can be accepted as correct, Davhana would not have gone as far as Nngwekhulu, as Luonde and Mbilwi were in close proximity to Vuvha. S.M. Dzivhani, who heard the story from the Mphaphuli people, states that after Ranwedzi had brought Davhana to Mbilwi, he negotiated with Albasini to grant him asylum.<sup>2</sup> This rules out the fact that there might have been any arrangements prior to the event taking place.

At any rate Davhana was granted asylum by Albasini who provided him with a place of residence. This appears strange and somehow ironic. Davhana, the first prince of

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1. D.M.K. Davhana, Personal Notes, p. 28.

2. S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau Vha Tshakhuma*, pp. 30 - 31; J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda natie*, p. 11.

the senior royal house in Venda, had to ask a foreigner - Albasini - for the right to reside on a piece of land which traditionally belonged to his family. It is also strange to hear that the fugitive, Davhana, was later regarded as *Thovhele*, by Albasini. The latter even regarded Davhana as being the "heir to Ramabulana's throne".<sup>3</sup>

In a letter to the government of the South African Republic, Albasini went so far as to maintain that Ramabulana had advised Davhana, before his death, he should listen to Albasini.<sup>4</sup> M.M. Motenda is at variance with this assumption. His recollection of the history suggests that Ramabulana told Davhana he would not be the successor to the Venda throne. He, Davhana, was too cruel and his behaviour was unbecoming.<sup>5</sup>

Mention has already been made in earlier chapters that Albasini had established a Tsonga settlement at Luonde by harbouring fugitives from Mozambique.<sup>6</sup> These fugitives fled after Soshangane had established the Gaza State. The Tsonga were regarded as government people. When Davhana and his supporters fled to Luonde, they joined up and became part of the diverse community Albasini was busy forming under his command.<sup>7</sup>

The fact that Albasini, and later the Boers of Schoemandsdal, regarded Davhana as Ramabulana's successor, was a stumbling block in Makhado's attempts to revive the Venda kingdom. Over and above this Davhana, whose survival depended on the

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3. TA SS55, p. 44. R183/64, Copy Verslag van den Superintendent van kafferstammen, 2 April - 25 Mej 1864, aan den Uitvoerende Raad van der Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek.
  4. *Ibid.*, p. 50. R183/64, Copy Verslag van den Superintendent van kafferstammen, 2 April - 25 Mej 1864, aan den Uitvoerende Raad van der Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek.
  5. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The Copper Miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg*, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 161; O.I. - K. Nengovhela (about 100 years), Khumbe, 31-8-1982.
  6. War Office, *The native tribes of the Transvaal*, p. 64; TA G.O.V. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 138/06, p. 8. Report of Native Location. History. The Makhado (Magato) Ramapulana Tribes, 23-03-1907; R. Wagner, *Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1948 - 1967*, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 325.
  7. R. Wagner, *Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1948 - 1967*, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 321.
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protection offered by the Whites, was considered a good and reliable "opgaaf betaler".<sup>8</sup> Therefore any attack on Davhana was liable to draw Albasini into the fight.

The Tsonga settlement of Goedewensch under Albasini, established in Venda territory, against the wishes of Matidze, the ruler of Luonde, was a thorn in the flesh of Makhado. The community at Goedewensch had harboured fugitives from Manukosi and Vuvha. Neither Makhado nor the Boers of Schoemandsdal could assert control over the people in the substantial community that was taking shape.<sup>9</sup>

Their leader, Albasini, based his claims to power and authority on the fact that as superintendent of kaffir tribes for Soutpansberg he owed allegiance only to the Volksraad of the South African Republic.<sup>10</sup> This meant the authorities at Schoemandsdal - the landdrost and the commandant - could not exercise control over him. Thus they disliked this stranger who communicated directly with the Executive Council, without consulting them.<sup>11</sup> The Executive Council looked upon him as a fearless White amongst the Blacks, who promoted their expansionist policies.<sup>12</sup> He was seen to assist the government in subjugating the Blacks. His landless Tsonga

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8. TA SS56, p. 160. R316/64, J. Albasini, Goedewensch - aan J. Vercueil landdrost, Schoemandsdal, 3-6-1864; J.B. de Vaal, Die rol van João Albasini in die geskiedenis van die Suid-Afrikaanse Republiek, 1813 - 1888, *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis*, 16(1), 1953, p. 75; ANON., Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War, *The Transvaal Argus* 17-06-1868.
  9. R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 321.
  10. J. Albasini III, *João Albasini, 1813 - 1888*, p. 18; R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, pp. 327 - 328.
  11. D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(1) June 1957, p. 47; G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872*, IV, p. 480; ANON., Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War, *The Transvaal Argus*, 25-03-1868.
  12. TA A18, Accession R.G. Gage, The Development of the Northern Transvaal - Historical Stepping Stones and Reminiscences, by B.H. Dicke, Pietersburg, 17 - 18 June 1925, p. 4; J.B. de Vaal, Die rol van João Albasini in die geskiedenis van Transvaal, 1813 - 1888, *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis*, 16(1), 1953, p. 70.

subjects, who regarded him as their Moses, were divided into different kraals on his farm.

When Makhado ascended the throne at the beginning of 1864, the Whites had already firmly established themselves in his territory at Thivhalalwe (Schoemansdal), Luonde (Goedewensch) and other areas where they started conducting farming operations.<sup>13</sup> This new development posed a threat to Makhado's attempts to revive the Venda kingdom. The situation acquired yet another dimension when the Boers began to flex their muscle in an effort to exercise control over everything they found, including the indigenous inhabitants. This control was exercised through unilateral land demarcations, forced taxation and compulsory labour. These activities gave offence to the Venda nation.

In the course of time the Whites, whom Ramabulana regarded as friends and fellow-men, had become settlers in his country. Consequently they had established government structures for the purpose of controlling and regulating their society. One of the areas which required attention, was to plan for the improvement of Schoemansdal settlement. For this purpose a meeting was convened on 27 February 1855.<sup>14</sup>

It implied that money - a scarce item at the best of times - had to be raised. The White community was not large enough to meet this need. Therefore, it was resolved to impose tribute on the Blacks, believed to be under the control of the Whites.<sup>15</sup>

As it has been pointed out in chapter one, field cornets had to arrange with the various so-called "chiefs" in such a way that the collection of tribute would be simplified.<sup>16</sup>

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13. J.C.A. Boeyens, Die konflik tussen die Venda en die Blankes in Transvaal, 1864 - 1869, *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaans Geskiedenis*, 53(2), 1990, p. 1.
  14. D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(1), June 1957, p. 44.
  15. *Ibid.*, p. 45; O.J.O. Ferreira, *Stormvoël van die Noorde, Stephanus Schoeman*, p. 55.
  16. J.P.F. Moolman, Die Boere se stryd teen die Swart stamme in en om die Z.A.R., 1864 - 1871, p. 235; J.C.A. Boeyens, Die konflik tussen die Venda en die Blankes in Transvaal, 1864 - 1869, *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis*, 53(2), 1990, p. 5.

Amongst the chiefs, who were so-called *Opgaafkaffers*, were Tshivhase, Rrambuda, Mphaphuli, Nelwamondo, Netsianda, Tshikundamalema, Nethengwe and others. The lands and territories of these rulers were far from Schoemansdal.<sup>17</sup> These rulers had to collect the tributes from their subjects. Afterwards the tributes were to be handed over to the field cornets.

As the volume of work increased, it became evident that the field cornets could not cope with the responsibility of collecting the *opgaaf*. The Buys clan were entrusted with this responsibility during the times of A.H. Potgieter and S. Schoeman. The area for *opgaafkaffers* was however too large. Michael Buys could not discharge his duties effectively. Schoeman consequently appointed Albasini as a tribute collector on 9 June 1859. The Dutch wording was *Superintendent van kafferstammen*.<sup>18</sup>

Apart from the collection of tribute, Albasini had to keep a watch on the activities of Mzila's kaalkaffers (naked kaffirs)<sup>19</sup> who had recently fled Mozambique seeking sanctuary at Tshitavhadulu, near Tshakhuma. As the Executive Council did not trust the Black people, Albasini had to keep the government informed about any plans and preparations for war among the Venda. As a tribute collector, he was in charge of Vhuronga, Vhulovhedzi,<sup>20</sup> Mashau,<sup>21</sup> Vari,<sup>22</sup> Luonde, Tshakhuma, Vhuphani and Vhutavhatsindi areas.<sup>23</sup> Although this was a vast area, it did not bother him, as he had his horde of Tsonga subjects to rely on. Contrary to the intentions of the government, he sent them from place to place to seize cattle, goats,

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17. TA SS57, pp. 274 - 275. R521/64, Zoutpansberg, J.W. Du Plessis, List of 'opgaafkaffers', 02-08-1864.

18. R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, pp. 321. J.P.F. Moolman, Die Boere se stryd teen die Swart stamme in en om die Z.A.R., 1864 - 1871, p. 236; J. Albasini III, *João Albasini*, 1813 - 1888, p.8

19. They were called *Mabunyu* by the Venda. J. Albasini III, *João Albasini*, 1813 - 1888, p. 8.

20. Modjadje's area.

21. Not far from Valdezia.

22. The Lovedale Park area.

23. J.B. De Vaal, Die rol van João Albasini in die geskiedenis van die Transvaal, 1813 - 1888, *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis*, 16(1), 1953, pp. 64 - 65. Vhuphani and Vhutavhatsindi are names for geographical areas which today cover Thohoyandou and Mutale districts.

sheep, ivory and hoes against the wishes of the local residents.<sup>24</sup> In this way the tributes were collected and sent to Albasini at Goedewensch. Within five years after his appointment, he had collected a considerable number of cattle, sheep, goats, hoes and ivory.<sup>25</sup>

It stands to reason that the excessive collection of tribute created an environment conducive to conflict between the Vhavenda and the Boers. The Vhavenda were not amongst those impoverished Blacks who, according to G.M. Theal, summarily accepted the authority of the Whites. Nor did they "apparently" object to paying tribute.<sup>26</sup> The people who complied were the Tsonga. One reason for their compliance with the arrangements of the Whites was that they themselves were foreigners. Such Blacks were gradually brought under the same system which prevailed in other areas.

By contrast, the Vhavenda, especially under the leadership of Makhado, vehemently resisted any attempts to subjugate them to the laws of the South African Republic. Therefore the payment of taxes to Albasini and his Tsonga followers would signal an acceptance of not only subjugation to the Boers, but also to the foreigners who had established themselves at Luonde.

Another issue which emanated from the meeting of 27 February 1855, chaired by S. Schoeman, was the identification of 38 so-called *mahosi* in a country which had only five senior rulers: Ramabulana, Tshivhase, Mphaphuli, Rammubuda and Modjadji.<sup>27</sup> This in itself provided fertile ground for future misunderstanding and conflict. The other 33 were, according to Venda political custom, actually *mahosi* falling under one of the five rulers whose status had been relegated to that of their subordinates. In other words, *Thovhele* and *mahosi mahulu* became *mahosi*. This was to become

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24. TA A595, Accession Le Roux Smith - Le Roux. Account of A. Struben, p. 35; J.B. De Vaal, Die rol van João Albasini in die geskiedenis van die Transvaal, 1813 - 1888, *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis*, 16(1), 1953, p. 65.
25. TA SS55, p. 136, R210/64, landdrostkantoor, Zoutpansberg, Zitting van 12 April 1864.
26. G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872*, IV, p. 474.
27. J.B. De Vaal, Die rol van João Albasini in die geskiedenis van die Transvaal, 1813 - 1888, *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis*, 16(1), 1953, p. 65.
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the official policy of successive governments in the era of the South African republic, the Union of South Africa and also the Republic of South Africa. It is still today the same. This misunderstanding of Venda political custom has even given rise to the conclusion of some authors that Venda consisted of independent chiefdoms!<sup>28</sup>

This arrangement, devised by the Boers for their own benefit, clashed with the political customs of the Venda kingdom.<sup>29</sup> For example, some of the 33 so-called *mahosi* (Matidze, Nelwamondo, Magoro, Mashau, Neluvhola, Nthabalala, Madzivhandila, who were regarded as independent) were in fact under the jurisdiction of Ramabulana. Therefore arrangements of this nature thrust on the body politic, of a people who had developed their own political structures, over a period of centuries, was bound to cause ill-feeling and conflict. Unfortunately, S. Schoeman and his authorities failed to understand the ramifications of their decisions which were, they felt, based on their own legitimate structures - quite different in nature from those of the Vhavenda.

In Venda society *Thovhele*, like his *mahosi mahulu*, are above everybody.<sup>30</sup> The people are not their equals. They are the subjects. As soon as the monarch, *Thovhele*, was enthroned, he had no friend or enemy. He was their father.<sup>31</sup> It was expected of his subjects to display loyalty by rendering services and gifts. This was no payment of taxation or tribute in the western sense, where receipts were given and defaulters were prosecuted. The payment of *opgaaf* to Michael Buys, João Albasini and the field cornets thus implied that the civil officials were usurping the authority of the monarch.

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28. J.C.A. Boeyens, Die konflik tussen die Venda en die Blankes in Transvaal, 1864 - 1869, *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis*, 53(2), 1990, p. 1; R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, pp. 323.
29. R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, pp. 321.
30. N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 13.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 13. This is an accepted custom from generation to generation. That is why the Vhavenda have high respect for their monarch.

The appointment of Albasini as tax collector, was naturally not welcome. He had, after all, turned Luonde into a Tsonga settlement. His Tsonga warriors were also employed as messengers for collecting tribute. Consequently Albasini and his messengers were much hated and disliked by the Vhavenda.<sup>32</sup>

Albasini's use of the Tsonga as emissaries to the Vhavenda had a negative connotation. They were regarded as immigrants - in fact, residents who only recently arrived in the area. They felt themselves safe only as long as they were under Albasini's protection. Therefore they were bound to do his bidding. In addition to this, Albasini's lifestyle was so unconventional that he came to be regarded as a witchdoctor, rather than a White official serving a civilised government.<sup>33</sup>

It is not surprising that Albasini had "... 'n hele klomp *opgaafvee*" on his farm waiting to be sold at a public auction. To the Vhavenda, Goedewensch appeared to be a large enclosed area in which cattle were impounded and appeared to be Albasini's property, just waiting to be shared with his Tsonga messengers.<sup>34</sup> The methods employed by the messengers in collecting *opgaaf* were crude. Intimidation, in the form of large groups entering villages, death and slave-taking were only some of the methods employed to fill the pastures and storage barns of Goedewensch.<sup>35</sup>

As described above, Albasini was charged with the responsibility of informing the Executive Council about the conditions of the Blacks. Armed with this directive, he could single out a *khosi* as a rebel, refusing to pay tax. Reports of this nature were accepted by the government as being correct. Examples of Albasini's violence are

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32. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The Copper Miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg*, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, pp. 178 - 179; TA A595, Accession Le Roux Smith - Le Roux. Account of A. Struben, p. 35.
33. J. Albasini III, *João Albasini, 1813 - 1888*, p. 11; J.B. de Vaal, *Die rol van João Albasini in die geskiedenis van die Transvaal, 1813 - 1888*, *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis*, 16(1), 1953, p. 66.
34. J.B. de Vaal, *Die rol van João Albasini in die geskiedenis van die Transvaal, 1813 - 1888*, *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis*, 16(1), 1953, p. 66.
35. J. Albasini III, *João Albasini, 1813 - 1888*, p. 12; TA A595, Accession Le Roux Smith - Le Roux. Account of A. Struben, p. 41.

legion. There was for example the attack on Rammbuda from 16 to 19 September 1863. It was followed by an attack on Lwamondo on 22 September 1863 by a commando under Albasini and F.H. Geysers.<sup>36</sup>

During these attacks many beasts, sheep and goats were captured and brought back to Goedewensch. As nobody in the Soutpansberg could exercise control over Albasini, it is doubtful whether all the captured goats and sheep reached the desired destination. In addition to this, Albasini's warriors were little more than his servants. They had little time to provide for their own subsistence. In order to secure a living, they had to go out plundering and pillaging the homesteads. There were times when they had to personally entertain the Venda homesteads, in order to obtain food. They identified themselves as the children of the White men.<sup>37</sup>

The pillaging and perpetration of atrocities in order to force the people to pay taxation was a sensitive issue amongst the Vhavenda. It appeared that Albasini and the Tsonga were profiting from Vhavenda losses. It was a source for future conflict between the two groups - the owners of the land and the infiltrators. Combine the above with Albasini's harbouring of Davhana after Ramabulana's death, and we are

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36. J.H. Breytenbach en D.C. Joubert (Red.), *Notule van die Volksraad van die Suid-Afrikaanse Republiek, (volledig met al bylae daarby), 1859 - 1863*, pp. 572 - 573, Bylaag 85, 1853, R735/63, Goedewensch, Albasini aan Uit. Raad van der Z.A.R. Republiek, 28 September 1863; J. Albasini III, *João Albasini, 1813 - 1888*, p. 13, 16, 21; J.C.A. Boeyens, Die konflik tussen die Venda en die Blankes in Transvaal, 1864 - 1869, *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis*, 53(2), 1990, p. 15 - 17; J.C.A. Boeyens, Zwart Ivoor: Inboekeling in Zoutpansberg, 1848 - 1869, *Suid-Afrikaanse Historiese Joernaal*, 24 (1991), 31 - 66, p. 47.

37. J.C.A. Boeyens, Zwart Ivoor: Inboekeling in Zoutpansberg, 1848 - 1869, *Suid-Afrikaanse Historiese Joernaal*, 24 (1991), 31 - 66, p. 54; L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, 1966, p. 37.

provided with the breeding grounds for the phletora of misunderstanding which ensued between Makhado and the Boer settlement at Schoemansdal.<sup>38</sup>

The town of Schoemansdal, lying at the foot of Vhulorwa and Makwatambani mountains, which the Boers regarded as part of the Soutpansberg range, was by 1848 the furthest northern White settlement in Southern Africa. Its development on Venda soil, attracted the attention of the Portuguese in Lourenco Marques. For them trade with the interior was important. To promote commerce the Portuguese sent a commission in 1855 to conclude trading agreements with the Boers. On their return to Mozambique, the Commission under the leadership of Santa Rita de Montanha<sup>39</sup> reported to the Governor that Schoemansdal consisted of 278 houses with about 1000 souls of whom 300 were able-bodied men above the age of sixteen. The settlement's imports consisted of 200 000lbs (90 909kg) of lead and 10 000lbs (4546kg) of sugar. Its exports consisted of French beans, broad beans, mealies, honey, cheese, dried fruit, tanned hides, dry salt, rhinoceros horn, ivory, butter and treated timber.<sup>40</sup> These products reflect the level of development the settlement had reached seven years after its founding. The Portuguese were convinced that trade with this inland settlement was necessary.

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38. TA SS105, p. 341. R1604/68, Informatie ingenomen door de Heer M.M. Fitzgerald voor kennisgeving aan de Diplomatieke Agent aangaande Magata, Welgevonden, 21-7-1868; TASS56, p. 86. R287/64, Drie maandelyksche verslag van den fungeerdende Veldkornet S.J. van Rensburg, Schoemansdal, 19-5-1864; J.C.A. Boeyens, Zwart Ivoor: Inboekeling in Zoutpansberg, 1848 - 1869, *Suid-Afrikaanse Historiese Joernaal*, 24 (1991), 31 - 66, pp. 54 - 55; R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, pp. 329; TA SS105, p. 261. R1868/68, Verklaring van Magok aan S. Schoeman, Diplomatieke agent, Morgenzon, 22-6-1868; TA SS105, p. 262. R1868/68, Ramatomana/April aan S. Schoeman, Diplomatieke Agent, Morgenzon, 22-6-1868; TA SS105, p. 263. R1868/68, Ramushweu aan S. Schoeman, Diplomatieke Agent, Morgenzon, 22-6-1868; O.J.O. Ferreira, *Stormvoël van die Noord, Stephanus Schoeman in Transvaal*, p. 337.
39. R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, pp. 325 - 326; H.J. Grobler, Storie van 'n vergane Voortrekkerdorp, *Die Brandwag*, 24-12-1919, p. 217.
40. D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(1), June 1957, p. 45; TA A17, Accession J.F. Churchill, J.F. Churchill's letter, 13-9-1856.

Ideally situated at the time, Schoemansdal was the foremost inland market for a lucrative ivory trade. It was situated on an open plain, which seven years before, had been used for ploughing and grazing. Makhado's royal residence was not far from it. Therefore Makhado and those whose fields and grazing lands had been taken over by the Whites, with the permission of Ramabulana, now watched the development of the town with a sense of loss.<sup>41</sup> The Boers who were not concerned about the feelings of the original inhabitants, used it as a base. Hunting parties made their way to Lake Ngami and the banks of the Zambezi, via Schoemansdal. For their purposes the town was situated in pleasant surroundings. There were furrows with excellent water supplies from the Thivhalalwe River, running along each streets. It was also well provided with orchards and gardens. The landdrost of the district, Jan Vercueil, held his court here, and there was a clergyman of the Dutch Reformed Church (Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk), the Reverend N.J. van Warmelo resident in the village. A church and a parsonage were constructed, as well as a school for children.<sup>42</sup>

This, then was the town of Schoemansdal which, by its very presence, became a threat to the existence of the Vhavenda as well as the authority of Makhado, despite the fact that it was said he was the Boers' favourite candidate for leadership in the area.<sup>43</sup> It was further reported that Makhado was on good terms with the Boers from the time of his installation. His people, it was said, went to work in their houses as well as in their fields. Some accompanied the hunters in order to assist them in hunting, slaying and retrieving hides, tusks and feathers. In return for their services,

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41. Schoemansdal was situated below Whulorwa mountains. Makhado's second royal residence, Makwatambani was on the east while the main royal residence Luatame was about 16 km towards the north-east. People could easily see the town with its activities.
42. G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872*, IV, p. 477; TA A18. Accession, Churchill's letter, 13-09- 1856.
43. D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(1), June 1957, p. 47; O.J.O. Ferreira, *Stormvoël van die Noorde, Stephanus Schoeman in Transvaal*, p. 56; J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda natie*, p. 11.

the Venda hunters were presumably remunerated.<sup>44</sup> It appeared for all intents and purposes as if the two racial groups interacted well.<sup>45</sup>

This initial arrangement did not last long as these peoples of different cultural, political and socio-economic backgrounds were unable to meet on equal terms. The more technologically advanced Boers, according to Western standards, tried to subjugate and exploit the less knowledgeable ones. The latter, in turn, resisted the authority imposed upon. They assimilated certain types of technology of the Whites, effectively utilising it in a country with which they were thoroughly familiar. From the outset the situation in Soutpansberg was conducive to the development of misunderstandings which would culminate in armed conflict.<sup>46</sup> To a large extent it was the result of contrasting cultural discourses. Nevertheless, as long as Makhado continued to assert his authority over his brothers and other *mahosi*, the relationship with the Boers apparently continued to be good, though cautious.<sup>47</sup> In some respects Makhado was thus a facilitator of potential cultural conflict.

Mention has already been made of the fact that ivory was an important item of trade at Schoemansdal. Thus, elephant hunting became a full-time occupation for those engaged in the trade. According to information recorded, the merchants of Soutpansberg exported vast amounts of ivory during the 1864 hunting season. It was calculated more than 350 elephants had been killed by hunters.<sup>48</sup> The hunters sold the ivory to merchants who had stores in the town. They, in turn, sold the goods to

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44. This is doubtful because when the Boers demanded their guns, the Vhavenda said they had worked for them.
45. J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda Natie*, p. 11; T.V. Bulpin, *Lost Trails of the Lowveld*, p. 107; R. Wagner, *Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867*, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 335.
46. The Boers who had come as settlers had through their own cultural and technological background, become the masters, while the Vhavenda who were the owners of the land were turned into servants.
47. R. Wagner, *Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867*, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 329.
48. Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War, *The Transvaal Argus*, 21-06-1866; See also A18, Accession R.H. Gage, *The Development of the Northern Transvaal - Historical Stepping Stones and Reminiscences*, by B.H. Dicke Pietersburg, 17 - 18 June 1925, p. 7.

other merchants who exported the goods overseas *via* the ports of Natal and the Cape Colony. Soutpansberg produced by far the greatest amount of ivory of all hunting centres in the interior of Southern Africa.<sup>49</sup>

As the number of hunters combing the diverse regions of Venda increased, the elephants moved further and further away, thereby decreasing the quantity of ivory to 200 000lbs (90 900kg). To obtain more, the hunters were forced to travel further afield. During the rainy season in which heavy rainfall was the order of the day, the scourge of malaria prevailed. It prevented White hunters from undertaking expeditions during the spring and summer months. This was a blessing in disguise for the Vhavenda who were looking for ways in which they could obtain firearms. It was at this point that they approached their masters whom they asked to provide them with firearms so that they could follow the elephants across the Vhembe River.<sup>50</sup>

The owners of the firearms were told they could follow them with wagons once the weather turned cooler. They could then transport the ivory collected during the summer hunt. In the absence of any other means for the year-round procurement of ivory, some farmers had no alternative but to yield. They then handed their firearms to the Vhavenda hunters. It was against the stipulations of the government. The *Jagwet* (Hunting law) of 1858 which laid down certain rules pertaining to hunting.<sup>51</sup> Schoeman was opposed to the arrangements of the hunters. He considered it unwise

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49. ANON., Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War, *The Transvaal Argus*, 21-06-1866; See also A18, Accession R.H. Gage, *The Development of the Northern Transvaal - Historical Stepping Stones and Reminiscences*, by B.H. Dicke Pietersburg, 17 - 18 June 1925, p. 7. R. Wagner, *Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867*, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 315; J.W.N. Tempelhoff, *Die Okkupasiestelsel in die distrik Soutpansberg, 1886 - 1899*, p. 17.
50. D. Möller-Malan, *Die donker Soutpansberg*, *Historia*, 2(1), June 1957, p. 47; O.I. - M. Ravele, (about 69 years old), Mauluma, 21-1-1983; L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, p. 8; O.I. - A. Ramavhoya (about 100 years), Rabali, 29-12-1982.
51. J.P.F. Moolman, *Die Boer se stryd teenoor die Swart Stamme in en om die Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, 1864 - 1867*, pp. 235 - 237; J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda natie*, p. 11.

to place weapons, with which he could defend his household, at the disposal of "barbarians", who might later use them against him.<sup>52</sup>

For a better description of the White inhabitants of the Soutpansberg one must turn to Theal who, despite his exaggeration of some of their characteristics, shows how they could have contributed to the upheavals and conflict which followed. Theal asserts that many of the Whites of the Soutpansberg were the most lawless in the whole of South Africa.<sup>53</sup> Also Wagner, more recently came to the conclusion that:

(F)rom the first day (came) a swelling complement of hunters, traders, and adventurers, among whom figured English, Scots, and Irish, Dutch, Belgians and Germans, Portuguese of European and Asian extraction, and Cape Coloureds. Zoutpansberg formed the outermost inhabited frontier of the Boer Country and the elements which colonised it did not belong without exception to the best.<sup>54</sup>

Of course, there were many respectable, well-behaved people residing on farms, but on the frontier proper, there assembled a large number of fugitives from justice of almost every European nationality as well as the decadent off-shoots of old colonial families.

Theal regarded their manner of living as even more savage in many respects than that of the Blacks, holding that these were robbers, possessing no scruples when there was plunder of any type within their reach. Many merely masqueraded as traders and hunters, thus besmirching the image of both Empire and humanity. These were the types of people who, in these early days, took with them parties of Vhavenda to the hunting areas.<sup>55</sup>

By 1864, these hunters and traders contented themselves with sending their Vhavenda assistants to procure ivory and ostrich feathers for them while they

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52. D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(1), June 1957, p. 47  
 53. G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872*, IV, p. 476; T.V. Bulpin, *Lost trails of the Lowveld*, p. 106; R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 316.  
 54. G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 - 1872*, IV, p. 476.  
 55. *Ibid.*, p. 476.

remained at home. The Vhavenda, who were thus entrusted with guns and ammunition, soon found they would obtain more trade goods from illicit traders for booty than their employers paid them, and disposed of the greater portion of the ivory, feathers and skins in this manner. In this manner the Venda clans were armed. Therefore, when their White employers demanded their guns to be returned, the Vhavenda refused to do so, acquiring even more firearms from Mozambique, as well as from foreign traders who, according to the local Boers, were regarded as being dishonest.<sup>56</sup>

Flygare, in his account of these times, shows that the Boers themselves were to blame for the situation which arose concerning the initial refusal of the Vhavenda to hand back firearms to the original owners. According to him, the Vhavenda were at first paid for the produce of the hunt they brought back. Afterwards, when the Boers ceased to pay them, they devised means of rewarding themselves.

To accomplish this, a number of them appeared one day in the town and reported that many elephants had been spotted nearby. They then claimed they could have shot them, but unfortunately, they had no weapons.<sup>57</sup> As the Boers wanted ivory, they gave the Vhavenda firearms. Thereafter, the Vhavenda disappeared into the bush. The owners waited in vain for their return, but neither guns nor hunting produce were returned:

The gun was the basis of Boer power on the highveld: to the Boer hunter it was also the tool of his trade: a 'mystery' of which he was master, to be enjoyed by him alone. And yet by the 1860's many Africans had acquired guns in the north .... The Venda in particular so benefited from this proliferation that they were able to turn it into effective political use. In 1865, 1866 and 1867 the Whites asked for

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56. *Ibid.*, p. 476; R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, pp. 330; L.T. Marole, *Makhuluku*, p. 18.

57. J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda Natie*, p. 11; T.V. Bulpin, *Lost Trails on the Lowveld*, 1952, p. 106.

their guns back and the Venda said 'no'. And in refusing they were led by a man who was himself a "Swart Skut", Makhado.<sup>58</sup>

In addition, when the Boers demanded the return of their arms, the Vhavenda's reply was that they had worked for a long time without any remuneration. Therefore, the firearms could be considered payment for their labours.<sup>59</sup>

In this manner the subjects of Makhado who, before the arrival of the Boers had fought with assegais, axes, battle-axes, and bows and arrows, were equipped with firearms which they used in their subsequent wars against the Boers. Some of Makhado's generals, like Funyufunyu and Rasivhetshela who grew up with the Boers hunting elephants, were already proficient in the use of firearms and subsequently trained Makhado's armies.<sup>60</sup> With the Boers determined to repossess their weapons and the Vhavenda's refusal to comply, the stage was set for the development of events and incidents which culminated in a major crisis - the so-called "War of the Soutpansberg".<sup>61</sup>

From the White man's point of view, the War of the Soutpansberg in which Makhado was able to drive out the Boers, was a three-cornered contest. The three groups consisted of Albasini and his Tsonga collaborators, the Boer settlement at Schoemansdal and Makhado and his Vhailafuri<sup>62</sup> at Luatame, Dzanani. The Boers claimed the whole territory as theirs by acquisition. The Vhavenda ruler on the other hand denied this, as it was his by virtue of the fact that his ancestors lay

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58. R. Wagner, *Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867*, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 330.

59. J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansberg en de Bawenda Natie*, p. 11; N.J. van Warmelo, Report on Succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, Pretoria, 1940, p. 54; TA G.O.V. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 138/06, Report of Native Location Commission. History. The Makhado (Magato) or Ramapulana Tribes, 23-03-1907, p. 7; R. Wagner, *Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867*, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and Society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 330.

60. N.J. van Warmelo, Report on Succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, Pretoria, 1940, p. 54.

61. ANON., Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War, *The Transvaal Argus*, 18-03-1868.

62. Vhailafuri are the inhabitants of Western Venda or Dzanani.

buried there. However, the historians<sup>63</sup> and writers who have attempted to bring this event to historical revelation, have succeeded in bringing to light only one aspect of the cause of the war.

With oral information at the disposal of researchers, it is time to reveal the causes of this war from the Vhavenda point of view. The paucity of documentary sources being evident, oral sources which have so far been neglected, will be freely employed, for Makhado and his people had no means of recording those events which forced them on to battlefield.<sup>64</sup>

Firstly, the presence of the controversial Albasini at Luonde as vice-consul for Portugal and Superintendent of "kaffir tribes" in the Soutpansberg under the South African Republic,<sup>65</sup> in itself provided fertile ground for the beginning of hostilities. Albasini and his Tsonga, having dug themselves in at Luonde on his farm, Goedewensch, had nothing to fear. Makhado could not venture in his territory for purposes of launching an open attack on Goedewensch. The Boers also were constrained. Although the origins of the war cannot be solely ascribed to the lawlessness of the White inhabitants in the area,<sup>66</sup> close scrutiny of the activities of Albasini certainly throws further light on the matter.

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63. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 163; S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda and Vhadau Vha Tshakhuma*, p. 32.
64. So far South African historians have been unfair to the history of Venda. They have recorded only those events in which documentary evidence exist which documents are the results of the Venda's refusal to comply with the wishes of the Whites. Yet there is a lot of information in the minds of the people themselves concerning their customs, laws and developments. G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872, IV*, pp. 47 - 495; J.B. de Vaal, Die rol van João Albasini in die geskiedenis van die Transvaal, 1813 - 1888; *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis*, 16(1), 1953, pp. 473 - 495.
65. J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda natie*, pp. 12 - 13; J.B. de Vaal, Die rol van João Albasini in die geskiedenis van die Transvaal, *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis*, 16(1), Pretoria, 1953, pp. 44 - 65; O.J.O. Ferreira, *Stormvoël van die Noorde, Stephanus Schoeman in Transvaal*, p. 224.
66. ANON., Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War, *The Transvaal Argus*, 10-06-1868. A18, Accession R.H. Gage, The Development of the Northern Transvaal - Historical Stepping Stones and Reminiscences, by B.H. Dicke Pietersburg, 17 - 18 June 1925, p 7.
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The trader Monene, or the “onrusstoker”,<sup>67</sup> who was alleged to have triggered the war, was reported as having sought refuge with Albasini after fleeing from Manukosi for offences he was alleged to have committed.<sup>68</sup> This assertion differs with the accounts given by the Vhavenda.<sup>69</sup> It is supported by Möller-Malan,<sup>70</sup> that Monene was a trader whose business was taken over by Albasini after he left Schoemansdal. Möller-Malan, however, contradicts herself when she writes that Monene sought protection from Albasini, implying that when he settled at Luonde, Albasini was already in residence there. Perhaps she regarded the Monene she spelt with a “u” on page 41 of her text and the Monene spelt with an “o” on page 48 of that same text, as different people. What is significant here is that Monene, like many other Tsonga refugees, entered Venda after Manukosi established his Gaza Empire in Mozambique. He proceeded to Luonde where Albasini found him, took over his business and demoted him to the position of an *induna* of his Tsonga subjects.<sup>71</sup>

In 1859, events in Mozambique took a significant turn. The founder of the Shangaan nation and the Gaza Empire Manukosi, passed away.<sup>72</sup> In the dispute that followed - characteristic of the coming into being of new leadership in most African societies - his two sons, Mzila and Mawewe, fought for supremacy. Mzila was driven into Venda and settled at Tshitavhadulu,<sup>73</sup> rather than near Ramabulana’s kraal.<sup>74</sup> His settlement at Tshitavhadulu was sanctioned by Raluthaga Madzivhandila of

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67. J.B. de Vaal, Die rol van João Albasini in die geskiedenis van die Transvaal, 1813 - 1888, *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis*, 16(1), 1953, p. 77.
68. G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872, IV*, p. 478; R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 327.
69. O.I. - Mamphideni Ndou (about 100 years), Soni, 01-03-1971.
70. D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(2), September 1957, p. 41.
71. R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 328.
72. G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872, IV*, p. 478.
73. P.E. Schwellnus, *Ndededzi*, V, p. 39.
74. G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872, IV* p. 479.
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Tshakhuma, as it was in his area of jurisdiction. Mzila's stay in Venda was, however, short-lived since events in Mozambique forced his return, whereupon he defeated Mawewe, thus regaining leadership of that country in 1861.<sup>75</sup>

After gaining complete control of Mozambique, Mzila lodged a complaint with Albasini, requesting him to extradite Monene with his wives and children to Mozambique, or to put them to death for the offences Monene was alleged to have committed during the reign of Manukosi. Mzila further warned that should his request be denied, he would close the hunting grounds in his country to further trade, thus denying hunters and traders access to their chief source of income, namely ivory.<sup>76</sup> Faced with this dilemma, Albasini felt he had no choice but to succumb to the ultimatum. But while still contemplating his course of action, Monene became aware of Albasini's treachery and fled to the protection of Commandant F.H. Geysers at Schoemansdal. In turn Commandant Geysers entrusted Monene to the care of Jacob C. de Couto, a farmer at Morgenzon until such time as he would be in a position to lodge a complaint against Albasini with the *landdrost*.<sup>77</sup>

On 7 April 1864, De Couto was officially ordered by Commandant Geysers to deliver Monene together with his witnesses to Schoemansdal, where landdrost F.C. Vercueil had his court. Albasini was also subpoenaed to appear in order to defend himself against Monene who was not only his junior but his subject as well.<sup>78</sup> He

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75. ANON., Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War, *The Transvaal Argus*, 10-06-1868.
76. G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872*, IV, p. 479. ANON., Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War, *The Transvaal Argus*, 10-06-1868. R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, pp. 326 - 327.
77. ANON., Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War, *The Transvaal Argus*, 10-06-1868. R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 327.
78. R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 325. Monene being a Tsonga or knobneuzen was like all these people under João Albasini who was their chief.

held that only the Executive Council of the South African Republic could listen to his account and decide on his fate.<sup>79</sup>

The whole arrangement fizzled out as Albasini did not appear at Schoemansdal. Monene was ordered to go back to Morgenzon and to remain there until the president of the South African Republic, M.W. Pretorius, could visit the Soutpansberg in order to investigate the matter.<sup>80</sup> Pretorius finally arrived at Schoemansdal in July 1864. It is recorded that Monene was placed near Makhado and Madzhie under Vercueil's supervision.<sup>81</sup> What remains unclear in this instance is the place where Monene was actually located. None of the people interviewed knew anything about this happening. Moreover, the place could not have been near both Makhado and Madzhie, as the distance between Luatame and Madzhie is more than 50 km. It would have been more sensible to state that Monene was located near Schoemansdal. However, after the president's departure, Albasini decided to hit back. He lodged a complaint against Monene, who alleged Albasini wanted to kill him. The government issued orders for the arrest of Monene. This was done and Monene was placed in custody under field cornet Stephanus van Rensburg, of Schoemansdal.<sup>82</sup> Albasini's enemy, Monene, did not remain long in detention. He escaped on 28 March 1865 and according to records, he first sought refuge at Luatame, then Phahwe and ultimately at Mukumbani.<sup>83</sup> This would appear strange as Monene, being a Tsonga, could not have been expected to seek refuge in Venda royal residences, yet Monene was welcomed as he was fleeing from Albasini who had harboured Davhana.

When news of Monene's escape from detention reached Albasini, he became furious and immediately raised an *impi* of his subjects, ordering them to search for Monene.

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79. R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, p. 328. G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872*, IV, p. 480; ANON., Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War, *The Transvaal Argus*, 25-03- 1868.
80. ANON., Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War, *The Transvaal Argus*, 25-03-1868.
81. *Ibid.*
82. *Ibid.*
83. *Ibid.*; G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872*, IV, p. 480.

The *impi* fell upon innocent villagers and pillaged their homes like dogs hunting for game, committing criminal acts against Magoro and other *mahosi*.<sup>84</sup>

As Monene's whereabouts could not be determined, a Boer commando reported to Commandant Venter at Goedewensch on 1 April 1865. On 7 April, this commando under Venter and Albasini and which included Davhana and Tsonga warriors, left Goedewensch, travelling over the mountains as far as Phahwe.<sup>85</sup> Horrifying atrocities were committed under the pretext of looking for Monene. In the course of this invasion, several subjects of Tshikumbu Maphaha including his mother *Makhadzi* Nyakhuhu, perished, whilst a number of cattle, sheep and goats were also taken. In addition, several defenceless women and children were taken prisoner. After having combed and devastated the area, the commando returned to Goedewensch - perhaps for instructions. These barbaric attacks were perpetrated on ignorant and peaceful people who knew nothing of what was transpiring between Goedewensch and Schoemansdal.<sup>86</sup> On 8 May 1865 these combined forces then travelled to the next target, Madzivhandila. This attack on the people of Tshakhuma signalled the commencement of the conflict in earnest, as the Vhavenda were reported to have decided to retain the firearms they were issued with by the Boers for the purpose of hunting elephants. Afterwards they prepared themselves against their enemies.<sup>87</sup>

The killing and butchering of the inhabitants of Magoro, Phahwe, and Tshakhuma by Albasini's *impi* and the Boer commando was a criminal act of aggression against

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84. ANON., Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War, *The Transvaal Argus*, 25-03-1868; G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872*, IV, p. 480; TA A595, Accession Le Roux Smith - Le Roux; Account of A. Struben, p. 42.

85. ANON., Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War, *The Transvaal Argus*, 25-03-1868; G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872*, IV, p. 481.

86. R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 329. ANON., Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War, *The Transvaal Argus*, 25-03-1868; J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda natie*, p. 12.

87. R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 329; ANON., Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War, *The Transvaal Argus*, 25-03-1868.

a people living in peace. There appears to be no question that this call for aggression on the part of Albasini and the Boers was planned to subjugate *mahosi* who refused to pay taxes. The search for Monene was used as an excuse for the killings and the booty. Further the combined forces knew very well that Monene belonged to a different nation which was hostile to the Vhavenda. It is difficult to understand why these people were punished for the crimes committed by Monene.<sup>88</sup>

Those who hold that the war was caused by the lawlessness of the White settlers of Soutpansberg contend that Albasini became exasperated at the lack of the resolution of Monene's case in his favour while several of the officials at Schoemansdal felt that their dignity had been offended and their pride injured. Each side apportioned to itself a greater amount of authority than the other. The situation was aggravated by confusing and contradictory instructions from leaders on both sides. Monene's escape from detention was ascribed to Vercueil's and Van Rensburg's carelessness. This attitude had a great deal to do with the declining revenue of Schoemansdal, if the hunting borders were to be closed as the indigenous leadership in Mozambique threatened to do, if Monene were not to return.<sup>89</sup> It is suspected that Vercueil and Van Rensburg felt that Albasini wielded too much power and was acting against the interests of the Republic in the furtherance of his own selfish interests. The Volksraad considered these circumstances to be conducive to the war.<sup>90</sup> It should also be noted that events so far discussed had no bearing or connection with Makhado himself. Albasini's stubborn resistance and the breakdown of communications between Pretoria and Schoemansdal, had nothing to do with the Vhavenda. These misunderstandings originated strictly within the White community of the Soutpansberg.<sup>91</sup>

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88. ANON., Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War, *The Transvaal Argus*, 25-3-1868.

89. ANON., Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War, *The Transvaal Argus*, 20-05-1868.

90. *Ibid.*

91. The Vhavenda were living independently. Consequently the problems of the Boers simply spilt over them.

What then, were the events which the Vhavenda regarded as having led to the outbreak of hostilities? A consideration of questions of this nature must inevitably lead to some grievances nursed by the Vhavenda since the establishment of Schoemansdal in 1848. First and foremost was the question of land. When Ramabulana told Louis Tregardt in 1836 to settle where he pleased,<sup>92</sup> he also told the rulers of the neighbouring nations in 1848 that the Boers were his friends.<sup>93</sup> He said this without knowing the numbers of the Boers or their intentions when they arrived for settlement in his country. He thought they would remain under his jurisdiction, abiding by Venda traditional values in the question of land tenure.<sup>94</sup> This is what he implied when he said they should dwell where they liked<sup>95</sup> and not turn the country into farms.

It has been indicated that Ramabulana fled from Tshirululuni after Davhana's escape from detention. This is true to a certain extent, but the underlying cause of this flight was the realisation that the Boers had come to stay and wanted to exercise control over him. However, by their actions, they had violated the spirit of his verbal agreement with Louis Tregardt.<sup>96</sup> This feeling was further aggravated by the fact that many Boers left the original settlement of Schoemansdal which Ramabulana believed to be their home. They infiltrated some of his lands, partitioning them into farms.<sup>97</sup> In this way the Vhavenda were gradually broken up and scattered. The result was that the best lands, which they had inhabited for a long time, were

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92. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulana's*, p. 74; M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana; N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg*, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 159.
93. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg*, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 159.
94. In Venda tradition, the monarch holds the land in trust for the community. It cannot be sold or given to anybody.
95. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 75; O.I. - King Nesengani (about 95 years), Davhana's location, 14-06-1971.
96. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 53; O.I. - King Nesengani (95 years), Davhana's location, 14-06-1971.
97. O.I. - Z. Mutsila (68 years), 26-12-1987; M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg*, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 163.

usurped and absorbed for settlement farming and grazing. In the course of time large numbers of the original inhabitants became destitute and discontented.<sup>98</sup>

Makhado considered this as an encroachment on his land. Unlike his father Ramabulana, who was timid and preferred to avoid the presence of the Boers by removing himself from their vicinity, Makhado resisted them because he wanted to remain the undisputed ruler of the lands of his forefathers.<sup>99</sup>

Makhado's underlying complaint with the entire situation was summarised in the words recorded by S.M. Dzivhani where he said:

A ri vho mu rolela shango lawe vha nanga hune Vha funa, meaning: they annexed his land and chose to live where they liked.<sup>100</sup>

This complaint was continued by M.M. Motenda who wrote:

Makhado nwana wa Ramabulana a si tsha dahisana fola Zwavhudi na Makhuwa, a tavhanya u vhona uri Mavhuru vha na makulela na mukundulela vha do mu dzhenela nduni na muhwalo. (Meaning: Makhado, Ramabulana's son, lost confidence in the Whites, he soon realised that the Boers were selfish and gregarious and that they would reduce him to nothing.)<sup>101</sup>

He argued that the Boers wanted to do what they liked with his land. This statement reveals the feelings of all Vhavenda against the Boers, as to them, land is indispensable. It is like a wife, it cannot be traded or tampered with.

Statements, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, representative of the traditional Venda attitude towards their land, reflect the religious ties with not only

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98. G.Y. Lagden, Report by the Commissioner for Native Affairs, relative to the acquisition and tenure of land by Natives in the Transvaal, July 1904, Pretoria, Government and Stationery Office, p. 6.

99. O.I. - Tshivhidzo Musekwa (about 100 years), Tshihanane, 12-07-1971; According to Venda custom and tradition, land cannot be ruled by more than one person.

100. S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau Vha Tshakhuma*, p. 32.

101. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg*, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 163.

the burial sites of the ancestors but also represent their patriotism and loyalty to the ethos of their personage as Vhavenda. Expressions voiced in the 1900's, reflected also the feelings of Makhado and his contemporaries.<sup>102</sup> An attachment to the belief of the life-giving forces of the ancestors, as well as the political and socio-economic structures under which the Vhavenda traditionally live, is but one of the many reasons the Vhavenda have names for their land, rivers, mountains and every piece of ground.<sup>103</sup> This is carried to such an extent that some Vhavenda are even named after their land, like for example Nefefe and Nesane.<sup>104</sup>

Since time immemorial land, according to Venda tradition and custom, was the communal property of *Thovhele, mahosi mahulu, mahosi* and their people. It could not be exchanged or sold. People could not be removed as they were confined within its borders.<sup>105</sup> The monarch was the trustee of the land for the people. He did not own it and he did not have direct control over his subjects. His royal residence was in fact situated in a country where the *mahosi*, through whom he ruled, in fact owned the land on his behalf.<sup>106</sup> An individual could freely move to another *khosi khulu* or *khosi* provided certain conventions were observed.<sup>107</sup>

With the arrival of the Boers, this state of affairs was affected. The Vhavenda, who lived on the lands that ultimately became farms, subsequently became farmers' tenants. They opted to remain as servants rather than move from the area with which they were more familiar. They, together with the fauna and flora, rivers, soil and everything found on that land which became a farm, were regarded by the farm-

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102. U.G. 22 - 1966, p. 378. Report of the Natives Land Commission, III, 1916.

103. It may be of great interest to historians to know that of all the Black people of South Africa, the Vhavenda alone have a name for their land, i.e. Venda, which means land and which has no prefix. The lands of other Black people are named after their people e.g., Batswana (*Botswana*), Amazulu (*KwaZulu*), Basuto (*Lesotho*), Bapedi (*Bopedi*).

104. The prefix "Ne" denotes the owner of a place called Fefe, Sane, etc.

105. O.I. - Khosi, A. Madzivhandila (about 45 years), Makwarela, 3-03-1988. The Vhavenda are attached to their areas of habitation.

106. This arrangement which remained unknown to non-Venda people, is unique among the Vhavenda. Disruption of this arrangement by the native Land Act of 1913, isolated some monarchs from their Mahosi. It was as a result of this that some Mahosi were raised to the status of their Mahosi Mahulu.

107. In Venda a subject was free to move from territory to territory without a passport like arrangement.

owner as his property. Therefore, the overall policy of land tenure in the Transvaal which was also applied throughout Venda, was to break up the Blacks, scatter them and to divide them in order to rule them effectively.<sup>108</sup> One of the prime reasons for these plans was to move the Africans from the best lands and create a no-man's island zone between them and the Boers. It was felt that the dangers of fraternisation and conflict could thus be avoided with employment of these tactics. This was also an indication of the Boers' feelings of superiority over the Africans.<sup>109</sup> It emphasised the European thoughts that Africans could never attain the sophistication of the Whites. It was sentiments of this nature, in respect of land, which ultimately led to the outbreak of hostilities between Makhado and the Boers.

From the very beginning, had the Boers stuck to Ramabulana's arrangement with Louis Tregardt, their presence would have been welcomed as they would have been part of the community.<sup>110</sup> Ordinary people would still have been employed as workers on lands, domestic servants and hunters on safari. Unnecessary confrontation would have been avoided as the Whites' higher standard of living was evinced in the food they ate, the clothes they wore and the medical service they were able to provide to their people. The staple food of the Africans, on the other hand, was porridge while skins were used to cover their bodies. The Africans also lived in an area where diseases like malaria were prevalent. Thus, it is clear to see why the Whites were admired for their knowledge and skills in the provision of health services. But, and due to the gregariousness, they deviated from the above arrangement and regarded Venda as if it was part of the Cape Colony, separated only by a few rivers and mountains. To them it appeared as if it was uninhabited.<sup>111</sup>

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108. G.Y. Lagden, Report relative to the acquisition of land by Natives in the Transvaal, 1904, p. 6. U.G. 22 - '16: Report of the Native Land Commission, Volume II, 1916, p. 374.
109. G.Y. Lagden, Report relative to the acquisition of land by Natives in the Transvaal, 1905, p. 6; U.G. 22 - '16: Report of the Native Land Commission, Volume II, 1916, p. 374.
110. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 163.
111. R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 321.

The Boers' need for labour was another area of confrontation. Those farmers who could not obtain free labour resorted to the forced labour methods which were cruel and abominable, bringing great hardship to those caught up in this ugly situation.<sup>112</sup> For example sporadic attacks were undertaken against homesteads which it was alleged, they were not paying tribute. Such expeditions were launched against Mashau and other *mahosi*. Cattle, goats, women and children were captured and distributed among the farmers and Tsonga collaborators.<sup>113</sup>

The situation deteriorated even more when people, employed by the Boers, were constantly engaged in day-to-day farming activities. Their visits to *misanda* (the royal residences) decreased. This was contrary to custom. The monarch's status was enhanced when many people frequented his residence.<sup>114</sup> With so many working people on Boer farms, there was direct interference with the ability to effectively farm their own lands and, since portions of the harvest were given as tribute to *Thovhele, khosi khulu or khosi*, it eroded the economic strength. As a result, resentment towards the Boers surfaced.<sup>115</sup>

This state of affairs was ascribed to the presence of the Whites, and voiced by Madzhe, when he told Makhado that it would be better if the Whites left. They were troubling the Vhavenda when demanding people to work for them full time, he

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112. A.M. Ncube, *The Venda and Mphaphu War of 1898*, Unpublished Conference Paper, Salisbury, 1972, p. 8; R. Wagner, *Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867*, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, pp. 332 - 334.

113. TA A 595, *Accession Le Roux Smith - Le Roux. Account of A.B. Struben*, p. 41; R. Wagner, *Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867*, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, pp. 332 - 334.

114. O.I. - M. Ravele (about 69 years), Mauluma, 21-01-1983.

115. A.M. Ncube, *The Venda and Mphaphu War of 1898*, Conference Paper, Salisbury, 1972, p. 8; R. Wagner, *Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867*, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, pp. 332 - 334.

explained.<sup>116</sup> Whites were seen as being boastful. They were accused of not knowing, nor understanding the difference between the rulers and the common folk. The solution to this situation, which was threatening the very foundations on which the Venda monarchy was based, was to go to war and drive out the Whites who treated people alike, including Thovhele himself.<sup>117</sup>

Complaints against the Boers intensified as it was alleged that the Boers needed labourers. They forced people to go and watch over their maize and wheat - even women and children.<sup>118</sup> It was this selfish attitude of the Boers, their forcing of women and children to work on the farms - that also hardened the attitude of the Vhavenda. According to Venda custom and way of thinking, this was a most sensitive matter. The Venda women were free to work for the monarch at different seasons of the year, but for a stranger to employ someone's wife in the manner practised by the Boers, was tantamount to marrying such a wife. Situations of this nature undoubtedly contributed to the outbreak of hostilities.<sup>119</sup> This, however, was not the case with a few Black strangers like the Tsonga who were scattered on farms. The majority of them settled with Albasini, as they had no hereditary attachment to the lands on which they found themselves. They got on very well with the Boers as the latter's farms were sanctuaries for them.<sup>120</sup>

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116. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 152; D. Möller-Malan, *Die donker Soutpansberg, Historia*, 2(1), September 1957, p. 47; N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual, Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 3, 1932, p. 32.
117. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 53; D. Möller-Malan, *Die donker Soutpansberg, Historia*, 2(1), June 1957, p. 47.
118. A.M. Ncube, *The Venda and the Mphhephu War of 1898*, Conference Paper, Salisbury, 1972, p. 8; R. Wagner, *Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867*, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 322.
119. A.M. Ncube, *The Venda and the Mphhephu War of 1898*, Conference Paper, Salisbury, 1972, p. 8; R. Wagner, *Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867*, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 322.
120. J.C.A. Boeyens, *Zwart Ivoor: Inboekeling in Zoutpansberg, 1848 - 1869*, *Suid-Afrikaanse Historiese Joernaal*, 24, 1991, pp. 31 - 36; U.G. 22 - '16: *Report of the Natives Land Commission, Volume II*, 1916, p. 376; M.M. Motenda, *Ramabulana*; N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 180.

In the light of the above, Theal's statement that the tribe under Ramabulana took advantage of the civil strife existing in the South African Republic, to make itself practically independent,<sup>121</sup> cannot be regarded as correct. These people, who had not yet been conquered or subjugated, had no means by which to know what was transpiring throughout the South African Republic. Their knowledge of happenings was parochial in nature, limited to their own areas in Soutpansberg, rather than the Republic in general.

Makhado's unsuccessful attempts to crush Davhana or to force him out of Luonde, as well as Davhana's continued stay with Albasini and his standing Tsonga warriors, were major sources of discontent and threat to his kingship.<sup>122</sup> It even became worse when it came to the surface that Davhana was supported partly by Albasini and primarily by certain sections in the Boer camp, who enlisted the support of neighbouring Sotho chiefs against Makhado.<sup>123</sup> For they were willing to pay for any war Davhana might start against Makhado. Thus the Boers were quick to use this division between Ramabulana's sons to penetrate Makhado's kingship. Subsequently, Makhado sent messengers to Albasini demanding the extradition of Davhana, since this was a disagreement between the brothers in which the Whites had no call to interfere with. His request, refused by Albasini, exacerbated the already tense situation.<sup>124</sup>

As the situation deteriorated, the field cornets realised that the Vhavenda were armed with guns obtained from hunters and traders. Subsequently, they demanded

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121. G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872, IV*, p. 478.

122. J.P.F. Moolman, *Die Boere se stryd teen die Swart Stamme in en om die Z.A.R., 1864 - 1871*, p. 239. TA SS56, pp. 101 - 106, R292/64. Copy van Memorandum gehouden door den Superintendent van Kaffer- Stammen te Zoutpansberg J. Albasini, vanaf 26-05-1864 - 09-07-1864; R. Wagner, *Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867*, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, pp. 321 and 329.

123. O.J.O. Ferreira, *Stormvoël van die Noord, Stephanus Schoeman in Transvaal*, p. 328.

124. TA SS193, p. 38. R1822/1823/75, W. Grieve, Veldkornet Spelonken aan D.S. Mare, landdrost, 19-08-1875; ANON., *Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War, The Transvaal Argus, 18-03- 1868.*

from Madzhie that the firearms be returned to those they considered to be the rightful owners, namely the Boers.<sup>125</sup> Madzhie's reply was clear. As long as the Boers had not yet complied with the request that Davhana be handed over to Makhado, no firearms would be returned. This reply further aggravated the already tense situation. Consequently, the Boers were so angry that they launched an attack on Madzhie on 1 September 1865. After this commando had failed to capture Madzhie's kraal, it retreated. In the prevailing atmosphere a spirit of insurrection became rife.<sup>126</sup>

When news of both the turbulent situation in Soutpansberg and the ill-fated sortie with Madzhie reached Pretoria, the government no longer closed its ears to requests for assistance from Soutpansberg leaders. Consequently, President M.W. Pretorius and Commandant-General Paul Kruger dashed to the Soutpansberg in November 1865 in an attempt to restore concord, only to find the Boers living in *laagers*.<sup>127</sup> A great deal of property had been lost. Some houses were reduced to ashes, while farming and trading were at a standstill. The situation was chaotic owing to the unchecked activities of lawless Whites at a time when there was no police, as there was no money with which to remunerate them. All Pretorius and Kruger could do was appeal to the inhabitants to live on friendly terms with the Blacks.<sup>128</sup>

They left after they realised that there were other and more serious problems facing the Republic which required their immediate attention. The situation deteriorated even further, and back in Pretoria, Pretorius and Kruger informed the burghers of

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125. D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(1), June 1957, p. 48; R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 330. J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda Natie*, p. 11.
126. G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872*, IV, p. 481; J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda natie*, p. 11; TA, A. 26, Accession D.F. Engelenburg, pp. 62, 66, D.S. Maré, Schoemansdal - Superintendent J. Albasini, 2 and 5 September 1865; TA A595, Accession Le Roux Smith - Le Roux. A.B. Struben Account, p. 42.
127. J.P.F. Moolman, Die Boere se stryd teen die Swart Stamme in en om die Z.A.R., 1864 - 1871, p. 254. TA U-R Besluite 1865 - 1868, pp. 164 - 165, Articles 10 and 13, 23 November 1865. TA A26, p. 48, D.S. Maré, Schoemansdal, 6 August 1865, G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872*, IV, p. 481.
128. G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872*, IV, p. 481.

the need to maintain themselves in a state of military readiness, in the event the situation worsened. However, at the time, it was felt inappropriate to wage war with Makhado, as the Republic was weakened by civil war, internal dissensions and a lack of money. So the chaotic situation continued.<sup>129</sup>

Unable to arrive at a tangible solution in Soutpansberg, requests for military support to protect the community, continued with such veracity that authorities in Pretoria could not continue to turn a deaf ear. The Volksraad met on 19 February 1866 at Potchefstroom and determined to send a commission of enquiry to investigate the underlying causes of the conflict in the Soutpansberg, as well as to enforce order by means of a commando and support the courts of law in their punishing of wrongdoers. The implementation of these actions required money, which the state did not have.<sup>130</sup>

Although the working conditions on the farms and in the households are unrecorded, there is one occurrence which remains in the memory of the Vhavenda, and which according to them, contributed greatly to the outbreak of war between Makhado and the Boers.<sup>131</sup>

One of the young Vhavenda employed on a farm was Mmboi, a younger brother of Funyufunyu, the Nduna<sup>132</sup> of Makhado's forces. Both Funyufunyu and Mmboi were sons of Tshinetise Matinyatshiulu of Vhuingamela.<sup>133</sup> Mmboi, an industrious and dedicated worker, was employed primarily to look after the cattle. As a herdboys he had to discharge all the duties connected with cattle-farming, including the milking

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129. *Ibid.*, pp. 482 - 383; TA U-R Besluite, 1865 - 1868, Nr. 2, Articles 13, 15, 16, pp. 165 - 166, 167, 23-11-1865.

130. G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872, IV*, pp. 482 - 483; J.P.F. Moolman, *Die Boere se stryd teen die Swart Stamme in en om die S.A. Republiek, 1864 - 1871*, p. 250; O.J.O. Ferreira, *Stormvoël van die Noord, Stephanus Schoeman in Transvaal*, p. 328.

131. L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, p. 36; O.I. - M. Ravele (about 69 years), Mauluma, 21-01-1983; O.I. - M. Radzilani (about 100 years), Vhulaudzi, 12-07-1971; O.I. - K. Phosiwa (about 95 years), Mauluma, 29-12-1982; O.I. - T. Musekwa (about 100 years), Tshihanane, 12-07-1971.

132. L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, p. 36; O.I. - M. Ravele (69 years), Mauluma, 21-01-1983; O.I. - T. Musekwa (about 100 years). Nduna is the Supreme Commander of the army.

133. L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, p. 36; O.I. - T. Musekwa (about 100 years), Tshihanane, 12-07-1971.

of cows. One day Mmboi's elder brother Funyufunyu happened to visit him during the morning milking session.<sup>134</sup> His brother was waiting for him outside the kraal. However, there were also three stockily built Boers inside the kraal.<sup>135</sup>

Mmboi was in the process of milking, and the container was almost full when a calf came running in and pushed the milk container with its head, resulting in the spilling of all the milk. When the three Boers saw the milk flowing away, they became furious, berating him for the loss of the milk, and thrashed Mmboi to such an extent that they left him unconscious.<sup>136</sup> Funyufunyu witnessed the entire episode, and sympathising with the unjustifiable punishment of his younger brother, rushed to Luatame to inform Thovhele of the beating. Makhado took up the matter, referring it to his uncle, Madzhie, for further advice. Makhado was worried by the attitude of the three Boers, and concluded that the whole White community was arrogant, and that it looked down upon his people.<sup>137</sup>

Incidents of this nature could have been numerous but were not brought to Makhado's attention. Such appalling episodes, coupled with the problem of Albasini and the Boers with Monene, and the havoc caused by Albasini's Tsonga warriors terrorising the villagers, commanding them to pay tribute and supply them with porridge as sons of Mulungu,<sup>138</sup> further contributed to the combination of circumstances in which the Vhavenda felt compelled to defend themselves, to fight for that which was their own.

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134. L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, p. 36; O.I. - M. Matumba (about 70 years), Tshikombani, 23 January 1983; O.I. - K Nesengani (about 95 years), Davhana's Location, 14-06-1971.

135. L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, p. 36; O.I. - M. Ravele (about 69 years), Mauluma, 21-01-1983; O.I. - T. Musekwa (about 100 years), Tshihanane, 12-07-1971; See also J.P.F. Moolman, *Die Boere se siening van en houding teenoor die Bantoe in Transvaal tot 1860*, p. 68. According to recorded information the Boers regarded the Blacks as useless creatures.

136. L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, 1966, p. 36; O.I. - T. Musekwa (about 100 years), Tshihanane, 12-07-1971; O.I. - M. Ravele (about 69 years), Mauluma, 21-01-1983; O.I. - M. Matumba (about 70 years), Tshikombani, 23-01-1983.

137. L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, p. 36; See also J. P.F. Moolman, *Die Boere se siening van en houding teenoor die Bantoe in Transvaal tot 1860*, p. 68.

138. Mulungu is the Tsonga word for "White man"; O.I. - M. Ravele (about 69 years), Mauluma, 21-01-1983.

As the situation deteriorated, the government stepped up its efforts and called a commando of 1 200 men in June 1867. However, the state of affairs was such that only half that number reported for duty,<sup>139</sup> as there was a strong feeling amongst the burghers against waging war against Makhado. The Soutpansbergers having seceded from the Republic, and only later returning, were still not among the “forgiven” for the problems they had caused during the times of constitution dissension. In addition to this, the burghers could not see their way clear to go to the assistance of the lawless Whites who had brought trouble upon themselves by their own reckless and criminal acts.<sup>140</sup> In the absence of the Commandant-General, who was indisposed, the President led the commando into the Soutpansberg himself. This expedition however, consisting of a handful of men, was unable to act in a meaningful nor forceful manner against the Vhavenda. The President was therefore compelled to give up the military venture and returned to Pretoria, leaving the Soutpansbergers to the mercy of the Makhado’s forces.<sup>141</sup>

Sensing the uncertainty and despondency amongst the Boers, a feeling for the waging of a general war against the Whites began to gain momentum amongst the Vhavenda leadership and populous. This new and aggressive stance found expression in Madzhie’s assertion that the time to launch an attack on the Whites had come. The Whites, it was alleged, were troubling the Vhavenda by making them work on their farms, and by mistreating them. Makhado, however, was cautious, as he doubted the Vhavenda’s ability to face the Whites in an all-out war. As Madzhie was persistent in his demands that war should be declared, Makhado

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139. G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872*, IV, p. 483.

140. G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872*, IV p. 482; R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and Society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 319 - 322.

141. G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872*, IV, p. 483; See also J.F. van Oordt, *Paul Kruger en de opkomst der Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek*, pp. 128 - 129.

ultimately listened to the recommendations of the *magota* (councillors) and his uncle.<sup>142</sup>

The people blamed Makhado for his unwillingness to take action against the Boers, accusing him of adopting the lifestyle of the Whites, and that, in doing so, he had turned himself into a coward. They ascribed this state of affairs to the fact that he no longer wore the traditional garb of royalty.<sup>143</sup> Madzhe was adamant in his demands that the White people should go. As pressures from his advisors and *magota* continued to mount, Makhado yielded, but rather than taking immediate action, he secretly visited his friend, Terence Fitzgerald, seeking advice. Fitzgerald, who for obvious reasons did not approve of the proposed confrontation, advised Makhado not to provoke the Boers, reminding him of their moral support during his battle for accession to the kingship.<sup>144</sup> Makhado returned to his royal residence, Luatame, wavering in his decision to engage the Boers in a battle, for he could not ignore his friend's advice. However, in the long term he felt compelled to acquiesce to the demands of his advisors and people, for the climate was such that any careless act or trifling insult on the part of the Boers, could set the Soutpansberg ablaze. In the meantime Stephanus Schoeman who had been sent by the government to try to settle the matter, had been misinformed that Makhado's allowance for the performance of traditional rites in preparation for war had occurred as early as 14 July 1865.<sup>145</sup>

The real situation was that Makhado, having refused to return the weapons to the Boers, was in the process of cementing and reorganising his kingship within the

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142. O.I. - M. Ravele (about 69 years), Mauluma, 21-01-1983; N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal rituals, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 3, 1932, p. 32.
143. O.I. - T. Musekwa (about 100 years), Tshihanane, 12-07-1971; K. Nesengani (about 95 years), Davhana's Location, 14-06-1971; D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 153. The Boers of Schoemansdal welcomed Makhado's accession to the throne as he grew up amongst them.
144. D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(1), June 1957, p. 46; D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 153.
145. D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(1), June 1957, p. 49. The informants assert that rituals of this nature were performed by a herbalist (*nanga*) who treated the war weapons with a medicinal preparation in order that the warriors did not miss their targets, as well as to remove any fear from the fighters. Such preparations were necessary in order to achieve victory as the Vhavenda, like other Black people, believed more in the supernatural powers of their herbalists than in military training.

parameters of protection, and that, although these preparations might not necessarily been for war with the Boers, it could be assumed they were in preparation for any outside threats made by Davhana and his sympathisers to regain the throne.

As a result of sporadic clashes and attacks by the Vhavenda the Boers, especially those living on farms in outlying areas, had already trekked to the *schanslaagers* in Schoemandsdal, at Goedewensch and Jan du Plessis' place as well as at Sand River.<sup>146</sup> The fact that the inhabitants sought refuge in such *laagers* indicates that foodstuffs were in short supply. Also, living conditions in the *laagers* were less than desirable. Weakened by disease, e.g. malaria, a shortage of supplies, guns and ammunition, the Boers could no longer defend themselves adequately against attack. Once again they appealed for military assistance from Pretoria.<sup>147</sup>

Concurrent with the intensified feelings for the necessity of waging war against Makhado, was the condition of the state treasury which precluded an intense military reaction to the situation in Soutpansberg. Government funds were in a deplorable state. Apart from meeting pressing state needs, even the salaries of officials were in arrears. The Republic was in such a deplorable financial state that a large quantity of ammunition brought from Europe to Durban in 1866 by McCorkindale, as partial payment for government lands sold to him, could not be delivered due to the lack of sufficient funds to meet the costs of transporting the shipment from Durban to Pretoria.<sup>148</sup> The necessity for more revenue was acute, but it was felt that additional taxation was out of the question.<sup>149</sup> In spite of these difficulties, however, there was the understanding that the Soutpansbergers had to

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146. P. Maré, Het verlaten van die plaats in 1865, *Die Brandwag*, 15-07-1912, pp. 121-2; J.P.F. Moolman, Die Boere se stryd teen die Swart Stamme in en om die Z.A.R., 1864 - 1871, p.25.

147. P. Maré, Het verlaten van die plaats in 1865, *Die Brandwag*, 15-07-1912, p. 122; J.P.F. Moolman, Die Boere se stryd teen die Swart Stamme in en om die Z.A.R., 1864 - 1871, p. 253.

148. G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872*, IV, p. 484; D.C. Joubert (Ed.), Notule van die Volksraad van die S.A.R. (met bylaes), Deel VII, 1867 - 1868, p. 50.

149. G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872*, IV, p. 484.

be assisted and that the government could no longer leave them alone to fend for themselves.<sup>150</sup>

Pretorius took the initiative and called a commando of 2 000 men to assemble towards the end of May 1867. He also summoned a meeting of the Volksraad.<sup>151</sup> Of the 2 000 called for military service, only about 500 men responded to the summons. With these few, Commandant-General Paul Kruger rushed to the Soutpansberg with instructions to restore concord. When the long-awaited commando arrived, it pitched camp on the western side of Schoemansdal.<sup>152</sup>

Their arrival, which brought relief to the Boers, signalled a warning to Makhado that should he not comply with the demands Kruger imposed on him, the outbreak of war between the two groups was inevitable.

Before any military action was undertaken by the commando, Paul Kruger sent a deputation to Makhado's royal residence, Makwatambani, specifically built to receive visitors. The deputation requested that Makhado should come down to Schoemansdal and enter into negotiations aimed at averting a conflagration.<sup>153</sup> Unfortunately, by the time of this event, Makhado had already accepted Madzhe's assertion that the Boers must go and responded negatively to the request.<sup>154</sup>

To further complicate matters he sent a group of young boys to meet Kruger, a tactic which the Boers regarded as a sign of his contempt for them and their peace offerings.<sup>155</sup> Whatever good intentions Kruger had towards Makhado which also

150. ANON., Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War, *The Transvaal Argus*, 11-06-1868.
151. D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(1), June 1957, p. 49; J.P.F. van Oordt, *Paul Kruger en de opkomst van der Z.A.R.*, p. 130; J.J. van Heerden, Die Kommandant-Generaal in die Geskiedenis van die S.A.R., *Argiefjaarboek vir S.A. Geskiedenis*, 27(2), 1964, p. 77; O.J.O. Ferreira, *Stormvoël van die Noord, Stephanus Schoeman in Transvaal*, p. 328.
152. P. Maré, Het verlaten van die plaats in 1865, *Die Brandwag*, 15-07-1912, p. 121; Paul Kruger, *The memoirs of Paul Kruger*, I, p. 111.
153. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 163; O.I. - M. Ravele (about 69 years), Mauluma, 21-01-1983.
154. D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(1), June 1957, p. 49; O.I. - M. Ravele (about 69 years), Mauluma, 21-01-1983.
155. *Ibid.*, p. 49; O.I. - M. Ravele (about 69 years), 21-01-1983

included a peaceful solution to the impending conflict, ceased from the very beginning.

When the Boer demands were refused, forces led by one of the commandants, Frikkie van Dyk,<sup>156</sup> attempted to storm Makhado's royal residence at Luatame. The topography of the country, with its heavy boulders and ravines presented insurmountable difficulties to the attackers. Because of the difficult fighting conditions, the commando diverted their attack to Vhulorwa, above Schoemansdal, where they were defeated. In this instance three Vhavenda<sup>157</sup> were fatally injured. Boer casualties were not disclosed. Makhado Dzwedzhi, Makhado's niece, provided additional information on this episode. She related that, when the Boer commando approached Vhulorwa, three prominent doctors (*maine*), Lidzwavho, Bereda, and Makhovha, had through their *thangu* (divining bones) discovered that the Boers were coming. Subsequently, the Vhavenda army prepared themselves under the command of Funyufunyu, for a proper defence against the attack. Hives of bees were provoked which came out in swarms from Mount Vhurengwe and attacked the Boers,<sup>158</sup> causing them to scatter in all directions, fleeing to Schoemansdal after having failed to storm both Luatame and Vhulorwa.

The next target of attack was Madzhie whose area of settlement was in the west. For this purpose the main Boer commando, led by Kruger himself, opted to turn

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156. D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(1), June 1957, p. 50; N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 3, 1932, p.33.
157. D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(1), June 1957, p. 50; N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 3, 1932, p. 33.
158. O.I. - Makhado Dzwedzhi (about 100 years), Mauluma, 23-06-1983; N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), Contributions towards Venda History, Religion and Tribal Ritual, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 3, 1932, p. 33.
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westwards in order to attack another army of Makhado under Madzhie.<sup>159</sup> The commando was assisted by Davhana, who had to join the battle for his personal benefit as well as payment for Albasini's protection. Like the Zulu, Mpande, in 1839 in the battle against Dingaan, Davhana joined the Boers to fight against his younger brother Makhado. Apart from Davhana's followers, Albasini who was waiting for such an opportunity, assisted the Boers by providing them with his Tsonga warriors, armed with assegais and spears.<sup>160</sup> The Tsonga auxiliaries would assist in combing the bushes and mountains.<sup>161</sup>

In this manner, the enlarged commando, consisting of the Boers and their collaborators, commenced their journey to the mountains of Madzhie in the early hours of the morning. As it was winter, the commando had to brave the cold. When they arrived at Madzhie's headquarters, four hundred troops climbed the high mountain, occupying strategic positions directly behind boulders, the intent being to forestall the arrival of any reinforcements from Makhado's other armies,<sup>162</sup> thus isolating and containing Madzhie's large army within the confines of his mountain stronghold. The Commandant-General himself, together with some of his men, remained on the slopes of the mountain with a cannon, the so-called "Grietjie", in place. The Soutpansbergers, under command of Fieldcornet David Herbst, proceeded to the nearest boulder, while Albasini's Tsonga warriors approached from the east. Accustomed to the topography of the countryside, the Tsonga

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159. D.C. Joubert (Ed.), *Notule van die Volksraad van die Suid-Afrikaanse Republiek (met bylaes)*, Deel VII, 1867 - 1868, p. 50; J.J. van Heerden, *Die Kommandant-Generaal in die Geskiedenis van die S.A.R., Argiefjaarboek vir S.A. Geskiedenis*, 27(2), 1964, p. 82; J.F. van Oordt, *Paul Kruger en de opkomst der Z.A.R.*, p. 131; TA G.O.V. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07; Native Commission No. 138/06, Report of Native Location Commission. History. The Makhado (Magato) or Ramapulana Tribes, p. 7, 23-03-1907; P. Maré; Het verlaten van die plaats in 1865, *Die Brandwag*, 15-07-1912, p. 121.
160. P. Maré, Het verlaten van die plaats in 1865, *Die Brandwag*, 15-07-1912, p. 121; TA G.O.V. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 138/06, p. 8, Report of Native Location Commission. History. The Makhado (Magato) or Ramaulana Tribes, 23-03-1907.
161. P. Maré, Het verlaten van die plaats in 1865, *Die Brandwag*, 15-07-1912, p. 122; O.J.O Ferreira, *Stormvoël van die Noorde, Stephanus Schoeman in Transvaal*, p. 328.
162. P. Maré, Het verlaten van die plaats in 1865, *Die Brandwag*, 15-07-1912, p. 121. D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(1), June 1957, p. 50.

scattered themselves, climbing the mountains and examining the caves and ravines in search of Madzhié's soldiers.<sup>163</sup>

Despite these preparations, the situation for the invaders was very precarious. They had to exercise great care, as they were not in positions to see their opponents while they themselves were exposed to attack by Madzhié's warriors from the high cliffs and deep ravines, as well as from behind huge boulders.

It was from these positions that Madzhié's warriors unleashed a hail of bullets from their elephant guns. The situation was such that, even the so-called swift-footed Tsonga were unable to penetrate the strategic points. Under these difficult conditions, the Boers immediately realised that continuing the fighting would be dangerous. It was not possible to launch a full-scale attack on the fortified mountainous stronghold.<sup>164</sup> Thus, they retreated from an offensive to a defensive position in which they repeatedly bombarded the mountain with their cannon in an effort to keep Madzhié's army at bay. By four o'clock that afternoon, the Commandant-General was convinced that there would be no danger of reprisal and ordered the commando to retreat from the slopes to join those stationed at the foot of the mountain. Eventually they retreated to Schoemansdal leaving Madzhié's army and the man believed to be the brains behind the outbreak of hostilities, Madzhié himself undefeated.<sup>165</sup> After the two major confrontations with the Boers, Makhado's armies were still in tact. His fighting strength remained unabated.

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163. P. Maré, Het verlaten van die plaats in 1865, *Die Brandwag*, 15-07-1912, p. 122; TA W126, I(1) Accession, p. 71, B.J. Vorster, 1852 - 1876 (skenker Mev. E.C. Theron).

164. P. Maré, Schoemansdal, Het verlaten van die plaats in 1865, *Die Brandwag*, 15-07-1912, p. 122; TA W126, I(1) Accession, p. 71, B.J. Vorster, 1852 - 1876 (skenker Mev. E.C. Theron). See also D.G. Joubert (Red.), Notule van die Volksraad van die Suid-Afrikaanse Republiek (met bylaes), Deel VII, 1867 - 1868, p. 50.

165. P. Maré, Het verlaten van die plaats in 1865, *Die Brandwag*, 15-07-1912, p. 122; TA W126, I(1) Accession, p. 71, B.J. Vorster, 1852 - 1876 (skenker Mev. E.C. Theron); J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda natie*, p. 11; TA ANON., Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War, *The Transvaal Argus*, 04-07-1868.

Both unsuccessful attempts to attack Makhado's royal residence at Luatame and the failure to dislodge Madzhié from his mountain stronghold were hailed by the Vhavenda as military successes. Conversely, to the Boers it was military defeats in which they were forced to retreat to Schoemansdal. The Commandant-General himself confirmed this when he states in his memoirs he had attacked the Vhavenda twice in order to drive them from that neighbourhood, and that these two attempts depleted his supplies of ammunition, to the point of exhaustion.<sup>166</sup> And, apart from this, the commando entered the war at a time when they were lacking both discipline and motivation. They blamed the crisis on the attitude of the local White inhabitants of the district who did not have a reputation for being law abiding citizens. Consequently the members of the force intended to leave the area as quickly as possible.<sup>167</sup> They had more important things to attend to than protecting a few unappreciative Whites. For the Soutpansbergers, this was an unfortunate turn of events, as they would again be left in distress and at the mercy of Makhado's armies. The futile attempts of the commando's combined forces to bring Makhado to his knees foretold the need to remain within the confines of the *laagers*, if their safety was to be ensured.<sup>168</sup>

Kruger's assertion that he was forced to retreat due to a shortage of ammunition, is not supported by Paul Maré who, as a young man, participated in the war. According to him, no substance should be attached to assertions advanced by any historiographer that the commando's inability to dislodge Makhado and Madzhié was due to the shortage of ammunition because:

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166. S.J.P. Paul Kruger, *The memoirs of Paul Kruger told by himself, I*, p. 111; J.C. van Oordt, *Paul Kruger en de opkomst der Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek*, p. 131.
167. Anon., Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War, *The Transvaal Argus*, 18-03-1868.
168. P. Maré, Het verlaten van die plaats in 1865, *Die Brandwag*, 15-07-1912, p. 122; J.C. van Oordt, *Paul Kruger en de opkomst der Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek*, p. 132; ANON., Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War, *The Transvaal Argus*, 08-01-1868.

in het magazyn van het lager na de aanval op Katsekatse was nog kruid en dopies en 'n aanzieklike hoeveelheid van lood in bezit van mijn vader (die Lager-kommandant was) toen de onluste begonnen.<sup>169</sup>

On his return to Schoemansdal, Kruger despatched A.P. Duvenage, a mounted messenger, to Pretoria requesting sufficient ammunition to mount an effective attack on Makhado. At the same time, he also requested an additional 1 500 men, without whom he would be unable to defeat the Vhavenda.<sup>170</sup> A meeting was then convened to discuss the future of the settlement. There was division amongst the Schoemansdallers and the commando. The former wanted the settlement to continue, whilst the latter felt it should be evacuated. Thus, the Commandant-General found it very difficult to exercise effective control over both groups. However, factors beyond human control intervened, resulting in the deaths of horses and oxen, as well as a shortage of provisions.<sup>171</sup> These circumstances, considered together, caused great concern within the War Council who then unanimously decided that the settlement should be abandoned. It was also decided that the inhabitants, with as many of their belongings as they could take, should move southwards with the commando to healthier abodes.<sup>172</sup>

Over and above these considerations, Kruger determined that the position of the settlement, from a military point of view, was not a strategic one. In his opinion, it would remain at the mercy of the Vhavenda as the stream from which its water was derived, came from the mountains held by them.<sup>173</sup> The possibility of the water being poisoned could not be discounted.

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169. P. Maré, Het verlaten van die plaats in 1865, *Die Brandwag*, 15-07-1912, p. 122.

170. *Ibid.*, p. 122; R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and Society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 323; D.C. Joubert (Ed.), *Notule van die Volksraad van die Suid-Afrikaanse Republiek (met bylae)*, VII, 1867 - 1868, p. 50.

171. D.C. Joubert (Ed.), *Notule van die Volksraad van die Suid-Afrikaanse Republiek (met bylae)*, VII, 1867 - 1868, p. 51.

172. J.F. van Oordt, *Paul Kruger en de opkomst der Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek*, p. 131.

173. G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872*, IV, p. 485.

After consideration of all the possibilities, Commandant-General Kruger convened a meeting of the villagers,<sup>174</sup> at which time he outlined the problems and dangers facing them. He assured them that he would remain with them, but they declared that they would rather not stay under such deplorable conditions, and that they would rather leave with the commando. In doing so, they could take with them their belongings in the wagons of the relatives in the commando. If the Vhavenda could not be subdued, the danger of future attacks remained.<sup>175</sup> In the event of this happening, they would be forced to flee without taking their belongings.

The tragedy of Schoemansdal was regarded by Kruger as the bitterest time of his military career. It was his plan to take with him all the inhabitants wanting to leave. He also felt that those who wanted to remain with commandant T.H. Pretorius, should be allowed to do so. Kruger was intent on staying until more ammunition arrived in town.<sup>176</sup> This suggestion was turned down by the *Krygsraad*. This military body maintained that all should vacate Schoemansdal. In the midst of this crisis, Rev. N.J. van Warmelo, the pastor of the local Dutch Reformed congregation, and a group of people protested against the plan. Van Warmelo maintained it was a sin before God, and an indelible mark on the good name of the Republic, to leave a settlement with a church and a school as prey to heathens. He then requested that he and his deputation be given the right to defend the town until the ammunition arrived.<sup>177</sup>

Immediately thereafter, another deputation arrived, among whom were those who had come earlier in the morning. This group stated that they saw no chance of

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174. *Ibid.*, p. 485; D.C. Joubert (Ed.), *Notule van die Volksraad van die Suid-Afrikaanse Republiek (met bylae)*, VII, 1867 - 1868, p. 51.
175. D.C. Joubert (Ed.), *Notule van die Volksraad van die Suid-Afrikaanse Republiek (met bylae)*, VII, 1867 - 1868, p. 51; P. Maré, Het verlaten van die plaats in 1865, *Die Brandwag*, 15-07-1912, p. 122.
176. D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(2), June 1957, p. 50; D.C. Joubert (Ed.), *Notule van die Volksraad van die Suid-Afrikaanse Republiek (met bylae)*, VII, 1867 - 1868, p. 51; O.J.O. Ferreira, *Stormvoël van die Noorde, Stephanus Schoeman in Transvaal*, pp. 329 - 330.
177. D. Möller-Malan, Die Donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(1) June 1957, p. 50; D.C. Joubert (Ed.), *Notule van die Volksraad van die Suid-Afrikaanse Republiek (met bylae)*, VII, 1867 - 1868, p. 51; J.F. van Oordt, *Paul Kruger en de opkomst der Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek*, p. 132..

remaining in Schoemansdal, and requested the *krygsraad* to provide transport to those who did not have the means. Remaining there was no longer advisable, as they heard the whole night the sound of Makhado's drum, Mutulogole,<sup>178</sup> signalling his intended attack on the town.<sup>179</sup> Following these discussions the inhabitants became convinced that they had no alternative but to commence packing their wagons in preparation for departure. Doors, windows and poles were all packed to use for rebuilding in a new settlement. It was a pitiable moment when tears rolled down cheeks as women and children wept, at the thought of leaving the town which had been their home for almost 19 years.<sup>180</sup> What a sad occasion it was for them to part from the graves of their beloved ones buried there in the church yard.

On 15 July 1867, when everything was ready, the Boers left Schoemansdal by way of Blaauberg, while the Vhavenda watched from mountain tops the dust rise near Matshavha's hills,<sup>181</sup> indicating that the Boers were returning, *en masse*, to the south from where they came. When all the inhabitants were gone, Makhado's people rushed to the abandoned town to pillage and plunder, while the Boers looked back on the conflagration of the area which symbolised the longest period they had spent in one place since the beginning of the Great Trek. Schoemansdal was the only settlement in their history from which they were forced to leave by the pressure exerted by any Black people.

As the Boers proceeded further, they saw the settlement of Schoemansdal, enveloped in flames and black smoke. It was more painful when they thought of deserted graves, orchards, gardens, houses and furniture, as well as cattle still

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178. The meaning of this name suggests that if the drum is played the rain would fall.

179. D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(1) June 1957, p. 50; Mutulagole is a special drum believed to be heralding the coming of rain.

180. P. Maré, Schoemansdal, Het verlaten van die plaats in 1865, *Die Brandwag*, 15-07-1912, p. 122. G.G. Munnik, *Memoirs of Senator the Hon. G.G. Munnik*, p. 79.

181. N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), Contributions towards Venda history, and tribal ritual, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 3, 1932, p. 33; O.I. - Makhado Dzwedzhi (about 100 years), Mauluma, 23-01-1983; O.I. - Tshivhidzo Musekwa (about 100 years), Tshihanane, 12-07-1971; O.I. - K. Nesengani (about 95 years), Davhana's Location, 14-06-1971.

grazing in the veld, and all those articles which were too heavy and cumbersome for them to take along.<sup>182</sup>

Thus it was that Makhado reduced Schoemansdal to ashes, bringing an era of White residence in the northernmost reaches of Soutpansberg to an end. But some did not see these events as the retention of the freedom of those under Makhado's rule. Rather, and according to E. Gottschling, the events of 1867 freed Makhado and his people from the authority of the South African Republic.<sup>183</sup>

Gottschling's assertion creates the impression that Makhado had been subjugated by the South African Republic which, as has been shown very clearly, was not yet the case. By fighting this war with the Boers, Makhado resisted the gradual imposition of Republican authority. What may be regarded as correct, is the fact that the Boers, by failing to subjugate Makhado in 1867, were unable to extend control of the Transvaal to the Venda kingdom north of the Luvuvhu River and therefore those Vhavenda living there, thus remained undefeated and free of Boer authority.<sup>184</sup> The Soutpansberg war was not an uprising or a rebellion in which the conquered rose against their conquerors. It was a war culminating in the retention of Vhavenda freedom from subjugation by their would-be conquerors - the South African Republic.

What then were the issues at stake? From Makhado's point of view they were both political and socio-economic, and struck at the very heart of the monarchy. The political implications were explicit with persistent Boer refusals to extradite Davhana. He continued to live under the protection of Albasini, and was regarded

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182. G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872*, IV, p. 485; R. Wagner, *Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867*, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and Society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 316; P. Maré, *Het verlaten van die plaats in 1865*, *Die Brandwag*, 15-07-1912, p. 122.

183. E. Gottschling, *The Bawenda, their history and customs*, *Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland Journal*, 35, 1905, p. 367.

184. O.I. - Nesengani (about 95 years), *Davhana's Location*, 14-06-1971; R. Wagner, *Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867*, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and Society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 323.

by the government as a loyal subject of the South African Republic.<sup>185</sup> This was a disagreement between the two brothers. The Whites continued to protect Davhana. It caused Makhado to distrust their intentions in regard to his remaining in power over the Vhavenda. The possibility of an attack from both Albasini and Davhana, was a constant threat to him and his people.<sup>186</sup>

Further, Boer attitudes and disregard for Vhavenda traditions of land tenure and law threatened both Makhado's political and socio-economic position with his people. His refusal to release fire-arms to the Boers, commencing in 1865,<sup>187</sup> reflected his need not only to protect his role as leader of his people, but to support the kingship by means of trade, as well as to protect those rights which he felt were being taken from his people: their land and their ability to cultivate it. It also prevented them from serving the kingdom in the proper traditional manner. Issues such as payment of tribute, forced labour and cruelty in their relations with his subjects, were only some of the political insults inflicted on the Vhavenda ruler. Then there were also the cultural differences between royalty and commoner, which were not always respected by the Whites. To Makhado, as the leader of his people, and to the people themselves, this was more than justifiable grounds for conflict.<sup>188</sup> Neither side was

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185. TA SS91, p. 263. R918/67, Memorandum van eene overkomst, Katlaterkraal, R. van Nispen, landdrost, 31-09-1867; TA SS66, pp. 277 - 286. R495/65; Verklaringen en rapporten, A.P. Duvenage, Veldkornet, Schoemansdal voor R.A. van Nispen, Sekretaris, 26-4-1865.
186. TA SS89, p. 120. R660/67, J.C. Steyn, Laagerplaats, Schoemansdal to State President, 22-06-1867; TA SS208, p. 242. R1078/76, Copy of translation signed by W.M. Edwards, J. Edwards and C. Snyman, Magatskraal, 14-05-1875.
187. S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, 1953, p. 32; M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 163.
188. N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual, Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 3, 1932, p. 32; M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 163; O.I. - M. Ravele (about 69 years), Mauluma, 21-01-1983.
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prepared to compromise, a military solution to the problems remained the only alternative.<sup>189</sup>

The Vhavenda victory over the Boers and the subsequent abandonment of Schoemansdal and Boer residence in Soutpansberg for some 31 years, marks the climax of the incidents and events which unfolded in the area from the beginning of 1863. In the course of time, these incidents, threatening the political and socio-economic stability of Makhado's kingship, led to sporadic attacks and clashes between the two groups which eventually saw the loss of the Soutpansberg War by the Boers and the South African Republic. With this great victory, Makhado became known as Tshilwavirusiku tsha ha Ramabulana,<sup>190</sup> a name which is legendary amongst the Vhavenda, for it signifies Makhado's victory through his bravery as a warrior and leader of his people. The Whites regarded him as the "Lion of the North". Praises and songs emanated from this name, hailing Makhado as a diplomat, a statesman, and a warrior unafraid to fight for his people and the preservation of the kingdom.<sup>191</sup>

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189. N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 3, 1932, p. 32; D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 151; M.M. Motenda Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 163.
190. O.I. - M. Ravele (about 69 years), Mauluma, 21-01-1983; O.I. - Tshivhidzo Musekwa (about 100 years), Tshihanane, 12-07-1971; L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, p. 36; O.I. - K. Nengovhela (about 100 years), 31-12-1982; O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), 29-10-1986; O.I. - A. Ramavhoya (about 100 years), Rabali, 29-12-1982; O.I. - J. Ramutumbu (about 95 years), Manamani, 14-09-1980; O.I. - Mutshena Ramovha (about 105 years), Mulenzhe, 20-05-1989.
191. G.P. Lestrade, *The Bavenda, with an introductory article on the Bavenda and descriptive notes on the plates*; A.M. Duggan Cronin, *The Bantu Tribes of South Africa*, I, p. 16.
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## CHAPTER 4

### MAKHADO RESISTS ATTEMPTS BY THE BOERS

#### TO RETURN TO VENDA 1868-9

The previous chapter ended with fortune smiling on Makhado after his first serious confrontation with the Whites. However, Albasini and the Boers were determined to find a way to exact retribution from the Venda monarch for the humiliation they suffered at his hands, and the destruction of Schoemansdal. The historical significance of the Schoemansdal settlement (1848-1867) cannot be underestimated.<sup>1</sup>

After the Boers were forced to leave the village, they first formed a laager at Moletsi, where they remained for five months. They then proceeded further and formed another laager at the farms of Hans Venter and Gert Emmenis. They remained there for a whole year. This was the beginning of the Marabastad settlement of which D.S. Maré became landdrost. This settlement paved the way for the establishment of Pietersburg in 1886.<sup>2</sup>

After the abandonment of Schoemansdal, only six families remained in the Spelonken vicinity of the Luvuvhu and Muhohodi Rivers. In their number were

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1. R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: The dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, 1987, p. 313; J.F. van Oordt, *Paul Kruger en de opkomst der Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek*, p. 132; Paul Maré, Schoemansdal, Het verlaten van die plaats in 1865, *Die Brandwag*, 15-07-1912, p. 121; ANON., Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War, *The Transvaal Argus*, 18-03-1868.
  2. H.J. Grobler, Storie van 'n vergane Voortrekkerdorp, *Die Brandwag*, 24-12-1919, p. 222; See also TA UR2, pp. 529 - 532, Argief van die Sekretaris van die Uitvoerende Raad van die Z.A.R., Besluite 13 Februarie 1865 - 18 Desember 1868; TA A18, Accession R. Gage, The Development of the Northern Transvaal - Historical stepping stones and reminiscences, by B.H. Dicke, Pietersburg, 17 - 18 June 1925, p. 9; J.B. de Vaal, *Die rol van João Albasini in die geskiedenis van Transvaal, 1813 - 1888*, Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis, 16(1), p. 70.

Koos Botha, W. Grieve, W. Fitzgerald and J. Albasini. The latter had had dug himself in at his fortified schans at Luonde. It had become a refuge for Whites in times of impending attacks from Makhado.<sup>3</sup>

G.G. Munnik says that Makhado claimed the Doorn (Muhohodi) River as his southern boundary and that, as the White settlers were few, they had to accept the arrangement.<sup>4</sup> Möller-Malan goes further and maintains that Makhado sent word to the remaining White settlers that they should know that the borders of Venda were the Munwenwe (Dwars River) in the south, Muhalagwena (Magalakwini River) in the west and Muhohodi in the east. It was maintained that anyone who tried to cross these boundaries without his permission, would be killed.<sup>5</sup> Both Möller-Malan and Munnik's allegations of Makhado demarcating the Doorn River as his boundary, are however open to debate. Particularly on the side of Venda historians there are other interpretations. M. M. Motenda gives a comprehensive exposition of the territorial arrangements in Venda. The Whites were warned to observe this arrangement, but it did not start only after the abandonment of Schoemansdal. Makhado had already instituted a decree to the effect that, in the event of hostilities within his territory, no fugitives should be followed after they had crossed the Muhohodi River. The region was called Tshabwa. Similarly, should any fugitive at Tshabwa cross into Dzanani, he could not be followed. This area, Tshabwa, was called Klein Spelonken by the White settlers and it happened to be the place where those six families remained.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, as long as the White settlers remained at Tshabwa, Makhado did not molest them, It was a place of asylum for political fugitives. Following this warning the

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3. G.G. Munnik, *Memoirs of Senator the Honourable G.G. Munnik*, p. 81.
  4. *Ibid.*, p. 101.
  5. *Ibid.*, p. 101; D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 159; R. Wessmann, *The Bawenda of the Spelonken*, p 148; TA A18 Accession R. Gage, *The development of the Northern Transvaal - Historical stepping stones and reminiscences*, by B.H. Dicke, Pietersburg, 17 - 18 June 1925, p. 8.
  6. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg*, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, pp. 166 - 167; TA A18 Accession R. Gage, *The development of the Northern Transvaal - Historical stepping stones and reminiscences*, by B.H. Dicke, Pietersburg, 17 - 18 June 1925.

Boers had no choice but to remain for good in the Klein Spelonken and they settled on farms in the region.<sup>7</sup>

While Makhado was jubilant about the Boers abandoning Schoemansdal and its subsequent destruction, President Pretorius regarded it as the greatest disaster the Republic had ever sustained.<sup>8</sup> This was the prevalent feeling of all Whites in the Republic. Unfortunately, economic and financial restraints were such that no decisive action could be taken in order to retaliate.<sup>9</sup> Despite these odds against him, Pretorius organised an army to recover the so-called lost ground. The army which he expected to raise, did not react positively. Only 53 men turned up. They were volunteers who were led into the Soutpansberg by Stephanus Schoeman. As a result of their limited numerical strength they could not launch an attack against Makhado. What they could do was to hold meetings with the Boers who were in the nearby *laagers* and local Black communities who were favourably inclined towards the Boers. After these meetings, the army was disbanded on 13 December 1867.<sup>10</sup>

The setback which Pretorius experienced in raising the first army of volunteers, did not discourage him. In January 1868, he called for 1 000 men to assemble on 2

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7. TA A18 Accession R. Gage, *The development of the Northern Transvaal - Historical stepping stones and reminiscences*, by B.H. Dicke, Pietersburg, 17 - 18 June 1925, p. 8; J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda natie*, p. 14.
  8. G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872*, IV, p. 486; J.F. van Oordt, *Paul Kruger en de opkomst der Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek*, p. 133; Paul Maré, *Schoemansdal, Het verlaten van die plaats in 1865*, *Die Brandwag*, 15-07-1912, p. 121; ANON., *Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War*, *The Transvaal Argus*, 18-03-1868.
  9. J.P.F. Moolman, *Die Boere se stryd teen die Swart stamme in en om die Z.A.R., 1864 - 1871* (D. Litt. et Phil. Proefskrif, Unisa, 1982), pp. 265 - 266; See also TA URB, pp. 526 - 527, No article number, *Argief van die Sekretaris van die Uitvoerende Raad van die Z.A.R., Besluite*, 13 February 1865 tot 18 Desember 1868; O.J.O. Ferreira, *Stormvoël van die Noorde, Stephanus Schoeman in Transvaal*, p. 330; TA UR Besluite 1865 - 1868, p. 523. No. 2, No article number 07-08-1867.
  10. J.F. van Oordt, *Paul Kruger en de opkomst der Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek*, p. 134; H.J. Grobler, *Storie van 'n vergane Voortrekkersdorp*, *Die Brandwag*, 24-12-1919, p. 221; J.P.F. Moolman, *Die Boere se stryd teen die Swart stamme in en om die Z.A.R., 1864 - 1871* (D. Litt. et Phil. Proefskrif, Unisa, 1982), p. 270; O.J.O. Ferreira, *Stormvoël van die Noorde, Stephanus Schoeman in Transvaal*, p. 342.
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February 1868. Again the response was not encouraging. This time only 260 men made themselves available.<sup>11</sup>

On account of the urgency of the matter, Pretorius led the army into the Soutpansberg himself on 21 July 1868. As Schoeman had done in 1867, Pretorius convened a meeting at Welgevonden which was attended by the Tsonga, member of the the Buys community and Davhana.<sup>12</sup>

By this time, Albasini was no longer in the good books of the government, as he had been identified as a being responsible for considerable dissatisfaction and misunderstanding between the Boers and the Blacks. To remove this obstacle in the way of co-operation and understanding, it was announced at the meeting that Albasini was no longer in the service of the government, and that Schoeman would replace him as a Diplomatic Agent.<sup>13</sup>

After the meeting, several chiefs held private talks with the President and assured him of their friendship. He appreciated this gesture and returned to Pretoria, leaving Schoeman to conclude the arrangements. In his mind, peace was apparently restored, but as the main rulers, Makhado, Tshivhase and Mphaphuli were not part of the arrangement, tranquillity could not be maintained. Schoeman had entered into agreements with *mahosi*, who did not hold the reins of true power. At any rate, this practice of negotiating with the weak in order to weaken his allegiance to the strong ones, was characteristic of the Boer strategy of divide and rule.<sup>14</sup> They ignored the inherent status of *Thovhele* in Venda culture.

The republican intention was to reassert the authority of the government in the area. Schoeman only succeeded in restoring authority over those Blacks who were loyal to

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11. G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 - 1872*, IV, p. 487.
  12. *Ibid.*, p. 489; O.J.O. Ferreira, *Stormvoël van die Noorde, Stephanus Schoeman in Transvaal*, p. 362; TA SS105, p. 319. R1597/68, Vergadering tussen President Pretorius en kapiteins, Welgevonden, 21 July 1868.
  13. O.J.O. Ferreira, *Stormvoël van die Noorde, Stephanus Schoeman in Transvaal*, p. 362; TA SS105, p. 319. R1597/68, Vergadering tussen President Pretorius en kapiteins, Welgevonden, 21 July 1868; G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872*, IV, p. 489.
  14. M.H. Nemudzivhadi, *The conflict between Mphaphu and the South African Republic, 1895 - 1899*, p. 11.

the Whites. Where the absolute supremacy of the Republic was not acknowledged, farmers had to pay tribute to the nearest chief to secure their property from plunder.<sup>15</sup>

Makhado who had emerged victorious from the conflicts between the Vhavenda and the Boers, continued to rule his country the way he liked. Gottschling's statement that, by destroying Schoemansdal, Makhado prevented his country from encroachments by the Boers,<sup>16</sup> is not correct, as Makhado had never been subjugated in the first place. What is correct, is that the Vhavenda reversed the tide of encroachment in 1867, when they defeated a commando led by Paul Kruger, and thus caused the Boers to abandon the entire Soutpansberg district.<sup>17</sup> As a result of these setbacks, the Boers were haunted by the feeling that the 'savages' would exult over them, and ridicule their weakness, branding them as cowards.<sup>18</sup>

Once Stephanus Schoeman realised he was unable to succeed in restoring Boer authority in Venda, he looked to the east for assistance. He was in a good position to do so as a Diplomatic Agent of the government he wielded sufficient power to make friends across the borders of the South African Republic. As early as June 1867, even before the evacuation of Schoemansdal, João Albasini, had already been ordered by Kruger to approach certain groups including the Ngoni and Swazi for military assistance against the Venda.<sup>19</sup>

Thereafter contact with the Swazi started taking shape in the beginning of December 1867 after a number of them had visited the Soutpansberg. They informed Schoeman that the Swazi would send an army as soon as possible. But it did not

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15. O.I. - M. Ravele (about 69 years), Mauluma, 21-01-1983.
  16. *De Volksstem*, 30-01-1890; *De Volksstem*, 25-09-1895; R. Wagner, Zoutpansberg: The dynamics of a hunting frontier, 1848 - 1867, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*, p. 323.
  17. TA SS89, p. 314. R782/67, J. Albasini, Goedewensch, aan M.W. Pretorius, State President, 20 July 1867; TA UR13, p. 526, No article number, 7 August 1867; ANON., Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War, *The Transvaal Argus*, 20-11-1867.
  18. Anon., Origin and progress of the Zoutpansberg War, *The Transvaal Argus*, 08-01-1868; TA W126 I(1), Wijpkema verasameling, pp. 71 - 72.
  19. TA SS89, p. 317. R752/67, Goedewensch, J. Albasini - M.W. Pretorius, President, 20 July 1867.
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materialise.<sup>20</sup> As far as Mzila was concerned, it was agreed that he would be given a piece of land, should he and his Whites allies succeed in subjugating the Venda. Mzila himself was interested in Lwamondo and Thengwe, while the intention of the Executive Council was to use him against Makhado.<sup>21</sup>

In order to get the matter off the ground, Stephanus Schoeman approached Mzila through his messengers. His message to the Ngoni ruler was that he, Schoeman, was faced with many problems. Mzila's assistance was required to help him out. Mzila's response was positive. However he felt that, before he could send his warriors, Albasini who was the cause of all the troubles, had to be forced to leave the Soutpansberg. The government of the South African Republic also had to agree to giving him a piece of land.<sup>22</sup>

In his attempts to communicate with Mzila, Schoeman had to contend with two obstacles. The first was that at the same time he was negotiating through his messenger Mazilikwaan, the Executive Council sent A. Duvenage to negotiate with Mzila. The other obstacle was Albasini. He contended Schoeman could not negotiate with Mzila, a Portuguese subject, without notifying him in advance of the matter.<sup>23</sup> Consequently he did all he could to obstruct the plans, spreading the rumour that Schoeman intended to kill the Ngoni warriors once they entered the Transvaal.<sup>24</sup> As a result of these differences, Mzila was confused and did not know on whose request he had to act. Schoeman had to solve these problems through negotiations with Mzila and the Executive Council.

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20. O.J.O. Ferreira, *Stormvoël van die Noorde, Stephanus Schoeman in Transvaal*, p. 364.

21. TA SS117, p. 45. R1514/69, Notule door ZED Gestr den Diplomatieke Agent St. Schoeman, Morgenzon, Klein Spelonken, Zoutpansberg, 7 April 1869; TA SS17, p. 44. R1514/69, Notulen door ZED Gestr den Diplomatieke Agent St. Schoeman ter plaats Morgenzon, Klein Spelonken, Zoutpansberg, 7 April 1869.

22. TA SS110, p. 74. R374/69, S. Schoeman, Morgenzon - Staatspresident, 8 April 1868.

23. O.J.O. Ferreira, *Stormvoël van die Noorde, Stephanus Schoeman in Transvaal*, pp. 350, 365, 366.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 366.

Without the knowledge of Schoeman, who was in Pretoria, Mzila's 5 000 warriors arrived under Magidjana and attacked Thengwe and Mphaphuli's territories whose inhabitants were considered peaceful. When Schoeman came back in the beginning of April 1869, he found that Mzila's warriors had intended to annex Lwamondo. Schoeman, together with five other Whites, had to join Mzila's forces. They failed to capture the mountain.<sup>25</sup> Later Schoeman blamed Albasini for the Ngoni attack on Lwamondo. After protracted discussions with the Ngoni, an agreement was concluded between him and Mzila's special messenger Moyakayaka on 7 April 1869.<sup>26</sup>

Here it was agreed and confirmed that should the Ngoni succeed in defeating the Venda, they would be given a piece of land. Thereafter, Schoeman and the Ngoni delegation left for Pretoria on 9 April 1869, and obtained the government's approval for the agreement reached on 7 April that the Ngoni warriors would be supplied with ammunition.<sup>27</sup>

The way was now paved for Ngoni warriors to attack the Venda. This time a large number of Ngoni warriors arrived at Lwamondo under Mpisane. They attacked Lwamondo on June 1869. As in earlier attacks by Albasini and the Ngoni, the Ngoni warriors found Lwamondo Peak impenetrable. The Lwamondo people who knew their place, fired heavily behind boulders while others hurled stones at the attackers. In addition to this the Lwamondo baboons became quite noisy as the strangers approached. As the Ngoni could not achieve anything, they were driven away in defeat.<sup>28</sup>

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25. *Ibid.*, p. 366; TA SS117, pp. 53 - 55. R1514/69, Notulen door ZED Gestr Stephanus Schoeman, Diplomatieke Agent te Seyantas Neck, Klein Spelonken, Zoutpansberg, 2 April 1869.
26. TA SS117, p. 41. R1514/69, Notulen door ZED Gestr den Diplomatieke Agent Stephanus Schoeman ter plaats Morgenzon, Klein Spelonken, Zoutpansberg, 7 April 1869.
27. O.J.O. Ferreira, *Stormvoël van die Noorde, Stephanus Schoeman in Transvaal*, p. 367.
28. P.E. Schwellnus, *Ndededzi*, V, p. 39; O.I. - K. Nengovhela (about 100 years), Khumbe, 31-12-1980; J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda natie*, p. 14.
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The inability of Albasini and the Ngoni to subjugate the Venda foiled the Boers' attempts to recover their pride.<sup>29</sup> Thus Lwamondo with its mountainous terrain and baboons, remained inaccessible and impregnable to outside incursion from the Tsonga and Ngoni forces of Albasini and Mzila.

Apart from the fact that the invitation of the Swazi to subjugate Venda was initiated by the Boers in their desperate attempts to return to Schoemansdal, political circumstances within Venda tied up with the Boers' intentions. Just as Makhado and his Venda followers were thorns in the flesh of Albasini, so was Albasini and his Tsonga, safely ensconced in the schans at Luonde,<sup>30</sup> were a constant bother and source of anger to Makhado.

Both leaders felt that, as long as the other remained undefeated, neither man's position of leadership was secure. Each was unable to unseat the other. Albasini, in spite of his bravery, was well aware that although his Tsonga impi could defend him, they were in no position to launch a direct attack on Makhado. They simply were not strong enough to do so.<sup>31</sup> Thus this Portuguese and the self-appointed Chief of the Tsonga, invoked the assistance of the Swazi who were forever seeking loot and prepared to shed blood.<sup>32</sup>

Albasini was not alone in calling in the help of the Swazi to do battle with the Venda. Davhana, his protégé, also joined up. It was Davhana's hope that, with a Swazi army, he could attack and defeat Makhado, thus regaining the throne.<sup>33</sup> With

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29. João Albasini III, João Albasini, 1813 - 1888, pp. 13 - 16; S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, p. 87.

30. D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(2) September 1957, p. 170; D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 160; M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 178; João Albasini III, João Albasini, 1813 - 1888, p. 9.

31. G.G. Munnik, *Memoirs of Senator the Honourable G.G. Munnik*, p. 85.

32. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 160; TA SS119, p. 252, N.R., 1870, J. Albasini, Goedewensch - Jules Franck, 14 October 1869; See also TA SS891, p. 317. R782/67, J. Albasini, Goedewensch - M.W. Pretorius, President, 20-07-1867.

33. TA V.O.G. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 138/06, Report of Native Location. History. The Makhado (Magato) or Ramapulana Tribes, 23-03-1907, p. 10.

these personal ambitious plans and the backing of the South African Republic, Davhana and Albasini approached the Swazi for military assistance. Their ultimate objectives were quite simple. Makhado's defeat would enable Davhana to regain the Vhavenda throne. Albasini would feel more secure. At the same time the Boers would return to Venda.<sup>34</sup>

The Swazi promised to come, once they had attended to other commitments. In October 1869, a large Swazi offensive was launched against the Venda. Meanwhile, within the White community, the struggle for supremacy between Schoeman and Albasini had reached such proportions that he (Schoeman) felt his voice was not heard in Pretoria. The Executive Council alleged that Schoeman had failed to restore peace in Soutpansberg.<sup>35</sup> This change of attitude towards him, once more brought Albasini to light. He directed the Swazi to attack the territories he considered to be unfriendly to himself.<sup>36</sup>

It was for this reason that one impi was directed to Tshakhuma to attack Madzivhandila and the other to face Makhado at Dzanani. Madzivhandila had to be attacked. Davhana knew the latter was Makhado's father-in-law. The measure was intended to cut him off from rendering assistance to Makhado.<sup>37</sup>

The Swazi impi, directed by Albasini to go to Tshakhuma, was spotted and the local residents were able to flee to their fortress on Mount Mangwele. There were caves with beautifully constructed stone walls.<sup>38</sup> A section of the cave, meant for protection of the *khosi*, was well to the rear of the sanctuary. The area for the ordinary rank and file was near the entrance. They had to defend their ruler. Cattle

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34. *Ibid.*, p. 10; See also TA SS119, p. 252. N.R. (unnumbered), J. Albasini - Jules Kranke, 14 October 1869.

35. TA UR3, p. 155. URB Art. 21, 7 October 1869.

36. TA SS115, p. 95. No. 301, 72A - 1264, R.A. van Nispen, Landdrost, P. Potgietersrust - Hoog Ed. Uitvoerende Raad der Z. Afrikaansche Republiek, 1 November 1869.

37. Makhado had earlier married Dombo, daughter of Madzivhandila who gave birth to Makhado's second son Sinthumule. Therefore Madzivhandila was Makhado's great supporter.

38. S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, p. 87 - 88; P.E. Schwellnus, *Ndededzi*, V, p. 47.

and goats were also accommodated there, while the men and warriors positioned themselves outside the caves to defend the monarch and the population.

As the attack began, it soon transpired that Madzivhandila's warriors were not fighting alone.<sup>39</sup> Brave women, such as Mudzunga, Tshivhase's daughter, and Raluthaga Madzivhandila's wife, also joined the battle against the Swazi. When it came to her attention that her son, Masindi was fatally wounded, she bravely and fearlessly joined the fighting men with her basket filled with ammunition, supplying them with bullets. She is also said to have personally crushed a Swazi with a stone.<sup>40</sup> As the fighting intensified, she led the warriors in reciting the royal praise of her dynasty, Tshivhase, "Singo-Singo u a vhaswa" meaning, "Be careful you will soon land into trouble".<sup>41</sup> In reply those of Tshakhuma said: "u ya vhadwa, u ya vhadwa", meaning: "You are to be destroyed".<sup>42</sup> But Mudzunga was not the only woman fighting amongst men. Nyatshivhiahuvhi, a princess of Tshivhazwaulu, also refused to seek refuge in the cave. When attacked by a Swazi warrior intending to stab her, she grabbed his assegai and pinned him to the ground. As the fighting continued, the daring Mudzunga crushed another Swazi warrior with a stone.<sup>43</sup> Thus in the Battle of Mangwele, both Mudzunga and Nyatshivhiahuvhi displayed their mettle and distinguished themselves as outstanding fighters.<sup>44</sup>

The Swazi, felt discouraged because they were unable to penetrate the caves or cope with the slopes, ravines and cliffs of Mangwele. They realised their position was untenable and fled in defeat to Dzanani.<sup>45</sup> In their flight they passed through Tshiunzi (near the present day Witvlag), with the frustration of defeat fresh in their minds. They subsequently terrorised, wreaking havoc and committing dreadful

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39. P.E. Schwellnus, *Ndededzi*, V, p. 43.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

41. Tshivhase's royal praise and oath, meaning, "Be careful you will soon land into trouble." P.E. Schwellnus, *Ndededzi*, V, p. 44.

42. Tshakhuma's royal praise and oath meaning, "You are to be destroyed." P.E. Schwellnus, *Ndededzi*, V, p. 44.

43. S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, p. 87 - 88.

44. P.E. Schwellnus, *Ndededzi*, V, p. 44 - 45.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 46; S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, p. 88.

atrocities on Tshiunzi's inhabitants.<sup>46</sup> They joined the second Swazi army whilst Davhana's forces prepared an attack on Makhado's royal residence at Dzanani.

Makhado's royal headquarters at Luatame, was originally constructed in such a manner that his enemies would be forced to enter from one direction only.<sup>47</sup> Behind it, and along the northern side, was Mount Luatame, where nobody could enter. Thus the invading armies, consisting of the Swazi regiment that fled from Tshakhuma, Albasini's Tsonga, and Davhana's followers, including the Swazi who had come to assist him, assembled at the foot of the mountain and planned their strategy. In an effort to surround the headquarters to achieve a speedy victory, the army was divided into groups. This done, they launched the invasion of Dzanani at midnight on Sunday, 18 October 1869.<sup>48</sup> One group made daring attempts to enter the western side of the headquarters, but without success. They then retreated as Makhado's soldiers were firing heavily. The invaders awaited reports on the progress of the second group of impi's despatched to storm the headquarters from the mountain side, the intent being to completely surround the royal kraal.<sup>49</sup>

As the column from the mountain approached the royal residence, the third group, which had entered through the southern gate, reached the palace and thus penetrated Makhado's defences, although his army fired their guns and arrows with great skill in efforts to drive the enemy away. The Swazi were so trained that, when they had to cross a fence, they laid down their shields to form a bridge across the fence. This was proved to be an advantage to the Venda who hurled arrows at them. The Swazi were unable to protect themselves sufficiently.<sup>50</sup>

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46. P.E. Schwellnus, *Ndededzi*, V, p. 47; D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 160; M.M. Motenda, *Ramabulana*, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg*, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 163.

47. P.E. Schwellnus, *Ndededzi*, V, p. 48.

48. G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872*, IV, p. 490; TA SS119, p. 255, N.R. (unnumbered), J. Albasini, Goedewensch - Jules Franck, 27 October 1869; J.F. van Oordt, *Paul Kruger en de opkomst der Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek*, p. 135; J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda natie*, p. 13.

49. P.E. Schwellnus, *Ndededzi*, V, p. 49.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 48; S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, p. 88.

Although the rifle fire from Makhado's warriors was intense, the Swazi entered the royal headquarters and it proved very difficult to force them out. Makhado's army quickly devised a plan. They opened the kraal and drove out the cattle, pretending the animals had been captured by the Swazi. The Swazi then rushed to assist the pretending captors, whom they thought to be their fellow warriors. They then enquired as to whether the 'captors' were in fact their countrymen. The leader of the disguised Venda, Funyufunyu, replied in Swazi that they had indeed captured the cattle. The Venda then opened fire and shot two Swazi.

This unexpected action terrified the Swazi, who then fled the area.<sup>51</sup> The section of the army attacking from the mountain side also entered the royal headquarters. Makhado's generals, realising the inability of the Venda army to defend the residence, ordered their warriors to leave the kraal. In the process of carrying out these instructions Makhado's soldiers collected thick milk containers. As they departed from the residence, they left the full containers behind. To the hungry Swazi this was intended to suggest the defenders had fled. Upon entering the kraal and spying the containers of milk, the Swazi laid down their shields and assegais in order to consume the milk. While they were drinking, Makhado's generals instructed their troops to attack the Swazi again. The army responded, jumped upon the Swazi and cruelly massacred them. The survivors fled south-eastwards, meeting the remnants of the other Swazi regiments at Shehe where Elim Hospital was later built.<sup>52</sup>

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51. P.E. Schwellnus, *Ndededzi*, V, p. 49; S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, p. 88; TA V.O.G. P.S. 50/08/07, Location Commission No. 138/06, Report of Native Location Commission. History. The Makhado (Magato) or Ramapulana Tribes, 23-03-1907, p.10

52. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Eds.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 164; TA V.O.G. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 138/06, Report of Native Location Commission. History. The Makhado (Magato) or Ramapulana Tribes, 23-03-1907, p. 10; P.E. Schwellnus, *Ndededzi*, V, p. 49. Information supplied by J. Albasini in TA SS119, p. 250. N.R. 1870 (unnumbered), J. Albasini, Goedewensch - Jules Franck, 21 October 1869, differs from oral information, which is correct.

The defeated Swazi returned. When they passed through Bopedi, they were ambushed by Sekhukhune's warriors who further decimated them.<sup>53</sup> No oral sources could provide any definitive information as to whether there was any arrangement between Makhado and Sekhukhune concerning this episode. At any rate, what is known is that Makhado and Sekhukhune were on good terms as they regarded each other as brothers - *Thovhele* (Makhado) and *Thobejana* (Sekhukhune).<sup>54</sup> The defeat which the Swazi sustained at the hands of the Venda, enhanced Makhado's esteem throughout Venda.

It is evident some of the information passed on to the government of the South African Republic regarding the Makhado's victory in the war was inaccurate. It could perhaps have been that Albasini either wrongly informed the government, or he did not have first hand information on what transpired on the battlefield.<sup>55</sup>

The Boers were disappointed. Their plans to subjugate Makhado by using the Ngoni and Swazi mercenaries, had failed. Also Davhana was put back. However he was not yet discouraged. He was still contemplating on what to do next. That opportunity presented itself when he heard that Makhado and Madzhie were no longer on good terms. The rift between the two developed after the Boers had abandoned Schoemansdal in 1867. Whether the Boers had a hand in this rift as it was to their advantage, no source could reveal. What has been recorded is that Makhado wanted all the Boers to leave Venda while Madzhie wanted the missionary Stephanus Hofmeyr, to remain.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, Madzhie, who was instrumental in

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53. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Eds.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg*, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 164.

54. This is known throughout Venda and Bopedi. When the Pedi say Thobela and Thobejana, they refer to Ramabulana and Sekhukhune respectively.

55. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg*, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 160; D. Möller-Malan, *Die donker Soutpansberg*, *Historia*, 2(2) September 1957, p. 172; TA V.O.G. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 138/06, Report of Native Location Commission. History. The Makhado (Magato) or Ramapulana Tribes, 23-03-1907, p. 10; J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda natie*, p. 12.

56. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, 153; TA V.O.G. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 138/06, Report of Native Location Commission. History. The Makhado (Magato) or Ramapulana Tribes, 23-03-1907, pp. 10 - 11.

Makhado's accession to the throne, thought Makhado would always obey him, but as the latter became firmly established he acted independently and sometimes against Madzhe's wishes.<sup>57</sup> As a result of these developments, Davhana approached Madzhe for assistance. The latter invited him to take up residence in his stronghold.<sup>58</sup> Davhana did however not trust Madzhe completely. Instead he decided to go and stay at Tshioma, a subject of Madzhe. When Makhado heard this, he attacked them separately and defeated both Davhana and Madzhe.<sup>59</sup>

Davhana now realised his plans for regaining the throne were doomed. He subsequently crossed the Luvuvhu River into Luvhola where he established his royal kraal at Mpheni,<sup>60</sup> and ruled over the area until his death in 1894. Although he never again attacked Makhado, Davhana sent a warning to him stating:

Ndi do raha Sunguzwi nga Mulenzhe, matalala a kungulutshela ha vho-Netshihanane, meaning Davhana would kick Mount Sunguzwi (Hanglip) with his foot and push the loose flat stones to Netshihanane.

Netshihanane was a senior *khosi* under Makhado, guarding the northern part of the territory.<sup>61</sup> At Luatame, Makhado's wife, Dombo, daughter of Raluthaga Madzivhandila, gave birth in 1870 to his second son whom he named Sinthumule. The name meant that he (Makhado), should not be provoked and implied that, should Davhana further provoke him, Makhado would drive him out of the country.<sup>62</sup> Thus the two sons of Ramabulana, who had since 1864 been at loggerheads with one another, now recognised each other's position, i.e. Makhado

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57. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 153; TA V.O.G. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 138/06, Report of Native Location Commission. History. The Makhado (Magato) or Ramapulana Tribes, 23-03-1907, pp. 10 - 11.

58. TA V.O.G. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 138/06, Report of Location Commission. History. The Makhado (Magato) or Ramapulana Tribes, 23-03-1907, pp. 10 - 11.

59. *Ibid.*, pp. 10 - 11; J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda natie*, p. 12.

60. TA V.O.G. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 138/06, Report of Location Commission. History. The Makhado (Magato) or Ramapulana Tribes, 23-03-1907, pp. 10 - 11; S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, p. 31.

61. O.I. - T. Musekwa (about 100 years), Tshihanane, 12-07-1971.

62. N.J. van Warmelo, Report on Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, pp. 3 and 6.

was *Thovhele* and Davhana was a *khosi*, in his territory. This arrangement was typical of the Venda political system. Davhana settled at Mpheni, which was at Tshabwa, where, according to Makhado's proclamation, he (Davhana) would not be followed, or attacked as long as he remained south of the Muhohodi and Luvuvhu Rivers.<sup>63</sup> Deep in his heart Makhado would have felt more secure if Davhana no longer had friendly relations with the Boers.

In the midst of these developments, a new situation emerged. Albasini secretly sent people to Pretoria to give false information regarding Schoeman. He had to do this. Schoeman had identified Davhana and Albasini as the source of considerable misunderstanding between the VhaVenda and the Boers. He also recommended that they be removed from the Spelonken. The Executive Council of the South African Republic appeared hesitant to comply.<sup>64</sup> Albasini's agents comprised a group of four people, allegedly representing Nelwamondo, Davhana and Madzhie, accompanied by Pandeka. In Pretoria they levelled accusations against Schoeman. Nelwamondo's messenger and the Tsonga Pandeka, alleged Schoeman had invited the Swazi to attack Venda. They blamed him for all the atrocities they perpetrated.<sup>65</sup>

Madzhie's messenger, on the other hand, voiced his concern to the government over the power struggle between Makhado and Davhana which had led to all the troubles in the Soutpansberg. According to him, peace could only be restored if Makhado was replaced by Davhana.<sup>66</sup> Madzhie's attitude towards Makhado indicates that these two people, who were instrumental in destroying Schoemansdal, were at loggerheads. In an effort to safeguard his position against any action Makhado might take, Madzhie hoped to draw the Boers to his side by suggesting that Davhana, their

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63. M.M. Motenda, *Ramabulana*; N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg*, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 167.

64. ANON., *Origin and progress of the Soutpansberg War*, *The Transvaal Argus*, 08-01-1868; See also TA SS105, p. 252. 1868, Original A-No. 1, No. R. no.; *Morgenzon*, *Magok voor S. Schoeman*, 22 Juny 1868; TA SS118, p. 123, *Joernaal met verslae en document van die Naturelle Zaken in het district Zoutpansberg*, 5 January 1869.

65. TA UR3, URB, p. 149, Art. 21, 26 October 1869.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 149.

ally, should replace Makhado. This is not surprising as the driving force behind the actions of man is his need for survival.

All the messengers were unanimous in their desire that Paul Kruger should come to Venda to restore peace and tranquillity, as he had done in the case of Mapela in the Waterberg district. Madzhie's messenger went further and blamed both Makhado and Schoeman for the tense situation that had developed. Davhana and Madzhie would, according to them, co-operate with the government in its efforts to normalise the situation.<sup>67</sup>

Albasini's influence becomes apparent when the messengers said that whenever they approached him for assistance, he told them he was no longer interested in public affairs. He wanted to live in peace.<sup>68</sup> Albasini cannot be exonerated because when Schoeman was appointed Diplomatic Agent, he had been relieved of his post as Superintendent of Natives. So, in order to obtain the sympathy of the government in regaining that position, he had to discredit Schoeman.<sup>69</sup>

After the Executive Council had listened to the complaints and requests presented by the four messengers from Venda, it resolved that a commission be appointed to conclude peace with friendly Blacks and to compile a list of all chiefs with whom treaties could be concluded. This would facilitate the determination of boundaries, as well as the payment of tributes.<sup>70</sup>

As far as Madzhie was concerned, the Executive Council was not convinced that he meant what he conveyed through his messenger. Consequently they resolved that since Madzhie and Makhado were responsible for the burning of Schoemansdal, compensation for the destruction of property as well as the return of firearms, would be demanded. The Venda was to be informed that all their complaints should be

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67. *Ibid.*, p. 153, Art. 21, 27 October 1869.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 149 - 150, Art. 21, 26 October 1869; TA SS119, p. 252, N.R., 1870, J. Albasini, Goedewensch - Jules Franck, 14 October 1869.

69. TA SS119, p. 251. N.R., 1870, J. Albasini, Goedewensch - Jules Franck, 21 October 1869.

70. TA UR3, p. 156. URB, Art. 21, 26 October 1869.

addressed to the landdrost as there would no longer be a Diplomatic Agent or a Superintendent. The landdrost would become the head of the district.<sup>71</sup>

The commission, comprising the Commandant-General, the Landdrost and the Commandant of the Soutpansberg, had instructions to demand loyalty from Makhado and other rulers. Should they continue with their animosity against the government, Davhana would be given arms, and with the assistance of Pandeka and other government collaborators, they were to be subjugated. Davhana who would emerge the conqueror, would then be in a position to handle the whole situation and then return the firearms.<sup>72</sup>

Although the Ngoni and Swazi mercenaries were stopped at Lwamondo, Tshakhuma and Dzanani, they murdered defenceless women and children as they went to the so-called enemies of the Whites. Thus the ordinary people were left frightened. This was one of the reasons for the invitation of the "Mabunyu" as the Venda called them.<sup>73</sup> The overall intention was to have them frightened so that they would lose faith in their leadership, feel defenceless, and turn to the Whites for protection. Thus the government, which had waited for such developments, stepped in at the right time and instituted a commission.<sup>74</sup>

On 12 November 1869, the commission consisting of Paul Kruger, R.A. van Nispen and D.B. Snyman, arrived at Goedewensch, Albasini's farm. They had to conclude treaties with friendly Blacks, determine their numerical strength, their lands, borders and their readiness to pay tribute. The Blacks were to be informed that they were now under the Landdrost. There no longer was to be a Superintendent or Diplomatic Agent. Makhado and Madzhie were to pay compensation for the destruction of Schoemansdal.

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71. *Ibid.*, pp. 156 - 157.

72. *Ibid.*, pp. 156 - 157.

73. Mabunyu means naked people. These naked people were Swazi and Ngoni. TA V.O.G. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Native Location Commission No. 138/06, Report of Location Commission. History. The Makhado (Magato) or Ramapulana Tribes, 23-03-1907, pp. 10; S.M. Dzivhani and E.N. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, p. 86 - 88.

74. TA UR3, p. 157, URB, Art. 21, 27 October 1869

The Commission held a series of meetings from 13 to 24 November 1869. It was held at Goedewensch. It meant that Albasini's voice was heard by the Executive Council. In this way his tarnished image was restored. Messengers were despatched to invite *mahosi mahulu* and *mahosi* to attend the meeting.<sup>75</sup>

Unfortunately *Thovhele* and the *mahosi mahulu* never attended. They probably were of the opinion that their presence at the talks would boost the status of Albasini. Those headmen and messengers who came, pledged their loyalty to the government and were assured of protection probably against the Mabunyu - the Swazi and other who had previously devastated their country.<sup>76</sup> Davhana played an important role here in sending messengers to the various *mahosi*. Amongst the 15 Venda delegates were Davhana, Nelwamondo, Matidze and Masia. The Tsonga were represented by 20 men.<sup>77</sup>

These people, who were made to appear as independent chiefs officially declared that they and their subjects submitted themselves to the government of the South African Republic. They promised to conduct themselves according to the laws of the Republic.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore the messengers bound themselves to pay annually to the said government the tribute demanded from them, according to the existing laws of the South African Republic.<sup>79</sup>

This agreement in itself was interesting. It contains the names and crosses of the people who were prepared to subject themselves to republican authority. The "signatories" could not write, and crosses were drawn instead. A close scrutiny of the crosses, suggests that they were made by the very same person who drew up the document in the first place. Furthermore, it is also possible that the so-called

75. *Ibid.*, p. 157.

76. U.G. 22 - '16, Report of the Natives Land Commission, II, p. 382; TA SS117, p. 237, R1591/69, Boodschap van Magato aan De Heer Kruger, Albasini's plaats, 19 November 1869.

77. TA SS117, p. 238. R1591/69, Boodschap van Tobaan aan De Heer Kruger, Albasini's plaats, 19 November 1869; See also TA SS1591, p. 281, R1591/69, Kontract tusjen de Commisjje en kafferkapiteinen van Zoupansberg, 20 November 1869.

78. TA SS117, p. 281. R1591/69. Kontract tusjen de Commisjje en kafferkapiteinen van Zoutpansberg, 20 November 1869.

79. *Ibid.*, p. 281.

“signatories” knew little of the formal conventions pertaining to European styled agreements. It might be that they in effect knew and understood very little of the true significance of what they had agreed to.<sup>80</sup> The nature of agreements in Venda society in the nineteenth century was also completely different to the way in which the Whites tried to conclude them.

In view of what has been explained above, it is understandable why the attempts to restore peace in the Soutpansberg region were futile. Furthermore the important rulers of Venda, Makhado, Tshivhase, Mphaphuli and Rammbuda, the real leaders of Venda, were not involved. How does one expect *Thovhele, mahosi mahulu* to be bound by decisions taken with their *mahosi* and *magota*? In spite of all this *Thovhele* and *mahosi mahulu* were from then on, expected to comply with the terms of the contract.<sup>81</sup>

After this arrangement, the commission returned to Pretoria convinced that they had laid the foundation for the subjugation of the Venda.<sup>82</sup> Subsequent events, however, will show that by neglecting to negotiate with the real leaders, their settlement rested on a very shaky foundation.

As the Boers were attempting to reassert their lost authority in the Soutpansberg, Makhado's popularity was spreading. But what still irritated him, was the fact that Davhana was still under the protective wings of the government who treated him like a king in exile.<sup>83</sup> Consequently the Boers, being Davhana's allies, posed a threat to his kingship. However, what Makhado did not know at this point in time, was that the relations between Davhana and some officials were not as good as they should have been. The first indications of a deteriorating state of affairs was voiced by Fieldcornet W. Grieve, when he informed the landdrost at Marabastad that, should he visit Makhado, and Davhana became aware of this, the latter would refuse

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80. *Ibid.*, p. 282.

81. *Ibid.*, pp. 282 - 284.

82. TA SS117, p. 257. R1591/69, S.J. P. Kruger, Rietvallei - J. Albasini, Goedewensch, 30 November 1869.

83. TA SS112, pp. 43 - 44. No. 730, Tabaan, Groot Kaptyn, Tabaan's Kraal, aan M.W. Pretorius, President der Z.A.R., 14 Juny 1869; TA SS117, p. 230. R1591/69, Tabaan aan vergadering 18 November 1869.

to take orders from him.<sup>84</sup> He also reported that Davhana had returned to his old residence, next to Albasini with 1 000 Tsonga warriors. Nwamanungu, a Tsonga leader under Albasini, was ordered to take Davhana back to his residence at Mpheni.<sup>85</sup>

According to Grieve, if Nwamanungu, could be given orders to act, he would easily put Davhana under arrest and send him to Marabastad because “zoo lang als Dawana hier is zal het nooit vrede zijn”.<sup>86</sup> This was the cause of the unrest in the Soutpansberg, and unless immediate steps were taken to remedy the situation, all the local Whites would be compelled to leave the Spelonken.<sup>87</sup>

When the political dimensions had reached this level and Davhana was a liability, Albasini's messenger, C.J. Snyman, who had been sent to Makhado, declared under oath on his return, that Albasini had told him that Makhado should open the roads to enable him and his followers to move freely.<sup>88</sup>

Makhado's reply was that he had nothing against the Boers as only a few of them had remained south of the Muhohodi River. They should live freely as in the days of Andries Hendrik Potgieter, but Makhado said,

(I)k heb de questie tegen my broer Jawana. Hoe kan Albasini dat doen om Jawana onder zijn arm te houden? Jawana is niet zyn broer of niet zyn zoon. Hy is Ramapoelana's zoon.<sup>89</sup>

Snyman in his declaration before Maré of 20 August 1875, hit the nail on the head. This was undoubtedly the root of all the troubles and misunderstanding. Snyman further reported that Makhado could not understand why the fugitive Davhana should enjoy protection and a kingly status when he had been rejected by the nation.

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84. TA SS193, p. 23. R1822/1823/75, W.J. Grieve, Veldcornet, Spelonken - D.S. Mare, Landdrost, Marabastad, 19 Augustus 1875.

85. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

86. *Ibid.*, p. 23. R1822/1823/75, W.J. Grieve, Veldcornet, Spelonken - D.S. Mare, Landdrost, Marabastad, 19 Augustus 1875.

87. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

88. TA SS193, p. 24. R1822/1823/75, W.J. Grieve, Veldcornet, Spelonken - D.S. Mare, Landdrost, Zoutpansberg, 21 Augustus 1875.

89. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

The country was not his, but that of Makhado. He reiterated his demand that Davhana should be surrendered to him.

Ik zal hem een woning geven, maar dat hy zich moet stil en rustig gedragen.<sup>90</sup>

When this demand was conveyed to Davhana, his reply was that he was no *Thovhele* but an ordinary *khosi* in his own kraal as he had his own territory.<sup>91</sup>

As events developed, Makhado was informed that preparations were afoot for the removal of Davhana to Marabastad. As this did not materialise, Snyman was told Davhana had gone to live with Madzhie.<sup>92</sup> This game of hide and seek over Davhana's position went on between the Landdrost, Albasini and Makhado. Makhado, who was uncompromising, on the other hand was adamant in his insistence that Davhana should be delivered to him, despite the problems which confronted the local Boer officials.<sup>93</sup>

The officials of the Republic were faced with a dilemma; whether to attempt to hand Davhana over to Makhado or to remove him to Marabastad. If Davhana objected they had no power with which to execute this. Furthermore, the Pretoria government wanted him in the Spelonken in order to weaken Makhado's authority. Thus, Makhado would remain uncomfortable as long as Davhana was not delivered to him. They were also not sure about his safety in the event of placing him in the hands of Makhado. To avoid all this, they left him untouched.<sup>94</sup>

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90. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

91. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

92. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

93. *Ibid.*, pp. 26 - 8.

94. *Ibid.*, pp. 26 - 8.

## CHAPTER 5

### MAKHADO AND THE MISSIONARIES

Since the life and times of Makhado heralded an era of great political and socio-economic change in Venda society, the picture would be incomplete if the story of the arrival of Christian missionaries was omitted, for the influence of these missionaries also had great influence on the lives of the Venda, as well as their relations with the Boers.

Long before their arrival, the Venda worshipped their gods Mwali and Raluvhimba. From the beginning, these people, the Senzi and Rozwi worshipped the same god, Mwali, who it was believed guided their movements from Ethiopia through Kenya, Tanganyika, Malawi into Zimbabwe and Venda.<sup>1</sup>

Raluvhimba, according to E. Gottschling,<sup>2</sup> rewarded good and evil. When Raluvhimba was angry with anyone, he could according to Venda belief, be heard rumbling underground or roaring in the air. Even to this day, if there is an earthquake, there are still some Venda who believe that Raluvhimba is passing. Many supernatural phenomena are ascribed to Raluvhimba. His fire was said to have been in the bush, and his voice heard in the mountains. It was also believed any good fortune which came to the Venda, was sent by Raluvhimba. Similarly, any punishment which befell them was also sent by him. This concept of Raluvhimba who was alleged to have visited a sanctuary named after him at Makonde on several occasions, exercised considerable influence on the lives of the Venda.<sup>3</sup>

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1. A.M. Chigwedere, *From Mutapa to Rhodes, 1000 - 1890, A.D.* p. 62 - 64; L.T. Marole, *Raluvhimba*, p. 21; J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda natie*, pp. 6 - 7; E. Mudau, *Ngoma-lungundu*, Extract from Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department, 8, 1940, p. 112.
  2. E. Gottschling, The Bawenda, a sketch of their history and customs, *Journal of the British and South African Association for the advancement of Science*, 3, 1905, p. 378; J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda natie*, p. 7; L.T. Marole, *Raluvhimba*, p. 6.
  3. E. Gottschling, The Bawenda, a sketch of their history and customs, *Journal of the British and South African Association for the advancement of Science*, III, London, 1905, p. 378; J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda natie*, pp. 6 - 7; E. Mudau, *Ngoma-lungundu*, Extract from Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department, 8, 1940, p. 132.
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Gottschling, who conducted substantial research in these matters, further states that the Venda had a dim idea of the creator, whom they called Khuzwane. He can be compared with the Jewish *Jahwe* or *Jehovah*.<sup>4</sup>

Besides *Raluvhimba* and *Khuzwane*, there was a third deity called *Thovhele*, who was favourably inclined towards mankind and acted as mediator between God and man.<sup>5</sup> The Venda had also their nameless gods (*midzimu/vhadzimu*). The latter names were given to the totality of the good souls of their ancestors. It was believed, these ancestors were not witches. Also the founders of their clans or dynasties, ruler were regarded as being representative of the gods. The *vhadzimu* were represented by visible objects such as bulls, goats and stones. Each clan worshipped its *vhadzimu* in a different way, and at particular times.<sup>6</sup>

This account given by Gottschling, one of the missionaries who brought Christianity to the area, sheds some light on the difficulties and problems which confronted him and his colleagues in their attempts to convert the Venda to Christianity.

Such was the religious state of affairs during the reign of Makhado when the missionaries arrived. Missionaries from the Berlin Missionary Society regarded themselves as being the first to bring the Word of God to the Venda.<sup>7</sup> However, when this statement is more carefully examined, it is found to be untrue. Their mistake in making this claim was to exclude the western and southern parts of Venda. Their Venda actually stretched only from the area of Tshakhuma to that of Vhumbedzi.

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4. E. Gottschling, *The Bawenda, a sketch of their history and customs*, *Journal of the British and South African Association for the advancement of Science*, III, London, 1905, p. 378. See also J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda natie*, p. 6; L.T. Marole, *Raluvhimba*, p. 1.
  5. L.T. Marole, *Raluvhimba*, p. 1; E. Gottschling, *The Bawenda, a sketch of their history and customs*, *Journal of the British and South African Association for the advancement of Science*, 3, London, 1905, p. 378; J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda natie*, p. 7.
  6. L.T. Marole, *Raluvhimba*, p. 1; E. Gottschling, *The Bawenda, a sketch of their history and customs*, *Journal of the British and South African Association for the advancement of Science*, III, London, 1905, p. 378.
  7. D.W. Giesekke, *Danala Minwaha le Fhungo la Mudzimu Venda*, 9 November 1972 (unpublished notes in possession of the author).

Research reveals that, long before the arrival of these German missionaries, a man named Mutshaeni, preached the Word of God in a cave at Tsharotha, Tshiheni.<sup>8</sup> The fact that he preached and taught in a cave indicates that there was no church building. It is believed that this Christian pioneer, Mutshaeni, came into contact with the missionaries in the Blouberg. If this is true, there is no doubt that the Dutch Reformed Church had already started missionary work in Venda at Goedgedacht, in Madzhie's territory in 1863. This was at least two years before the Berlin Missionaries (in 1865) started their operations in Blouberg.<sup>9</sup> There is however no doubt that it was before the coming of the German missionaries as subsequent events will show.

The first Christian church to embark on mission work in Venda was the Dutch Reformed Church. It started when the Rev. Alexander McKidd established Goedgedacht Missionary Station in the land of Madzhie in 1863.<sup>10</sup> His successor, the Rev. Stephanus Hofmeyr who came from the Cape Colony, did not only confine his attention exclusively to the Buys settlement, but also worked amongst the Venda. The Boers were sceptical about this. They thought he filled the minds of the Venda with strange ideas. According to them the Blacks were creatures without a soul. Therefore, there was no reason to assume that they too were entitled to a place in the kingdom of God, as the concept of God the Creator, was believed to be non-existent amongst the Venda and the Buys people.<sup>11</sup>

Hofmeyr was faced with almost insurmountable problems in his calling of bringing the Venda to Christ. But he was determined to carry on. He visited the people in their *kraals*, preaching the gospel of salvation.

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8. O.I. - E.N. Mudau (about 73 years), Tshakhuma, 25-01-1977; R.N. Mathivha, *The Berlin Missionary Venture in education at Tshakhuma, Venda, 1872 - 1954, An historical-critical survey*, p. 46.
  9. W. Maree, *Lig in Soutpansberg*, 1962, p. 49.
  10. Benso/Rau, *Independent Venda*, 1979, p. 34; D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 148.
  11. J.P.F. Moolman, *Die Boer se siening van en houding teenoor die Bantoe in Transvaal tot 1860*, (M.A. Verhandeling, Univ. Pretoria, Oktober 1875), p. 68.

As Goedgedacht was situated within a malaria-infested area, Hofmeyr moved the mission station to Kranspoort, an area very near Madzhie's headquarters. When conflict developed between the Venda and the Boers, the authorities at Schoemansdal ordered Hofmeyr and his people to leave Kranspoort for shelter at the *laager* in Schoemansdal.<sup>12</sup>

This was what Makhado wanted but Madzhie objected as he had established relationship with the missionary. He was ready to protect him. Hofmeyr believing Madzhie to be sincere in his assurances that no harm would come to either the missionary or his station, refused Schoeman's offer.<sup>13</sup>

When the fighting started, Hofmeyr heard about casualties on both sides. Fearing for his safety, he sought refuge at the farm Bethesda, near Rida.<sup>14</sup> Madzhie persuaded him to return and after he was assured that he would be safe, he complied and returned to Kranspoort.

Although Makhado did not like the missionary, he later changed his attitude after the Boers had left Schoemansdal. It was the shortage of the necessities of life which brought about this change. For example, blankets and calico became expensive. Traders charged exorbitant prices. Money and trade goods, to purchase these items, were in short supply. It was at this juncture that Michael Buys intervened and advised Makhado to find a missionary and accept the Word of God, as there was need for a trustworthy White man in the area who would assist in dealing with the traders. Consequently Stephanus Hofmeyr was allowed to remain at Kranspoort.<sup>15</sup>

While the Dutch Reformed Church continued its activities in Western Venda, two German missionaries, the Revs. E.B. Beyer and M. Baumbach, arrived at Makhado's residence early in 1872. They asked him to allow them to preach the Word of God amongst his people. He, however, adopted the same attitude towards them as he originally had towards Hofmeyr and avoided them by suggesting that

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12. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 153.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 154 - 155.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 154 - 155.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 167.

they go to Tshivhase's territory, but they should not take his land.<sup>16</sup> As they had already established contact with Ligege Tshivhase, they proceeded to the north-east and acquired the latter's permission to work in his territory. In October 1872 the Reverends C. Beuster and H.C. Stech arrived, and after conferring with Ligege, started mission work at Tshimboni on 8 November of that same year.<sup>17</sup>

When Mutshaeni, the pioneer in the area, was told that a White man had come to Tshimboni, preaching the same message as he, he left Tshiheni with his son Joseph, to join Beuster. The arrival of Beuster was the beginning of the Shewasse Mission Station. He encamped under a fig tree in the location which later became his residence. Here he pitched tents to make a home for himself.<sup>18</sup>

Despite the problems and trying conditions he had to face in a new country, Beuster travelled on horseback throughout Tshivhase's territory preaching and teaching the Word of God, learning to speak Tshivenda and studying Venda culture. He often visited the royal headquarters. When he found the people playing *tshikona*,<sup>19</sup> he joined them, moving around the dancers on horseback. When the dancing ceased, he used the back of his horse as a pulpit, preaching to the people and responding to their questions about his teachings. He visited many *mahosi* including Ravhura of Makonde, where in turn, he learnt about the history of Venda. It was here that the

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16. D.W. van der Merwe, Die Geskiedenis van die Berlynse Sending-genootskap in Transvaal, 1860 - 1900, *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis*, (46)1, 1984, p. 54.
  17. D.W. Giesecke, Dana la Minwaha la Fhungo la Mudzimu Venda, 9 November 1972; L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, p. 39; D.W. van der Merwe, Die Geskiedenis van die Berlynse Sending-genootskap in Transvaal, 1860 - 1900, *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis*, 46(1), 1984, p. 54; R.N. Mathivha, The Berlin venture in education at Tshakhuma, Venda, 1872 - 1954, An historical-critical survey (M.Ed. Dissertation Unin, 1985), p. 42; J. Mavhusha, Vhafunzi vhatshena Venda, 1972 (unpublished notes in possession of the author).
  18. S.M. Dzivhani, A pamphlet on Beuster Mission Station, 9 November 1972 (unpublished notes in possession of the author); J. Mavhusha, Vhafunzi vhatshena Venda, 1972; R.N. Mathivha, The Berlin Missionary Venture in Education at Tshakhuma: Venda, 1872 - 1954, An historical-critical survey, p. 43.
  19. A royal dancing ceremony held on important or solemn occasions, the music played with the blowing of reed instruments accompanied by various types of drums. S.M. Dzivhani, A pamphlet on Beuster Mission Station, 9 November 1972.
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story of Thohoyandou impressed him so much, that he subsequently wrote a song about the great king.<sup>20</sup>

Ligegise Tshivhase, by allowing a missionary to work in his territory, brought about a great change in the lives of some of his people. Those who were living on the mission station and the sub-stations, learned much more than new attitudes towards life from Beuster. Beuster's teachings and actions also encompassed more than those of an economic nature, through improved agricultural techniques. Converts also learned to read and write in their own language, Tshivenda.<sup>21</sup>

His coming had far-reaching significance in the development, not only of the language, but his works laid the foundation for the recording and writing of Venda literature. It was with the assistance of the Lepsius method of writing languages that Beuster published in 1883 *Tsepele tsha Tseveda*, and in 1884 an abridged catechism in Luvenda entitled *Katexisma thuku ea Martinus Luther*, as well as *Dziepistola na dizevangeli dza dzizondaha na dza Votambo dza moaha oote*, in 1884 and *Evangeli nga Yohannes na dziepistola 3 dza Yohannes na dzipisaleme dzimoe dzo khethoaho nga Tseveda* in 1895.<sup>22</sup>

Makhado, on the other hand, having previously directed the German missionaries to Tshivhase, did however permit one of his *mahosi*, Raluthaga Madzivhandila, to allow missionaries in his area, as Madzivhandila could not have done this unilaterally. In May 1874 Raluthaga Madzivhandila approached Beuster, asking that a missionary be sent to Tshakhuma.<sup>23</sup> In response to this request, Rev. E. Schwellnus was sent to Tshakhuma where he subsequently established a mission

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20. S.M. Dzivhani, A pamphlet on Beuster Mission Station, 9 November 1972; L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, 1966, p. 14.

21. S.M. Dzivhani, A pamphlet on Beuster Mission Station, 9 November 1972.

22. C. Meinhoff, *Das Tsi-Venda, Linguistic Studie*, Introductory Part. This work was written after C. Meinhoff, an expert on theories and principles behind African languages, met the two sons of Rev. E. Schwellnus, Theodore and Paul. Having been born in Venda, the two sons supplied him with the structure of Tshivenda as it is spoken. He then converted this into writing. Dr N.J. van Warmelo, a government ethnologist, confirmed this in his office in Pretoria on 23-09-1983.

23. S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, p. 88; R.N. Mathivha, *The Berlin Missionary Venture in education at Tshakhuma, Venda, 1872 - 1954, An historical-critical survey* p. 48.

station. The fact that it was Madzivhandila himself who had asked for a missionary, was a source of encouragement to Schwellnus, who, like Beuster, was faced with many problems. He gradually established himself, learned Tshivenda language and the customs of people so that he could communicate with them and understand their manner of thinking.<sup>24</sup>

He extended his area of operation to Tsianda and Lwamondo. In 1877 the first converts were baptised and in this way a Christian community was established. The Christian community residing on the mission stations were required to live according to the teachings of the church, which were largely based on the tenets of Western European culture, in this specific instance, on German culture. Their names and customs were considered to be pagan by the missionaries. At the time of baptism, all converts were required to abandon their Tshivenda names, thus signifying to the world their turning away from the old ways in their acceptance of the new. This was, of course, characteristic of happenings in all places where missionaries exercised influence. The changing of names did not take place only for those who desired baptism, but it also occurred in towns and on farms where employers did not have to learn how to pronounce or remember the names of their employees.

In 1879, before and after completion of the mission house, all was not well among the newly-converted Christians. There was considerable resistance to many of the teachings of the church. This was evident in the perpetuation of traditions such as circumcision lodges and initiation schools. In order to avoid the watchful eye of the missionary, some new converts secretly sent their children to participate in these traditional happenings.

There were several reasons for this conflict between the two cultures. The missionaries were new-comers to a people who, for hundreds of years, were guided by religious beliefs which permeated the nucleus of their culture and the way of life in the extended family. The Venda did not know precisely how long the new

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24. S.M. Dzivhani and E.N. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, 1958, p. 88; R.N. Mathivha, *The Berlin Missionary Venture in education at Tshakhuma, Venda, 1872 - 1954, An historical-critical survey*, p. 49.

teachers would remain in their country. Many were unwilling to risk complete isolation from family members outside the mission stations. They felt their children should not be denied access to, or acceptance from their peers. Thus those traditional practices such as *vhusha*<sup>25</sup> and *Domba*<sup>26</sup>, which were initiation schools denoting a person's status in the community, were attended.

In addition to the above exposition, many of the people had no desire to leave the grave sites of their ancestors. Therefore, it was not difficult to accept that some even went to the extent of embracing the "new" religion in order to remain on their land. They also continued to observe many of the "old" rites and traditions, despite the fact that they were resident in areas where the missionary influence was predominant.

Because of improved agricultural techniques, life on the mission station, with all its restrictions, was better than that in the villages. But Christian parents knew that if they were discovered adhering to the "old ways", or breaking the "new" rules, they would immediately be required to leave the station.<sup>27</sup> It was a practice which persisted into the twentieth century amongst missionaries.<sup>28</sup>

For the Venda "Christians" a new predicament was the order of the day. In the event of an expulsion from the mission station, Venda "Christians" who totally had discarded with the traditional ways, were automatically excluded and not quite acceptable to the members of their extended families. In the event of their being re-incorporated they and their offspring thus faced the humiliation of being considered outcasts. It could isolate them from the people with whom they had the closest cultural affinities. It is true that they could have lived elsewhere in Venda, under a

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25. It was training that girls at the time of puberty had to undergo as in preparation for later life.

26. This was also training for young males and females, who had already passed through puberty.

27. D.W. van der Merwe, *Die Geskiedenis van die Berlynse Sending-genootskap in Transvaal, 1860 - 1900*, *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis*, 46(1), 1984, p. 55; R.N. Mathivha, *The Berlin venture in education at Tshakhuma: Venda, 1872 - 1954, An historical-critical survey* pp. 247, 248, 249, 256, 257, 263; O.I. - E.N. Mudau, (about 73 years), *Tshakhuma, 25-01-1977*.

28. U.G. 22 - '16, Report of the Natives Land Commission, II, p. 376.

*khosi* who did not embrace the “new” traditions, but it was difficult to adjust to new traditions, but it is difficult to adjust to new places when your heart is elsewhere. So, the secret sending of the young people to the various initiation schools and circumcision lodges continued, even at great risk to those involved.<sup>29</sup>

The problems experienced by Schwellnus in learning Tshivenda, were at least partially solved with the birth of his sons and a daughter who, from the outset, learnt to speak the indigenous language as well as those Venda children with whom they lived, played and hunted. They grew up in the culture and spoke the language as well as any Venda child and regarded themselves as being Venda. That is why Beuster of Tshivhase, realising Schwellnus’s inability to master the language and communicate freely in it, remarked that young Paul, Schwellnus’s youngest son, would be the one best suited to convert Tshivenda to a written language.<sup>30</sup> This he did by publishing readers, a hymn book, a grammar book and ultimately translated the Bible into Tshivenda in 1936.<sup>31</sup>

As at the Tshivhase Mission Station, agricultural activities were started at Tshakhuma. Water was led into the vegetable gardens and wheat fields, as well as orchards, where sub-tropical fruit trees were planted. These included orange, avocado, peach, banana and coffee trees. Bluegum and bamboo trees were also planted for timber. In this way Tshakhuma, like many other mission stations, resembled both an orchard and a plantation. This obviously had great influence on the development of Venda as some Venda learned that water from their overflowing rivers could be used for irrigational purposes.<sup>32</sup>

As the number of converts increased, Schwellnus spread his missionary activities in Makhado’s territories to Mauluma, Luonde, Masia and Mbwenda, with Johannes

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- 29. R.N. Mathivha, *The Berlin Missionary Venture in education at Tshakhuma: Venda, 1872 - 1954, An historical-critical survey* p. 62.
  - 30. O.I. - E.D. Giesecke, *On dedication of the Schwellnus Memorial Church in Tshakhuma, 1954.*
  - 31. D.W. van der Merwe, *Die Geskiedenis van die Berlynse Sending-genootskap in Transvaal, 1860 - 1900, Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis*, 46(1), 1984, p. 166.
  - 32. S.M. Dzivhani, *A pamphlet on Beuster Mission Station, 9 November, 1972.*

Madima eventually being posted to a sub-station in Tsianda.<sup>33</sup> After a long period of hard work and toil, the pioneer and founder of Tshakhuma Mission Station, E. Schwellnus, left for Germany in 1894. His successor Rev. R. Wessmann (previously stationed at Mavhola),<sup>34</sup> arrived at Tshakhuma when the relationship between Makhado and officials of the South African Republic in the Spelonken had deteriorated to such an extent that Wessmann was often sent to convey Pretoria's messages to the Venda monarch.<sup>35</sup>

In late 1873 while the Berlin missionaries, Beuster and Schwellnus, were busily laying respective foundations for their work, Swiss missionaries P. Berthoud and E. Creux, were warmly received by Stephanus Hofmeyr at the mission station at Kranspoort, after they had travelled the long distance from Basotholand. This was preceded by a conference held at Moriija on 12 May 1873 where it was decided that the Swiss Missionary Society should send an expedition north to the lands of the Bapedi. Ten days later, on 23 May 1873, an expedition consisting of the Mabile and Berthoud families, as well as three evangelists, left Basotholand for the north.<sup>36</sup> Passing through Pretoria, they proceeded northeastwards to Bopedi, where the Bapedi king, Sekhukhune, refused them permission to work.

Continuing north on the long journey to the western fringes of the Soutpansberg, they met Hofmeyr. He advised them to settle in the Spelonken because the Tsonga people had no missionary among them.<sup>37</sup> Encouraged at the prospects that their final destination was at hand, they proceeded to Luonde where they were warmly received by J. Albasini, who told them to remain there and preach the Word of God to his people. They subsequently accepted the offer and entered into negotiations

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33. R.N. Mathivha, *The Berlin Missionary Venture in education at Tshakhuma, Venda, 1872 - 1954, An historical-critical survey* p. 53.

34. M.H. Nemudzivhadi, *Dana la Minwaha la Fhungo la Mudzimu Vhumbedzi na Vhutavhatsindi, 1877 - 1977*, p. 6.

35. D.W. van der Merwe, *Die Geskiedenis van die Berlynse Sending-geenootskap in Transvaal, 1860 - 1900, Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis*, 46(1), 1984, p. 166.

36. G. Bridel, *Extracts from Album de la Mission Romande*, p. 5 (unpublished manuscript in possession of the author).

37. *Ibid.*, p. 6; F.A. Cuendet, *Rivoningo Emunyameni*, p. 11.

with a certain Scottish man, Watt, for the purchase of his farm on which they then established their mission station. Watt agreed to sell them the farm.<sup>38</sup>

Thereafter, P. Berthoud and E. Creux left Luonde for Basotholand, while two evangelists, Eliakim and Aser, remained to commence preaching the Gospel to the Tsonga. Upon their return to Basotholand, the two missionaries submitted their reports to the church and set about making arrangements for their return to Soutpansberg. The *Comite de Paris* lacked the necessary funds to finance the new project, but the Free Church, in a synod at Yverdon in April 1874,<sup>39</sup> resolved to send Creux and Berthoud, under the auspices of the Vaudoise Church, to found a mission station in the Spelonken area of the Soutpansberg district of the South African Republic.<sup>40</sup>

On 16 April 1875 Berthoud and Creux left Morija, fully convinced they were called by God to convert the Tsonga, who had no knowledge of His Gospel. On their long journey northwards, they again passed through Pretoria, where they obtained permission from the government to preach the Gospel to the Tsonga.<sup>41</sup>

On 9 July 1875, they arrived at Watt's farm and upon meeting with Eliakim and Aser they thanked God for allowing them the opportunity to found the first mission station of the Free Church of Vaud.<sup>42</sup> They purchased the farm from Watt and used the farmer's shop and house for dwelling purposes. Later they built huts which they used as dwellings for themselves.

It is not the purpose to discuss the mission work as such, but to highlight the effects of the arrival of the missionaries on the development of events between 1864 and 1895. The successes, achievements and setbacks of this particular missionary

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38. G. Bridel, Extracts from Album de la Mission Romande, p. 6; F.A. Cuendet, *Rivoningo Emunyameni*, p. 11.

39. G. Bridel, Extracts from Album de la Mission Romande, p. 7; F.A. Cuendet, *Rivoningo Emunyameni*, p. 11.

40. G. Bridel, Extracts from Album de la Mission Romande, p. 7; F.A. Cuendet, *Rivoningo Emunyameni*, p. 13.

41. G. Bridel, Extracts from Album de la Mission Romande, p. 8; F.A. Cuendet, *Rivoningo Emunyameni*, p. 13.

42. G. Bridel, Extracts from Album de la Mission Romande, p. 9; F.A. Cuendet, *Rivoningo Emunyameni*, p. 13.

venture will not therefore be discussed here. Cuendet and Bridel do not indicate the attitude of the Venda towards the arrival of these missionaries. Although *Khosi Mashau* on whose territory the mission station was founded, was reported to have welcomed them in a warm manner,<sup>43</sup> while Davhana, who had already settled at Luvhola, supplied them with milk cows.<sup>44</sup>

The Swiss felt more strengthened after visits by the Berlin missionaries, Beuster and Schwellnus.<sup>45</sup> These two societies subsequently arrived at some arrangement stipulating that, while the Berlin Mission would continue their work primarily among the Venda. The Swiss in turn, would concentrate on the Tsonga-speaking people of the area.<sup>46</sup> In this way the seeds of religious apartheid were sown between the Venda and the Tsonga. This later made it possible for the Nationalist Government to partition Venda into respectively the Venda and Gazankulu homelands.

With the Swiss there was no problem honouring this commitment as most of the Tsonga were found on farms in areas south of the Luvuvhu River, and the Swiss were welcomed to preach to the Tsonga under Albasini at Luonde. But both the Swiss and the German missionaries neglected the Venda south of the river to such an extent that the people remained backward, at least when compared with their Tsonga counterparts.<sup>47</sup>

Just as the Germans learned Tshivenda, the Swiss studied the Tsonga language in order to communicate more effectively with the people. Like Beuster they used the Lepsius system, thus enabling them to translate the Bible from French into Tsonga and to publish some books, as well as compile a collection of church hymns.<sup>48</sup>

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43. O.I. - W.M. Mashau (about 40 years), Mashau, 28-12-1979.

44. O.I. - D.K. Davhana, Personal Notes, p. 42.

45. G. Bridel, Extracts from Album de la Mission Romande, p. 11.

46. F.A. Cuendet, *Rivoningo Emunyameni*, p. 15; Patrick Harries, Exclusion, classification and Internal Colonialism, The emergence of ethnicity among the Tsonga-speakers of South Africa, Leroy Vail (ed.), The creation of tribalism in Southern Africa, p. 86.

47. The Venda south of Luvuvhu River associated the Swiss Missionaries with the Tsonga as only the Tsonga language was used in schools and church.

48. G. Bridel, Extracts from Album de la Mission Romande, pp. 20 -21.

The two Swiss missionaries Berthoud and Creux, like the other missionaries who came after the abandonment of Schoemansdal, found Makhado at the height of his power. Thus, mission stations of Valdezia (established 1873) and Elim (established 1879) played an important part in the events of the time, as the two missionaries, who were liberal in outlook, attempted to close the gulf of misunderstanding which had developed between the Venda and the Boers.<sup>49</sup>

After the Berlin missionaries had established a third mission station at Mavhola in 1877, where the missionaries were faced with many problems including malaria which killed some of them, an important event took place. This was the result of the missionary work undertaken by Reverend R. Wessmann who came to the area in 1884.

He visited Makahane who requested him for a missionary. In reply to this, Wessmann despatched some of his converts Lalumbe, Radema, Tshimange and Mammada in 1890, to start mission work there. An interesting fact is that *Khosi* Makahane, became one of the converts. He was baptised on 4 August 1890, at the age of 78.<sup>50</sup>

This event is of great historical significance. Up to that time, not a single *gota*, *khosi* or *Thovhele* had been baptised. Hofmeyr remained unsuccessful in his efforts to convert either Madzhe or Makhado. Similarly Beuster and Schwellnus failed to convert Tshivhase and Madzivhandila. These *mahosi* allowed the missionaries to preach to their subjects, but when asked to listen to the Gospel, told the missionaries they were too old and that their sons should be the ones to be converted.<sup>51</sup>

Those missionaries who came to preach the Word of God to the Venda came either of their own accord or at the request of *mahosi*. They arrived, with no knowledge of

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49. TA SS3062/91, pp. 57 - 60. R1764/83, C.J. Joubert, Special Commissaris, Boodschap aan kapitein Makhatu; E. Creux, Antwoord van het opperhoofd Makhatu, 3 April, 1883.

50. L. Giesekke, Chronicle of Mission Station Georgenholtz, 1877 - 1919, Tshakhuma, 1920 (unpublished paper translated from German by the late Bishop D.W. Giesekke. The paper is in the possession of the author. M. Nemudzivhadi, Dana la Minwaha la Fhungo la Mudzimu Vhumbedzi na Vhutavhatsindi, 1877 - 1977, p. 6.

51. O.I. - E.N. Mudau (about 73 years), Tshakhuma, 25-01-1977.

either the people or their language, in areas in which there were no modern amenities such as roads and bridges, where rivers were sometimes flooded by heavy rains, and where fever and malaria were life-threatening. Yet they persevered.<sup>52</sup> There were those among the Venda who scoffed at the coming of these missionaries claiming the mission stations, which were independent of the authority of *mahosi*, had become places of refuge for the undesirable elements of the population. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the arrival of these men of God was a blessing to at least some of the Venda and Tsonga of the area.<sup>53</sup>

These mission stations became centres of learning, for in order to enable their converts to read and understand the catechism and the Bible, schools were instituted at which these people were taught to read and write. Furthermore, the people were skilled in the use of irrigation for planting gardens and orchards<sup>54</sup> and sub-tropical fruit trees. They taught the mission residents to cultivate sugar cane, rice, wheat and garden vegetables,<sup>55</sup> thus ensuring by means of irrigational technology, year-round supplies of food for themselves and their converts. Forestry was also introduced with the planting of Bluegum trees, pines and other species for the growth of timber. The residue of such plantings is still evident in the areas of Tshakhuma, Beuster, Georgenholtz, Khalavha, Valdezia and Elim.<sup>56</sup>

Although the *mahosi* did not allow mission stations near their royal residences, they protected the missionaries, as their presence was a source of pride to them. These men had the ability to repair wagons and could inform *mahosi* about the movements of Whites in their territories. Most important, the missionaries acted as links between them and the Boer government. In the case of Makhado and his difficulties

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52. O.I. - E.D. Giesekke, on the dedication of the Schwellnus Memorial Church in Tshakhuma, 1954.

53. O.I. - E.N. Mudau (about 73 years), Tshakhuma, 25-01-1977; D.W. van der Merwe, *Die Geskiedenis van die Berlynse Sending-genootskap in Transvaal, 1860 - 1900, Argieffaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis*, 46(1), 1984, p. 55.

54. P.R.M. Mphephu, "Friends in Europe", *Venda Diary, 1984 - 1985*, pp. 90 - 91. Publication of paper delivered on the occasion of Lutheran Church Visitors from Grafschaumberg Circuit, West Germany, 19-07-1983.

55. *Ibid.*, pp. 90 - 91.

56. *Ibid.*, pp. 90 - 91.

with unfair traders in the area, his friend, Terence Fitzgerald, once advised him to get a missionary in his territory, who would supply him with clothing.<sup>57</sup> For this reason Hofmeyr was allowed to remain at Kranspoort.

It should also be noted that the missionaries, especially those in central and eastern Venda, where they were welcomed by *mahosi*, prevented clashes between these *mahosi* and the Boer government, while they also acted as messengers and ambassadors for the government. Some of them like Beuster and Wessmann, acted as reporters, despatching secret reports against rulers like Makhado, who did not allow them to work in the territories adjacent to the royal residence. Several copies of their letters, found in the Transvaal Government Archives, bear testimony to this.<sup>58</sup>

The coming of the missionaries also brought changes which transformed some of the Venda under Makhado and his contemporaries, into a new society in which some turned away from ancestor worship by accepting Christ as their saviour.

The power and influence of the god, Raluvhimba, began to diminish, while the Venda learned new ways of living through their contact with the missionaries. But this, within itself, is not an indication that large numbers of the Venda and Tsonga swarmed to the mission farms at Beuster, Tshakhuma, Georgenholtz, Valdezia and later to Elim and elsewhere in search of either salvation or for purpose of residence and western education. As late as 1916 (some forty-odd years after the coming of the missionaries), it was for example estimated that of the 180 411 Blacks resident in the Soutpansberg area, 41 000 were of Tsonga/Shangaan, decent. Of the  $\pm$  100 000 living outside the locations, there were only 7 625 indigenses, both the Venda and Tsonga/Shangaan, residing on the mission farms and stations in the districts north and south of Luvuvhu River.<sup>59</sup> It is not known at this point what percentage of the 7 625 were Tsonga/Shangaan, but it does tell us that less than one half of 1% of

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57. D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(2) September 1957, p. 171.
58. C.J. Conerly, The surrendering of the lands in the Northern Transvaal of Mahosi Davhana, Makhado, Mphephu and Sinthumule (B.A. Honours, Dissertation, Univ. of Cape Town 1990), p. 31.
59. U.G. 19 - '16, Report of the Natives Land Commission, I, 1916, p. 7.

the indigenous population chose, or were allowed to live on mission farms, which comprised some 20% of the lands designated to be set aside in trust for the "Natives" in Soutpansberg.

Conversely, it tells us that  $\pm$  99,5% of the majority population lived either in locations and state-owned lands, or as labourers or squatters on private or company-owned farms, rather than on mission farms with the missionaries.<sup>60</sup> So, even though there was a decline in traditional religious beliefs during the times of the early missionaries, the number converted to Christianity, was not nearly as extensive as these missionaries would have liked.

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60. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

## CHAPTER 6

### MAKHADO'S RELATIONS WITH THE SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC AND THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES UP TO 1883

Although Makhado did not like the Boers for the support they rendered to Davhana, and for their encroachments on his land, he could not do without them. He needed their modern medicines which were so effective in curing sub-tropical and other diseases. They brought with them clothes and other necessities of life. Without it life was unpleasant, particularly to the generation of Makhado, born after the Whites arrived in Venda. Makhado's friend, Fitzgerald, was not in favour of his confrontation with the Boers as he knew their strength, determination and fighting skills with their modern weapons of warfare.<sup>1</sup> Consequently Fitzgerald advised Makhado to patch up his differences with them before it was too late and to start building bridges of friendship. What worried and troubled him, was the fact that one day the Boers would come back to avenge the defeat they had sustained and which resulted in their abandonment of Schoemansdal. He was certain it might happen at any time during his lifetime, or after his death.<sup>2</sup>

As Makhado was in the midst of this dilemma, rumours reached him that there was a certain *maine*, a herbalist, across the Vhembe River, who was in a position to prepare a medicine which, when rubbed onto the body, could render one bullet-proof.<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to note that, instead of having his army trained and trying to obtain more arms and ammunition, Makhado found solution and comfort in the so-

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1. C.J. Conerly, The surrendering of the lands in the Northern Transvaal of Mahosi Davhana, Makhado, Mphephu and Sinthumule (B.A. Hons, Dissertation, Univ. of Cape Town, 1990), p. 33.
  2. S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, p. 34; D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(2) September 1957, p. 171; D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 163.
  3. T.V. Bulpin, *Lost trails of the Transvaal*, p. 97; S.M. Dzivhani, *Mahosi a Venda na vhadau van Tshakhuma*, p. 34; C.J. Conerly, The surrendering of the lands in the Northern Transvaal of Mahosi Davhana, Makhado, Mphephu and Sinthumule, p. 28.

called ability of a man who had no knowledge of producing any iron instrument other than an assegai, an arrow and a hoe for tilling the soil.<sup>4</sup>

Makhado then despatched Lidzwavho and Rasikhanya with a delegation to Vhukalanga (Zimbabwe), for the purpose of procuring the anti-bullet medicine. When they arrived at the village, the *maine*, who professed to possess knowledge of everything, prepared the medicine, rubbed it on a head of cattle, took his firearm and released the trigger. The bullet went astray, proving to Makhado's messengers the effectiveness of the medicine,<sup>5</sup> and showing that they had come to the right man to obtain the very best medicine for their purpose.<sup>6</sup> Whether the messengers saw the real bullet going astray or were hypnotised by the *maine's* tricks, it is difficult to say. But, as that was what they had come for, they believed and were convinced that what they saw was the truth. After this they returned home.

On their return, the excited messengers related to their king what they had seen, and what they were to do. According to them the medicine had to be tried on one of Makhado's wives closely related to him. This wife was Matodzi, his niece. After everything was done as directed by the *maine*, Makhado was told to fire a shot at her as the bullet would go astray. Contrary to their expectations, Matodzi fell dead. This tragic incident shocked and frightened Makhado, who immediately disappeared into his palace.<sup>7</sup> Thus, Makhado's hopes and plans of defending himself and his country against the attacks of the Boers, which seemed imminent, had been shattered.

As the matter had become a serious issue, a subsequent visit to the same *maine* was undertaken. This visit, like the first, resulted in the death of four people as the bullet did not go astray when the gun was fired.<sup>8</sup> Makhado's superstitious people were

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4. By the time the Blacks had not yet manufactured firearms.

5. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 164.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 164; T.V. Bulpin, *Lost trails of the Transvaal*, p. 97.

7. S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, p. 34; C.J. Conerly, *The surrendering of the lands in the Northern Transvaal of Mahosi Davhana, Makhado, Mphephu and Sinthumule* (B.A. Hons, Dissertation, Univ. of Cape Town, 1990), p. 29.

8. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 166; S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, p. 34.

numbed by fear. They became frightened at the power of the White man's weapons whose effectiveness could not be stopped or prevented by anything, including the medicines of the very best *maine*.

Makhado's attitude in this episode, of relying on and believing in superstitious phenomena was representative of the tendency of many Blacks in the nineteenth century. They expected impossible on the advice of the *maine*, whose knowledge of herbs and their powers could not be questioned. Similar incidents had occurred with the Xhosas in 1857,<sup>9</sup> when their belief in Nonqkause's prophecies and Umhlakaza's advice, resulted in the death of many when certain prophecies never materialised.

Unfortunately, such beliefs in the powers of the *maine* persisted throughout the nineteenth century. The superstitious beliefs prevented many people from improving their living conditions. Many beliefs had a negative effect on their abilities to perform hard work and undergo training. It also impeded their imagination and creativity.<sup>10</sup>

Following this painful and unforgettable experience, Makhado lost faith in the powers of the *maine* and their medicines. This was the bitterest experience of his life. It left him sad and frustrated, for the death of some of the very people he intended to protect, shocked him.<sup>11</sup>

Although this tragic event appears unbelievable and story-like, it has been recorded and was confirmed by informants like S.M. Dzivhani.<sup>12</sup> It shows the dilemma in which Makhado found himself. For as long as Davhana was at Mpheni, where he was in contact with the Boers, and while Makhado remained unaware of the secret manoeuvres that might be plotted against him, Makhado remained restless. Hence

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9. The Xhosas were told that after they had destroyed their mealies, and other properties, the sun would rise from west to east and thereafter a storm would drive the Whites into the sea. Here my comparison is not how and where this originated but on what impact it had in the minds of the superstitious people.

10. The tendency of involving the Sangoma in international soccer matches in democratic South Africa, is reminiscent of this. Unfortunately some Whites appear to be joining these superstitious practices.

11. S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, p. 33 - 34.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

his futile attempts to fortify himself by sending messengers to Vhualanga for bullet-proof medicine.

As Makhado was still recuperating from the effects of the tragic events which followed the *maine's* failure to produce anti-bullet medicine, conditions in the Transvaal were deteriorating. On the eastern frontier Sekhukhune posed a threat, while the lack of money and dissension among the burgers prevented the government from putting the Republic on a sound footing. These adverse effects prevented the government from taking any punitive measures against Makhado who, after the abandonment of Schoemansdal, had become a thorn in their flesh.<sup>13</sup>

Makhado on the other hand, continued to enjoy popularity throughout Venda as a result of the victories achieved by his armies. His name was heard throughout the land.<sup>14</sup> When women stamped mealies, they sang of him, while other people heaped praises on him for his fearlessness and bravery. His armies spread terror, as indicated by women's praise, saying,

Bebu nwana rishavhe Makhado. Makhado, mukukulume wa Venda Mahosi a luvha ene. Meaning: Let us place our babies on our backs and flee as Makhado's armies are near, Makhado, the cock of Venda, under whose seniority all Mahosi bowed.<sup>15</sup>

Conditions in the Transvaal worsened after it became evident that the Boer were unable to subdue Sekhukhune. It also appeared as if Cetewayo, the king of the Zulus had started arguing that if Sekhukhune could stand strong against the Boers, why could he not do the same in respect of his white neighbours. With their empty treasury and the lack of an organised army, the Boers found themselves in a precarious situation.<sup>16</sup> This situation, coupled with British fears of foreign intervention in the Transvaal, especially after the Brussels Conference of 1876, compelled them to start looking beyond the borders of the Cape and Natal colonies. Sir Theophilus Shepstone, a senior colonial official in Natal, received instructions to

13. T.V. Bulpin, *Lost trails of the Transvaal*, p. 98.

14. O.I. - K. Nengovhela (about 100 years), Khumbe, 24-08-1980.

15. *Ibid.*

16. E. Walker (Ed.), *The Cambridge History of the British Empire*, VIII, p. 475.

move into the interior and, on 22 January 1877, he arrived at Pretoria with 25 mounted police for the purpose of maintaining order in the Republic without using any force. According to him, nothing could save the Transvaal except annexation. Thus, on 12 April 1877, he published two proclamations declaring the Transvaal a British territory with himself as Administrator.<sup>17</sup>

As the focus of this chapter is on Makhado and the South African Republic, relations between the British government and the Boers will not be pursued. What is significant here is how the native policy of the new administration affected Makhado and Venda.

After Shepstone had established himself in the Transvaal, he soon came to grips with the financially impoverished state which he had inherited from the Boers together with its enormous problems which he had to solve in order to restore order and peace. Among other things, he embarked on a northern safari which took him to Venda. According to L.T. Marole, Shepstone met all the senior *mahosi* of Venda at a place called Muananzhele, probably in 1878.<sup>18</sup> Makhado, the Lion of the North, did not attend the meeting. It is reported that Shepstone pointed out to those present that he had come to greet his subjects and to listen to their complaints. The facts that the chiefs told him that they had no complaints against the Boers, cast a dark shadow on the meeting, as they did not voice the feelings of their subjects.<sup>19</sup> They did not tell Shepstone the truth when they said the Boers were good to them, paying them for the work they did, and as far as harsh treatment was concerned, they were used to it as it was the same as that of their *mahosi*.<sup>20</sup> It is reasonable to assume that the people who met Shepstone were a few Venda commoners and Albasini's Tsonga. If they were *mahosi* they would not have said the treatment they received from the Boers was the same as that of their Mahosi.

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17. *Ibid.*, p. 476; C.J. Conerly, The surrendering of the lands in the Northern Transvaal of Mahosi Davhana, Makhado, Mphephu and Sinthumule, p. 34.
18. L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, p. 40; D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(2) September 1957, p. 176.
19. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 169; D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(2) September 1957, p. 176.
20. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 169.

From Muananzhele, Shepstone proceeded north-eastwards as far as Muledane, where the present Palmaryville is situated. Here he met the eastern *mahosi*, who although not mentioned, were probably some rulers representing Tshivhase, Mphaphuli and Rammbuda. It is unlikely that the two *mahosi mahulu* and *khosi* would have attended the meeting.<sup>21</sup>

Although there was no report issued of their deliberations, it is quite likely, they pledged their loyalty to him as the representative of the British Government. They would also have agreed to pay tribute. Unlike the Boers, the British people were popular with the Venda. After this, Shepstone returned to Pretoria. Makhado, who refused to see him, said he could not pay homage to a White man. If other rulers were no longer proud of their heritage, he would annihilate them.<sup>22</sup>

This state of affairs continued throughout the British occupation of the Transvaal, which ended in 1881. As the British annexation of the Transvaal did not enjoy the support of the majority of the Boers, they rose in revolt and eventually routed the British forces at Majuba on 27 February 1881.<sup>23</sup> The immediate outcome of this war of liberation, in which the Boers succeeded in getting rid of the imperial yoke, was the signing of the Pretoria Convention (1881), the terms of which were negotiated by a Royal Commission acting under instructions from Downing Street.<sup>24</sup>

The Pretoria Convention guaranteed complete self-government for the Transvaal, subject to the suzerainty of the Queen and upon conditions laid down in 32 Articles of which Articles III, XVII and XVIII provided that no enactment affecting the Blacks should have effect without the consent of the Queen. It also provided for the creation of a Natives Location Commission, in whose name land for the Blacks would be registered.<sup>25</sup>

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- 21. *Ibid.*, p. 169; C.J. Conerly, The surrendering of the lands in the Northern Transvaal of Mahosi Davhana, Makhado, Mphephu and Sinthumule, p. 34.
  - 22. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 169.
  - 23. E. Walker (Ed.), *The Cambridge History of the British Empire*, VIII, pp. 494 - 495.
  - 24. *Ibid.*, p. 495.
  - 25. *Ibid.*, p. 496.

These three articles heralded a new era as far as the Blacks were concerned. Venda was no exception as the Native Location question would always be a source of friction between the Boer Government and the Blacks,<sup>26</sup> and of course, with Makhado.<sup>27</sup>

According to the Pretoria Convention, land would be registered by the Natives Location Commission. They would be instrumental in the surveying and beaconing off of locations throughout the Transvaal. In the case of Venda it could be accepted that the significant Venda rulers, who were prepared to subject themselves to the White authorities, were to be provided with 'locations'. At a *pitso* (meeting) of Chiefs held in Pretoria and addressed by the British Commissioner, resident in Transvaal, before the Transvaal was finally given back to the Boers in 1881, the chiefs were told that the Queen was concerned about their welfare. They were assured that, although the Transvaal was on the point of being restored to its former rulers, their interests would neither be forgotten or neglected.<sup>28</sup>

The Natives Location Commission, consisting of Piet Joubert, George Hudson, H. Schoeman and Fritz Stiemens, received their terms of reference from the Executive Council, as the terms of the Pretoria Convention were somewhat vague. Before anything else could be done, the Commission had to take a census in order to determine the number of heads of families. Only then could they embark on the demarcation of locations.<sup>29</sup> This task of taking census and the demarcation of locations brought the Transvaal Government into confrontation with Makhado, who after having succeeded in driving the Boers away from Venda, considered himself to be independent. The Boer authorities, on the other hand, negotiated with him as if he had already been subjugated.<sup>30</sup>

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26. J.H. Bovill, *Natives under the Transvaal flag*, p. 17.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

29. S.A.P. van Biljon, *Grensbakens tussen Blank en Swart in Suid-Afrika, historiese ontwikkeling van grensbeleid en beleid van grondtoekenning aan die Naturelle in Suid-Afrika*, p. 385.

30. Mayhew, V. (Ed.) *Reader's Digest: Illustrated Guide to Southern Africa*, p. 243; T.V. Bulpin, *Lost trails of the Transvaal*, p. 319.

When Makhado ascended the throne in 1864, some of his elder brothers, Nthabalala and Ramaru fled across the Muhohodi River into Tshabwa. These brothers settled at Vari and Shehe respectively.<sup>31</sup> For the purpose of this study, Nthabalala's position is worth mentioning as he had some dealings with Makhado and the Boers. All along it had become traditional that no fugitive would be pursued by Makhado if he/she had crossed the Muhohodi River. In spite of this, differences between Makhado and Nthabalala brought about a change in this arrangement. By settling in Tshabwa, Nthabalala had become friendly to the Boers who were gradually coming back on the farms they vacated in 1867. This situation constituted another area of confrontation between Makhado and the South African Republic.<sup>32</sup>

By this time Makhado's formidable and invincible armies had become the envy of Venda and the Soutpansberg.<sup>33</sup> His military successes terrified the Boers living in Tshabwa, as they felt exposed to his unexpected attacks. The Boer authorities stationed at Boskopies, Klipdam and Marabastad felt concerned and uneasy as the news filtered through to them.<sup>34</sup>

The fact that the Tsonga had entrenched themselves at Luonde under Albasini whom the government had recognised as their paramount chief, irritated Makhado. He felt the Tsonga should be driven out, something he could do only by forcing them out and a task which appeared impossible as they could find protection by flocking to the *schans*.<sup>35</sup>

This meant that in the event of the outbreak of hostilities, he would be faced with a formidable force consisting of Boer, Tsonga and Davhana and Nthabalala's followers. As rumours circulated throughout Tshabwa and Rhenosterpoort affidavits

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31. Shehe and Vari are in Tshabwa which the Boers called Klein Spelonken; M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg*, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 162.

32. TA SS787, p. 40. R941/83, Notulen van een Raadplegen, Klipdam, 20 February 1883.

33. F.A. Cuendet, *Rivoningo Emunyameni*, p. 27.

34. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 171.

35. G.G. Munnik, *Memoirs of Senator the Hon. G.G. Munnik*, p. 80; T.V. Bulpin, *Lost trails of the Transvaal*, p. 93.

and declarations against Makhado inundated the local offices, stating how bad and hostile he was and that he threatened the existence of the few Boers.<sup>36</sup>

Amid these critical conditions, Albasini, who was always negative towards Makhado, reported at a meeting held at Klipdam on 20 February 1883, that on 15 February Makhado had despatched his commando to the Spelonken, where it occupied several kraals belonging to Nthabalala's followers. Albasini objected vehemently, and it had the effect that Makhado reconsidered the deployment of his army. His reply was however that he would not leave Vari without having fought against Nthabalala.<sup>37</sup>

He did not want to face a combined force consisting of the Tsonga of Albasini, Nthabalala's followers and the Boers, he despatched two messengers, Palale and Mabusha to Albasini. He informed them that he had nothing against the Tsonga and the Boers. He said he was after Nthabalala. He merely wanted to remain the only undisputed leader of the Ramabulanas, exercising control over the whole country.<sup>38</sup>

On the other hand, Nthabalala who, by this time, had become aware of Makhado's intentions, had already alerted Albasini of this impending attack. Nthabalala demanded protection saying he had been loyal and obedient to the government. To substantiate this, he said he had been regularly paying tribute and consequently had the right to be protected against his arch enemy, Makhado.<sup>39</sup>

Albasini's allegations against Makhado were endorsed by the District Commandant, B.J. Vorster, who read Tom Kelly's letter informing the meeting that Makhado's army had already perpetrated atrocities at Vari, where the kraals, that belonged to

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36. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 160; TA SS3062, p. 143. R1085/83, B.J. Vorster, Commandant, Zoutpansberg, Doorkop, Spelonken, aan den landdrost, Zoutpansberg, 22 February 1883.

37. TA SS787, p. 40. R934/83, Notulen van een Raadplegen, Klipdam, 20 February 1883. Similar copies of these minutes dated 20ste February /83, instead of 20ste February 1883, are found in TA SS3062, pp. 213 - 219. For this purpose see TA SS3062, p. 215. R1085/83.

38. TA SS787, pp. 21-5. R934/83. Notulen van een Raadplegen, Klipdam, 20 February 1883.

39. *Ibid.*, pp. 40 - 41.

Nthabalala and his followers, were set alight. The meeting had to accept the allegations as authentic as there was nobody on Makhado's side to state his views.<sup>40</sup>

To make matters worse, Oscar Dahl, the Native Commissioner at Fort Klipdam, reported to the same meeting, in the beginning of September 1882, when he was on a tax collection tour in and along the western range of the mountains, he encountered some resistance from the inhabitants of Madzhie, Tshirangalala, Ramasunzi and Mamali. These people said they could not pay any tax. They were afraid Makhado would punish them, capture their beasts and set their kraals on fire.<sup>41</sup>

As the situation appeared to be getting out of hand, the Commissioner advised Makhado to allow these people to fulfil their obligations by paying their taxes. Makhado's reply was that he would consider the request after the Commissioner had visited him in order to discuss the issue. Makhado in going further, pointed out that as leader of his nation, the whole Soutpansberg fell under his jurisdiction. By this he implied that there was nobody above him in his country. Therefore, instead of assuring the commissioner about the issue at stake, Makhado, concluded by telling him that he would not pay any tax to him, but directly to Piet Joubert, the Commandant-General.<sup>42</sup>

The issue of who should receive Makhado's tax, if ever he had to pay at all, should be clearly understood. It persistently remained a bone of contention between the Venda ruler and local government officials. As *Thovhele*, he regarded himself superior to them. By paying tax to the commissioner, he would, by implication, be lowering his status. It would also imply that he acknowledged the latter's seniority - an ordinary paid official of the government. This meant that it was expected of Ramasunzi, Madzhie, Mamali and Tshirangalala who were his *mahosi*, to pay their

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40. TA SS787, p. 44. See also TA SS3062, p. 218, Notulen van Raadplegen, Klipdam, 20 February 1883.

41. TA SS782, p. 38. R934/83, Notulen van een Raadplegen, Klipdam, 20 February 1883. See also TA SS3062, p. 218. Notulen van Raadplegen, Klipdam, 20 February 1883.

42. TA SS787, p. 41, R934/83. Notulen van een Raadplegen, Klipdam, 20 February 1883. See also TA SS3062, p. 217, R1085/83, Notulen van een Raadplegen, Klipdam, 20 February 1883.

taxes to him. He would then in turn transfer it to the Commandant-General who was based in Pretoria.<sup>43</sup>

Meanwhile, at the Spelonken, Makhado's commando had invaded Nthabalala. This incident was reported to the Commandant-General by Commandant B.J. Vorster on 27 February 1883. Vorster reported that Makhado's army had been seen across the Muhohodi River. When the commander of Makhado's army was invited to join peaceful negotiations, he turned the offer. Instead he set another kraal on fire. Despite the pressure exerted by the Commandant of Zoutpansberg and the Commissioner of the Spelonken, Makhado's commander did not withdraw his forces. Thereafter, Vorster wrote a letter to Makhado expressing his concern over his unco-operative attitude.<sup>44</sup>

On the same day, Commissioner Dahl, basing his information on declarations by Albasini and Vorster, reported to the Superintendent of Natives that his attempts to bring Makhado to the negotiating table were unsuccessful. In spite of this futile exercise, Dahl still offered to visit Makhado's commando in the Spelonken and to remain there pressing for a negotiated settlement with Makhado's commander.

The commander refused to meet him. It shattered all Dahl's plans. Realising that further attempts would not achieve any purpose, the commissioner concluded that the outbreak of hostilities was inevitable, and, consequently, he referred the matter to the Commandant-General.<sup>45</sup> Meanwhile, whilst awaiting further instructions from

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43. TA SS787, p. 41. R934/83, Notulen van een Raadplegen, Klipdam, 20 February 1883. See also TA SS3062, p. 217. R1085/83, Notulen van Raadplegen, Klipdam, 20 February 1883.

44. TA SS3062, pp. 161 - 162. R1085/83, B.J. Vorster, Commandant Zoutpansberg, Boschkop, Spelonken, aan den kaffer Hoofd Magato, 22 February 1883; See also TA SS3062, p. 108, R101/83, B.J. Vorster, Commandant Zoutpansberg, Boschkopys, Spelonken, aan Hoofd Kapitein Magato, 26 February 1883.

45. TA SS789, p. 296. R1074/83, Oscar Dahl, Commisjaris Zoutpansberg, Lagerplaats, Spelonken, aan Superintendent van Naturellen Zaken, 27 February 1883. More information on Makhado's attack on Nthabalala and Begwa in the Spelonken was supplied by T.C. Menne on his farm, Boschkoppies on 12-12-1987. Menne was the grandson of J.S. Cooksley, Makhado's friend.

the Commandant-General, Dahl remained in the Spelonken, exploring possible solutions in the interests of the country.<sup>46</sup>

As the situation was deteriorating, Commandant Vorster, could not remain idle. He wrote to Makhado that as a result of his unco-operative and uncompromising attitude and his refusal to withdraw his forces from the Spelonken, he was compelled to go and rescue Doors Buys, who was trapped in the Spelonken with his family. Vorster then went and rescued Buys from Begwa's kraal. The action did not rule out negotiations but, Makhado remained adamant that he (Vorster) would believe the aggression took place under Makhado's orders.<sup>47</sup> Once more Vorster ordered Makhado to withdraw his forces from the Spelonken in order to prevent further complications.

Over and above this, Antonio A. Albasini, the Commissioner for the Spelonken area, who was in the process of gradually taking over the reigns of the Tsonga from his father, João, reported that, after Makhado had attacked Nthabalala, Nthabalala informed him that he (Makhado), had claimed that Vari and some Boer settlements in the vicinity fell within his area of jurisdiction.<sup>48</sup> Albasini further pointed out that, if Makhado was allowed to go unchecked, he would eventually bring the 3 000 to 4 000 Tsonga, who had been loyal to the Republic, under his control. From the look of things Makhado had deeper motives than the subjugation of Nthabalala, who he wanted to use as a springboard for the conquest of the Spelonken.<sup>49</sup>

According to Albasini, it was abundantly clear that Makhado would start by conquering Nthabalala and thereafter the Boers, after he had harvested his crops. To forestall his ambitions, Albasini felt the Boers should strike immediately and force him into subjection. If he were left to continue his activities unchecked, Makhado

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46. TA SS789, p. 296. R1074/83, Oscar Dahl, Commisjaris Zoutpansberg, Lagerplaats, Spelonken, aan Superintendent van Naturellen Zaken, 27 February 1883.

47. TA SS789, p. 294. R1095/83, B.J. Vorster, Commandant Zoutpansberg, Boschkopys, Spelonken, aan Hoofd Kapitein Magato, 26 February 1883; See also D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 159.

48. TA SS790, p. 127. R1095/83, A.A. Albasini, Commissaris kantoer aan C.J. Joubert, 5/3/83.

49. *Ibid.*, pp. 127 - 128.

would grow stronger and increase his following, thereby creating more problems for the government.<sup>50</sup>

Reports on Makhado's aggression which were circulated from the Spelonken, Rhenosterpoort, Marabastad and to Pretoria, clearly suggested to the Boers that they were being threatened. Consequently, they decided to take up arms against Makhado under the guise of protecting Nthabalala, their loyal ally. To substantiate their planned attack, they alleged that Makhado had refused to pay taxes and accept the boundaries laid down for his territory. He, it was argued, wanted to drive away the Tsonga, an act which would eventually end with the conquest of the Boers. For this purpose they raised an army consisting of Boers, and Tsonga from Albasini, Valdezia and Elim mission stations.<sup>51</sup>

This combined army led by Commandant B.J. Vorster, launched an attack on Begwa's kraal with the intention of freeing the Buys whose headquarters were surrounded by Makhado's army. Heavy fighting, lasting one and a half hours, ensued. Begwa's kraal fell to the Boers and their collaborators. The resultant casualties as reported were two Blacks dead and five wounded on the side of the invaders. Makhado lost twenty-one men. Disappointed and shattered, Makhado's army disappeared into the mountains.<sup>52</sup>

Commandant Vorster, having been encouraged by the success of the combined army, could not end the matter there. He sent a message to Makhado, requesting him to come for negotiations in order to have the matter amicably settled. Makhado, who considered himself undefeated turned this invitation down. Although Vorster

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50. *Ibid.*, pp. 127 - 128.

51. F.A. Cuendet, *Rivoningo Emunyameni*, p. 27; G. Bridel, Extracts from Album de la Mission Romande, p. 30; See also TA SS3062, pp. 106, 139. R1075/83, B.J. Vorster, Commandant Zoutpansberg aan Leden van het Uitvoerende Raad, 27 February 1883; and B.J. Vorster, Commandant Soutpansberg, Lagerplaats, Boschkopys, Spelonken, aan Leden van het Uitvoerende Raad, 5 Maart 1883; D Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(2) September 1957, p. 179; Rev. Ernest Creux, Letters to the Editor of the Christian Express, p. 2, undated (Pamphlet in possession of the author).

52. TA SS3062, p. 102. R1075/83, B.J. Vorster, Commandant Zoutpansberg, Spelonken aan Leden van het Uitvoerende Raad, 27 February 1883; See also D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, pp. 170 - 171.

did not want to continue the war, he requested the landdrost to reinforce his army and to supply more ammunition.<sup>53</sup>

To forestall further troubles and attacks from Makhado, who was alleged to have adopted a rebellious attitude, the Commandant had a *schans* built for the protection of the lives of the Boers who were in the Spelonken. The *schans*, or *laager*, was guarded by ten local Boers, eight Buys and a standing contingent consisting of 600 Tsonga.<sup>54</sup>

After receiving Vorster's communication, the Pretoria government felt involved and responded by despatching Christian J. Joubert to the Spelonken. As a special commissioner, Joubert was empowered to investigate conditions and thereafter to bring peace and tranquillity to the whole of the Soutpansberg.<sup>55</sup>

At a meeting held at Boskoppies *laager*, Spelonken, which was also attended by Joubert, it was decided to reiterate the same message already sent to Makhado as well as other *mahosi* of the district by the District Commandant, concerning the arrival of the Special Commissioner.<sup>56</sup>

On 29 March 1883, at another meeting held at the same place, a messenger, who had been sent to Makhado by Joubert to request him to meet Joubert at the wagon road that passed at the foot of Tshirululuni mountain, returned. This road was called *Buis-paden* as it was leading to the Buys settlement in the west. The messenger reported that Makhado had indicated that Joubert should come to see him at his royal residence where Commissioner Dahl once collected the taxes. Indeed Joubert should have arranged to meet Makhado at Luatame. He might have done this under the influence of the local Boers. Therefore, Makhado could not understand why Joubert wanted to meet him below the mountain. He regarded this invitation as an

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53. TA SS3062, p. 105. R1075/83, B.J. Vorster, Commandant Zoutpansberg, Spelonken aan Leden van het Uitvoerende Raad, 27 February 1883.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

55. TA SS3062, p. 44. R13217/91, Commissie vergadering, C.J. Joubert, Spec. Comm., Oscar Dahl, w. secr., Boschoppies Lager, Spelonken, Soutpansberg, 27 Maart 1883.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

attempt to lure him into a trap in which the Boers might kill him. Consequently he turned down the request.<sup>57</sup>

Ignoring Makhado's suggestion that Joubert should come to his royal residence, Joubert accompanied by his bodyguard, went to the appointed place to find out whether Makhado had arrived. On his way to the Muhohodi River, he met two of Makhado's men, who had come to inform him that Makhado would not come to the appointed place, and that they had been instructed to lead the Special Commissioner to the king's royal residence. Joubert, in his reply, said he had not come to visit Makhado's royal residence. He had come to meet all *mahosi* personally, with a view to investigate the causes of the unrest situation in the Soutpansberg. According to Joubert, it was the duty of everyone in the country to comply with the orders of the Special Commissioner, and, if Makhado was not prepared to comply with the order, it might be concluded that he was unco-operative because he appeared to be unwilling to meet Joubert, together with other *mahosi* at the place chosen by Joubert himself.<sup>58</sup>

The Special Commissioner who clearly approached the problem on a master-servant basis, was perturbed by Makhado's negative attitude. To him, the Black man's behaviour was tantamount to arrogance. Joubert who was not prepared to bow down to Makhado's wish, told his messengers he would again come to the appointed place to meet Makhado the following day. He would be accompanied by a patrol of 30 men, while Makhado was at liberty to bring with him as many of his people as he wished. The two messengers then handed £17 to Joubert as a gift of welcome from Makhado. Joubert was not impressed by this gesture. He said Makhado should be told that he would accept the gift on condition that Makhado complied with his request. If he failed to do so, the gift would be sent back.<sup>59</sup>

The following day, on 30 March 1883, the Special Commissioner again went to the appointed place with his bodyguard and waited for 2½ hours, thinking that

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57. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

59. TA SS3062, p. 47. R13217/91, Commissie vergadering, Boschoppies Lager, Spelonken, Soutpansberg, 30 Maart 1883. Minutes unsigned.

Makhado would come. This was a futile exercise, as nobody appeared. So Joubert left at 14:00 fully convinced that Makhado was not prepared to meet him. The commission then concluded that, as there was no prospect of meeting Makhado in order to arrive at an amicable settlement, the Special Commissioner could use his discretion in dealing with Makhado in accordance with the powers entrusted to him by the Executive Council.<sup>60</sup>

Although the Boers in the Soutpansberg felt that the turbulent situation in the district could only be settled by resorting to a show of arms, the Executive Council hesitated to take any decisive action, especially if such action could lead to complications in its relations with England as this would be in contradiction with the spirit of the Pretoria Convention. With this view in mind, Joubert called upon Rev. Creux of Elim Mission Station, begging him to talk to Makhado to find out whether he really wanted war or peace.<sup>61</sup>

As he was Makhado's friend, Creux felt that such a task should be entrusted to the Berlin missionaries, who were working among the Venda. When the Berlin missionaries could not come as anticipated, Creux eventually agreed to go to Makhado in his mountain headquarters.<sup>62</sup>

As Creux did not want to go alone, he took with him a Tsonga man, Hakamela Nyatsi. Along the way to Luatame, they came across Makhado's army, heavily armed, but happy to see the missionary on the road to their king as they did not want war. They knew that, if fighting broke out, it would mean the loss of harvests, burnt villages and famine.<sup>63</sup>

With Joubert's letter in his pocket, Creux arrived at Luatame and was taken to the residence of Rasivhetshela, one of the senior *ndunas*, where he was joined by

60. *Ibid.*, p. 48; See also D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(2) September 1957, p. 179.

61. G. Bridel, Extracts from Album de la Mission Romande, p. 30; TA SS3062, p. 57, R1764/91, C. Joubert, Speciale Commisjaris, Boodschap aan Magato, undated. See also D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(2) September 1957, p. 171.

62. G. Bridel, Extracts from Album de la Mission Romande, p. 30; See also D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 171.

63. G. Bridel, Extracts from Album de la Mission Romande, p. 31.

Makhado. Creux explained that Joubert heard that war had begun, and that he, Joubert had come to explore the prospects for a peaceful settlement. According to the message, Joubert wished he could see the king and talk to him as a father speaks to his child. Creux mentioned a *rendezvous* where Joubert could be found with fifteen Boers. He hoped Makhado would not be afraid to come with fifty men and his councillors.<sup>64</sup>

Makhado's reply was clear and to the point. He did not want war, but peace. He was ready to pay tax if the Boers wanted him to do so, but he would under no circumstance go to the place where they wanted to meet him as they might assassinate him just as they had done with his uncle, Ramavhoya.<sup>65</sup>

Creux, however, pointed out to Makhado that he should not be afraid, as the Boers were not the same as before. That was why they had sent him, a missionary who was his friend, to bring a message of peace. He further told Makhado that, although, blood had flowed, there was still some chance that something good could be done. He advised him not to reject the hand that had been extended to him and to have the interest and welfare of his people at heart. Creux assured Makhado that, should he be suspicious of the intentions of the Boers, he (Creux) would remain as a hostage until he came back, and that, should anything happen to him, he (Creux) would order Makhado's people to kill him.<sup>66</sup>

Makhado, who was not convinced by this assurance, said his life meant much more than that of a missionary, as he (Makhado) was the only leader of his people while there were other missionaries who could replace Creux. He insisted that the Boers should meet him at his residence where he would call upon his people to come to

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64. *Ibid.*, p. 31; TA SS3062, p. 59. R1764/83, Antwoord van het Opperhoofd Makhatu aan den afgevaardigde aan hem gezonden door den Wegd Heer den Speciale Commisjaris, 3 April 1883, Ernest Creux, Zendeling, Boschoppies, 4 April 1883. R1764/85 had to be used along with pp. 82 - 84 as the matter is the same.

65. G. Bridel, Extracts from Album de la Mission Romande, p. 31; TA SS3062, p. 60. R1764/83, Antwoord van het Opperhoofd Makhatu aan den afgevaardigde aan hem gezonden door den Wegd Heer den Speciale Commisjaris, 3 April 1883, Ernest Creux, Zendeling, Boschoppies, 4 April 1883. See also D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(2) September 1957, p. 180.

66. G. Bridel, Extracts from Album de la Mission Romande, p. 31.

pay homage to Joubert. He ended by pointing out a tree below his headquarters where he could meet them.<sup>67</sup>

The missionary then left Luatame and conveyed Makhado's response to Joubert, who, although his request had not been fully accepted, was delighted to hear that the king also wanted peace. His officers, however, doubted Makhado's sincerity. They maintained that he wanted to lure them into an ambush, and urged that another message be sent to Makhado.

In this message Joubert said he was upset to hear that Makhado had no confidence in him and that, if the king really wanted peace, he should prove this by paying £1 000 as a token of his sincerity. The first instalment had to be sent to the government by the following Monday.<sup>68</sup> In addition Makhado would have to declare that he would not go beyond the boundaries which had been fixed by the British Government until such time that a Government Commission, of which the British Resident would be a member, had arrived.<sup>69</sup>

This time, Joubert's message was conveyed by Creux and Rev. Beuster. When they arrived, they found Makhado surrounded by many warriors. When the message was conveyed, the people were astonished to hear that £1 000 had to be paid. They felt it would be difficult, if not impossible, to raise. When boundaries were mentioned, the people shouted that the Boers wanted to take their land. Beuster interceded and pleaded with them, warning that should they try to fight against the Boers, their mealies would be destroyed. Makhado's warriors in their reply said the destruction of mealies meant nothing to them, as they would rather perish than be ruled by the Boers.<sup>70</sup>

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67. *Ibid.*, p. 31; TA SS3062, p. 60. R1764/83, Antwoord van het Opperhoofd Makhatu aan den afgevaardigde aan hem gezonden door den Wegd Heer den Speciale Commisjaris, 3 April 1883, Ernest Creux, Zendeling, Boschoppies, 4 April 1883.
68. G. Bridel, Extracts from Album de la Mission Romande, p. 31; TA SS3062, p. 61, R1764/83, C. Joubert, Special Commisjaris, aan Kapitein Makhatu, Lagerplaats, 4 April 1883.
69. G. Bridel, Extracts from Album de la Mission Romande, p. 32.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

In the midst of this hullabaloo and verbal wrangling, Makhado disappeared into an inner court and called on his councillors for their advice. The result of this top-level meeting was the signing of everything that was expected of him, as he had a terrible fear of war. This done, the two missionary messengers took the signed document back to Joubert, who noted that, although Makhado had not yet collected the £1 000, it would be sent as soon as it was available.<sup>71</sup>

Joubert's happiness was, however, short-lived as he waited in vain for the promised money. He became worried and told Creux that the Boers were becoming impatient. They might arrive with a cannon and ammunition the following day if his peace initiative was unsuccessful. Should that be the case, the impending catastrophe might not be averted.<sup>72</sup> Fortunately, for Makhado, history was on his side as, according to the terms of the Pretoria Convention, any misunderstanding which might arise between the Blacks and the Boers, would have to be resolved by a Commission of which the English Resident would be part.<sup>73</sup> This meant the Boers had to act with care in order to uphold the Convention. Any contravention of its terms might draw the British Government into the conflict, and such British intervention had to be avoided at all costs.

As Makhado had not yet fulfilled his promise, Joubert once more approached Creux, and sent him to Luatame to tell Makhado that he would like to see him with six Boers from Waterberg at a spot chosen by himself. When Creux arrived at Luatame, he was warmly welcomed as Makhado regarded him as the saviour of his people.<sup>74</sup> He wondered why the Boer Government could not appoint him as a magistrate for, according to Makhado, had they sent a Boer, war would have broken out long ago. Creux, through this visit came to realise that the king could not give the money to the Boers as he feared they might attack him. Instead, Makhado

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71. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

72. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 32; TA SS3062, pp. 84 - 85. R1764/83, C. Joubert, Speciale Commisjaris, Klipdam, Zoutpansberg, aan P.J. Joubert, Commandant Generaal, 14 April 1883.

74. G. Bridel, Extracts from Album de la Mission Romande, p. 32; TA SS3062, pp. 61 - 62. R1764/83, C. Joubert, Speciale Commisjaris, Lagerplaats, aan Kapitein Makhatu, 4 April 1883.

decided to take £300 with him to Joubert. When he however saw the Boer horsemen arriving at the foot of the mountain, fear seized him and he refused to go to the meeting place.<sup>75</sup>

Disappointed and disgusted, Creux returned to the appointed spot. He told Joubert that Makhado had refused to come down. As one of his brothers was there, Joubert ordered him to inform Makhado that he (Joubert) would return the following day and should Makhado not come, he would meet him at his residence. After the Boers had returned to the plain, Makhado sent the £314 which he collected, plus £20 for Joubert, £10 to two of his officers and £10 pounds to Creux who, he said, had brought peace.<sup>76</sup> A few days thereafter, Joubert wrote to Creux, Beuster and Schwellnus, thanking them for the good services they had rendered the Republic and asking them to assure Makhado of his goodwill while reminding him of the conditions of peace.<sup>77</sup>

As Joubert was busy trying to normalise the situation through peaceful means, the Spelonken Boers, who would be satisfied with nothing but the total annihilation of Makhado, continued fabricating stories which were submitted to Albasini. Albasini, in turn, reported on 5 April 1883 that Makhado had mobilised his fighting men from Vuvha, Luonde and Mauluma. This combined force, it was alleged, was spotted on its way to Makhado.<sup>78</sup>

On 7 April 1883, Albasini despatched a private letter alleged to have been written by Rev. E. Schwellnus, presumably to the Special Commissioner, informing him that from the said letter, that it was apparent that future problems from Makhado could not be ruled out. He said it was rumoured that Makhado was alleged to have bought the whole land that formerly belonged to Ramabulana with £1 000 from the Special Commissioner. All *mahosi* who had deserted him, would be brought to task

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75. G. Bridel, Extracts from Album de la Mission Romande, p. 32.

76. *Ibid.*, p. 32; D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 174; See also D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(2) September 1957, p. 180.

77. G. Bridel, Extracts from Album de la Mission Romande, p. 33; D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 174.

78. TA SS3062, p. 72. R1764/83, A.A. Albasini, Commisjaris van Nat., Spelonken, aan Speciale Commisjaris, Lagerplaats, Spelonken, 5 April 1883.

as soon as the Boer and Tsonga commandos had left. Further reports from Albasini claimed that *Khosi* Madzivhandila of Tshakhuma had been ordered to come to Dzanani with his commando. As he refused to carry out the orders, Madzivhandila was told that after the Special Commissioner had left, he would be brought to task.<sup>79</sup>

As if the allegations against Makhado were not enough, Albasini went further and indicated that most of the *mahosi* would apparently desert the Boers' side to join Makhado. Should this happen, Makhado would be in a position of strength which would enable him to perpetrate atrocities and havoc on all Black and White inhabitants of the Spelonken. To prevent this, Albasini said he would keep the Tsonga commando in a state of readiness at his place, but he could not do that for a long time as food would run short.<sup>80</sup>

Albasini's intentions were clear, as he wanted to instil a sense of anxiety in Joubert's mind so that Joubert supported the idea of keeping the Tsonga commando at his place, possibly with the Government's financial assistance.<sup>81</sup>

Albasini's accusations against Makhado did not in any way influence Joubert, who strove to remain impartial and upheld his integrity. He expressed satisfaction about the restoration of peace in the turbulent district. Makhado's payment of £314 as the first instalment of his tax arrears, as well as his promise not to attack other *mahosi* and to keep peace within his territory until the coming of the Location Commission, was to Joubert an indication that hostilities were a thing of the past.<sup>82</sup>

Joubert further indicated that his mission was not yet completed, as he was still visiting other *mahosi* in order to assure complete tranquillity for the district. He considered this a formidable task, as sporadic clashes had already occurred. He was, however, optimistic that with support and co-operation from the Boers, it had

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79. *Ibid.*, pp. 74 - 75.

80. *Ibid.*, pp. 74 - 75.

81. *Ibid.*, pp. 82 - 83. R1764/83, C.J. Joubert, Speciale Commisjaris aan Commandant-Generaal, 14 April 1883; TA SS3062, p. 75. R1764/83, A.A. Albasini, Commisjaris van Nat., Spelonken, aan Speciale Commisjaris, Lagerplaats, Spelonken, 5 April 1883.

82. TA SS3062, pp. 82 - 83. R1764/83, C.J. Joubert, Speciale Commisjaris aan Commandant-Generaal, 14 April 1883.

become possible to put an end to a situation which had already reached boiling point.<sup>83</sup>

After Joubert had concluded the desired settlement in the Soutpansberg, he left for Pretoria. The commando was disbanded, and the man who had been called upon to intercede in the interest of peace in the Spelonken, Rev. Creux, visited Makhado and advised the king that, as he was afraid of the Boers, it would be better if he could surrender his country to Her Majesty the Queen of England, as Moshesh had done. As soon as this was done, and the country became a protectorate, the Boers would no longer worry him. They would be afraid of the mighty British Government.<sup>84</sup>

Makhado, who was haunted by the fear of the Boers, was pleased to hear this, but after the missionary had left, his elders and councillors turned the advice down.<sup>85</sup> According to them, there was no difference between the Boers and the British. They were all White people with the same aims and ambitions which self-evidently would be contrary to the wishes of the Black people. Up to this point in time, Makhado's councillors still saw the possibility of pushing the Boers back as they said they would break the Boers' little necks.<sup>86</sup> Whether this request would have been accepted by the British Government after they had signed the Pretoria Conventions in 1881 it is difficult to say. At any rate, had Makhado's councillors accepted it and allowed him to approach Her Majesty's Government with such a request, the history of Venda might well have taken a different course. But that is a matter open to conjecture. Venda would not only have become a fourth protectorate in Southern

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83. *Ibid.*, pp. 82 - 83.

84. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 174; D. Möller-Malan, *Die donker Soutpansberg, Historia*, 2(2) September 1957, p. 180. For additional information see R.A. II, Interview with Mpefu and his Indunas, p. 4, 03-01-1899.

85. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 174; D. Möller-Malan, *Die donker Soutpansberg, Historia*, 2(2) September 1957, p. 180.

86. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 174; M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 164.

Africa but she might also have been in a position to develop her own traditional institutions outside the segregationist policies of the later South Africa.

This unsuccessful attempt within the Venda kingdom underlines the fact that, despite the influence the brave Makhado had on his people he could not act as he pleased, He had to listen to his councillors. This shows that Venda was run along the lines of a consultative monarchy, because the king, according to Venda custom, was king by the wish of the people. Makhado was no exception.

Thus, Makhado's unsuccessful attempts to make Venda a protectorate concludes this chapter which has unravelled the Boers' unsuccessful attempts to restore their authority and Makhado's successful endeavours to keep them out of Venda. The next chapter will trace how Makhado forced unity by annexation and display of power in order to revive the Venda kingdom.

## CHAPTER 7

### MAKHADO FORGES UNITY, 1883-8

Having in previous chapters discussed the role of the Boers, the missionaries and to some extent the role of the Ngoni and Swazi, an outline has been given of the conditions under which Makhado governed Venda. In this chapter the focus will be more specifically on Makhado as a ruler. An attempt will be made at revealing his skills as both a ruler and a diplomat. These attributes were highlighted and put to a critical test during the course of events which took place in Tsianda and Lwamondo, as well as those between Makhado and Tshivhase, Mphaphuli, Nethengwe, Magoro and the Sotho communities resident in Soutpansberg.

In an effort to fully understand the reasons for the intervention of Makhado in the affairs of Tsianda, a brief description of Govhamasenga, an uncle of Thohoyandou, and his descendants is necessary. The inhabitants of Tsianda, the Vhalaudzi, were part of the Senzi whose *vuhosi*<sup>1</sup> consolidated itself at Dzata.<sup>2</sup> During the days of Thohoyandou, who ruled four generations before Makhado, Govhamasenga was not yet a *khosi*. He was simply an important personality in the political spectrum due to his attachment to the royal household of the Masingo.<sup>3</sup> When Thohoyandou was at the height of his power, a feeling of suspicion arose, for he thought that Govhamasenga and his many sons might contest his kingship. This, of course, is difficult to understand, as Govhamasenga being the brother of Thohoyandou's mother, had no right to the kingship, and therefore, could not be expected to have thought of ousting Thohoyandou.

What is known, and what could have been expected, is Govhamasenga's assistance in defending and protecting the position of his sister's son and nephew,

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1. Kingship.
  2. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985; TA G.O.V. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 146/7/8/06. History of Tribe Netseanda and Mogibi, p. 1, 30-07-1906.
  3. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985; TA G.O.V. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 146/7/8/06. History of Tribe Netseanda and Mogibi, p. 1, 30-07-1906.

Thohoyandou. At any rate, and in accordance with available information which has come to be accepted as viable, Thohoyandou advised his maternal uncle to leave the royal headquarters at Dzata for a distant place. This was done to avoid disputes which might arise over succession to the throne between Govhamasenga's descendants and Thohoyandou's progeny, including Makhado.<sup>4</sup> This close relationship, which survived generations of rulers, was one of the reasons which, in 1882, compelled Govhamasenga's descendants to approach Makhado in order to resolve the dispute for succession between Mugivhi and Mukhesi.

Acting on Thohoyandou's advice, Govhamasenga and his followers left Dzata for the south. On his way he left one of his sons Maphaha, at Phahwe and proceeded onwards to Vhusenzi, eventually settling at Tshinavheni.<sup>5</sup> As Tshinavheni was hot and infested with mosquitoes and tsetse flies, which proved a scourge to the people, it is not surprising that Govhamasenga and his people found this place uninhabitable. Seeking a more compatible area, he turned north, leaving his sons Netshivhulana at Tshivhulana, Nengodzi at Tshimbupfe and Masie at Tshiphuseni, Makumbane at Tshisahulu while Muungufhala travelled on to settle along the Vhembe River. Govhamasenga himself went on to settle at Tshituwani<sup>6</sup> with his youngest son Tshipetane. It was during the time when Tshipetane was occupied in making Tshituwani his home, that Mpofu, Makhado's grandfather, was establishing himself at Sunguzwi. Govhamasenga remained at Tshituwani until his death, whilst his son, Tshipetane, became a *khosi* of the area.<sup>7</sup>

Tshipetane ruled the new territory without disturbance. Upon his death, he was succeeded by his son Dingana, who continued to reside at Tshituwani.<sup>8</sup> During this time, Mpofu and his progeny were concentrating their efforts on the territories

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4. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985; N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 98.
  5. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985; TA G.O.V. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 146/7/8/06. History of Tribe Netseanda and Mogibi, p. 1, 30-07-1906.
  6. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985.
  7. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985; N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 98.
  8. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985; N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 100.
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around Sunguzwi with their attention focused primarily on Dzanani. Therefore, Dingana, as his father and grandfather before him, ruled in comparative peace. This continued during the reign of Ramabulana, Makhado's father, who himself had no peace as he was fleeing from the Boers at Schoemansdal. When the Swazi attacked Tshakhuma and Makhado in 1869, Dingana felt exposed, fearful of his safety, if he remained at the headquarters in Tshituwani. He decided to move into the mountain. It could not be easily attacked by the Swazi. Consequently Mikondeni became the new headquarters from which he ruled.<sup>9</sup>

A *khosi* of Makhado and contemporary of Dingana, Ratombo of Tshidzivhani, gave Dingana his daughter as wife. This marriage revived the relationship between Dingana, a Mulaudzi, and Makhado, a Singo. Because of the esteem in which she was held, the new Singo wife, Khakhu, was posted at Dzananiwa,<sup>10</sup> where, on occasion, her husband visited her.<sup>11</sup>

With the repulsion of the Swazi at Tshakhuma and their subsequent defeat by Makhado, Dingana decided to send one of his sons, Mugivhi, with his mother, Mushaabalo, back to Tshituwani where pasturage for the grazing of his flocks was much more abundant than on the mountain.<sup>12</sup> Mugivhi returned to Tshituwani only to find the houses of the former royal residence in a state of disrepair and dilapidation because they had been unoccupied for some time. It was then that he decided to move the headquarters at Tshituwani to a higher place in the immediate

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9. The area to which she was posted was named Dzananiwa because she came from Dzanani, the name for Makhado's territory. Dzananiwa means little Dzanani. N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 100.
  10. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985.
  11. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985; N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 100; TA G.O.V. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 146/7/8/06. History of Tribe Netseanda and Mogibi, p. 3, 30-07-1906.
  12. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985; TA G.O.V. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 146/7/8/06. History of Tribe Netseanda and Mogibi, p. 1, 30-07-1906; N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 100.

vicinity. These newer quarters became the headquarters of his descendants - right up to the present.<sup>13</sup>

When Dingana died in 1881, Tsianda acquired new significance. Makhado was, at the time, at the peak of his power, and Dingana's death provided him with the opportunity to extend his political authority substantially. The earlier, internal strife within the Ramabulana dynasty had precluded any thoughts towards including Tsianda and its environs in Ramabulana's territory. Even in the early years of Makhado's reign, when he demanded tribute from Tshakhuma and Lwamondo, he gave no thought to Dingana's territory at Tsianda. But with the death of Dingana, a new era in the history of Tsianda began.<sup>14</sup>

At the time of the respective deaths of Govhamasenga and Tshipetane, there had been no wars of succession to the throne of Tsianda. This was despite the fact that, as previously pointed out, such wars were not uncommon in Venda after the death of a ruler. Tsianda, however, had yet to experience such internal strife.<sup>15</sup> Upon the deaths of the two previous rulers, it would appear that no word was sent to Dzanani.<sup>16</sup> This can be ascribed to the fact that there were no disputes over who was to succeed to the throne. Furthermore, none of these previous rulers' wives came from Dzanani. Now, however, one of Dingana's wives, Ratombo's daughter, was living in Tsianda. Therefore, when their ruler died, the inhabitants of Tsianda sent messengers to inform Makhado of Dingana's death.<sup>17</sup>

By this time, Makhado's popularity had spread to every corner of Venda. The messengers from Tsianda were cordially received at the royal headquarters. Their visit to Makhado clearly implied that they acknowledged his supremacy.

After presenting tribute to the court, in accordance with Venda law and custom, they reported Dingana had died. They then stated that the people would be pleased if

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13. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985; TA G.O.V. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 146/7/8/06. History of Tribe Netseanda and Mogibi, p. 2, 30-07-1906.

14. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985.

15. *Ibid.*

16. O.I. - Makhadzi Ramphiri (about 90 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1986.

17. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985.

Makhado could install a new *khosi*. This was necessary as their land would not remain peaceful without a ruler.<sup>18</sup> This pleased the ambitious *Thovhele*. The desires of the messengers from Tsianda fitted well with Makhado's expansionist plans. By implication it presented an opportunity to bring Tsianda more directly within Makhado's sphere of influence and jurisdiction.

He then instructed the messengers to return to Tsianda, and that he would consider their request for assistance in settling the matter of Dingana's successor. The messengers returned to Tsianda fully convinced that Makhado would send a royal deputation to assist in settling the problems of who would ascend to the throne.<sup>19</sup>

Makhado consequently immediately despatched a deputation, who upon their arrival at Tsianda, called together the elders and councillors of the deceased *khosi*. The deputation conveyed Makhado's response to their request for assistance, telling the *magota* and the elders that Makhado had instructed them to determine the identity of Dingana's successor and then install him.<sup>20</sup>

After listening to the statements by different people of Tsianda, including the *makhotsimunene* (*khosi's* brothers) and *dzikhadzi* (sisters), the deputation realised that the country was divided between Dingana's two sons, Mugivhi and Mukhesi. It soon became apparent that the gulf between the two groups could not be bridged. They then concluded that, unless a viable solution was found, civil war might ensue over the succession. In an effort to avoid this, they determined that all the princes of Tsianda travel to Mauluma, "to the place where a dipping tank was later built".<sup>21</sup> They felt the problem could best be settled on neutral ground. The ruler of this area was Ravele, the son of Nndwayamiomva and another *khosi* under Makhado. All the

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18. *Ibid.*

19. *Ibid.*; N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 100; TA G.O.V. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 146/7/8/06. History of Tribe Netseanda and Mogibi, p. 3, 30-07-1906.

20. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985; TA G.O.V. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 146/7/8/06. History of Tribe Netseanda and Mogibi, p. 1, 30-07-1906; N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 100.

21. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985; TA G.O.V. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 146/7/8/06. History of Tribe Netseanda and Mogibi, p. 2, 30-07-1906.

*dzikhadzi* and *makhotsimunene* of Tsianda accompanied the princes to Mauluma, where again the deputation reiterated Makhado's directive that they should make arrangements for one of the princes to succeed Dingana. Makhado desired the matter to be settled peacefully, without the shedding of blood.<sup>22</sup> In accordance with Makhado's wishes, the deputation requested the group from Tsianda to co-operate with them by listening to their suggestions for a peaceful solution of the problem.<sup>23</sup>

The deputation then pointed out that the outbreak of civil war over the succession could be avoided if two *vhuhosi* (kingships), rather than just the one, were created. The second *vhuhosi*, would be over the territory of Dzananiwa, the residence of Dingana's wife and Mukhesi's mother, who was a Singo. This portion of land did not fall under Tsianda. It was ruled by the Masingo themselves, who, because a fellow Singo was stationed there, used it as the centre from which they demanded tribute from the *mahosi* of the vicinity. It was then indicated that the *mahosi* of Tsianda would pay their tributes there, instead of travelling to Dzanani, which was situated some distance away. In conclusion they advised that it would be better if Mukhesi were installed here where his mother was stationed, while the other son, would remain in his father's territory at Tshituwani.<sup>24</sup>

This set of proposals baffled the royal family of Tsianda, as well as those who had accompanied them to Mauluma. Although the arrangement was in his favour, Mukhesi, who was a sincere, but outspoken person, expressed his surprise over the installation of two *mahosi* on one day. Mugivhi did not say anything. Mukhesi, however, proposed that it would be better for him and Mugivhi to settle their differences at home, without outside interference. He openly told Makhado's deputation that they had failed to solve the problem, as they had contrary to Venda law and custom, installed two *mahosi* to oversee the same land. According to Mukhesi, only one *khosi* was to be installed and that was he himself, as two bulls cannot live in the same kraal.<sup>25</sup>

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22. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985.

23. *Ibid.*

24. O.I. - Makhadzi Ramphiri (about 90 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985.

25. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985.

Following this arrangement, Makhado's messengers returned to Dzanani while the inhabitants of Tsianda with much joy and ululation of the women returned to Mikondeni to celebrate the installation of their candidate for the throne - Mukhesi.<sup>26</sup> The ordinary people were told by the councillors to go to their homes, as they would be informed of the day on which they should bring tribute as homage to the newly installed *khosi*. On the appointed day, when they had again assembled at the royal headquarters, they realised that the whole of the Vhuronga region from Mathuzeni and Mukanye to Dzwerani were not present. They were told these people had gathered at the forest of Hamutsha where Mugivhi was staying with his mother. Mugivhi's followers then informed him that Makhado's messengers had deceived him, as he could no longer be installed. Subsequently, they decided to have nothing to do with Mukhesi's celebration at Mikondeni.<sup>27</sup>

Mugivhi, who refused to believe he had been deceived, expressed surprise over what they told him. When he asked for clarification and explanation, his followers told him that his mother was a *dzekiso* wife,<sup>28</sup> implying that he was an heir-apparent.<sup>29</sup> His followers then voiced their dissatisfaction against the installation of Mukhesi by Makhado's deputation for the simple reason that his, Mukhesi's mother, came from Dzanani. These followers decided to launch a protest, refusing to pay tribute to Mukhesi. Mugivhi, however, reserved his opinion on the matter. He had no desire to differ with his brother and pointed out that the matter had to be referred to the elders. It was beyond his authority.<sup>30</sup>

At the elders' meeting it was concluded that they would, under no circumstances, send their tribute to Mukhesi. They had further decided rather to remain at Hamutsha and, as in the past, continue paying tribute to Mugivhi. According to the elders, the royal residence of Dingana was at Hamutsha. Mikondeni, where Mukhesi was, was only a temporary royal residence, established after the Swazi

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26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Ibid.* See also TA SS3062, pp. 125 - 126, R1085/83, J. Albasini, Goedewensch, aan Commandant van Zoutpansberg, 2 Maart 1983.

30. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985.

invasion in 1869. Furthermore, and very importantly, the property of kingship was left by Dingana at Hamutsha.<sup>31</sup> In addition to this, traditional instruments for raising *domba*, and circumcision lodges remained at Hamutsha. The little rivulet called Tshamanodamba-vhusha in which girls performed their *vhusha* ritual<sup>32</sup> was also in the vicinity of Hamutsha. The rivulet continued to be used for this purpose, even after the move to Mikondeni.<sup>33</sup>

Following the decision taken at Hamutsha, Mukhesi waited in vain for Mugivhi's followers to pay tribute. As time passed and tribute was due, Mukhesi's followers despatched a messenger to Hamutsha enquiring as to why the people were not sending their tribute to Mukhesi.<sup>34</sup> Mugivhi, very sure of the support of his followers, replied boldly that Mukhesi's messenger should inform his brother that he, Mugivhi, was not in a position to bow down to Mukhesi, as his kraal at Hamutsha was the royal residence. Thus Mugivhi implied that he was the real ruler of the whole territory.<sup>35</sup> The messenger conveyed Mugivhi's reply to Mukhesi and further informed him that Mugivhi was prepared to defend his position with force of arms. This, to Mukhesi, sounded like an ultimatum. Consequently, he began to prepare his forces to meet those of the recalcitrant Mugivhi.<sup>36</sup>

As neither of the two brothers was prepared to surrender his position to the other, both sides began to mobilise their armies. Mugivhi's warriors came primarily from the south - where Hamutsha was situated. Mukhesi's warriors were in the mountainous north in the vicinity of Mikondeni was situated.<sup>37</sup>

On the appointed day, the two opposing forces, armed with stones, battle axes, bows and arrows, as well as firearms purchased from illicit gun traders (as well as those brought by temporary workers from Kimberley) were deployed by their leaders. Mukhesi's forces came down the mountain to stand on the hill known as

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31. *Ibid.*

32. *Ibid.*

33. *Ibid.*

34. *Ibid.*

35. *Ibid.*

36. *Ibid.*

37. O.I. - Makhadzi Ramphiri (about 90 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1986.

Hamagidi.<sup>38</sup> The army of Mugivhi, approaching from the south, took up position on the hill known as Matomboni, overlooking the rivulet Tswororo. In this manner, the two armies faced each other, each fully determined and convinced of the justice of the cause for which they stood.<sup>39</sup>

Upon receiving signals from their respective leaders, the fighting commenced. As the fighting gained momentum, heavy losses were sustained by both sides. So much blood was shed. It flowed into the rivulet which turned red. It was because of this event that its name was changed into Tswororo, meaning “the gushing out of blood”, following piercing by an assegai. Although it has not been confirmed, it would appear that the initial battle continued until the following day. As no side was prepared to surrender or to show signs of falling back, the followers of Mukhesi, realising the seriousness of the situation, turned to Ratombo of Tshidzivhani for assistance against Mugivhi.<sup>40</sup>

Ratombo, upon receipt of the information that his sister’s son, Mukhesi, was in need of assistance against Mugivhi, felt compelled to participate in the fight. Since he could not make this decision on his own, he informed Makhado that Mugivhi and his followers refused to acknowledge Mukhesi as *khosi* and were, therefore, refusing to pay homage to Mukhesi. Makhado and his advisors, having been instrumental in the installation of Mukhesi, felt they were humiliated by Mugivhi and his people. Makhado would not tolerate it. Mugivhi would have to pay for this act of insubordination and face the consequences.<sup>41</sup>

Makhado immediately called one of his armies to assemble at the royal residence, ordering its commander to proceed to Tsianda and assist Mukhesi in his bid to retain the throne, trying to bring the confrontation between the two brothers to a halt.<sup>42</sup>

Matamela Mulelu, one of Makhado’s elder brothers, led the punitive expedition into

38. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985.

39. O.I. - Makhadzi Ramphiri (about 90 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1986. See also TA G.O.V. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 146/7/8/06. History of Tribe Netseanda and Mogibi, p. 2, 30-07-1907.

40. O.I. - Makhadzi Ramphiri (about 90 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1986.

41. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985; N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 100.

42. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985.

Tsianda. Makhado, in his choice of Mulelu to lead the army, was unaware that Mulelu's mother, Runganani, was the eldest child of Dingana and his heir apparent (but could not succeed her father because she was female) and the sister to Mugivhi. Had Makhado been aware of Mulelu's connections with Mugivhi, he, in all likelihood, would not have chosen Mulelu to lead the army on this particular mission.<sup>43</sup>

When Mulelu's expedition arrived on the scene, he found that Mukhesi, whom he was sent to assist, was fighting against his own maternal uncle Mugivhi. To further complicate matters, Mugivhi and Mukhesi (as brothers) were Mulelu's uncles. Thus Mulelu was caught in the midst of a personal dilemma, not of his own making. As a subject of Makhado and the leader of an army which was despatched to punish Mugivhi, he felt compelled to obey the Thovhele's instructions.<sup>44</sup> However, as Mugivhi's nephew, he found it difficult to shed his blood. Mugivhi was after all his (Mulelu's) mother's brother. He then devised a plan whereby he could carry out his king's directive, while, at the same time, saving the life of his uncle, Mugivhi. Mulelu felt he had to do this as he could not act against his conscience in an effort to please Thovhele. Consequently, he gave orders to his army to assist the people of Tsianda. In doing so, they were however to kill only the followers of Mugivhi without perpetrating any harm to their leader. If possible, they simply had to capture him.<sup>45</sup>

When Mugivhi's followers became aware that the Tsianda were fortified and strengthened with the Dzanani, they felt they could not face this formidable force alone. In an effort to counter the opposition's strength, they secretly crossed into Lwamondo to seek military assistance. They felt this was possible because Mugivhi

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43. O.I. - Makhadzi Ramphiri (about 90 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1986.

44. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985; N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 100.

45. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985. See also TA SS3062, p. 137. R1085/83, B.J. Vorster, Commandant Zoutpansberg, Lagerplaats, Boschkopys, Spelonken, aan Driemanschap en het Uitvoerende Raad, 5 Maart 1883. See also TA SS3062, p. 114. R1075/83, 5 Maart 1883; copy of the same letter.

was married to Maboho Nelwamondo's daughter Vele.<sup>46</sup> As hoped, Nelwamondo welcomed Mugivhi's messengers and agreed to supply his son-in-law with military assistance. He then despatched an army to Tshituwani and, the newly combined forces continued the battle. Ongoing hostilities continued for some four years, right through the famine of 1882 known as Tshipindula.<sup>47</sup>

Neither side was prepared to surrender. When Mulelu realised that the Lwamondo had joined the side of Mugivhi, thus making the opposing sides equally powerful, he decided to return to Makhado and inform him of this state of affairs. Upon his return to Dzanani, he reported that he was unable to see a solution to this conflict, seeing that Mugivhi was now assisted by the Lwamondo, and that the killing on both sides was ruthless. Mulelu further warned the king if they continued incur so many losses of warriors's lives in the conflict between the brothers, they, themselves, would be in no position to defend the kingdom.<sup>48</sup>

Makhado, still unaware of his *nduna's* diplomatic moves, responded positively, saying that the two territories Tsianda and Lwamondo belonged to him. He subsequently gave orders that his *nduna* should return and tell the fighting factions to lay down their arms and end hostilities and that thereafter, the territory would be divided into two parts.

Makhado's *nduna* returned to Tsianda and told the fighting armies to end hostilities. Makhado's messengers then succeeded in persuading Mugivhi and Mukhesi to lay down their arms, stating it was His Royal Highness, *Thovhele's* wish.<sup>49</sup> The two agreed to the peace terms that the territory be divided along the rivulet Maundwi (Tswororo), and that the two brothers would become independent *mahosi*, each paying tribute directly to Makhado at Dzanani. It was decided that Mukhesi's territory was to be situated north of Tswororo and would include Magidi and

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46. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985; N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 101.
47. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985; N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 101.
48. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985.
49. *Ibid.*; N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 100.

Dzananwa right up into the mountains. Mugivhi's territory then was to stretch south of Tswororo and bordered by the Mufule, Dzondo and Dzindi Rivers, all of which were the territory of Hamutsha. In the north, north-west and south-west, the territory of Mukhesi or Tsianda, bordered with Tshakhuma at Tshavhavha, Tshivhazwaulu and the River Luvuvhu. Khavhagali, Mugivhi's brother, was then stationed at Pfumbida, while Mashawana fell under the jurisdiction of Mugivhi.<sup>50</sup>

This territorial arrangement, which Makhado hoped would end hostilities between the two brothers, fell short of the expectations of the inhabitants of Tsianda, who were eager to bring the entire territory under Mukhesi's jurisdiction. They decided to forestall the arrangement by sending a *maine* with a vessel containing a mixture of blood and medicinal powders to be secretly sprinkled during the night time on the grounds of Mugivhi's *khoro*.<sup>51</sup> In the morning, as the people went to *khoro*, they saw this blood and reported to Mugivhi. When Mugivhi saw the blood, superstitious as he was, he collapsed and died. According to Van Warmelo, Mugivhi's difficulties with Mukhesi ended at the time of his death in 1887, four years after the fighting commenced. As a result, Mugivhi, enjoyed only two years of undisturbed reign.<sup>52</sup>

Following Mugivhi's death, Makhado sent Matamela Mulelu to assume the reins of power. He probably ruled until the installation of Mugivhi's son some four years later. It is also reported that Mulelu was pressured to relinquish the reins of power. After all it was his mother who was Mugivhi's sister. He, Mulelu, was just a nephew.<sup>53</sup> Mulelu, however, refused to vacate the throne, basing his claim on the fact that the two contenders for kingship, Tshipetane and Khavhagali, both sons of Mugivhi, refused to recognise each other. This allegation had no foundation, as Tshipetane assured Mulelu that he would make no claim on the throne if he, Mulelu, would leave the territory.<sup>54</sup> Mulelu bowed to this condition and vacated the throne.

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50. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985.

51. *Ibid.*

52. *Ibid.*

53. *Ibid.*

54. *Ibid.*; N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 101.

He returned to Dzanani and later joined Mphephu in his flight to Vhukalanga (Zimbabwe) in 1898.<sup>55</sup>

It is also necessary at this juncture to lay stress on the remarkable fact that Makhado's territorial settlement in this area has remained unaltered since the nineteenth century - up to this day.<sup>56</sup> The decision reached in 1885 provided the base on which the present day territories of Hamutsha and Tsianda are formed, despite attempts by respectively the government of South Africa and, later, that of the former Republic of Venda to consolidate them into one territorial council. Geographically, and in terms of tribal relationships, the two appeared to be one and indivisible unit. Yet, the events which prevented their unification have their roots, as had just been shown, in the past.

The relation of events during the times of Makhado would be incomplete if the history of Lwamondo is not taken into consideration. After the evacuation of Dzata, the territory of Lwamondo and several others severed ties with Singo rulers.<sup>57</sup> That is why Makhado visited Lwamondo after his installation and demanded tribute from Maboho Nelwamondo. If the ties were strong between Lwamondo and Dzanani, Nelwamondo would have appealed to Makhado for assistance when he was attacked by Tshivhase, Albasini, Mzila and the Swazi. Instead Nelwamondo defended his territory successfully on his own.<sup>58</sup>

No wonder, when Mugivhi could not face the combined forces of Mukhesi and Makhado, he turned to Lwamondo for assistance while Nelwamondo deployed his warriors to Hamutsha without consulting Makhado.<sup>59</sup>

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55. N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 101.

56. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985; N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 102.

57. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985; N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 103.

58. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985; N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 103.

59. N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 101; TA G.O.V. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 146/7/8/06. History of Tribe Tseanda and Mogibi, 30-07-1906, p. 2.

Maboho had built his royal residence at Madefule and later moved to Tshiozwi, north of Lwamondo mountain, and eventually established himself at Mafela on the ridge of the mountain which has become the royal residence of Lwamondo. Here he managed to beat off all outside aggression.<sup>60</sup>

In 1883 Maboho, who had protected Lwamondo against foreign aggression, died. He, like any Venda ruler, had many sons. Of these Raidimi and Phophi were the most important. Each claimed the throne. As usual, and as in other territories, Maboho's death was followed by a protracted struggle for succession to the throne. It is here that there is some confusion between written and oral historiographical reasons for Makhado's coming to the assistance of Raidimi in respect of the succession to the throne of Lwamondo.<sup>61</sup>

According to Van Warmelo, Raidimi's mother was Vhumbani, daughter of Maphaha of Phahwe, while Phophi's mother, Mmbodi, was a daughter of Raluthaga Madzivhandila of Tshakhuma. Van Warmelo's assertion that Makhado came to the assistance of Raidimi because of family ties, is incorrect. He based his analysis on the assumption that, because Raidimi's mother came from Phahwe, where Makhado's younger sister, Ndalambi was married, and that Makhado's wife Midana Imphephu's mother), also came from the same family.

Makhado would naturally have supported those family members closest to him for the throne.<sup>62</sup> But, Van Warmelo's assessment of the situation is not supported by Kone Nengovhela, Phophi's niece, whose narrative of these events was clear and unambiguous.<sup>63</sup> It is correct that Midana, Makhado's wife, came from Phahwe, that she was Maphaha's daughter and that Phophi was supported by the people within the

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60. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985.

61. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg*, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 162.

62. O.J.O. Ferreira, *Stormvoël van die Noorde, Stephanus Schoeman in Trnasvaal*, p. 367; S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, pp. 86- 87; João Albasini, 1813 - 1888, pp. 12 - 13; O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985; L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, pp. 25, 36, 37.

63. O.I. - B. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985; O.I. - Makhadzi Ramphiri (about 90 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1986.

territory, especially those of Matatani who, as the gota of that area had married a daughter of Raluthaga Madzivhandila of Tshakhuma.<sup>64</sup> However, the similarity between the interpretations of Van Warmelo and Kone Nengovhela's of these events ends here.

The fighting then commenced, and the people were divided according to the two princes. Some *makhotsimunene*,<sup>65</sup> Matshuse, Nemutandani and Muligwe supported Raidimi. Mabidzha, one of them, fled to Makhani at Muhuyu. Raidimi, although older than Phophi, could not withstand the power of Phophi's supporters and hastened to Vhuingamela where his younger brother Kilimboi,<sup>66</sup> had married Funyufunyu, Tshinetise's niece, Muofhe.<sup>67</sup>

Up to that point Makhado had no reason to interfere in the affairs of Lwamondo. Maboho had accepted his suzerainty. But after Funyufunyu Tshinetise had accepted to assist Raidimi, he conveyed this request to Makhado who felt concerned as Lwamondo was nominally part of his territory. To prevent any developments which might upset his planned expansion of territory, he immediately mobilised his forces, which consisted of one age group, which unfortunately could not be identified. Kone Nengovhela who had a vivid recollection of this force, reported that a multitude of the Dzanani people accompanied Raidimi. They arrived at Vhuthopha on 5 February 1883. Lwamondo had never experienced such a force in terms of numbers and determination. This was one of Makhado's armies which were feared throughout Venda.<sup>68</sup>

Raidimi felt strengthened and optimistic that Phophi would be crushed and he would be installed on the throne left vacant after the death of Maboho. Indeed, Phophi's army could not face this mighty force from Dzanani. Instead of offering any military resistance, they decided to surrender diplomatically. They did this by despatching a

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64. N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 69; O.I. - K. Nengovhela (about 100 years), Khumbe, 24-08-1980.

65. N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 69; O.I. - K. Nengovhela (about 100 years), Khumbe, 24-08-1980.

66. N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 69.

67. O.I. - K. Nengovhela (about 100 years), Khumbe, 24-08-1980.

68. *Ibid.*

girl called Matodzi with a *mufaro*<sup>69</sup> containing *Vhulungu ha madi na denga*,<sup>70</sup> to Makhado's army. This friendly gesture of loyalty was followed by a head of cattle which was taken the gathering place by one Madzunye. It made its way through the multitude of people to Maphugani.<sup>71</sup>

This token of surrender and loyalty, in the form of Venda beads and a head of cattle, was well received. The animal was immediately slaughtered and roasted for the army to feast upon. That was what the army wanted. To the disappointment of Raidimi, not a shot was fired by Makhado's army. Although it was reported that one *khotsimunene* of Lwamondo was killed, this atrocity was committed by the inhabitants themselves.<sup>72</sup> This is contrary to Albasini's report to the meeting at Klipdam on 20 February 1883, in which he said Makhado's army perpetrated havoc at Lwamondo.<sup>73</sup>

Makhado's army was not interested in who should be the new ruler of Lwamondo. What they wanted was loyalty from the people of the territory and to keep Albasini's influence out of Lwamondo. Phophi had clearly shown he owed allegiance to Makhado, The army had no cause to fight. They left Lwamondo. Raidimi who felt betrayed, no longer felt secure. He then accompanied the army on their way to Dzanani, leaving Phophi as the sole contender for the throne of Lwamondo.<sup>74</sup>

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69. *Ibid.* Kone, as Phophi's niece and the fact that she belonged to the royal family, knew much about the course of events in this regard.
70. O.I. - K. Nengovhela (about 100 years), Khumbe, 24-08-1980; TA SS787, p. 39. R934/83, Notulen van Raadplegen, Klipdam, Zoutpansberg, 20 February 1883; TA SS803, p. 106. R1426/83, Shienondewe voor A.A. Albasini, Commis. Natu. Spelonken, 14 Maart 1883.
71. O.I. - K. Nengovhela (about 100 years), Khumbe, 24-08-1980; TA SS787, p. 163. R957/83, Aanval van Magato op Paupil, A.A. Albasini, aan Staatsecretaris, 8 February 1883. Maphugani is a slaughtering place.
72. O.I. - K. Nengovhela (about 100 years), Khumbe, 24-08-1980.
73. TA SS787, p. 39. R934/83, Notulen van Raadplegen, Klipdam, Zoutpansberg, 20 February 1883. See also TA SS803, pp. 102 - 103. R1426/83, Mocwhoru, Onderkapityn van Shiewaas, voor A.A. Albasini Comms. Naturelle, Spelonken, 15 Maart 1883. See also TA SS787, p. 63. R957/83, A.A. Albasini, Com. v. Natu. Spelonken, aan de Superintendent van Naturelle Zaken, 8 Maart 1883.
74. O.I. - K. Nengovhela (about 100 years), Khumbe, 24-08-1980.

Raidimi, however, did not stay long in Dzanani. He later returned to his father's land and concluded peace with his brother Phophi. This type of understanding which shows surrender and the end of hostilities between contenders for the throne, was characteristic of Venda political history. It helped in bringing the feuding parties together and unified the nation, as the cause for which they were fighting no longer existed.<sup>75</sup>

Why Makhado did not install Raidimi after Phophi had laid down his arms, nobody knew. Perhaps he was satisfied with the surrender. He had shown beyond any doubt that his intention was not to support Raidimi in his bid for succession to the throne, but to subjugate the people of Lwamondo. He preferred to accept Phophi's terms of surrender, and to recognise him as *khosi*, as he had the greater number of supporters behind him. In this way Makhado's territory extended to the River Dzindi, which became the boundary between him and Tshivhase's territory. Thus Makhado's hegemony over Lwamondo was sealed.<sup>76</sup>

As the way was now opened, preparations for Phophi's accession started. Men were invited to participate in *tshikona* dance. Others were building a hut which the women plastered for the occasion. The *khosi* designate left through Madefule, while Netshivhale, who was responsible for the installation, entered through Tshiozwi and ultimately arrived at Makambe, where the installation took place. When everything was completed, the new *khosi*, Phophi, went back to his royal residence in the mountain.<sup>77</sup>

Phophi had now become the ruler of Lwamondo, with the assistance of Makhado. What is of significance here is that Makhado, by intervening in the affairs of Lwamondo, had made his presence and authority felt there as well. He did not invade the territory, otherwise he would have appeared to be an aggressor. Instead, he waited for an opportunity to present himself. Thus, when Raidimi requested assistance, Makhado seized the opportunity as it fitted with his plans of

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75. *Ibid.*; N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 70.

76. O.I. - K. Nengovhela (about 100 years), Khumbe, 24-08-1980.

77. *Ibid.*

aggrandisement. He emerged with enhanced popularity, as the Dzindi and Luvuvhu Rivers had become the south-eastern borders of his territory, bringing him into close proximity with Tshivhase and Mphaphuli in that direction.<sup>78</sup>

As if this was not enough, further developments in Tsianda brought Makhado once more into the picture. After Netsianda (Mukhesi) had established himself in his territory, he claimed sovereignty over Lwamondo on the grounds that the territory was formerly his, as the Lwamondo people had settled there after a friendly agreement was entered into between their forefathers. Nelwamondo had, however, declared himself independent in the course of time.<sup>79</sup>

As Nelwamondo (Phophi) objected to paying tribute to Mukhesi, differences and misunderstandings resulted. When Makhado heard of these differences between his two Mahosi, he intervened. As a solution, he proclaimed that Netsianda should exercise jurisdiction over his own territory, while Nelwamondo had to do the same in his. Each had to go to Dzanani on his own, and consequently they sent girls as a tribute to Makhado. Following this arrangement, Makhado had succeeded in settling the hostilities between Lwamondo and Tsianda for good.<sup>80</sup>

The first portion of this chapter has related how Makhado enhanced his sphere of influence by judiciously settling the civil strife at Tsianda and Lwamondo. This was accomplished with skillful demonstrations of both power and diplomacy which brought the rulers of Tsianda and Lwamondo under the shadow of his power. These *mahosi* and their *magota* owed their allegiance to their *Thovhele*, Makhado. This section of the chapter will show why and how Makhado crossed the borders of his territory into areas ruled by *mahosi mahulu*, Tshivhase and Mphaphuli, as well as *Khosi* Nethengwe. This will include some *mahosi* like Magoro, Nenngwekhulu, Netshivhulana and Netshimbupfe who were formerly under the Ramabulana Royal

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78. *Ibid.*

79. O.I. - N. Mugivhi (73 years), Hamutsha, 31-12-1985.

80. O.I. - K. Nengovhela (about 100 years), Khumbe, 24-08-1980.

house but had lost connection in the course of time.<sup>81</sup> Makhado also targeted certain Sotho-speaking groups.

The territories of Tshivhase and Nethengwe were situated north of the Luvuvhu River, while that of Mphaphuli straddled the river. On the other hand Magoro, Netshimbupfe, Nenngwekhulu and Netshivhulana were situated south of the river. As far as the Sotho-speaking nations were concerned, there were the Tlokwa of Mmathsaka and Ramokgopa with whom Ramabulana had established contact many years before. There were also those Sotho to the west and south-west of Dzanani, under the leadership of Moloto and Matlala, whose territories *Thovhele* regarded as his.<sup>82</sup> Makhado's dealings with the inhabitants of surrounding territories will be easier to comprehend in the light of the historical developments of the times which affected each of these groups in different ways.

The reign of Makhado cannot be properly evaluated if certain economic and social conditions are not understood. Their influence had a bearing on the political developments which further motivated the rulers to act and behave as they did in order to cope with the situation. One of these was the outbreak of the great famine in 1881, referred to by the Venda as *Tshipindula*. Some of the sources used in this writing maintained that this great famine was preceded by the deaths of Vele Rammubuda of Dzimauli and Tshirumbula Luvhimbi of Vhumbedzi.<sup>83</sup> As Tshirumbula and his predecessors were believed to possess the power to make rain, his death was regarded as an omen of some great calamity to befall the country.

The outbreak of *Tshipindula*, one of the greatest social and economic disasters to occur during the reign of Makhado, was preceded by the appearance of a comet in September 1881. This phenomenon appeared in the skies each night over a period of

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81. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg*, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 162.

82. N.J. van Warmelo, Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 3, 1932, p. 22. See also G.J. Liesegang, New light on Venda traditions: Mahumane's account of 1730, *History of Africa*, 4, p. 163.

83. Information obtained by the author from his grandmother, Mavhungu Masithi Ravhura in 1953. She experienced this famine. By 1881 she was a mother of one child. See also L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, p. 40

four months.<sup>84</sup> During the month of October there was sufficient rainfall to encourage the people to sow crops which, after germination, were scorched by excessive summer heat. Rain again fell, crops were planted, but failed to mature as there was no further rain. Then, an even stranger happening occurred, something probably never encountered before by the Venda.<sup>85</sup> Locusts, called *magerere*, then came to destroy the remaining vegetation. The drought, combined with the arrival of the locusts, brought great hardship to the Venda. There was probably only one retail shop, owned by a certain Roxby (*Rhokho*) at Tshamanyatsha from which the people could purchase mealies.<sup>86</sup>

The drought continued into 1882. The people who were unable to plant, were faced with even greater hardships. Whether it is correct to accept the assertion that the areas hardest hit were those of Vhuphani, consisting of the territories of Mphaphuli and Tshivhase, cannot be established.<sup>87</sup> Available information tells us that, in order to survive this disaster, those who had used up the maize they stored in their *Zwisiku*,<sup>88</sup> travelled north across the Vhembe River in order to dig up the roots of a shrub known as *muthobi*, causing some to refer to this event as the *Famine of Muthobi*. Obtaining the *muthobi* roots, merely complicated matters, for those who did not cook the roots properly developed bulging stomachs and eventually died. Evidence of starvation was seen everywhere, the corpses of those who died while searching for food were found all over the countryside.<sup>89</sup>

The Venda were also unfortunate in that they could not obtain mealies. By 1882 there were only a few Whites scattered on their farms in the Spelonken area who

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84. L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, p. 40; N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 101.

85. Information obtained by the author from his grandmother Mavhungu Masithi Ravhura in 1953; O.I. - K. Nengovhela (about 100 years), Khumbe, 24-08-1980.

86. Information obtained by the author from his grandmother Mavhungu Masithi Ravhura in 1953; O.I. - K. Nengovhela (about 100 years), Khumbe, 24-08-1980.

87. O.I. - K. Nengovhela (about 100 years), Khumbe, 24-08-1980.

88. *Zwisiku* are mealie pits or grain silos. O.I. K. Nengovhela (about 100 years), Khumbe, 24-08-1980.

89. O.I. - K. Nengovhela (about 100 years), Khumbe, 24-08-1980.

cultivated maize. Traders and hawkers were unable to transport this important staple of the Venda into the area. After the discovery of diamonds at Kimberley in 1867, those Venda working in the diamond mines could not carry bags of mealies over such a long distance, so the people continued to die of starvation and its associated diseases.<sup>90</sup>

Although the outbreak of Tshipindula had nothing to do with the expansion policy of Makhado, it is one of the important events of his times. The areas hardest hit were those of Tshivhase and Mphaphuli - his greatest rivals in Venda. Economically and socially the two *mahosi mahulu* suffered great losses which in turn affected the political conditions. Their fighting strength was sapped while money, which could be used in purchasing arms and ammunition, was used to buy food. Thus Makhado's armies in their determination to execute their *Thovhele's* master plan of reviving the Venda kingdom to its former glory, met with weakened counterparts. This policy was intensified as Makhado wanted to keep the Boers out of Venda.<sup>91</sup>

When Makhado ascended the throne in 1864, the ruler of the territory of Tshivhase was Luvhengo who died in 1865.<sup>92</sup> When Makhado drove Davhana from Vuvha, he was assisted by a Tshivhase, and as this occurred in 1864, the Tshivhase who supported him was obviously Luvhengo. Luvhengo's death, like that of Ramabulana, was followed by a dispute between his sons Tshivhenga and Ligegise. Ligegise, however, succeeded his father to the throne as he had the support of many people.<sup>93</sup> He subsequently set about strengthening his position and hold over the territory. The political leadership had become weak during his father's rule.<sup>94</sup> His tenure was marked by the occurrence of several events, ranging from the arrival of

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90. *Ibid.*

91. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana; N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 163. TA SS3062, pp. 143, 147, R1085/83, B.J. Vorster, Commandant Zoutpansberg, Doornkop, Spelonken, aan den Landdrost Zoutpasnberg, 22 February 1883.

92. L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, p. 26.

93. O.I. - K. Nengovhela (about 100 years), Khumbe, 24-08-1980; L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, pp. 24 - 25; N.J. van Warmelo, Contributions towards Venda culture, history and religion, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 3, 1932, p. 32.

94. L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, p. 26.

missionaries in his territory to the wars which he fought against his contemporary, Makhado, in the west and at Dzimauli.<sup>95</sup>

When Makhado refused to accept the Berlin missionaries, they went to Ligegise Tshivhase, who welcomed them warmly and endeavoured to make their stay as enjoyable and pleasant as possible. Deep in his mind, he felt a link had been established with the Boer Government to counter the aggressive tendencies of Makhado who was intent on spreading his influence throughout the whole of Venda. The tribute which Tshivhase paid to Makhado in the beginning of his reign was insufficient.<sup>96</sup> Makhado therefore decided on an armed invasion of Tshivhase with the intention of enlarging his territorial jurisdiction. By this time, Tshivhase's territory included Mandiwana, Tshifulani, Tshifhire, Vhulaudzi and Mbulu in the Nzhelele-Mutshedzi valley, which all bordered on Makhado's territory.<sup>97</sup>

Makhado was the first Venda *Thovhele* to maintain standing armies for defensive and offensive purposes. This phenomenon occurred as the result of internal strife within Venda as well as foreign incursions into the country. His sons Mphephu and Sinthumule, therefore underwent military training from a very early age. They were in charge of their respective age groups. Ultimately these evolved into rather formidable military regiments.<sup>98</sup>

Tshivhase's lands of Vhulaudzi, Tshifhire and Tshifulani, which pierced through Makhado's territory, constituted a threat to his kingdom. In the event of hostilities, such lands could be used by Tshivhase as a springboard for attack on his royal residence which was situated a few kilometres away. To remove this threat, Makhado decided to annex these lands. The sooner this was accomplished, the better, the stability of his kingdom.<sup>99</sup> The opportunity presented itself when Makhado's eldest son, Mphephu, reached maturity. It was custom among the Venda that a prince prove his worth by leading an army on a surprise invasion into

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95. O.I. - K. Nengovhela (about 100 years), Khumbe, 24-08-1980; O.I. Nyadenga Tshivhase (about 100 years), Tshakhuma, 15-05-1963.

96. O.I. - T. Musekwa (about 100 years), Tshinanane, 12-07-1971.

97. *Ibid.*

98. *Ibid.*

99. *Ibid.*

another's territory for the purposes of plundering and the taking of booty.<sup>100</sup> Mphephu was thus commissioned by his father to lead his age group, Mavhegwa, in the invasion of Tshifulani, Tshifhire and Vhulaudzi to test his strength, bravery and skill in the capture of these portions of Tshivhase's territories.<sup>101</sup>

The Mavhegwa were subsequently mobilised and ordered to attack the three areas in a stealthy manner and with lightning speed before Ligegise Tshivhase anticipated the attacks. In about 1883 the army left Luatame fully determined to achieve that which they were called upon to execute, their first target being Tshifulani. These surprise attacks were successful. Tshifulani was overrun with very little resistance. The inhabitants of Tshifhire and Vhulaudzi also surrendered easily when faced with the trained Mavhegwa of Mphephu.<sup>102</sup>

From Vhulaudzi the victorious army travelled over the mountains and invaded Dopeni,<sup>103</sup> an area ruled by Ralinala, one of Ligegise's uncles. Ralinala, realising the awkward situation in which he found himself, fled to a cave in Mount Tswime, known for its hot springs and a certain stone which, it is said, "breathes". Mphephu's army, realising that the *khosi* had disappeared into the mountains, crossed the Mulindi River, which flows into Nzhelele River, and pitched up tents in Dzinzi forest at Tshivhilidulu. This was their last encampment in the series of clashes.<sup>104</sup>

As great atrocities and havoc had been wrought by Mphephu's army, the inhabitants of the conquered areas appealed to Ligegise to put a stop to the carnage, Ligegise wasted no time, he immediately sent messengers to Makhado registering his protests against the violation of his territorial boundaries.<sup>105</sup> Makhado, pretending ignorance

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100. *Ibid.*

101. O.I. - Nyadenga Tshivhase (about 100 years), Tshakhuma, 15-05-1963; O.I. Tshivhidzo Musekwa (about 100 years) 12-07-1971.

102. O.I. Abey Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986. As grandson of Makhado he had heard much about the history of the Ramabulana dynasty. As Mphephu was probably born about 1865 - 1866, he might have reached maturity at  $\pm$  17. The attack on Tshivhase's lands might have taken place in 1882 - 1883.

103. Near present day Siloam.

104. O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986.

105. *Ibid.*

of the invasion, expressed his surprise and recalled Mphephu's army to Luatame. In order to exonerate himself from responsibility for the invasion, and to shift the blame to Mphephu, Makhado inquired of his son why he and his soldiers had launched an attack against Tshivhase without first informing him first. Mphephu, as an obedient son, said nothing to clear himself. He rather remained silent, thus creating the impression that he and his army had attacked Tshivhase without Makhado's permission.<sup>106</sup> Makhado, intending to prove to the messengers of Ligegeise that he was very angry with his son and that he did not want to be associated with the incident, then gave Mphephu a public hiding. Ligegeise's messengers returned from Luatame, informing their *khosi khulu* of these events. The Tshivhase, feeling ill-treated and offended, were sceptical of the reasons given by Makhado for the attacks.<sup>107</sup>

Since there was the possibility of further attacks from Makhado, Ligegeise organised an army from the Tshikovhi clan, and led by his son, Ramaremisa, despatched it to Tshifhire. However, before the Tshivhase contingent reached Tshifhire, Makhado, having heard of their impending arrival ordered Mphephu's Mavhegwa to resist. The two opposing armies met, exchanged fire and Ramaremisa's warriors subsequently retreated, sustaining heavy losses in the steadily intensifying attacks. Realising the futility of the whole exercise, Ramaremisa and his army retreated, leaving Tshifhire, Tshifulani and Vhulaudzi under Makhado's control.<sup>108</sup>

The loss of Vhulaudzi to Makhado was a heavy blow to Ligegeise because of its historical significance to the Tshivhase royal family. It was at Vhulaudzi that the dynasty established its third royal residence following the evacuation of Dzata.

Over and above this, the great *makhadzi* of the family Nyatema remained at Vhulaudzi after Raluswielo's departure for Phiphidi. Both Raluswielo and Nyatema were buried there. Thus, Vhulaudzi had become a sacred place for the dynasty, and its loss to Makhado was unbearable.<sup>109</sup> As long as Vhulaudzi remained under

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106. *Ibid.*

107. *Ibid.*

108. *Ibid.*

109. *Ibid.*

Makhado's jurisdiction, there could be no peace between the two most powerful monarchs. In an effort to show his displeasure at the loss of the territory in which he was raised by Nyatema, who had assumed the position of the first *makhadzi*, Ligegise demanded the return of his sister Nyampfa whom he had given as wife to Makhado. Upon her return, she was married to a man named Dzegere while Nyatema remained at Vhulaudzi and married a certain man of Dzanani. From this marriage their son, Radzilani was born. He subsequently started his new royal house at Vhulaudzi, which explains why the area of Vhulaudzi remains within the territorial boundaries of Dzanani, even to this day.<sup>110</sup>

The annexation of Tshifulani, Tshifhire, Vhulaudzi and Mbulu to Dzanani further enhanced Makhado's popularity amongst the people and the realisation of his dream satisfied him to such an extent that Makhado did not attack Tshivhase again, at least not in a direct manner.<sup>111</sup>

Leaving Tshivhase alone in his territory, the account now moves from the north to Vhuronga. As early as 1883, Makhado had already ordered Sigwavhulimu Netshimbupfe, Netshivhulana and neighbouring Mahosi who had already acknowledged him as their Thovhele to attack Nemngwekhulu who had become a rebel.<sup>112</sup> The next victim in this area was Magoro whose land, Mbwenda, was situated between Tavhana and Tavha Rivers. Magoro had been paying tribute to Albasini since his defeat in 1863. His father was subsequently killed by Albasini, the Tsonga and the Boers in the same year.<sup>113</sup> This did not please Makhado whose plan it was to keep the Whites out of Venda as well as to increase his following. He then despatched the Mavhegwa regiment under Mphephu in about 1885, who unable to penetrate Magoro's lines of defence were forced to return to Dzanani without the expected victory.<sup>114</sup>

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110. *Ibid.*

111. O.I. - N. Tshivhase (about 100 years), Tshakhuma, 15-05-1963; O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986

112. TA SS787, p. 39. R934/83, Notulen van een Raadplegen, Klipdam, 20 February 1883; See also TA SS 3062, p. 214. R1085/83, Notulen van een Raadplegen, Klipdam, 20 February 1883.

113. O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986.

114. *Ibid.*

When the army returned to Dzanani without having achieved victory, Makhado, who had not anticipated any military setback against Magoro, could not believe it. He began to sing “hoogoo”,<sup>115</sup> as an indication that the fighting must continue. The following morning, Mphephu, who understood his father’s desire, immediately led his army back into Mbwenda. Since this force had proved to be inadequate, the Ngomakhosi age group under the leadership of Makhado’s second son, Sinthumule, accompanied Mphephu to Mbwenda, the intent being that the second group guard the wells in order to prevent Magoro’s people from obtaining water, thereby forcing them to surrender.<sup>116</sup>

The people of Magoro found themselves in an awkward position as their mountain stronghold was besieged by two armies which cut them off from their food and water supplies.<sup>117</sup>

Subsequently, they begged the army to allow them to go to Dzanani. Permission was granted. When they handed themselves over and told Makhado they had surrendered, he was not in a forgiving frame of mind, threatening to shoot them on the spot. His councillors immediately interceded, pleading with him not to take such action against these people who had come to him with pledges of loyalty. Makhado relented, and Magoro began to pay tribute to Makhado in a show of loyalty and to avoid future conflict. After their tributes were accepted, the inhabitants of Mbwenda happily returned home, thus leaving Makhado free to plan his next sortie against the people of Lambani under the protection of Ranwedzi Mphaphuli.<sup>118</sup>

The second territory to fall prey to Makhado’s ambitious designs was that of Mphaphuli, whose ruler was Ranwedzi. From the very beginning of Makhado’s accession to power, Ranwedzi Mphaphuli entered the historical arena when he harboured Davhana after his flight from Vuvha in 1864. Ranwedzi was also

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115. *Ibid.* “Hoogoo” is a song of the circumcision lodge; See also L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, p. 20.

116. O.I. A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986.

117. *Ibid.*

118. *Ibid.*

instrumental in persuading Albasini to provide him with refuge from Makhado.<sup>119</sup> Davhana's settlement at Luonde for several years hardened Makhado's conviction that both Albasini and the government were continuing to conspire against him, hoping to oust him and place Davhana on the throne.<sup>120</sup> As a result of these happenings, Ranwedzi and Makhado were not on the best of terms. Yet, despite this deep-seated ill-feeling, Makhado had not despatched an army to attack Ranwedzi's territory, possibly because it did not lay adjacent to Dzanani. It might also have been because Makhado's forces would have had to cross Tshivhase's area in order to get to Mphaphuli.<sup>121</sup>

Although the records indicate that Makhado attacked a portion of Mphaphuli's territory, it remains unclear as to how he launched such an attack.<sup>122</sup> The general consensus, amongst oral informants, is that he had no intention of annexing. Therefore it would appear as if he wanted to capture cattle, as this was often the motive for such aggression. In reality, Makhado did not attack Mphaphuli directly. He rather attacked Lambani, the ruler of a land known for its cattle ranching, which did not form part of Ranwedzi's territory. There is no indication whether Ranwedzi sent his armies to assist and strengthen Lambani. Further, Makhado was related, through marriage to Mphaphuli. Nndwayamiomva, Makhado's brother on his mother's side, and one of his staunchest supporters, sent his daughter, Matsheketsheke, as wife to Ranwedzi.<sup>123</sup> Therefore, the reason for the invasion could have been that Lambani was a rebellious *khosi* and Ranwedzi might have persuaded Makhado to attack Lambani in order to discipline him. If that were not so, Ranwedzi would have despatched his army to repel the attack on Lambani. Apart from this expedition to Lambani there is no further record of Makhado

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119. S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, p. 32.

120. *Ibid.*, p. 32; See also TA UR3, pp. 156 - 157, URB, 27 October 1869; TA SS105, p. 261. R1577/68, (A - No. 1) (99), Magoka voor S. Schoeman, Diplomatiek Agent, Morgenzon, 22 Junie 1868.

121. Mphaphuli's territory north of Luvuvhu River was separated from Makhado's territory by Tshivhase's territory.

122. S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, p. 32.

123. O.I. - M. Ravele (about 69 years), Mauluma, 21-01-1983.

attacking any territories falling under Mphaphuli's jurisdiction, in spite of the assistance given to Davhana by Ranwedzi.<sup>124</sup>

The army mobilised, it left for Lambani under the leadership of Mukololo Mphephu. Möller-Malan reports this particular raid as being Mphephu's first trial of bravery. This is not so. As pointed out above, he first attacked Tshivhase's territory and annexed Tshifulani, Mbulu, Tshifhire and Vhulaudzi in about 1883. He also attacked Magoro's people in the same year.

Möller-Malan further states that, after taking many cattle, Mphephu's army destroyed Mphaphuli's royal residence at Mbilwi, located in the central southern portion of his holdings.<sup>125</sup> This is also incorrect, Mphephu's forces attacked the north-eastern area where Lambani is situated. What is correctly reported, is that the army did capture many cattle, and that the inhabitants of Lambani under cover of darkness, followed the raiders. When they found them sleeping, they surrounded them, and in the process of recapturing their cattle, killed many of Mphephu's warriors.<sup>126</sup>

When the inhabitants of Lambani returned home in joy and jubilation over the defeat of Mphephu, Makhado faced humiliation at the hands of his son Mphephu. He was furious, for it was his belief that Mphephu should have died fighting on the battlefield rather than return to Dzanani alive and in defeat. According to *Thovhele*, it was a disgrace to the Ramabulanas to successfully wage a battle, and then as a result of his son's carelessness, be conquered within a few hours by the very people he thought he had defeated. Makhado felt that Mphephu's failure placed a stain on the name of Ramabulana which could not be erased.<sup>127</sup> Public recrimination of Mphephu began with a severe lecture. Verbal recrimination did however not assuage

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124. S.M. Dzivhani and E. Mudau, *Mahosi a Venda na Vhadau vha Tshakhuma*, p. 30 - 31.

125. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 169.

126. *Ibid.*, p. 169; D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 2(2) September 1957, pp. 178 - 179.

127. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, pp. 169.

Makhado's fury and he subsequently gave vent to his feelings by giving Mphephu a severe public flogging.<sup>128</sup>

Mphephu, saddened and chastised, and probably feeling some anger towards his father, was urged by his followers to leave the royal residence. His followers realised that the seriousness of the situation, jeopardised Mphephu's chances for accession to the throne and that reconciliation between *Thovhele* and his mukololo was not possible. Consequently, Mphephu, accompanied by his mother Midana, and his age group moved to Gogobole where he became *khosi* of the area.<sup>129</sup> Perhaps the shame, combined with economic necessity, prompted Mphephu to leave the area completely, for in the course of 1886 he, and the members of his age-group, left the area for Pretoria where he was employed for a short time as a watchman. However, he did not remain long in Pretoria, proceeding further south and west to become employed in the diamond fields of Kimberley.

Makhado, unable to forgive his son for the insult brought upon the Ramabulanas by virtue of Mphephu's weakness and cowardice, informed his councillors that Mphephu would no longer succeed him. This cowardice prevented him from sitting on the chair of the Ramabulanas. *Thovhele's* public naming of a successor, so common in western nations, was unheard of amongst the Venda. According to Venda tradition, *Thovhele* had no control of events leading to the installation of his successor. He had no right to appoint publicly a ruler over the subjects he would leave behind after his death. In fact the identification of the successor had to come from the *makhadzi* and *khotsimunene*.<sup>130</sup>

Although Möller-Malan claims that the name of Makhado's new heir was not mentioned, the Berlin missionary, R. Wessmann, among others, reported that

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128. O.I. Makhado Dzwedzhi (about 100 years), Mauluma, 13-06-1983; D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 169.

129. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 169; G.G. Munnik, *Memoirs of Senator the Hon. G.G. Munnik*, p. 153; Letter C.D. Langenhoven, to Author, 23-06-1989, Kimberley Mine Museum, De Beers Consolidated Mines, Ltd.; D. Möller-Malan, *Die donker Soutpansberg, Historia*, 2(2) September 1957, p. 179.

130. The Venda have a unique system of identifying an heir. It is the responsibility of the deceased monarch's sister (*Khadzi/Makhadzi*) and his brothers (*Khotsimunene/Makhotsimenene*).

Makhado's heir to the throne was to be his fourth son, Maemu. He was a young son of Makhado's important wife, Nwaphunga.<sup>131</sup>

These reports can be assumed to be correct, for in 1886 Makhado could not have foreseen his early death in 1895, at the age of about 53. It was probably expected at that time that he would live to a ripe old age, thus allowing the then 10 year old Maemu<sup>132</sup> to reach full maturity before ascending the throne. Although Makhado would make no public announcement of his successor, he would discuss the matter at length with his *khadzi* and *ndumi* as well as his trusted councillors.<sup>133</sup>

In matters of Venda accession to the throne, as far as the living ruler was concerned, it meant nothing. The final decision as to who should ascend the throne rested solely with *makhadzi* and *khotsimunene*. This aspect of Venda succession should be clearly understood, as it is an exclusive practice to Venda society.<sup>134</sup>

It has thus far been pointed out that Makhado was not only involved in establishing order in the affairs of areas adjacent to Dzanani. He was also desirous to expand his territory and spheres of influence to other areas. By 1886, his popularity and fame had spread to the far reaches of Venda. Some of the smaller rulers elected voluntarily to flee to him seeking political asylum. It was especially with the outbreak of political upheaval, usually in the form of civil wars. Among these rulers was the *khosi* of Thengwe from across the Mutale River in central portion of north-east Venda, a territory outside Makhado's immediate sphere of influence.<sup>135</sup>

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131. R. Wessmann, *The Bawenda of the Spelonken*, p. 119.

132. N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sintnumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 55.

133. *Ibid.*, p. 55; Van Warmelo on p. 34 states: "Maemu for instance was about 17 years, when he succeeded. But he was too young to defend himself against his elder brother and so he was driven out".

134. The word of the ruling monarch or the father is not final in matters of succession. It is his wish or desire. The Khadzi and Ndumi usually listen without objecting but when the time comes they follow their own conscience guided by tradition and custom.

135. In Venda the heir is identified by Makhadzi and Khotsimunene on behalf of the royal house. Consideration is given to the parentage of the mother and her status in the family. The prospective monarch is installed with a Khadzi and Ndumi.

At the time of Makhado's installation in 1864, the ruler of the Vhatavhatsindi of Thengwe was Munzhedzi. He subsequently died in 1884. His successor was Funzanani whose other names were Magiledzhi and Ladzani. This particular group of people experienced no hostility from Makhado. Perhaps it was because their territory was far from Dzanani and the absence of incidents within the territory which would attract Makhado's attention.<sup>136</sup>

One of the sources used in this writing, Alilali Ramavhoya, who was born during the time of Makhado, maintains that there was an outbreak of some unrest in the Thengwe dynasty during the time of Magiledzhi.<sup>137</sup>

The character of Magiledzhi could have contributed to this situation, as he was said to be a cruel *khosi* who murdered many people by throwing them over a precipice on Mount Thengwe, following charges of witchcraft and related matters.<sup>138</sup> Furthermore, he fought against his neighbours at Tshikundamalema, and ultimately suffered defeat at the hands of Ranwedzi Mphaphuli, who sent him into exile. It was probably as a result of these events that Magiledzhi and his followers left their territory, his first stop being Mudalahothe in Tshivhase's area.<sup>139</sup> The fugitives eventually proceeded to Dzanani, where Makhado gave them political asylum. Magiledzhi remained at Dzanani until the invaders of his territory, the warriors of Mphaphuli, were forced to evacuate. There were fears of the so-called powers of mysterious and imaginary forces associated with the practice of witchcraft (referred to by the Venda as *Zwidudwane*).<sup>140</sup>

Following Mphaphuli's evacuation of Thengwe, Magiledzhi returned to his territory, although some of his followers chose to remain with Makhado. Today

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136. O.I. - A. Ramavhoya (about 100 years), Rabali, 29-12-1982.

137. *Ibid.*; N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 127. Van Warmelo confuses Magiledzhi with Munzhedzi.

138. W.M.D. Phophi, Mutale District Chieftainship, p. 29. Unpublished notes in the former Department of National Assembly of the Venda Government, p. 29; N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 127.

139. W.M.D. Phophi, Mutale District Chieftainship, p. 29.

140. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

their descendants are still found at Dzanani.<sup>141</sup> That is why the relations between Thengwe and Dzanani have over the years remained good.

The account now turns to the Sotho-speaking people who settled within the borders of Venda. Some of these were the Tau of Machaba who settled in Dzanani near Makhado's stronghold. Because they were within his territory, they became his subjects and free from any aggressive acts on his part.<sup>142</sup>

Two additional groups of Sotho, the Tlokwa of Mmathsaka (Matoks) and Ramokgopa, were also on friendly terms with Makhado. It should be remembered that these were those Sotho who were instrumental in having Makhado's father, Ramabulana reinstated on the throne. Over the years the Tlokwa continued to reside on the lands of Mphagane, given to them by Makhado's grandfather, Mpofu. When Ramokgopa, the younger brother, rebelled against the real ruler, Mmathsaka, and decided to move across Munwenwe (Monono, Dwars) River into Mungomani (Mokomene), Makhado supported Ramokgopa in order to weaken the military strength of Mmathsaka. Ramokgopa's settlement at Mokomene heralded the establishment of his dynasty in that area and he laid claim to the surrounding territory.<sup>143</sup>

As a token of gratitude, Ramokgopa gave his younger brother's daughter, Mokgadi, as a wife.<sup>144</sup> Mokgadi was an intelligent woman, and not surprisingly, became Makhado's favourite wife. She was stationed at Makwatambani, the village which Makhado used for receiving and meeting White visitors, including government officials.<sup>145</sup>

As a gesture of goodwill, Makhado's sister was also married to Ramokgopa. The intermarriage between the Ramabulanas and Ramokgopas continued up to modern

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141. Imaginary creatures associated with witchcraft.

142. O.I. - A. Ramavhoya (about 100 years), Rabali, 29-12-1982.

143. O.I. - E.N. Mudau (about 73 years), Tshakhuma, 25-01-1977.

144. N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 58.

145. Benso/Rau, Constitutional development and political structure, *The Independent Venda*, p. 42.

times. It goes a long way towards shedding some light on the close relationship between the Venda and the Tlokwa.<sup>146</sup>

Apart from the Tlokwa, there were other Sotho-speaking people on the south-western side of Dzanani. These were the Kwena of Moletsi and the Kone of Matlala. These people, despite the fact that they were of a different nationality, had a long association with the Venda, which dated from before the time of Ramabulana's residence at Rida in Moletsi.

After his re-instatement to the throne, these people recognised him as *Thovhele*, at least during the early years of his reign. The isolation of Ramabulana from the mainstream of Venda suzerainty, beginning with his movement from the Boers to Nngwekhulu and then on to Mauluma and Vuvha, diminished his influence and authority over these two Sotho territories. This situation was further aggravated by the wars of succession between his sons Davhana, Rasikhuthuma, Khangale and Makhado. During this period of transfer of power, the monarchy appeared to be unstable to establish itself outside the boundaries of Dzanani. Consequently, the Kone and Kwena developed feelings of independence from the Ramabulanas.<sup>147</sup>

Makhado with his imperialistic ambitions could not allow this state of affairs to continue. He became concerned about *mahosi* who had turned against his father's rule. The restoration of his authority over such rulers became his immediate priority. According to him, only *Thovhele* should reign. He then mobilised his armies against his south-western counterparts. Moletsi became his first target.<sup>148</sup>

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146. *Ibid.*, p. 42. Not even the Verwoerdian horror of apartheid could break them apart. No wonder that officials of the South African government were surprised, when on the implementation of the third level of Bantustan government (the so-called Territorial Authorities), the Tlokwa, the Lobedo and the Venda started together in 1962 and continued up to 1969. Such historical ties originated during the times of Makhado.

147. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), *The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg*, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 162. See also D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 159.

148. O.I. - E.N. Mudau (73 years), Tshakhuma, 25-01-1977.

The attack on Moletsi was based on deceptive tactics. Makhado had arranged with the ruler Moloto, to stage a *matangwa*<sup>149</sup> dance at the latter's royal residence.

For the occasion Moloto invited his inhabitants and dancers to be entertained by Makhado's dancers. The inhabitants responded positively and gathered at their *khosi's* residence. Makhado's dancers were dressed in appropriate costumes. The princes wore hyena skins whilst the commoners were in white goat skins. The *mahosi* on the other hand wore porcupine skins, while the ordinary people wore impala skins.<sup>150</sup> Their headgear was made of a jackal's skin. Dressed in this manner, indicating no signs of hostility or war, Makhado's team arrived at Moloto's royal residence, probably in the middle of 1887.

The dancing began with many spectators witnessing the happy and joyful event. As the dancing continued into the evening, the people of Makhado fell upon those of Moletsi, attacking them unexpectedly and in such a ruthless manner that some people were massacred. Those who remained, were subjugated and forced to pay tribute to Makhado. The following day the disguised army departed and invaded Matlala whose inhabitants were caught unaware and dispersed in many directions without offering any resistance.<sup>151</sup>

The repercussions of Makhado's invasions of Moletsi and Matlala, under the guise of entertaining the inhabitants by playing *Matangwa*, remain imprinted in the minds of the Venda and the neighbouring Sotho. The episode survives in the form of a praise eulogising the greatness, the bravery, the statesmanship and the diplomacy of Makhado. This praise which is known throughout Venda and neighbouring Sotho territories, says,

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149. Matangwa is a joyful dance accompanied by drums and flutes.

150. O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986.

151. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 162. The attack on Moletsi was probably in the middle of 1887 as Funyufunyu (Tromp), Makhado's general visited Moletsi in April 1887 after Moloto the ruler had sent his brother Seripa to purchase two wagons in Pretoria. Commissioner Zoutpansberg reported that Tromp might have influenced Moloto not to pay tax. This is contained in a letter addressed to Superintendent of Native Affairs: TA SS1391, R3189/87. The pages are unnumbered in the specific correspondence.

Matangwa ndi mutshinyashango, phunguhwe ya lila Muledzhi, la ha Madala la fhalala, meaning: Matangwa destroys the country, when the jackal cries at Muledzhi. The territory of Matlala disintegrates.<sup>152</sup>

This praise refers to Makhado's men playing *matangwa* at Moletsi with jackal skin headgear, and to the killing of people. When news of this reached the ears of the inhabitants of Matlala, they fled into hiding.<sup>153</sup> Thus, it is that, even in the modern times the neighbouring Sotho praise Makhado as follows:

Makxato ke selwa-bosihu saha Ramapulana.

Yena ha ke a tia ka letswifi Makxato.

O tia ka ngwedi morwa Lepulana.

Ba re o tile lari ya Makxowa.

O sitile Mamphoto.

A tia a thopha le diesele tsa Makxowa.

Makxota ka moka ba lwisa sekolokotla,

Ba lwisa se sele hare ha mafsika.<sup>154</sup>

The praise means: Makhado Ramabulana fights in the night. He does not attack in darkness, he attacks in moonlight. They say he attacked White men's laager. He crushed Mamphodo, and attacked and captured the donkeys of the White men. All Magota be loyal to Makhado, they fight bravely, they fight like a bear amongst the boulders. The Tlokwa, the Kwena and Kone know this.

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152. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 162. This means: "Matangwa destroys the country, when the jackal cried at Moletsi, the territory of Matlala surrendered". The inhabitants of Moletsi and Matlala know this praise.
153. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 162.
154. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana, N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 162. The praise means: Makhado Ramabulana fights in the night. He does not attack in darkness, he attacks in moonlight. They say he attacked White men's laager. He crushed Mamphodo and captured the donkeys of the White men. All Magota be loyal to Makhado, they fight like a seal/bear amongst the boulders. The Tlokwa, the Kwena and Kone know this praise.
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The praise, which is in Sotho, is an immortal tribute depicting some of the events which characterised Makhado. It indicates that during those days many rulers were *mahosi* under *Thovhele*. It also provides the reason why most of the *mahosi mahulu* of Venda are praised in Sotho because the relationship between the two groups dates from early times. Another fact which is brought to light here is that the Venda and their neighbouring Sotho do not regard each other as foreigners since rulers like Makhado played a unifying role between the two.<sup>155</sup>

This chapter has outlined how Makhado exercised his power and his popularity in the exercising of Machiavellian diplomatic skills. It also brought to light the numerous ways in which Makhado's ambitious nature led him to extend his spheres of influence to neighbouring territories.

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155. O.I. - Alilali Ramavhoya (about 100 years), Rabali, 29-12-1982. This relationship is felt by both the Venda and the Sotho.

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## CHAPTER 8

### MAKHADO KEEPS LIGEGISE AT BAY BY ASSISTING TSHIKOSI IN DZIMAULI TO PREVENT THE BOER ENCROACHMENT, 1883-95

Makhado's expansionist policies must be viewed against the background of contemporary events in other parts of Venda. The territory which attracted his attention was Dzimauli which was under Vele, the son of Phophi Rammbuda. Rammbuda was Tshivhase's younger brother with whom he settled at Phiphidi. Leaving Phiphidi, Rammbuda crossed Mutshindudi River and settled at Lunungwi where he stayed for a while. After the death of his elder brother, he crossed Mutale River into Dzimauli which he conquered and declared his independence against his nephew Luvhengo, who had succeeded his father Tshivhase. In this way he established a new dynasty north of Mutale River.<sup>1</sup> Nyafhasi, the previous ruler, was ejected and driven away to seek refuge with her brother, Ravhura of Makonde.<sup>2</sup>

Rammbuda established his royal residence under the cliff called Tshiendeulu. It became the burial place of his successors. His throne was disputed by his two sons, Tshivhenga and Vele. In the wars which followed, Vele succeeded in driving Tshivhenga out. The loser fled to Mbilwi, from whence he did not return. This left Vele in the undisputed position of leadership. He subsequently succeeded his father to the throne.<sup>3</sup>

Unlike his predecessor, who fought only against the original inhabitants of Dzimauli and his brother's son Luvhengo, Vele's rule on the other hand was marked by a

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1. L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, p. 26; J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda natie*, p. 13; TA G.O.V. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 149/06, Ramputa's Location, Dzimalulu, Zoutpansberg District, 21 July 1906.
  2. N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 106; J.M. Rammbuda, "Bako la Tshavhadinda", *Thohoyandou*, 27 May 1988. (As one of the surviving sons of Tshikosi, at the time, J.M. Rammbuda had a lot of information on the Rammbuda dynasty. He was a community and church leader, therefore highly respected).
  3. N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 106.
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series of wars. Strife with Luvhengo Tshivhase continued. Tshivhase still hoped to regain control of the lost territory, while Vele was also reported to have attacked Thengwe on several occasions, perhaps with intentions of extending his hegemony over the territory immediately adjacent to his own.<sup>4</sup> Neither were Vele's military operations limited to Venda. He also attacked the Vhakalanga living in the north across the Vhembe River and brought back captured cattle. In the south-west, he invaded Mudunungu, one of Tshivhase's areas.<sup>5</sup>

Vele's reign was threatened by invasions from J. Albasini, the Swazi and the Malema. He, however, managed to beat off these enemies. The Swazi attacks were then followed by those of the Malema, which were foiled by the resistance of Tshikundamalema whose territory is situated to the north-east of Dzimauli.<sup>6</sup> Earlier on in this study, reference was made to atrocities carried out by Albasini and his Tsonga warriors. Through his bravery and skilful military tactics, Vele, however, survived all the incursions to firmly establish the roots of his kingship in the mountainous area of Dzimauli. He ruled well and wisely until his death in 1882.<sup>7</sup>

Vele's death ushered in a new era in the history of Dzimauli, as the throne he left vacant became the subject of disputes among his sons. These disputes attracted outside rulers, among whom were Ligegise Tshivhase and Makhado Ramabulana, who made use of the division occurring in the territory to extend their own spheres of influence. Ligegise, however, continued the war started by his father, Luvhengo, in an effort to bring Rammuda's territory to its knees. In this way he could bring it once again under the jurisdiction of Tshivhase.<sup>8</sup>

After Vele's death, Bele, his eldest son, whom he had placed at Vhuhulwi, came down and usurped the kingship. This pre-emptory reaction by Bele was contrary to royal custom and infuriated many people including *Makhadzi* Masindi, who

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4. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 107.

6. J.H. Breytenbach (Ed.), *Notule van die Volksraad van die Suid-Afrikaanse Republiek (volledig met alle bylae daarby)*, IV, 1859 - 1863, pp. 572 - 3.

7. N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 106; L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, 1966, p. 40.

8. N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 106; L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, p. 26.

subsequently fled to sanctuary with Ligegise Tshivhase. The influential men in the community meanwhile turned their backs on Bele for reasons known only to the royal family.<sup>9</sup>

According to Van Warmelo, the royal family was unable to support Bele's claim to the throne because it was alleged that he interfered with his father's young wives. Behaviour of this nature was abominable and, therefore, unacceptable in Venda law and custom. By doing so Bele had jumped across the fence, and technically became one of his father's generation. This irresponsible type of behaviour placed him in the tenuous position of *quasi-khotsimunene* (his father's younger brother), which automatically disqualified him from accession to the throne.<sup>10</sup>

*Makhadzi* Masindi, Vele's sister, did not just flee to Tshivhase for sanctuary only. As a Rrambuda she could not seek military assistance from any ruler other than the Tshivhases, her relatives. She appealed to Ligegise for military assistance to prevent Bele from contaminating the throne of Rrambuda as by fiddling with his father's young wives during that latter's lifetime, Bele had committed an abominable act. Ligegise's response was positive, as over and above this, he had ulterior motives. The time was opportune to remove Bele from the throne, when Dzimauli was still divided, for a united Dzimauli under a strong ruler like Bele would prove formidable. Without Bele on the throne, Tshivhase's suzerainty would be restored over the lands of Rrambuda. Thus, it was that Ligegise concluded that Bele was not entitled to sit on the throne of Rrambuda.

On the other hand, Makhado had a deep-seated animosity towards Bele, since it was alleged that the latter looked down upon *Thovhele* when he said that Makhado was a teenager.<sup>11</sup>

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9. N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 106; W.M.D. Phophi, *Phusuphusu dza Dzimauli*, p. 16; L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, pp. 26 - 27; TA G.O.V. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 149/06, Ramputa's Location, Dzimalulu, Zoutpansberg District, 21 July 1906.
  10. N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 112; O.I.- J.M. Rrambuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966; W.M.D. Phophi, *Phusuphusu dza Dzimauli*, p. 16.
  11. O.I. - Abey Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986; O.I. - J.M. Rrambuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966.

During the early years of Makhado's reign, he journeyed to several *mahosi mahulu* and *mahosi*, including Rammbuda. The purpose of these visits was to test their loyalty. Makhado felt the need to solicit and re-establish previous loyalties to the House of Ramabulana. At the time of his visit in 1865, Makhado was probably in his late twenties. During the visit to Rammbuda, it is alleged that Bele refused to praise and pay homage to Makhado when he spoke. It was interpreted as an act of disrespect to the young *Thovhele*. At the end of the tour, when the party returned to Dzanani, Makhado made inquiries as to Bele's identity and was informed that he was the eldest son of Vele Rammbuda. It was on the grounds of this insult that Makhado withheld his support of Bele against Ligege in the ensuing battle for the throne of Rammbuda.<sup>12</sup>

Ligege's armies invaded Dzimauli during the second week of December 1882 and placed the royal residence under a state of siege for approximately three weeks. The geographical position of the residence made its defences difficult to penetrate and the invading armies were forced to retreat.<sup>13</sup> As the fighting continued, fortune played into the hands of Ligege's army, for one of Bele's supporters, Mamphita, betrayed him and defected on 31 December 1882,<sup>14</sup> and directed them the entrance to the royal residence which was through a cave at Luheni. Bele's forces, realising that Ligege's army had entered the cave from below,<sup>15</sup> were trapped. In the fighting that ensued, they were unable to withstand the invaders' heavy attack as they had sustained many casualties. Realising the seriousness of the situation, those who could, escaped, leaving the royal residence at the mercies of Ligege's armies. It was subsequently set it on fire. Bele sent his cattle to Mphaphuli while some of his followers crossed the Mutale River into Mudalahothe.<sup>16</sup>

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12. O.I. - Abey Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986; O.I. - J.M. Rammbuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966.

13. O.I.- J.M. Rammbuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1986, J.M. Rammbuda, Mafhungo a shango la Harambuda. (Hand written notes in possession of the author).

14. TA SS 779, p. 39. R512/83, Hoofd kapitein Bellie of Rampoete, voor A.A. Albasini, Coms. Natu. Spelonken, 9 January 1883.

15. O.I. - J.M. Rammbuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966.

16. O.I. - J.M. Rammbuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966; W.M.D. Phophi, *Phusuphusu dza Dzimauli*, p. 17; TA SS 787, p. 39. R934/83,

Bele himself fled for his life, first to Dzanani where he could not stay as he was not on good terms with Makhado. He ultimately proceeded to Mpheni where he sought refuge, out of reach of Makhado, with Davhana (Makhado's arch enemy). His brothers Muditambi, Tshikosi, his mother Nyabele, his son Miriavhavha and sister Khangale, found sanctuary with Makhado in Dzanani.<sup>17</sup>

Bele's flight to Mpheni was welcomed by Davhana who probably advised him to present his case to Commissioner Albasini. Albasini, who saw in this the opportunity of acquiring yet another ally, advised Bele to make an affidavit which could be transmitted to the Superintendent of Natives. As Bele was fighting a battle for his life, he requested the government to reinstate him in the self-installed kingship from which he was ousted by Ligege. He told Albasini that he was the lawful successor to the throne. As for Ligege who ousted him, he wanted to appoint one of his friends. Albasini transmitted the declaration to the Superintendent but the government did not take any action.<sup>18</sup>

Bele's flight from Dzimauli, his attempts to obtain assistance from Davhana and Albasini and Tshikosi's acceptance in Dzanani, marked the beginning of a new chapter in the relations between Makhado and Ligege.<sup>19</sup>

Following Bele's escape from Dzimauli, Ligege's army installed another son of Vele, Mashila on the throne, and not Tshivhase's friend as Bele told Albasini. Mashila's mother was Mukumela, a daughter of Ravhura of Makonde.

It is interesting to note here, that whereas the first Rammbuda drove away Nyafhasi, Ravhura's sister, Ravhura's daughter Mukumela was married by Vele, Rammbuda's son. Mashila was chosen for leadership because he had married Nyatshitahela Mutshalingana, Ligege's sister. Therefore, as a brother-in-law, Ligege felt that Mashila would not turn against the Tshivhase as his predecessors had done. In this

Notulen van een Raadplegen, Klipdam, 20 February 1883; See also TA SS 3062, p. 214. R1085/83, Notulen van een Raadplegen, Klipdam, 20 February 1883.

17. O.I. - J.M. Rammbuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966.
18. TA SS779, p. 39. R512/83, Hoofd kapitein Bellie of Rampoete, voor A.A. Albasini, Coms. Natu. Spelonken, 6 January 1883.
19. O.I. - J.M. Rammbuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 29-05-1966.

way, Ligegise hoped to regain ascendancy over Dzimauli.<sup>20</sup> However, Ligegise's joy, as well as that of the whole territory, was short-lived for Mashila mysteriously passed away within eight months of his installation. This was perhaps the shortest period of rule of any Venda khosi of Rammbuda's status. The cause of Mashila's untimely death could not be determined. However, when consideration is given to the atmosphere surrounding his installation, at a time when the inhabitants were divided, the possibility of poisoning cannot be ruled out.

Mashila's death created further problems and raised new hopes which tempted Makhado and Tshivhase to intervene once more, in the affairs of Rammbuda's Kingship. Makhado supporting Bele's brother, Tshikosi, for the chair while Ligegise attempted to install Tshikosi's brother of another house, Siphuma, on the throne of Dzimauli.<sup>21</sup>

The question may now arise as to why Tshikosi and Bele (for a short period of time) fled from Dzimauli to Makhado in Dzanani and the reasons for Makhado's subsequent support for Tshikosi for the throne of Rammbuda. One of their sisters, Denga, was married to Ramalamula, Makhado's elder brother. There were family ties between the two. It is also believed that contact could have existed between Nyabele, Tshikosi and Bele's mother, and Nwaphunga, one of Makhado's wives. Nwaphunga's original home was Tshiheni, while Nyabele may have resided at Vhuhulwi when Bele was stationed there by his father. The acquaintance between the two women could have developed there. It is said that, as a result of Nwaphunga's advice, Nyabele and her son, Tshikosi, gave her daughter Khangale to Makhado as wife. Khangale then became Makhado's eighteenth wife.<sup>22</sup> It is thought that, for these more obvious reasons, Makhado felt obliged to render

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20. W.M.D. Phophi, *Phusuphusu dza Dzimauli*, p. 21; O.I. - J.M. Rammbuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966; O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986; TA G.O.V. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 149/06, Ramputa's Location, Dzimalulu, Zoutpansberg District, 21 July 1906.

21. O.I. - J.M. Rammbuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966; O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986.

22. O.I. - Abey Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986; O.I. - J.K. Ramabulana (68 years), Thohoyandou, 06-05-1991; N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, p. 108.

assistance to his brother-in-law, Tshikosi. However, the underlying reasons for Makhado's support had to do with the increasing of his sphere of influence<sup>23</sup> to Dzimauli, one of the north-eastern territories in Venda.

During these months of exile Bele found refuge with Davhana at Mpheni because relations between Davhana and Makhado were still strained. Thus, the common fear of Makhado brought these two together.<sup>24</sup>

On the advice of Davhana Bele approached the Swazi. He wanted to interest them in helping him regain the kingship he felt belonged to him. Bele was, however, unsuccessful. The Swazi (Mabunyu) were no longer interested in Venda. It was a country of mountainous terrain and general inaccessibility.<sup>25</sup> They were frustrated by the lack of success they experienced during earlier invasions which had been engineered by Albasini and Davhana. Bele subsequently returned to Mpheni. From there he travelled north, crossing the Vhembe River. There he tried to enlist the support of the Ndebele, who, like the Swazi, rejected his request.<sup>26</sup> While Bele was wandering from place to place seeking military assistance, his younger brother Tshikosi and his mother were posted at Maname, a portion of Makhado's territory bordering on Dzimauli. They were anticipating further developments in the protracted struggle for succession to the still unoccupied throne of Rammbuda. Whilst Tshikosi was waiting, he was joined by many influential people who did not like Tshivhase's influence over Dzimauli.

Tshikosi's proximity to Dzimauli was of strategic importance. He had to be able to move into the territory quickly and with authority, if he was to be successful in his bid to succeed his father to the throne.<sup>27</sup>

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23. O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986; N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, p. 113.
  24. O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986.
  25. O.I. - W.M.D. Phophi (78 years), Tshifudi, 14-05-1987; L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, pp. 26 - 27; J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawendana*, p. 10.
  26. W.M.D. Phophi, *Phusuphusu dza Dzimauli*, p. 26; N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, p. 112.
  27. O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986; N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, p. 112.

Upon his return from Matabeleland, Bele could not go back to Dzimauli as the territory was ruled from Mukumbani through one of Ligegise's satellites. He preferred Makhado's territory. The differences between him and Makhado were less than those with Ligegise. Consequently he established himself at the village of Liubvubvu at Lwandali. In the process he sought rapprochement with his brother and all his kith and kin to reinstate himself in the good graces of the royal family. Soon thereafter Makhado was informed of Bele's settlement at Lwandali and his desire to conclude matters peacefully with his brother, Tshikosi.<sup>28</sup> It is surprising that, at this stage and despite the fact that Tshikosi and Bele were brothers of the same mother and, therefore, brothers-in-law to Makhado, the grudge born from earlier times towards Bele, continued to affect Makhado's attitude towards him.<sup>29</sup>

It could also be that the insult, combined with Bele's interference with his father's wives, which was a violation of traditional law. All these factors combined to influence Makhado to turn away from supporting Bele as the legal heir to the throne of Rammbuda.<sup>30</sup>

At the back of Makhado's mind was the fact that Bele had, by offending his father, rendered himself unacceptable to the influential members of the Dzimauli royal family. By establishing good relations with them, Bele could easily, retake the throne. Tshikosi's sister, Khangale and Makhado's wife, however liked Tshikosi more than Bele. Over and above these considerations, Tshikosi was his father's favourite son and very popular with the people of Dzimauli. Thus Makhado felt that Tshikosi's cause had to be advanced. Success could only be achieved if Bele were eliminated, in such a way that there would be no untoward evidence of malfeasance on Makhado's or the royal family's part.<sup>31</sup>

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28. O.I. - J.M. Rammbuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966; W.M.D. Phophi, *Phusuphusu dza Dzimauli*, p. 29; O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), 29-10-1986; L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, p. 27.
29. O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986; O.I. - J.M. Rammbuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966.
30. O.I. - J.M. Rammbuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966; O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986.
31. N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 112; J.M. Rammbuda, "Bako la Tshavhadinda", *Thohoyandou*, 27 May 1988.

With these thoughts in mind, Makhado welcomed Bele's peaceful overtures and returned to the family fold. He furthered the deception by telling Bele that, should the need arise, Bele would receive Makhado's support in his efforts to regain Dzimauli. Bele, having no suspicions of Makhado's true intent, felt easier and was lulled into a false sense of security, believing that the earlier differences between Makhado and himself were forgiven and forgotten.<sup>32</sup>

The conspiracy to remove Bele from the political scene at Dzimauli began when he was informed that, as the first step towards his regaining the throne, he was to be installed at Lwandali, an arrangement well fitted to Bele's ambitious nature. Shortly thereafter he even became more elated when he heard that his installation at Lwandali was to be held in the very near future. Whether Tshikosi joined the conspiracy of his own volition, or whether he did so on the advice of Makhado, remains unclear. It is readily apparent that Tshikosi knew, in great detail, the preparations made for the assassination of Bele by his followers at Maname.<sup>33</sup>

The preparations complete, Makhado despatched messengers to Lwandali with all the instruments for installing Bele. On their arrival, Mashige, their leader, reported their presence to Tshikosi.<sup>34</sup>

Pretending to be waiting for Tshikosi and his followers from Maname, Mashige then ordered the royal dignitaries to enter a special hut in which they were entertained with beer. Mashige used the occasion to convey Makhado's message to them. He associated himself with the tribulations Bele had had to endure. He then assured Bele of his intentions to install him at Lwandali. Bele was also promised that he would remain in power as long as he lived in peace with Tshikosi, and that Bele, as the elder brother, would have the final authority over both Maname and Lwandali. The latter promise was even more pleasing to the ambitious Bele, he being unable to believe his own good fortune.<sup>35</sup>

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32. O.I.- J.M. Rammbuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966; O.I. - J.K. Ramabulana (68 years), Thohoyandou, 06-05-1991.

33. O.I. - J.M. Rammbuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966.

34. *Ibid.*

35. *Ibid.*; O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986.

In the midst of the rejoicing, the assassin Mashige, joined by his group, immediately strangled Bele with a cord. Mashige, dressed in full military regalia, then addressed the people, who had come for the occasion. He instructed them to keep Bele's assassination a secret and that the feasting and celebrations were to continue as if nothing had occurred.<sup>36</sup> Tshikosi arrived shortly thereafter and Bele was buried that same day. The feasting and celebrating continued until the people left the following day. The "bloody deed", perpetrated by Makhado and Tshikosi shocked the people, but they could do nothing. It was the result of the wars of succession between Vele's sons which allowed leaders from outside the territory to intervene on the pretext of rendering assistance. In reality they were furthering their own interests.<sup>37</sup>

Following the tragic death of Mashila and the assassination of Bele, the scramble for succession, assisted and influenced by the two main powers, Makhado and Ligege once again gained momentum. As Makhado was supporting Tshikosi for the throne, Ligege was disappointed by Mashila's death. He immediately turned his support to one of Vele's other sons, Siphuma, who ruled at Guyuni. Ligege did not just support Siphuma, he had married his sister Nyamadiba. For this reason, he was expected to be a staunch ally to Tshivhase, his brother-in-law. It was with this strategy involving kinship that Ligege felt he could forestall Makhado's interference in the affairs of Dzimauli, and thus return the territory to Tshivhase if Siphuma ascended the throne.<sup>38</sup>

Siphuma had been put in charge of Guyuni, while Mashila's wife, Nyatshitahela, assisted by a certain Mulondo, remained in control of Dzimauli. This particular arrangement fitted well in Ligege's plans, since Nyatshitahela was his sister. Immediately after Bele left Dzimauli and the ascension of Mashila to the throne of Rammuda, Ligege succeeded in having Siphuma installed at Gogogo. The

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36. O.I. - J.M. Rammuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966; O.I. - Kone Nengovhela (about 100 years), Khumbe, 31-12-1982; O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 12-05-1966.

37. O.I. - J.M. Rammuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966; N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 113; L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, p. 27.

38. N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 108; O.I. - J.K. Ramabulana (68 years), Thohoyandou, 06-05-1991.

position became vacant when the ruler of the land, Negogogo, joined Bele's followers. This move was executed in order to ensure that the return of either Bele or Tshikosi to Dzimauli through that area would be thwarted.<sup>39</sup> With other strategic movements in Rammuda's territory, it appeared that Ligegise's influence over Dzimauli was firmly in place, as Siphuma was his brother-in-law, while Nyatshitahela Mutshalingana was his sister. Both were in a position to control the most important territories in the kingdom. All in all, and for the first time in two generations, the Tshivhase dynasty now, *via* either direct or indirect means, ruled Dzimauli through control of the leadership of the territories of Gogogo. Tshixwadza, Tshavhadinda, Vhuhulwi, Dzamba, Luheni and Tshamulumbwi.<sup>40</sup>

However, the tide of history did not continue to flow in the dynasty's favour, since the success of either Tshikosi or Siphuma to ascend the throne depended, not only on external military assistance, but also on the popular support of the royal family and the people.<sup>41</sup>

Following Tshikosi's posting to Maname, Makhado awaited developments presenting favourable opportunities for intervention in the affairs of Dzimauli, for Tshikosi's settlement so near the territory, had several advantages. Firstly, because he resided outside Dzimauli, no one would attack him in Makhado's territory. Secondly, his close proximity to Dzimauli placed him in a position to watch over and monitor developments in the territory, because people from Dzimauli could easily communicate with him. Lastly, because of his personal safety under the wing of Makhado and his abilities to discern happenings within the territory, he was secretly able to exercise his personal influence on the affairs of the territory. Thus Tshikosi's presence in Maname provided the necessary springboard for the launching of direct attacks on the Tshivhase-controlled territories in Dzimauli.<sup>42</sup>

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39. O.I. - J.K. Ramabulana (68 years), Thohoyandou, 06-05-1991; O.I. - J.M. Rammuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966..
40. O.I. - J.M. Rammuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966; O.I. - Kone Nengovhela (about 100 years), Khumbe, 31-12-1982.
41. N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 112; O.I. - J.K. Ramabulana (68 years), Thohoyandou, 06-05-1991.
42. O.I. - J.M. Rammuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966; O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986; N.J. van Warmelo, Report

For two years Tshikosi monitored events from Maname when fortune eventually played into his hands. The unstable political conditions in Dzimauli brought about feelings of insecurity and conflict between the various people and their leaders. The over-all lack of peace in the Tshivhase-held areas engendered feelings of dislike and possibly hatred, for Ligegise's appointees, caused great restlessness amongst the general population.<sup>43</sup>

Siphuma's presence at Gogogo was a warning to the anti-Tshivhase group that the neighbouring Fefe could be the next victim, as Ligegise had intended to fill the Vhukoma (Kingship) of Dzimauli with his appointees. Nefefe, the ruler of Fefe, felt threatened and insecure. In order to protect his position and to forestall Ligegise's ambitious plans of imposing his authority over the whole Dzimauli, he led a group of influential personalities to Maname and asked Tshikosi to attack Siphuma at Gogogo.<sup>44</sup>

This was an ideal opportunity for direct intervention by Makhado and Tshikosi in the affairs of Dzimauli. This further indicated that Siphuma and Ligegise did not have complete control over Dzimauli. He listened very carefully to the complainants. He doubted his own ability to militarily dislodge Siphuma from Gogogo. Consequently he sought military assistance from Makhado. This fitted in with Makhado's plans of expanding his influence north of Mutale River. This could be done by thwarting Ligegise's plans and eventually force him out of Dzimauli.<sup>45</sup>

When the opportunity presented itself, Makhado immediately mobilised his forces and ordered them to join with Tshikosi's followers on Makhado's side. The episode had to be properly planned and speedily executed. Any setback would frustrate the anti-Tshivhase group and strengthen Ligegise's supporters.<sup>46</sup>

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on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, p. 113; J.M. Rammuda, Mafhungo a Shango la Harambuda; O.I. - K. Nengovhela (about 100 years), Khumbe, 31-12-1982.

43. O.I. - J.M. Rammuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966; O.I. - J.K. Ramabulana (68 years), Thohoyandou, 06-05-1991.

44. O.I. - J.M. Rammuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966; O.I.- J.K. Ramabulana (68 years), Thohoyandou, 06-05-1991.

45. O.I. - J.M. Rammuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966.

46. *Ibid.*

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To achieve a speedy success, the two forces subsequently invaded Gogogo from the north, surrounding Siphuma's kraal, who was apparently unaware of the impending attack.<sup>47</sup>

In this encounter between Siphuma and Tshikosi many atrocities were perpetrated, as Siphuma suffered many casualties. With Siphuma defeated and driven from the territory, the way was now paved for the reinstatement of the former leader, Negogogo, who had joined with Tshikosi's followers after Bele's death. It should be noted here that Khangale, the sister of Tshikosi, was meant to be Negogogo's wife, but was instead, given as Queen to Makhado in order to enlist his assistance in regaining Dzimauli. To cement secure relations with Negogogo and retain his continued loyalty through family ties, as well as to honour the loss of Khangale by Negogogo to Makhado, Negogogo was later given Muofhe, daughter of Tshikosi, as wife.<sup>48</sup> This ensured the important foothold Tshikosi had gained in Dzimauli with the reinstatement of Negogogo.<sup>49</sup>

The annexation of Gogogo marked the beginning of protracted war in the mountains of Dzimauli, perhaps the longest in Venda history. With his defences shattered and Gogogo no longer safe, the defeated and disappointed, but not yet vanquished Siphuma, fled to Tshivhase's territory to plan further strategies for the retention of his power in Dzimauli. Because Ligegise disliked the idea of losing contact, through the royal house of Rammbuda, with internal happenings in Dzimauli, he subsequently placed his figurehead of leadership and Rammbuda royal power, Siphuma, at Tshamulumbwi.<sup>50</sup>

Leaving Negogogo securely seated on his throne, the armies of Tshikosi and Makhado triumphantly began the return journey to their respective homes, Maname

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47. W.M.D. Phophi, *Phusuphusu dza Dzimauli*, p. 36; O.I. - J.M. Rammbuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966; O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986.

48. O.I.- J.K. Ramabulana (68 years), Thohoyandou, 06-05-1991; O.I.- J.M. Rammbuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966.

49. O.I.- J.K. Ramabulana (68 years), Thohoyandou, 06-05-1991; O.I.-J.M. Rammbuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966; TA SS 1232, p. 177. R2899/89, C. Beuster, Zendeling bij Schewase, aan P.J. Joubert, Supt. van Natu. 5 February 1889.

50. O.I. - J.M. Rammbuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966.

and Dzanani. During the course of the journey, they were challenged by the inhabitants of the small territory of Vhuhulwi who were allies of Tshivhase and who were very worried by the fall of Gogogo. The defences at Vhuhulwi were thought to be secured from external aggression due to the strategic setting of their fortress on top of a high mountain. Makhado's army could not tolerate a confrontation of this nature from such a small area and group of people. If the Vhuhulwi people were left unpunished after such provocation, Makhado's army would be disgraced, thus allowing the challengers to remain proud and boastful to others of their defeat of the mighty Makhado.<sup>51</sup>

A blot of this nature on the history of Dzanani could not be tolerated as it would remain in the minds of the people and cause them to doubt abilities of their leader and Thovhele, Makhado, to lead properly because of his perceived cowardice.<sup>52</sup>

The battle was a short one. The armies of Makhado and Tshikosi surrounded the mountain and placed its occupants under a state of siege. The Vhuhulwi found themselves in an awkward situation and ultimately surrendered. Their invaders then decided, on humanitarian grounds, to spare their lives. As did Siphuma before them, the vanquished Vhuhulwi leaders fled to Tshivhase for political asylum. The victorious Tshikosi, instead of returning to Maname, decided to make Vhuhulwi his new home. It is interesting to note that Tshikosi established himself in the very place to which his deceased brother, Bele, was posted by their father.

According to Van Warmelo, Tshikosi lived at Vhuhulwi for two years.<sup>53</sup> The occupation of Vhuhulwi by Tshikosi considerably strengthened his ability in the minds of the people, his ability to ascend the throne of Dzimauli. The taking of Gogogo and Vhuhulwi, and Tshikosi's subsequent return to Dzimauli, also meshed nicely with Makhado's ambitious plans for driving Ligegise from Dzimauli, since this was gradually achieved at Tshivhase's<sup>54</sup> expense, whose influence was, with

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51. O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986.

52. *Ibid.*

53. N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 113; O.I. - J.M. Rammuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966.

54. O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986.

each of Tshikosi's victories, slowly, but surely, diminishing throughout Rammbuda's territory.<sup>55</sup>

Tshikosi's successes in capturing Gogogo and Vhuhulwi were a means to an end - the ultimate conquest of Dzimauli. But he could not rest at Vhuhulwi while other lands in the territory were still occupied by Ligegise's cohorts. One of these leaders in particular, Netshixwadza and leader at Tshixwadza was particularly bothersome to Tshikosi. A victory at Tshixwadza would join Vhuhulwi to Gogogo and give Tshikosi a solid line of lands from which to move against the balance of the Tshivhase-dominated areas.<sup>56</sup>

Considering the outstanding performances and the lightning speed displayed by his army when they overran Gogogo and besieged Vhuhulwi, Tshikosi thought the defences at Tshixwadza would fall quickly, once the attack was launched.<sup>57</sup>

Consequently, and without seeking support from Makhado, he launched an attack on Tshixwadza which proved unsuccessful. It would appear that Tshikosi was unaware of the presence of Tshivhase's army at Tshixwadza. The Tshivhase army cornered and besieged Tshikosi's forces which subsequently retreated to Vhuhulwi. While with victory in hand, Tshivhase's army withdrew, leaving the area in the control of the local inhabitants.<sup>58</sup> When Makhado learnt of Tshikosi's setback at Tshixwadza, he ordered an attack on Tshivhase's territories of Tshifhire, Tshifulani and Vhulaudzi, in order to divert Ligegise's attention from Tshixwadza. Thus Ligegise's army was withdrawn in order to defend these lands which were more important than Tshixwadza, leaving no military line of defence against future attack. When knowledge of the withdrawal reached Tshikosi, he mobilised his forces and invaded Tshixwadza once more. During the course of the fierce battle, Tshixwadza's morale was broken. They packed their belongings and fled to nearby Luheni which was ruled by Ratshitanga, one of Ligegise's sons.<sup>59</sup> Following the

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55. *Ibid.*

56. *Ibid.*

57. *Ibid.*

58. *Ibid.*

59. *Ibid.*

fall of Tshixwadza, Tshikosi established himself there, where according to Van Warmelo, he resided for two years.<sup>60</sup>

This gradual annexation of Dzimauli was described by Van Warmelo as a piece-meal retaking of the territory, which demonstrates his lack of understanding of the overall picture in Soutpansberg. Had Van Warmelo investigated in more depth, he would have seen the war for Dzimauli in a much different light, not as a piece-meal unorganised dispute among the “natives”, but one which was planned in such a manner as to give Tshikosi time to build his army to retake Dzimauli without Makhado’s armies which came to his rescue. This was only a portion of Makhado’s overall strategy to secure Soutpansberg from the Boers. With each victory Tshikosi achieved, it only stands to reason that more and more warriors came to join him in the battle against Tshivhase. However the building of an army after each battle took time, especially when one was initially contesting with a very large and strong dynasty as well as invading a territory from outside the territory.<sup>61</sup> Tshikosi was able to regain the territory with minimum assistance from the Ramabulana because each step in the process was carefully planned and executed.<sup>62</sup>

Kone Nengovhela refers to the retaking of Dzimauli as *Sendedza Tshikosi* (gradual pushing by Tshikosi).<sup>63</sup> J.M. Rrambuda, one of the surviving sons of Tshikosi, appeared to have a thorough knowledge of the background to these events when he supports this saying and when he stated that, after each conquest, Tshikosi was ordered by Makhado to move and settle in the newly annexed land.<sup>64</sup> These gradual movements inward were intended to serve as a signal to the whole of Dzimauli that Tshikosi was certainly going to be the next ruler of the territory, as Tshivhase’s army was forever on the retreat. It became obvious over the years to those concerned, that Tshivhase’s authority and influence in the territory was gradually

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60. N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 113.

61. O.I. - J.M. Rrambuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-10-1986.

62. O.I. - J.M. Rrambuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966.

63. O.I. - K. Nengovhela (about 100 years), Khumbe, 24-08-1980.

64. O.I. - J.M. Rrambuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966.

being undermined by Tshikosi's victories.<sup>65</sup> Thus a dark cloud hung over Ligegise's ambitious plans for gaining a foothold in Dzimauli. It also became obvious that Tshikosi's conquest of Dzimauli was not haphazardly planned, but carefully executed and that the taking of Gogogo, Vhuhulwi and Tshixwadza constituted only the first stage of the entire operation which meshed in with Makhado's intricate blueprint aimed at preserving all of Soutpansberg for the Venda.<sup>66</sup>

To declare an all-out war on Ligegise would have proved catastrophic for both Makhado and Tshikosi. During the years between 1883 and 1886 Makhado was busy securing the entire Soutpansberg from both the Boers and other interest groups. Had Makhado and Tshikosi become involved in an all-out confrontation with Tshivhase,<sup>67</sup> the entire countryside would have gone up in flames, with brothers divided. This could have caused chaos which the Boers and other interest groups could then use to their advantage. Rather, it can be presumed that the gradual retaking of Dzimauli was carefully spaced within the context of Makhado's other activities involving the various areas of Tshifhire, Tsianda, Lwamondo, Tshimbupfe, Tshivhulana, Nngwekhulu and Mbwenda, as well as the Sotho to the west and south of Venda. All these activities were carefully spaced and occurred in such a manner as to keep Ligegise off balance at all times, wondering just what Makhado would do next.<sup>68</sup>

The conquest of Dzimauli was not Makhado's ultimate goal. The liberation of Soutpansberg, both above and below the Luvuvhu-Muhohodi Rivers, was his ultimate goal. Dzimauli played an integral part in Makhado's overall master plan. The objective was to bring all the Venda under centralised political authority. As it

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65. *Ibid.*

66. This was part of Makhado's overall master plan for keeping Venda safe for the Venda.

67. This became clear as Makhado pretended to be supporting Tshikosi yet in reality he did not want Tshivhase to spread his influence north of Mutale River. Direct attack on Tshivhase would have drawn the Boers in the conflict in order to support Tshivhase, their loyal ally.

68. M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana; N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Soutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 162.

revolved around restoring the glory of the past<sup>69</sup> - the era when they were led by Dambanyika, Vele, Thohoyandou and Tshisevhe. Dzimauli's return to a leadership favourable to Makhado, was only a small portion of his overall strategy to restore the Senzi to their former position of power and prestige, which, at the same time, would serve to weaken the position and influence of the Tshivhase dynasty in the eyes of all the rulers and other kingdoms as well as their followers. This would then minimise a Tshivhase threat to the re-establishment of the Venda state under centralised political authority, eventually making Tshivhase subordinate to Makhado's control, as his was senior to Tshivhase in royalty.<sup>70</sup>

Further, Makhado realised that, without complete unity, any defence the Venda might mount against White incursion and domination in Soutpansberg would be lost. Makhado could not afford to have a strong and highly-respected Tshivhase leader strongly influenced by Whites maintaining his independence<sup>71</sup> from the envisaged restoration of Venda power and glory in the area. Thus, every defeat Ligegise suffered at the hands of Tshikosi served to undermine his credibility with other leaders, as well as restore Rammbuda's territory to those who would support Makhado in his endeavours to secure Soutpansberg from foreign domination. It was for all these reasons that the "piece-meal" retaking of the territory by Tshikosi was very important to Makhado's master plan for Soutpansberg.<sup>72</sup>

Tshikosi's shattering victory at Tshixwadza sent shock waves throughout Dzimauli and the residents of nearby Dzamba, led by Mashila's mother, Mukumela, surrendered themselves after a short tussle with Tshikosi's forces. According to Mukumela, both Tshikosi and Mashila were her sons and she had nothing to do with

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69. L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, p. 19.

70. Makhado's royal house, the Ramabulana royal house, was senior to the Tshivhase royal house in status. His royal house was Khotsimuhulu and that of Tshivhase Khotsimunene.

71. Tshivhase looked to the Boers for assistance in the event of any conflict with Makhado. See J. Flygare, *De Zoutpansbergen en de Bawenda natie*, p. 12; TA SS4485, p. 64. R1195/95, C. Beuster, *Zendingstatie bij Schewase*, 28 December 1894.

72. N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, 1940, p. 113; O.I. - K. Nengovhela (about 100 years), Khumbe, 24-08-1980.

the Tshivhase dynasty, who, she alleged, were responsible for the premature death of her son, Mashila.<sup>73</sup>

Describing this fray, J.M. Rrambuda says that after leaving Tshixwadza, Tshikosi's followers arrived at Tshifhondwi in Dzamba where Mukumela, Mashila's mother, was in charge. Here Tshikosi's followers encountered Tshivhase and Siphuma's warriors. Siphuma's followers betrayed the Tshivhase supporters and secretly gave their guns to Makhado's wife, Khangale. Siphuma's followers then fled the area, leaving the rifles in order to arm Tshikosi, as Ligegise was no longer on good terms with Siphuma.<sup>74</sup> This particular version of the fighting is difficult to substantiate, because Siphuma, following his flight from Tshixwadza, had already been placed by Ligegise at Tshamulumbwi. But given the fact that some two years had elapsed since the defeat at Tshixwadza, and that Siphuma was no longer on good terms with Ligegise, Siphuma's followers may have taken refuge with Mukumela at Dzamba. It is also possible that Makhado's wife, Khangale, was sent by her husband to discover what conditions were at Tshifhondwi<sup>75</sup> and that Siphuma's followers, in an effort to make amends with the royal family and to impress Makhado, gave the arms to Khangale to use against Tshivhase. At any rate, Dzamba's surrender added another feather to Tshikosi's cap as his domain had been enlarged. Mukumela's terms of surrender were accepted and friendly relations existed between Tshikosi and Mukumela who regarded him as her son.<sup>76</sup>

With Dzamba now secured for two years, Tshikosi again waited to turn the situation to his advantage. He used the time to strengthen his own forces. When he thought the opportunity correct, he attacked Ratshitanga, Ligegise's son, at Luheni. He intended to open the way to Tshifume and Vhuhulwi which had already fallen to Tshikosi.<sup>77</sup> He also wanted to place himself in a position more closely situated to the

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73. O.I. - J.M. Rrambuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966; J.M. Rrambuda, *Mafhungo a shango la Harambuda*.

74. J.M. Rrambuda, *Mafhungo a shango la Harambuda*.

75. *Ibid.*

76. *Ibid.*

77. W.M.D. Phophi, *Phusuphusu dza Dzimauli*, p. 39.

royal residence at Tshavhandinda.<sup>78</sup> The battle was short-lived as Ratshitanga, unable to face Tshikosi's army, fled across the Mutale River into his father's territory. Adhering to his previous pattern, Tshikosi settled himself at Luheni. When those who had settled with him from Maname, Vhuhulwi and Tshixwadza realised he intended to remain at Luheni, they packed their belongings and followed him, thus ending their two-year sojourn at Tshixwadza.<sup>79</sup>

Ratshitanga's eviction from Luheni was considered to be a blow to the Tshivhase dynasty. The defeat of Tshivhase's son, Ratshitanga, was also Tshivhase's defeat. Luheni was the nearest stronghold to the royal headquarters at Tshavhadinda. The occupation of this strategic area by Tshikosi meant that Tshavhadinda would be the next to fall, if Tshikosi was allowed to remain at Luheni.<sup>80</sup>

The Tshivhase leaders were infuriated by the loss and commenced preparations for the launching of a massive attack on Tshikosi, whose forces, in anticipation of a Tshivhase offensive were solidly dug in at Luheni.<sup>81</sup> Previous experience at Tshixwadza and Luheni had taught Ligegise that, in any attack against Tshikosi, they had to prepare themselves thoroughly. Ligegise carried a vendetta against Tshikosi and intended to bring him to his knees. He wanted to wipe out the shame caused by their shattering defeats at Tshixwadza and Luheni. That is why, in the biggest encounter to date between Tshikosi and Ligegise, Ligegise mobilised a large army of warriors called throughout his territory, ordering them to meet on the banks of the Mutale River and await his orders to cross into Dzimauli.<sup>82</sup> Ligegise's army then crossed into Dzimauli, fully determined to conquer their enemy.<sup>83</sup>

Choosing to attack during the darkest hours of the night, the topography of Luheni was such that Ligegise's army had to choose a long, arduous approach from below

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78. J.M. Rammuda, *Mafhungo a shango la Harambuda*.

79. *Ibid.*

80. *Ibid.*

81. *Ibid.*

82. O.I. - J.M. Rammuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966.; W.M.D. Phophi, *Phusuphusu dza Dzimauli*, p. 40.

83. O.I. - J.M. Rammuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966.; W.M.D. Phophi, *Phusuphusu dza Dzimauli*, p. 41.

the mountain. It presented certain difficulties. They could not see the way clearly. This was coupled with the exhaustion ensuing after the difficult climb up the mountain. There there were the thoughts of impending battle with enemies they were unable to see.<sup>84</sup>

Tshikosi, anticipating an attack at any time, posted men at strategic points along the paths up the mountain from which they could open fire and repulse the invaders. As Tshikosi planned, the opposing forces were forced into retreat in great haste and suffered many casualties across the Mutale River.<sup>85</sup> Subsequently, Ligegise gave up the attack. His army returned in defeat, knowing that, with the failure to recapture Luheni, their position amongst the inhabitants of Dzimauli was considerably diminished while Tshikosi's was further enhanced.<sup>86</sup>

The Tshivhase forces were defeated. Tshikosi, who now felt elated and invincible, decided to deliver another blow to the dynasty. His target was now Tshamulumbwi, in which Ligegise had placed Siphuma following Siphumas' retreat from Gogogo. As long as Siphuma remained in Dzimauli, Tshikosi's position there was insecure. Therefore, Siphuma had to be forced out of Tshamulumbwi and driven back across the Mutale River into Tshivhase's territory.

Realising Siphuma's potential military strength, Tshikosi once more despatched messengers to Dzanani, seeking military assistance from Makhado. The Venda ruler had been watching this development of events with interest. He even despatched a battalion to Dzimauli. In all probability, this was the army which was joined by his two eldest sons, Mphephu and Sinthumule. Makhado, however, appeared to be unaware of this happening until much later, for it is reported that he reprimanded

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84. O.I. - J.M. Rammuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966.; O.I. - W.M.D. Phophi (78 years) Tshifudi, 14-05-1987.
85. O.I. - J.M. Rammuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966.; O.I. - W.M.D. Phophi (78 years) Tshifudi, 14-05-1987.
86. O.I. - J.M. Rammuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966.; TA SS 2962, p. 119. R10840/91, Thomas Parfuri (sic.), Voor A.A. Albasini, Com. Natu. 20 Augustus 1891.

his generals, charging them with having allowed his two sons to accompany the army without Thovhele's knowledge and consent.<sup>87</sup>

The combined forces of Makhado and Tshikosi marched to Tshamulumbwi over the mountains of Mphwaninga, the intent being to establish Tshikosi as the undisputed and supreme ruler of Dzimauli.<sup>88</sup> However, the victory proved too difficult to achieve. They were unable to penetrate Siphuma's defences and engage in hand-to-hand combat. As the two armies retreated, the Dzanani group left two people dead. Siphuma, *midi-ya-vhathu* meaning: Siphuma the destroyer of kraals, realising their inability to cause him harm, openly ridiculed them from the top of his mountain stronghold. Shortly thereafter, he departed for Mukumbani to inform Ligeise of his victory over the combined forces of Makhado and Tshikosi. At Tshamulumbwi Siphuma left his satellite, Tshimunye, as ruler of the area.<sup>89</sup> Even though unsuccessful, Tshikosi's attack and Siphuma's installation of Tshimunye as leader and his subsequent journey to Mukumbani, had far-reaching effects in Dzimauli. It prolonged the battle for the throne a number of years. The leaders of the anti-Tshikosi group at Tshavhadinda, Nyatshitahela and Mulondo, felt that Makhado and Tshikosi would launch another attack, and that Tshavhadinda could be the next target. This threat of imminent attack forced them to flee to Mukumbani.<sup>90</sup>

As Nyatshitahela and Mulondo, refused to go back to Dzimauli, Ligeise felt that his plans of bringing Dzimauli under his jurisdiction would be foiled. He did not entertain the idea that Tshavhadinda should remain unoccupied, for fear that it might fall to Tshikosi. He therefore advised and persuaded Siphuma to assume the reins of leadership by occupying the royal headquarters at Tshavhadinda.<sup>91</sup>

It had been Siphuma's ultimate objective for many years. Consequently he agreed to Ligeise's proposition. With the assistance of a complement of brave Tshivhase

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87. O.I. - K. Nengovhela (about 100 years), Khumbe, 31-12-1983; O.I. - A. Ramavhoya (about 100 years), Rabali, 29-10-1982; O.I. - J.M. Rambuuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966.

88. O.I. - A. Ramavhoya (about 100 years), Rabali, 29-10-1982.

89. O.I. - J.M. Rambuuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966.

90. *Ibid*; O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986.

91. O.I. - W.M.D. Phophi (78 years) Tshifudi, 14-05-1987.

warriors, Siphuma fortified the strategically situated Tshavhadinda against the forces of Dzanani and Tshikosi. The occupation of Tshavhadinda was of great political significance to the territory. whoever held the royal headquarters was, to all intents and purposes, the ruler of Dzimauli.<sup>92</sup>

The placing of Siphuma at Tshavhadinda occurred while Tshikosi was still licking his wounds after his losses at Tshamulumbwi. He remained convinced that Tshamulumbwi had to be conquered before any other attacks could be launched. Realising that Makhado felt that this state of affairs should be reversed, he again sent a message for assistance from Dzanani. Makhado was only too pleased to assist, for the shame of defeat he had suffered from such a small land as Tshamulumbwi had to be wiped out from the minds of the people and Venda history. Tshimunye, Siphuma's satellite, had to pay dearly for the earlier defeat. Moreover, if Tshamulumbwi fell, Tshavhadinda would eventually follow. Once this had been accomplished, Tshikosi's supremacy would be unchallenged, and this would mean that allegiance to Dzanani would be ensured.<sup>93</sup>

Makhado immediately mobilised his forces, ordering them to rush to Dzimauli fully determined to crush Tshamulumbwi. He ordered that, should they be defeated, they should not return to Dzanani. Any defeat inflicted on his armies would be a shame to the Ramabulana, he argued.<sup>94</sup> Encouraged, inspired and motivated by the words of *Thovhele*, and determined on the course they were to take, the Dzanani and Tshikosi forces arrived on the high plains of Tshamulumbwi and placed Tshimunye's residence, on top of the lofty mountain, in a state of siege and waited for nature to take its course. Eventually, the people of Tshamulumbwi, running short of water and food supplies, surrendered to Tshikosi.<sup>95</sup>

Phophi writes that some of the defenders were slain. Although he does not state their identity, it can be assumed that their newly appointed leader, Tshimunye, was

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92. *Ibid.*

93. O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986.

94. *Ibid.*

95. *Ibid.*; W.M.D. Phophi, *Phusuphusu dza Dzimauli*, pp. 45 - 46; TA SS 2962, p. 119. R10840/91, Thomas Parfuri voor A.A. Schiel, Com. Natu. 20 Augustus 1891.

amongst them.<sup>96</sup> A. Ramabulana states that this was the worst encounter in the war of supremacy between Ligegise and Makhado. Aside from the length of time over which the siege occurred, the second battle of Tshamulumbwi was fought without the use of fire power. Only derogatory words were exchanged. It all ended in the gradual military suffocation of the defenders of Tshamulumbwi, rendering them weak and ultimately defenceless.<sup>97</sup>

Thus, over the course of some fourteen years, the two major wielders of power in Venda, Makhado and Ligegise, tested their respective strengths, skills and fighting tactics on the people of war-torn Dzimauli. Each of the four, Siphuma, Tshikosi, Ligegise and Makhado, was seeking to gain or regain power.<sup>98</sup>

Makhado was pursuing a path which would preserve Soutpansberg from further White incursion into Venda in order to attain his ultimate objective namely, the restoration of the former glory and power of the Senzi dynasty to Venda. It could only be realised with the removal of all Whites from Soutpansberg and under a united Venda kingdom, with armies prepared to thwart incursion from the outside was his ultimate goal. With Makhado's expansionism, one can readily see that, by surrounding the remaining Whites in Soutpansberg, with Venda allies<sup>99</sup> subject to him as supreme leader, he could force their complete evacuation of Soutpansberg with, either threats of siege, or outright war. Ultimately all Whites had to either leave Soutpansberg or perish in their attempts to remain. One could also say that, at least in part it appeared as if Makhado's quest for power was an aesthetic one.

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96. O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986; W.M.D. Phophi, *Phusuphusu dza Dzimauli*, pp. 46 - 47; TA SS 2962, p. 119. R10840/91, Thomas Parfuri voor A.A. Schiel, Com. Natu. 20 Augustus 1891.
97. O.I. - W.M.D. Phophi (78 years), Tshifudi, 14-05-1987; O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986; O.I. - A. Ramavhoya (about 100 years), Rabali, 29-10-1982.
98. TA SS4000, p. 178. R13496/93, J.T. Kelly, Waarnemende Com. v. Natu., Spelonken, aan P.J. Joubert, Superintendent v. Naturellen, 11 October 1893; TA SS4000, p. 179. SR1303/93, J.T. Kelly, Waarn. Com. Natu. Boschoppies, Spelonken, aan P.J. Joubert, Superintendent v. Naturellen, 17 Oct. 93. See also TA SS3062, p. 157. R1085/83, Rooibok, Tapalala's Induna, voor B.J. Vorster, Commandant Zoutpansberg, 21 February 1883.
99. TA SS2962, p. 127. R10840/91, A.A. Schiel, Com. Natu, aan Supt. van Natu. 23 Augustus 1891.
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From the Venda point of view, it was a positive quest aimed at the preservation of the people and the way of life they had sustained for hundreds of years.<sup>100</sup>

Tshivhase's goals appear to have been more negatively imperialistic in nature, and not as far-reaching as Makhado's. Initially, he sought to subjugate a single territory, rather than preserve Soutpansberg as a whole. The dynasty needed to recover those territories previously lost to Rammbuda. The stigma of defeat at the hands of Rammbuda had to be removed to repair the reputation of the dynasty.<sup>101</sup> But any embarrassment he could heap on Makhado along the way, was welcome. Control of Dzimauli, in conjunction with his own territory, could virtually give Ligegise total command over the lands north of Mutale River. Had he succeeded, he would have eventually moved on Nethengwe and the other independent Mahosi in the area, thus placing him in control of territories equal in size and prestige to those of Makhado.<sup>102</sup> Had events taken a different turn, there might have been an all out war for supremacy in the Soutpansberg between the Ramabulana and Tshivhase dynasties.

With Tshikosi and Siphuma, the reasons were not as grandiose or complicated, nor were they as far-reaching. Each of these men were seeking power within the boundaries of Dzimauli. It would appear that further expansion of the kingdom was not a part of either Siphuma's or Tshikosi's political vision, for had it been, both Makhado and Ligegise would have found other candidates with less pretentious desires. Tshikosi was, in a sense, fighting for the same thing as Makhado, except on a smaller scale.<sup>103</sup> He felt and believed that the battle was to preserve the territory of Rammbuda from a Tshivhase take-over which might occur if Siphuma were allowed to ascend the throne and bring shame to the house of Rammbuda.<sup>104</sup>

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100. O.I. - K. Nengovhela (about 100 years), Khumbe, 24-08-1980; TA SS3062, p. 158. R1075/83, Kaffir Kapitein Tapalala, voor B.J. Vorster, Commandant te Zoutpansberg, 21 February 1883.
101. O.I. - J.M. Rammbuda (about 66 years), Makwarela, 12-05-1966; O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986.
102. O.I. - J.M. Rammbuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966.
103. O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986.
104. O.I. - J.M. Rammbuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966; TA SS2962, p. 141. R11065/91, Constable Nathanael Jojo, voor A. Schiel, Com. Natu. 26 Augustus 1891; W.M.D. Phophi, *Phusuphusu dza Dzimauli*, p. 35.

By annexing Gogogo, Vhuhulwi, Tshixwadza, Dzamba, Luheni and Tshamulumbwi, Tshikosi had become stronger than his adversary Siphuma, as nearly the whole of Dzimauli was controlled by him and his supporters. The one remaining objective, the royal headquarters at Tshavhadinda, was the last obstacle to Tshikosi assuming leadership of his father's throne. Preparations for the assault on the royal kraal concluded, Tshikosi's army journeyed to Lwamondo,<sup>105</sup> the springboard from which Tshikosi launched his first attack on Tshamulumbwi. J.M. Rammbuda described the fighting as fierce and intense. That was the day of the "great war" in which two important personalities were killed and their bodies hurled down from Tshiungani Mountain.<sup>106</sup> However, Tshikosi's tricks, plans and fighting tactics proved futile against the superior fighting machinery of Siphuma. Thus, his army retreated and they established themselves again at Lwamondo.<sup>107</sup>

Tshikosi knew that he, again, must make preparations for an assault on Tshavhadinda, which he now had to mount without assistance from Dzanani, for the kingship of the Ramabulana's had passed to Mphephu following Makhado's untimely death in 1895. He felt, however, that with careful preparation, he could overrun Tshavhadinda in the course of time.<sup>108</sup> He realised that succession to Venda kingship was to a large extent dependent on popular support as well as members of the royal family. He also knew that Siphuma lacked both support of the population and certain influential members of the royal house. But in spite of the support he had, Tshikosi realised that, as long as he resided outside the royal headquarters at Tshavhadinda, he could not claim to have ascended the throne of Dzimauli, even though he controlled most of the lands in the territory.<sup>109</sup>

Siphuma was, however, unfortunate in that he was unpopular amongst the *makhotsimunene* (uncles) on whose support he had to depend if he was to ascend the throne legally. For this state of affairs he had no one to blame but himself. His

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105. O.I. - J.M. Rammbuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966.

106. *Ibid.*

107. *Ibid.*

108. *Ibid.*

109. *Ibid.*

character had become a serious liability. His lack of flexibility and his failure to accommodate other people's interest and wishes contributed greatly to scare them away from his course. Over and above this, many people were unhappy with his association with Ligeise, who, they believed, wanted to use Siphuma as instrument for returning Dzimauli to the jurisdiction of Tshivhase.<sup>110</sup>

As the passing away of Makhado in 1895 did not bring a change in the Ramabulana's attitude towards assisting Tshikosi, this account would continue until the enthronement of Tshikosi in 1896. Makhado's successor, Mphephu, considered it his duty to accomplish that which his father left unfinished.<sup>111</sup> Thus in his preparations for the last encounter Tshikosi received assistance from Dzanani. Tshikosi knew that the entry way to the royal headquarters, the cave of Tshavhandinda, was almost impenetrable even though it could easily be reached from all directions but the north, and that it was surrounded by strong stone walls, providing a place of refuge in times of conflict.<sup>112</sup> In order to capture this strategically situated place, Tshikosi planned his attack in autumn, the intent being to take Siphuma by surprise in an effort to avoid the bitter experiences of the past.<sup>113</sup>

The army gathered in the early hours of a morning on which there was heavy rain, feeling this was a more expedient plan of attack, for no one would expect them in such weather. In this arrangement Tshikosi's army re-inforced by those from Dzanani, began their fearless advance up the mountain in unsavoury conditions, through the slippery rocks and boulders of Dzimauli, having determined not to return unless Tshavhadinda fell into their hands.<sup>114</sup> They considered this to be the greatest venture of their life because the future of Dzimauli was dependent on who occupied Tshavhadinda.<sup>115</sup>

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110. *Ibid.*

111. *Ibid.*; M.M. Motenda, Ramabulana; N.J. van Warmelo (Ed.), The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Soutpansberg, *Ethnological Publications of the Native Affairs Department*, 8, 1940, p. 166.

112. J.M. Rammuda, "Bako la Tshavhadinda", Thohoyandou, 27 May 1988.

113. *Ibid.*

114. O.I. - J.M. Rammuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966.

115. *Ibid.*

As they neared Tshavhadinda with great stealth, Tshikosi divided his army, for he intended to launch an attack from below. One of his younger brothers, Nngwana (Nyalalumbe's son) led the other division to the top of the mountain. They would come down through *matembele* (creepers) in order to launch an attack from above.<sup>116</sup> This strategy was chosen in order to frighten and confuse Siphuma, since he would be in no position to defend the cave and target of a hail of bullets from two different directions. It was a bold, difficult and dangerous venture. They did not know what preparations Siphuma might have made against an attack. Once Nngwana's group reached the top of the mountain, they found it was impossible to fire at the cave.<sup>117</sup>

Due to poor visibility, they were unable to see their comrades attacking from below and there was the danger that they might shoot them instead of Siphuma's warriors. In the midst of these unfavourable conditions, the brave and daring Nngwana jumped down through Matembele and killed Siphuma's two sons who were roasting mealie cobs in the cave.<sup>118</sup> Nngwana, hardly believing what had happened, shouted to his comrades-in-arms to join him in entering the cave which ultimately led to Siphuma's kraal which was located below the cave. However, the time for the actual attack on Siphuma's kraal had not yet come.<sup>119</sup>

Siphuma, who appeared to have underestimated the abilities and the strength of Tshikosi's forces was not in the kraal. Having repulsed Tshikosi's forces at Tshamulumbwi and recently at Tshavhadinda, Siphuma relaxed his defences.<sup>120</sup> As he was unpopular with the *makhotsimunene*, some of them threw their support to Tshikosi and entered into agreement with Tshikosi to lure Siphuma away to a *mukumbi* (marula) drink at Mutodani. The drinking of *mukumbi* is a festive

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116. *Ibid.* Matembele are branches of mountain trees hanging down, sometimes along the cliffs. The invaders used them to land on Tshavhadinda. From this event, the Rammubuda dynasty received a praise known as "Rammubuda tshiwa-nga-matembele tshologodo ya murwa Phophi Nzhelele", meaning Rammubuda who falls through creepers, a surprise attacker, son of Phophi, from Nzhelele.

117. O.I. - J.M. Rammubuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966.

118. *Ibid.*; See also W.M.D. Phophi, *Phusuphusu dza Dzimauli*, p. 50. Phophi writes that only one child was killed.

119. O.I. - J.M. Rammubuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966.

120. *Ibid.*

occasion accompanied by entertainment and food. Because Siphuma was considered to be the *khosi*, and in keeping with his status, the best food was prepared for the occasion.<sup>121</sup>

While the people were enjoying themselves, Tshikosi's brother, Mahafha, who was among them, left in secret to alert Tshikosi at Masenga to enter Tshavhadinda, as it was left unguarded. That was the reason why Tshikosi divided his army, and upon notice by Nngwana that the guards were slain, rushed up the mountain to join the forces on top and enter the cave to await Siphuma's return from Mutodani.<sup>122</sup>

When Siphuma and his followers returned to Tshavhadinda that evening, unaware of what had transpired, they were alerted by rifle shots to halt outside the cave. Tshikosi then informed Siphuma that it was he, his younger brother, who had entered Tshavhadinda and who claimed the throne. He advised Siphuma not to fight, as this would lead to unnecessary shedding of blood, which, Tshikosi did not want, as they were brothers of the same father. He concluded by advising Siphuma to peacefully cross over to Tshivhase's territory and to leave matters standing as they were. Siphuma, having no other alternative, complied and left with his followers. However, he later returned and concluded peace with his younger brother.<sup>123</sup>

Following Siphuma's peaceful surrender and retreat, Tshikosi triumphantly entered Tshavhadinda, the capital of Dzimauli in March 1896, six months after Makhado's death. This event was the consummation of the protracted struggle for control of Dzimauli which commenced in 1882 and fourteen years later ended at Tshavhadinda.<sup>124</sup> Thus, the entire operational plan when placed in perspective, which after the fall of Tshamulumbwi had completed the letter "Z" and now with

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121. *Ibid.* Mukumbi is a festive drink prepared from Mafula fruits from a tree called Mufula, very tasty and available only in the Autumn months. /

122. *Ibid.*

123. *Ibid.* N.J. van Warmelo, Report on succession to Sinthumule Chieftainship, p. 113.

124. TA SS 779, p. 39. R512/83, Bellie oft Rampoota, voor A.A. Albasini, Com. v. Nat. Spelonken, 9 January 1883. Tshivhase drove Bele out in December 1882. Tshikosi went to Dzanani the same time. The actual conflict started in 1884 when Siphuma was driven out of Gogogo.

the occupation of Tshavhadinda, very appropriately doubled the letter "Z" to produce the shape of an "M" turned horizontally. The first point of the letter starts with settlement at Maname. From Maname, Tshikosi moved to Gogogo and annexed it. On his way back along the same route, he occupied Vhuhulwi and settled there. From Vhuhulwi he attacked Tshixwadza, initially lost but later annexed it. He thereafter took Luheni. From there he unsuccessfully launched an attack on Tshamulumbwi. He retreated but later annexed it. From Tshamulumbwi he attacked Tshavhadinda, failed but later occupied it. This was the plan both Tshikosi and Makhado adhered to until the whole of Dzimauli was taken from Siphuma and Tshivhase. Tshivhase was aware of Makhado's plans but he could not stop him. That is why he resorted to the Boers for assistance. This portion of what may be referred to as Makhado's "Master Plan" for the preservation of Venda against Boer incursion, was successfully completed some fourteen years after it began, even though he did not live to celebrate Tshikosi's ascendancy to the throne of Rammbuda.<sup>125</sup>

In this struggle for ascendancy between the sons of Vele Rammbuda, Makhado with his son Mphephu, through tact, diplomacy, statesmanship and military strategy, succeeded in forestalling Ligegise's incessant attempts to regain control of Dzimauli. In this way Makhado spread his influence to Dzimauli. From that time on a strong bond existed between Dzanani and Dzimauli.<sup>126</sup>

Although the assistance Makhado rendered to Tshikosi was part of his plan for saving Venda and the restoration of its former glory and power, he also fulfilled the traditional obligation of rewarding Tshikosi for giving his sister, Khangale, to Makhado as *Mufumakadzi* (Queen). Tshikosi eventually became *khosi* of Dzimauli, but without Makhado's military assistance he would not have succeeded in ascending the throne.<sup>127</sup>

The presence of Makhado's forces at Gogogo, Vhuhulwi, Tshamulumbwi and Tshavhadinda, apart from military assistance, boosted Tshikosi in the eyes of the

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125. O.I. - J.M. Rammbuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966.

126. *Ibid.*

127. *Ibid.*

people of Dzimauli. These forces were regarded as liberators, freeing Dzimauli from Tshivhase's influence.<sup>128</sup>

Although Tshikosi had given Makhado his sister as wife, he felt it was not enough. He therefore handed a portion of his territory to the Ramabulanas. This was Dzamba which he meant to be a token of tribute and loyalty - *Tshizwa tsha musumo* - to Makhado for the good service he rendered to Dzimauli.<sup>129</sup>

Makhado appreciated this gesture but told Tshikosi that instead of stationing an outsider at Dzamba as his representative, he would delegate his wife, Khangale, to be a ruler of this land as Tshikosi's ascendancy to the throne of Rammbuda had elevated Khangale to the position of great *Makhadzi* of Dzimauli.<sup>130</sup>

Following this arrangement between Makhado and Tshikosi, Khangale left Dzanani and settled at Dzamba as the great *Makhadzi*, but she was still Makhado's wife. As a result of this arrangement Ramabulanas became permanent resident of Dzimauli.<sup>131</sup> They were the children of Khangale.

This narrative of the war for Dzimauli concludes the account of Makhado's military and diplomatic vis a vis other rulers of Venda. Thus, Makhado succeeded in keeping Tshivhase's influence out of Dzimauli. This was done in such a way that the Boers, although aware of his intentions could not render active assistance to Tshivhase who was their loyal subject.<sup>132</sup>

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128. *Ibid.*

129. O.I. - A. Ramabulana (70 years), Makwarela, 29-10-1986.

130. *Ibid.*

131. *Ibid.*

132. TA SS4485, pp. 64 - 66. C. Beuster, *Zendeling bij Schewase, aan Coms. Natu. Klein Spelonken*, 28 December 1894.



**FIGURE 3: *THOVHELE* MAKHADO IN 1894**

## CHAPTER 9

### ATTEMPTS AT SUBJUGATING MAKHADO AND HIS DEATH, 1884-95

The year 1884 ushered in a new era in the relationship between Makhado and the South African Republic. The Republic could not take any punitive steps against the Venda monarch, as that would constitute a violation of the terms of the Pretoria Convention which prevented them from any actions affecting the 'natives' without Her Majesty's Government's consent.<sup>1</sup> As the Boers pressed for the complete independence of their state, the British Government yielded and signed the London Convention on 27 February 1884, which, amongst other things, empowered the Transvaal to make treaties with the 'natives' to the north. These included the Venda of Makhado.<sup>2</sup>

The Pretoria Government tried to avoid war at all costs with Makhado, having chosen the way of negotiation as a means of subjugating him peacefully. The Boers in the Soutpansberg, who felt threatened by his expansionist policy, continued to fabricate stories against him, using the agreement he had been alleged to have entered into with Christian Joubert in 1883. They were eager to assert pressure on the government to use force against Makhado.<sup>3</sup>

In the midst of these developments, the Commissioner of Klipdam, Oscar Dahl, reacted to Albasini's accusations that he (Dahl), was unwilling to collect tax from Makhado. According to Albasini, as long as Makhado was not paying tax, he

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1. E.A. Walker, *The Cambridge History of the British Empire*, 8, p. 496.
  2. *Ibid.*, p. 521.
  3. TA SS3062, p. 59. R1764/83, Ernest Creux, *Zendeling, Boschkopies, Antwoord van het Opperhoofd Makhatu aan den afgevaardigde aan hem gezonden door den Weled, Heer Speciale Commisaris*, 3 April 1883.

(Albasini) would not be in a position to collect taxes in the district.<sup>4</sup> Albasini had to voice his feeling, as part of Makhado's territory was believed to be within his area of jurisdiction.<sup>5</sup>

In order to clarify his point of view to the superintendent, Dahl pointed out that as from 1876, Makhado's area fell under his jurisdiction. Four years before, (1880) Makhado had paid his taxes. Dahl further stated that, during his visit to Makhado, he came to learn that the latter experienced difficulties in counting his subjects' huts, which were scattered over a large area. Another difficulty which complicated the issue of tax collection, was the fact that, the moment his people saw a White man, they would flee into hiding. Despite these difficulties, Makhado was still willing to pay his tax to Dahl but, unfortunately, part of his country was under Albasini. Moreover, Albasini's area included the Knobneuzen who were not on friendly terms with Makhado.<sup>6</sup> Makhado had told Dahl he wanted peace, not war.

Albasini, on the other hand, insisted in his letter to the Superintendent that he was entitled to collect taxes from Makhado, as the latter's territory fell within the Spelonken and not Klipdam.<sup>7</sup> Over and above this, after his visit to Makhado, Albasini assessed the situation and concluded that Makhado would pay tax if his territory were under one commissioner, who in this case, was the commissioner of the Spelonken as Makhado said he could not serve two masters.<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, Albasini felt very strongly that unless Makhado's territory was placed under his jurisdiction, it would be difficult to collect taxes. Makhado's unwillingness to pay taxes would discourage other leaders like Tshivhase, Mphaphuli and Nelwamondo from rendering their tributes.<sup>9</sup> It could eventually weaken the authority of the Republic over the Soutpansberg. The inclusion of

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4. TA SS989, p. 140. R4742/84, Oscar Dahl, Com. Nat. Zoutpansberg, Klipdam, Zoutpasnberg, aan Sup. Nat. Zaken, 3 October 1884.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

7. TA SS989, pp. 153, 156-7. R4751/84, A.A. Albasini, Coms. Nat. Spelonken, aan Superintendent Naturellen, 4 October 1884; and R5035/84, Oscar Dahl, Olifants Rivier, aan Superintendent Naturellen, 21 Oktober 1884.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 153, 156-7.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 153, 156-7.

Nelwamondo with Tshivhase and Mphaphuli revealed that Albasini, like the Boers, was ignorant of the territorial dispensations of the Venda kingdom. Nelwamondo was administratively under Makhado.<sup>10</sup>

As the two officials of the Republic vied with each other for the possession of Makhado's territory, Thovhele skilfully played off one against the other while preventing military confrontation with the government. It was for this reason that Albasini further reported that Makhado had told him that he was willing to pay taxes but unfortunately nobody had come to collect the money.<sup>11</sup> The impression Makhado created was that the government was failing to collect tax.

Differences between Commissioners Albasini and Dahl which were transmitted by several letters to Pretoria, pushed the government into action. The government had to do something because if the affairs of the Soutpansberg between the two commissioners and Makhado were left unattended, the situation would get out of control. As a result of this, the Superintendent of Native Affairs, P.J. Joubert, accompanied by Commissioners A.A. Albasini, Oscar Dahl and L. Rabe, member of the Volksraad and Stoffel Snyman, visited Makhado on 10 December 1884.<sup>12</sup>

During this meeting Joubert explained to Makhado the purpose of his coming. The major issue was that the huts had to be counted in order to determine how much taxersa had to be paid. It was also necessary to determine how these funds were supposed to reach the government.<sup>13</sup>

Makhado's reaction to the counting of huts was that he would call the people together and asked the commissioner to count them there instead of going from village to village. This process would enable the commissioner to assess the amount of taxation to be paid. Regarding the office that the taxes had to be paid to,

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10. *Ibid.*, pp. 153, 156-7.

11. TA SS989, p. 153. R4751/84, A.A. Albasini, Coms. Nat. Spelonken, aan Superintendent Naturellen, 4 October 1884.

12. TA SS1014, pp. 102, 104. R5998/84, P.J. Joubert, Sup. Natu. Zaken, Zoutpansberg, aan den Staats President en Leden der Uitvoerende Raad, 12 December 1884.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 104. According to the accompanying letter the visit was on 12 December 1884 which is the date on which it was written. Yet the date on the discussion document is 10 December 1884.

Makhado agreed that Albasini should be responsible. He did however point out that he would have preferred to collect and hand it over personally. Joubert objected, as it was contrary to legislation. The Superintendent left Makhado's Royal Residence under the impression that the problems which necessitated his coming to the Soutpansberg were settled. Makhado's response was positive after all.<sup>14</sup>

Whether the arrangement and understanding reached between Makhado and Joubert would bear any fruit, was dependent on the attitude and activities of the two commissioners and the local Boer community who would be satisfied with nothing but the total destruction of Makhado.<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile Commissioner Albasini continued his struggle against Makhado. On 21 January 1886 he visited Makhado, demanding payment of taxes outstanding, prior to 1886. Makhado replied that his people had no money as they had to go to work for it in the Diamond Fields. His subjects, working for the local Boers, he explained, were earning very little. Despite these unfavourable circumstances, he believed that if all went well, perhaps they might be in a position to settle the issue of the monies outstanding. Albasini thereafter raised the issue of stock theft which the Boers alleged, were stolen by Makhado's people. As no conclusion could be reached, he reported to the government, he saw no other means than to use force on Makhado.<sup>16</sup>

As Makhado had indicated earlier that he would pay his taxes in winter, Albasini approached him to honour his promise. He told him to pay according to law and his passbook. In reply Makhado said there was nobody above him as far as his people were concerned. Consequently he would not allow anybody to collect taxes directly

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14. *Ibid.*, p. 104.

15. TA SS1167, p. 37. R556/86, A.A. Albasini, *Commisjaris Naturelle*, Spelonken, aan P.J. Joubert, Superintendent van Naturelle Zaken, 25 January 1886; See also TA SS1206/86, p. 140. R1910/86, *Ramasoetie voor Oscar Dahl*, *Commisjaris Naturelle*, Zoutpansberg, 20 April 1886.

16. TA SS1167, p. 37. R556/86, A.A. Albasini, *Commisjaris Naturelle*, Spelonken, aan P.J. Joubert, Superintendent van Naturelle Zaken, 25 January 1886.

from the people. Instead the people would hand the money to him and he would in turn pay the government in one sum.<sup>17</sup>

Albasini who could not be forced to act contrary to legislation, waited for further developments. Meanwhile Makhado kicked the ball by informing Albasini twice that his money for taxation was ready and that the commissioner should come to take it to the government. Albasini referred the matter to the government on 10 July 1886, to receive that money collected by Makhado or not.<sup>18</sup>

While still waiting for a reply from the government concerning the manner in which Makhado should pay tax, Albasini informed the Superintendent of Native Affairs that Makhado was spreading his sphere of influence by extending his territory, and forcing the inhabitants to be loyal and pay tribute. Maswanganyi, a Knobneuzen induna was warned by Makhado not to pay tax to Albasini as he was living in his land. In 1885 another Knobneuzen induna, Shigamane, fell under him. According to him Albasini's, Maswanganyi's and Shigamane's home was in Mozambique. Should this state of affairs be allowed to continue, Makhado would be supreme in this part of the country. In such a situation, how would he discharge his duties?<sup>19</sup>

As a follow-up to his letter of 10 July 1886, Albasini reported to the government on 23 July 1886, that he had gone to Makhado in connection with hut tax. Makhado showed him 50 head of cattle of which some were sick. These, he explained, were meant to pay his tax. Furthermore, Makhado said he would not allow Albasini to count huts as required by law. He felt himself to be the master over his people. Consequently he decided to collect the tax personally and hand it to the commissioner. Albasini refused to take the cattle. It was, as far as he was concerned, a joke. Makhado was undermining the Commissioner's office.<sup>20</sup>

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17. TA SS1232, p. 123. R2899/86, A.A. Albasini, Commisjaris Naturelle, aan Superintendent van Naturelle Zaken, 11 Juni 1886.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 123.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 123; TA SS1232, p. 130. R2900/86, A.A. Albasini, Commisjaris Naturelle, Spelonken, aan Superintendent van Naturellen, 11 Juni 1886.

20. TA SS1232, p. 126. R3398/86, SR47/86, A.A. Albasini, Commisjaris Naturelle, Spelonken, aan Superintendent van Naturelle Zaken, 23 July 1886.

In reply to this the Secretary of State, M.F. Stiemens, said the commissioner should have accepted the offer, He should just have left the cattle that were sickly. After assessing the value, he should then have informed the ruler of the amounts still outstanding. What was however important was to count the huts.<sup>21</sup>

On receipt of the government's minute Albasini again visited Makhado to carry out the instructions. This time Makhado showed him 40 little bulls. Six were sick and whilst Albasini was still there, one died. The value of each bullock was not more than 5/-. When asked whether that was all the tax he intended to pay, Makhado replied in the affirmative. When Albasini indicated that he would not accept them as payment for his tax, Makhado said he would then slaughter them. On the question of the census and payment according to legislation, Makhado said nobody should worry about his people as he was their Thovhele.<sup>22</sup>

In conclusion Albasini said he could not negotiate with him as he was unco-operative, disobedient and disloyal towards the government. As the matter had reached such volatile proportions, the government, he explained was perhaps the only authority to negotiate with him. Makhado's negative attitude towards taxation was a bad example to other Black people as he had paid nothing in accordance with the law. If no action could be taken against him, the money received in tax from other Blacks would decrease.<sup>23</sup>

Commissioner Albasini who was determined for the government to take drastic steps against Makhado, continued with his agitation and submitted affidavits to strengthen his case. One was a statement made by a certain Matjewelle on 13 January 1887.<sup>24</sup> Matjewelle, was a headman of Inhambane, who was Albasini's subject and regularly paid his taxes to the government. His complaint was that Masindi Ratombo, a *khosi*

21. TA SS1232, p. 120. R2899/86, SR412/86, M.F. Stiemens, Staatssecretaris, aan Superintendent van Naturelle, 25 August 1886.

22. TA SS1232, p. 121. R2899/86, SR412/86, A.A. Albasini, Commisjaris Naturelle, Spelonken, aan Superintendent van Naturelle, 20 September 1886. The minutes were received by the Secretary of State on 30 September 1886.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

24. TA SS1364, p. 90. R704/86, Matjewelle, Onderkapitein van Hoofdkapitein der knobneusen Inhambana, voor Anthoni Augustu Albasini, Comms. Natu. Spelonken, 13 January 1887.

under Makhado, had mobilised a commando for Makhado and said that as he was under Makhado, he had to obey his *Thovhele's* orders, not to pay tax to the South African Republic.<sup>25</sup>

This was substantiated by another affidavit, by a policeman, called Charlie, in which he reported that he had been sent by Albasini to Masindi Ratombo to find out why Matjewelle had to fall under Makhado. Ratombo's reply was that Matjewelle had to fall under Makhado in order to free himself from the oppressive rule of Inhambane, who always compelled him to pay taxes to the government whereas, if he were under Makhado, he would freely pay taxes to him (Makhado).<sup>26</sup>

In addition to this, Maswanganyi again said he had always paid taxes to the government, but Ratombo had persuaded him to fall under Makhado so that he would no longer be forced to pay taxes. He requested the government for assistance for, although he was under Makhado, he was still prepared to support the government if the government could protect him.<sup>27</sup>

The above affidavits were despatched to the Superintendent of Natives during the second and third weeks of January 1887. The purpose was to show how stubborn and disobedient Makhado had become towards the government. The originators of the affidavits, Matjewelle, Charlie and Maswanganyi, were Knobneuzen and therefore very loyal subjects of Albasini. Whether the affidavits were of their making or they were compiled by Albasini under their names, no other source could reveal. At any rate they were ordinary people who had to do what Albasini ordered them.<sup>28</sup>

Whether Albasini's intentions in making these affidavits available were to expedite the government's action against Makhado, or to request assistance in collecting taxes from Makhado, is difficult to say.<sup>29</sup> What has been noted from the very

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25. *Ibid.*, p. 90.

26. TA SS1364, p. 88. R704/87, Charlie Policeman, Voor Anthonia Augusto Albasini, Comm. N. Spelonken, 17 January 1887.

27. *Ibid.* p. 89. R704/87, Maswanganyi, onderkapityn met zyn zoon kweaabo, voor Anthonia Augusto Albasini, Comm. N. Spelonken, 18 January 1887.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

beginning is that Albasini and Makhado were antagonistic towards each other. According to Albasini, there could be no peace in the Soutpansberg if Makhado's expansionist tendencies were not halted.<sup>30</sup>

Indeed Albasini succeeded in persuading the government, which after receiving these allegations and accusations against Makhado, decided to act by sending the Native Location Commission. The purpose of this commission was to demarcate the Venda ruler's location. The commission from the outset let it be known that the government was determined in getting more directly involved in the affairs of the Soutpansberg. Makhado was a prime target.<sup>31</sup>

The Commission left Pretoria for the Soutpansberg. Its members were P.J. Joubert, Superintendent of Natives (Chairman), Commissioner A.A. Albasini, Captain Zboril (Land Surveyor), S.H. Rissik, S. Snyman, F.C. Stiemens (Secretary), September (Makhado's interpreter) and Linrenz (Albasini's interpreter). On 22 February 1887 the commission encamped near Makhado's Royal Residence. The Chairman despatched Albasini to Makhado, ordering the Venda ruler to meet the commission the following morning at his Royal Residence. This had to be done in order to make arrangements and discuss with him the *modus operandi*, of the commission and to make the necessary arrangements for the demarcation of his location. Furthermore, Makhado had to be informed that should he like to voice his feelings, he could do so to the commission. If there were any problems, it could be referred to the government.<sup>32</sup> The message had the tinge of an ultimatum. Makhado, after considering the membership of the commission, reacted positively. Further discussions were held with him at Lutame on 23 February 1887.<sup>33</sup>

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30. TA SS3062, p. 75. R13217/91, A.A. Albasini, Comris v. Natu. Spelonken, aan Speciale Comris., Lagerplaats, Spelonken, 7 April 1883; See also TA SS3062, p. 141. R1085/83, A.A. Albasini, Commisjaris Naturellen, Spelonken, aan B.J. Vorster, Commandant Zoutpansberg, 5 Maart 1883; TA SS193, p. 25. R1822/83, Christoffel Jacobus Snyman, Voor Dietlof Siegfried Maré, Landdrost, Zoutpansberg, 21 August 1883.

31. TA SS1364, p. 72. R1526/87, P.J. Joubert, Supt. Naturellen, Lovedale Plaats van den Heer Cooksley, aan S.J.P. Kruger, Staats President en lede van den Uitvoerende Raad, 24 February 1887.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

33. J.W.N. Tempelhoff, Die okkupasiestelsel in die distrik Soutpansberg, 1886 - 1899, p. 517; G.Y. Lagden, *Report by the Commissioner for native affairs*

The Chairman informed Makhado that he had come on the orders of the government to demarcate locations in which the Blacks would live freely. For this purpose lines were to be marked and beacons positioned to define borders.<sup>34</sup>

Joubert proceeded further by telling Makhado that any violations after the borders had been defined and marked, would be dealt with by the government. Every *khosi* including *Thovhele* himself, irrespective of royal status, would get his own location.<sup>35</sup> Apart from demarcating the different locations, it was also necessary to determine the size of the respective populations. This, according to Joubert, was intended to end hostilities, as each *khosi* would be peacefully settled in his own location.<sup>36</sup>

After dictating the government's orders to Makhado, who was not asked to reply, Joubert realised that Makhado had some reservations. Joubert then enquired from Makhado which part of his country he would like to have as his location. Makhado, who did not want to commit himself at that stage, diplomatically replied that he had already conveyed his intentions to Albasini. He was however pleased that the Superintendent had visited him in his royal residence.<sup>37</sup> Makhado's reaction, as indicated above, is understandable. According to Venda custom, when foreigners took the trouble of visiting a *khosi* or *Thovhele*, it was and is still highly appreciated. This was the case with Joubert's visit.<sup>38</sup>

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*relative to the acquisition and tenure of land by the natives in the Transvaal*, Government Printer, Pretoria, July 1904, p. 70; TA SNA173, p. 172, NA2252/03, Memorandum on the Ramabulana tribe of natives, Zoutpansberg, Archives of the Secretary of Native Affairs; TA G.O.V. 1087, P.S. 50/8/07, Location Commission No. 138/06, Report of Native Location Commission on proposed location for the Chief Mpefu, 23 March 1907, p. 11.

34. TA SS1364, p. 73. R1526/87, Notulen van onderhoud tusschen de Locatie Commisjje en kapitein Magato, Magatostad, Zoutpansberg, 23 February 1887.
  35. *Ibid.*, p. 74. R1526/86 Onderhoud tusschen P.J. Joubert, Superintendent van Naturellen en Kapitein Magato, Magatostad, Zoutpansberg, 23 February 1887.
  36. *Ibid.*, p. 75. R1526/87, Notulen van onderhoud tusschen de Locatie Commisjje en Kapitein Magato, Magatostad, Zoutpansberg, 23 February 1887.
  37. *Ibid.*, p. 76. R1526/87, Notulen van onderhoud tusschen de Locatie Commisjje en Kapitein Magato, Magatostad, Zoutpansberg, 23 February 1887.
  38. *Ibid.*, p. 77. This is Venda custom and accepted throughout.
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Makhado further pointed out, in no uncertain terms, that he could not part with any section of his territory. Every portion of his territory had its own use. When Joubert regarded the plains as empty and uninhabited, Makhado pointed out that the plains were meant for sheep and cattle grazing while he would not allow the Boers to live behind the mountains. With regard to the taking of census, Makhado said it was no longer an issue, as he had already allowed Christian Joubert to do this some years before.<sup>39</sup>

Joubert, who appeared to take this very lightly, said every *khosi* ought to count his own followers and inform *Thovhele* accordingly. In fact Joubert was ignorant of Venda custom and tradition. A Venda ruler did not have followers as he was not a political leader. Instead he had subjects under him irrespective of their political ideas. Makhado's reply on the taking of the census was that his territory was extensive and had about 50 lands under *mahosi*. Thus, counting such people as Joubert had directed, would have been an impossible task. On the question of which part of his territory, he would prefer to be his location, Makhado replied that he did not know what to say as Venda (the whole Soutpansberg) belonged to *Thovhele* Ramabulana, his father. He was therefore not prepared to abandon any part of his kingdom which he had acquired by means of inheritance.<sup>40</sup>

What Joubert did not understand was that in terms of Venda custom and tradition, land could not be divided or traded. Each area was an entity. It was not like a farm, which could be bought or sold. Therefore, any other arrangement, outside this natural and traditional setting would be a violation of the sovereignty of the kingdom. This could only happen in the event of a war but even in such an instance the natural demarcation was not necessarily interfered with. The conqueror could just exercise control over the conquered territory without interfering with the inhabitants' right of tenure on the land.<sup>41</sup>

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39. *Ibid.*, p. 77.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 76.

41. The land belongs to the people, they can do what they like with it as long as they are loyal to their *khosi*.

As Joubert wanted to know specifically how far Makhado regarded the low lying plans as his, *Thovhele* indicated that his line of demarcation was the Luvuvhu and Muhohodi Rivers right up to Machaba hills and from there to the end of the Soutpansberg range along the Brak River going down to the Vhembe River. This was the only arrangement that would satisfy him.<sup>42</sup>

As this was the portion which the Boers of the Spelonken had set their sights on, Joubert, who did not want to commit himself, set Makhado's demands aside and said this would be clear after the surveyor had investigated the matter. Makhado then stated very clearly that, if his demands were met, he would be in a position to pay taxes.<sup>43</sup>

Joubert's imperialistic attitude, which appeared to be undermine Makhado's position as a leader of his people, regarded Makhado's reaction as a stubborn refusal. Ignoring what Makhado's feelings were, he dictated to him that his location would be demarcated in terms of the legislation of the South African Republic. He stated further that he was unaware of what the government officials M. Barbro and C.J. Joubert had submitted concerning the issues of land and taxation. Makhado told Joubert if he was not aware of this, he should enquire from Albasini and Snyman, as they had accompanied C.J. Joubert.<sup>44</sup>

Albasini accepted the challenge and explained that what C.J. Joubert meant was that, in accordance with the laws of the South African Republic, Makhado ought to pay 10/- per hut annually and that the huts had to be counted. In order to create an impression of uncertainty in Makhado's mind, he was informed that many *mahosi* had already been spoken to and should Makhado have any complaints against

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42. TA SS1364, p. 76. R1526/87, Notulen van onderhoud tusschen de Locatie Commissie en Kapitein Magato, Magatostad, Zoutpansberg, 23 February 1887; TA G.O.V. 1087, P.S., 50/8/07, Location Commission, No. 138/06, Report of Native Land Commission on proposed location for the Chief Mpefu p. 12, 23 March 1907.

43. TA SS1364, p. 76. R1526/87, Notulen van onderhoud tusschen de Locatie Commissie en Kapitein Magato, Magatostad, Zoutpansberg, 23 February 1887.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 76.

anybody, he could go to Pretoria where the gates were always open to him and nobody would harm him on the way.<sup>45</sup>

When Makhado wanted to know whether Joubert's visit was to him alone, Joubert said he had come to see him first. Had he visited *mahosi mahulu* first, Makhado as their *Thovhele* would have perhaps complained as his royal status was higher.<sup>46</sup> In conclusion Makhado, who appeared throughout to be suspicious of Joubert's intentions, wanted to know from Joubert whether he would submit his report while he was still in Venda. Joubert's reply was that he would send his report after the land surveyor had completed his work.<sup>47</sup>

After this unsuccessful meeting, Joubert went back to Lovedale Park, the farm of the trader, J.S. Cooksley, at Muananzhele. Here he held a meeting with the Boers of the Spelonken on the matter of Makhado's demands. However, he could not reconcile their needs with Makhado's demands. Therefore, pretending that his impressions came from his observations, he wrote to Makhado and told him that, on his way from Luatame, he looked around and found that the land he claimed as location was too large. Ignoring the fact that his land was inhabited by the Venda, Joubert went further and said the land in question included Schoemansdal, farms of Cilliers, Jan Breedt, Christian Rabe and the mission station of Hofmeyr, as well as cultivated lands amounting to over 600 farms.<sup>48</sup> This area was considered to be too large, as it would be difficult for Makhado to collect taxes. This was, of course, to be done in order to satisfy the demands of the settlers.<sup>49</sup>

It is interesting to note the clash of interests and Joubert's failure to understand Makhado's feelings as a leader of a nation which had inhabited the land before any White man had set foot in that part of the world. Makhado had indicated the

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45. *Ibid.*, p. 77.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

48. TA SS1364, pp. 81 - 82. R1526/87, De Supt. van Naturellen, enz enz, Cooksleys Plaats aan Kapitein Magato, 24 February 1887.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

boundaries of the land he would like to be termed a 'location' in terms of the Boers' persistent demands.<sup>50</sup>

The territory, which was part of Makhado's land and over which he had been exercising control, had now become suddenly too large as the Boers needed to exercise control by collecting taxes. This made it seem as if Joubert had come to force Makhado, to relinquish his throne as *Thovhele* of the Venda kingdom, and become appointed as a mere tax collector by the Government of the South African Republic which he had forced out of Venda in 1867. The Location Commission was intent on dispossessing the Venda of their land by means of the demarcation of locations, the counting of huts and the imposition of taxes.<sup>51</sup>

Joubert then categorically explained to Makhado that he could not see his way clear to recommend to the government the land which the Venda leader regarded as his own. It simply was too large an area. He stated this as if Makhado had approached the government with a view to be given a location - a concept which never existed in Venda land tenure.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, Makhado was a Venda, and in Venda, how could he be said to be claiming that which was his, as if the Venda had been living with the Boers in the same land for many centuries? In the same communication Joubert stated that he felt compelled to bring to the attention of the government the manner in which Makhado paid his taxes - a manner which, for all practical purposes could not be regarded as anything but ridiculing the Local Commissioner and the Government.<sup>53</sup>

Furthermore, the disappointed and unhappy Joubert wanted to know from Makhado whether *Thovhele* expected him to send a favourable report about himself and his subjects to the government before he (*Thovhele*), had paid his arrear taxes. By then, these had soared to an estimated £15 000. It was calculated on the presumption that

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50. TA SS1364, p. 76. R1526/87, Notulen van onderhoud tusschen de Locatie Commissie en Kapitein Magato, Magatostad, Zoutpansberg, 23 February 1887.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

52. TA SS1364, p. 85. R1526/87, De Supt. van Naturellen, enz enz, Cooksleys Plaats aan Kapitein Magato, 24 February 1887.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 85.

the population comprised 5 000 people. This was even before an official census. Makhado who was responding in the interests of his people against foreign incursion, was regarded as unco-operative by Joubert who said he could not be held responsible for anything that might happen, He was hinting to the potential use of force.<sup>54</sup>

Makhado's position was unenviable, because yielding to Pretoria's demands as dictated by Joubert, would have been tantamount to cutting his own throat. Resisting as he did, meant an intensification of the struggle to crush him. At any rate the man who could influence anything that might happen, was Joubert himself. His movement either way would decide the course of events.<sup>55</sup>

As the terms dictated in the interview by Joubert, hinged on very important issues namely, land, taxation and census, issues which were the very heart and soul of a nation, Makhado could not have been expected to have co-operated with a government official, who, instead of looking for causes of misunderstanding, came with the idea of imposing Boer authority on a people who had all along regarded themselves as independent.<sup>56</sup>

Acceptance of the proposals Joubert brought without having consulted the senior members of the nation, would be wronging the people he was leading. On the other hand it would have been tantamount to yielding to an ultimatum. To this the Venda people would not agree. Land, according to Venda law and custom, was the base on which the soul of a nation existed and therefore could not be separated from the people. The fifty *mahosi* whom Makhado said he controlled, were the real owners of the land. As *Thovhele*, Makhado, ruled and exercised his authority through them.<sup>57</sup> It was most unfortunate that Joubert appeared to him to be the sort of person who was not prepared to listen, but only wished to impose the wishes of a

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54. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

55. TA SS1364, p. 74. R1526/87, Notulen van onderhoud tusschen de Locatie Commissie en Kapitein Magato, Magatostad, Zoutpansberg, 23 February 1887.

56. T.V. Bulpin, *Lost trails of the Transvaal*, 6th edition, p. 319.

57. M.H. Nemudzivhadi, *The conflict between Mphaphu and the South African Republic, 1895 - 1899*, p. 100.

government Makhado did not know. It was as a result of this that interview which Joubert approached from a master-servant or White-Black perspective, failed.<sup>58</sup>

As the relationship between Makhado and the South African Republic deteriorated, the tempo of allegations and complaints from local officials continued to mount. Whether these were genuine or not, is not the subject of this study. What is important is that the complainants were instigated by the officials of the Government in the Soutpansberg. In this respect, Stuurman and Lihirema, sons of Ramasunzi, a *khosi* under Makhado along the western range of the Soutpansberg, had an interview with Joubert in which they stated that they were living at Mavhambo (near the Soutpan) and had always paid their tribute and tax to the Government. In 1884 Makhado attacked and burnt down their huts, but for humanitarian reasons, he did not capture their cattle.<sup>59</sup>

This attack brought hardships, forcing Ramasunzi to ask for peace but he later escaped to the Blaauberg. The next target of Makhado's "imperialism" was Mamali, from whom he demanded taxation, threatening him that if he would not comply, he would follow Ramasunzi into the Blaauberg. Mamali and his people fled, leaving their beasts in Makhado's hands. The fugitive Ramasunzi, placed himself in the care of the government and asked for protection and assistance.<sup>60</sup>

Affidavits and allegations of this nature levelled against Makhado by the Boer community of the Soutpansberg, were intended to estrange Makhado from the government of the South African Republic in order to induce them to take punitive measures against him. Ramasunzi and Mamali were his subjects and no *khosi* could revolt against the mighty Makhado. On the other side of the coin, Makhado himself had by his ambitious and expansionist policy prepared the ground for such allegations.<sup>61</sup>

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58. TA SS1364, p. 76. R1526/87, Notulen van onderhoud tusschen de Locatie Commissie en Kapitein Magato, Magatostad, Zoutpansberg, 23 February 1887.

59. TA SS1364, p. 92. R1646/87, Stuurman en Lehirima, zoon van Kapitein Ramasoetie, voor P.J. Joubert, Superintendent van Naturellen, 28 February 1887.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 93.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 93.

As the affidavits were flooding the office of the Superintendent of Natives and the State President, the Location Commission was again instructed to continue with their work. As they came to Venda, they wrote to Albasini that Makhado should be informed that they wanted to proceed with their work.<sup>62</sup> As for Makhado, he should be made to understand that they had once more come to determine the size of the land, to demarcate it, and to position beacons, which nobody was allowed to remove. This, according to the commission, was what the President had told the *mahosi* when he had indicated a Commission would come to demarcate the land.<sup>63</sup>

After communicating with Makhado, Albasini reported that Makhado's negative attitude had not changed.<sup>64</sup> This unchanged attitude did not deter the commission from their work. They visited Makhado and informed him that they had started to inspect some of the land inhabited by his folk, and that he should send a messenger to accompany them so that he could see where the beacons would be positioned. It would appear that the land they started inspecting did not belong to Makhado's people but to the Boers. As the message they conveyed, was not a request but a demand, Makhado, who could not hide his feelings about this sort of communication, pointed out to them that they should first demarcate Tshivhase's and Mphaphuli's territories. This, according to the commission would not be possible as it was difficult to do any demarcation in these central and eastern territories with their muddy, red soil in summer. He then suggested that they should come in winter. The commission regarded this request as delaying tactics to enable Makhado to advance further excuses and objections.<sup>65</sup>

The Location Commission, which had by that time taken a stand against Makhado, pointed out to the government that they would start surveying the land along the

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62. TA SS1851, p. 8. R2057/89, F.H. Rissik, Secretaris der Commisie, aan A.A. Albasini, Commissaris, Spelonken, 14 February 1889.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 9; TA SS1851, p. 7. R2057/89, A.A. Albasini, Com. Natu. Boschkoppies aan Secretaris der Commisie, opmeting der Gronden in Zoutpansberg, 18 February 1887.

65. TA SS1851, p. 7. R2057/89, A.A. Albasini, Com. Natu. Boschkoppies aan F.H. Rissik, Secretaris der Commisie, opmeting der Gronden in Zoutpansberg, 18 February 1889.

Muongadi (Sand) River while awaiting further instructions. They also requested the government to provide them with 500 men for protection to enable them to proceed with their work.<sup>66</sup>

The commission's request to be provided with a guard of 500 men, coincided with the establishment of forts from Magoeba's Kloof to the Doorn River. One of these was established at Muananzhele, on a farm called Boskoppies and named after General Piet Joubert's wife, Hendrina. The 500 guard was under Elrich.<sup>67</sup> Makhado responded by settling Kumbani Manavhela on a hill opposite it, to keep a watch on the activities of the Boers.<sup>68</sup>

The establishment of Fort Hendrina which was manned by a police force was an indication of a shift in policy and an assurance to the Boer community that the government was behind them in their efforts to re-establish themselves in the Soutpansberg. Thus, in the event of the outbreak of any hostilities, the policemen together with the local burghers would be in a position to provide a combined resistance to repulse any invasion.<sup>69</sup>

During these military arrangements and planning, Commissioner A.A. Albasini died. His death was an event of historical significance. For although his family was of Portuguese origin the Boers could not do without him as he was in charge of the Tsonga fugitives who regarded him as their chief. He had a strong power base which the Republic had to use against Makhado.<sup>70</sup> Although there were differences between the Albasinis and the Boer community of the Soutpansberg, the government

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66. TA SS1851, p. 6. R2057/89, F.H. Rissik, Secretaris, Speciale Commissie, Boschkopies, aan Staats Secretaris, 20 February 1889.
67. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 178; See also J.W.N. Tempelhoff, *Die okkupasiestelsel in die distrik Soutpansberg, 1886 - 1899*, p. 523.
68. O.I. - Tshivhidzo Musekwa (about 100 years), Tshihanane, 12-07-1971. O.I. Jack Ramatsitsi (about 95 years), Tshiomvuni, 13-07-1971; O.I. - Madzinge Sitholimela (about 100 years), Mauluma, 13-07-1971.
69. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 179; D. Möller-Malan, *Die donker Soutpansberg, Historia*, 3(3) June 1958, p. 115.
70. Joao Albasini III, *Joao Albasini, 1813 - 1888*, p. 19; D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 177; Callwell, Chase E., *War Office, Natives Tribes of the Transvaal*, pp. 64 - 65. TA A18, B.H. Dicke, *The Development of the Northern Transvaal - Historical stepping stones and reminiscences*, 17 June 1925, Pieterburg, p. 4.

did not set them aside as they were not yet in a position to exercise direct control in the district. That is why when the local Boer community pressed for the termination of the Albasinis' authority, the Volksraad turned a blind eye to their request.<sup>71</sup>

Therefore the death of Commissioner Albasini, who had spear-headed the offensive against Makhado for decades, removed the unremovable obstacle from the political scene and provided the government an opportunity to effect a change in preventing another Albasini from succeeding the commissionership. This had to be done in order that the office should not sink to the level of a traditional institution in which succession is hereditary.<sup>72</sup> The Albasini power base had to be restricted to the chieftainship of the Knobneuzen, as the position of commissionership was a public office whose operative activities would expand to other areas of the district. To put this into practice, the government appointed Captain Adolf Schiel as the new commissioner of the Klein Spelonken. He was, however, warned not to provoke Makhado. He was also advised to exercise the utmost diplomacy when dealing with the Blacks.<sup>73</sup>

This change of commissionership from the Albasini family to Schiel appeared to have been received with relief by Makhado who invited him to his royal residence and promised to co-operate with him in maintaining peace and payment of taxation.<sup>74</sup>

As Commissioner, Schiel was still acquainting himself with the conditions in the district, reports of alleged misdemeanors committed by Makhado filtered to Pretoria. The government was informed that Makhado had attacked Tshivhase.<sup>75</sup>

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71. Joao Albasini III, *Joao Albasini*, 1813 - 1888, n.d., p. 19; D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 177.
72. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 177.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 178; T.V. Bulpin, *Lost trails of the Transvaal*, 6th edition, p. 348.
74. D. Möller-Malan, Die donker Soutpansberg, *Historia*, 3(3) June 1958, p. 127; D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 177; TA SS2206, p. 10. R442/90, A. Schiel, Coms. Natu. Klein Spelonken, aan Supt. van Naturellen, 31 Desember 1889.
75. TA SS1232, p. 177. SR85a/89 (No R Number but the one preceding it on page 132 is R2900/89), C. Beuster, Zendeling bij het opperhoofd Schewase, Zendingstatie bij Schewase, aan P.J. Joubert, Supt. van Naturellen, 5 Februari 1889.

The superintendent immediately put the blame on Makhado. He was then instructed to pay compensation to Tshivhase for the losses sustained with the destruction of kraals and the capturing of cattle. Joubert further said he had asked the government to send a police force to the Soutpansberg, "... ter omheining van verdere aanvalle deur Magata", as well as to stand on the side of Tshivhase in the event of further eruptions. Such a force would keep an eye on any developments. Up to now Makhado had not yet fulfilled his obligations to the government.<sup>76</sup>

On 23 January 1890, Commissioner Schiel received a telegram from the Superintendent. He rushed to Makhado and conveyed its contents to him. He was instructed to inform Makhado about the taking of census and payment of taxation. Makhado sent messengers around and called the heads of the kraals together and asked the commissioner to count them.<sup>77</sup> The result of this counting was 987 men, 1 163 women and 1 172 children. The commissioner said he had to do this as he could not travel throughout the whole territory. Makhado himself acknowledged the fact that the number was not enough and advised him to come back in winter to count all the huts. The commissioner reminded him to pay his arrears and current tax. His reply was that he would call the commissioner again once money was available.<sup>78</sup> As he was still busy with Makhado, Lucas Albasini arrived with a telegram ordering him to call together the Knobneuzen to appoint him (Lucas Albasini) as their chief. This interrupted his work but after he had done it he again visited Makhado who paid £592. He said he had tried his best and he could not pay more.<sup>79</sup> When the commissioner told him that the money was not enough, Makhado said he had paid more than Tshivhase and Mphaphuli. He further said he was prepared to do what the government wanted. He had paid his taxes and called his

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76. TA SS1893, pp. 12 - 13. R3743/89, P.J. Joubert, Supt. van Naturellen aan Coms. Spelonken, 8 July 1889; TA SS1893, R3743/89, A. Schiel, Coms. Natu. Klein Spelonken aan Supt. van Naturellen, 31 Desember 1889.

77. TA SS2206, pp. 16 - 17. R442/90, A. Schiel, Coms. Natu. Klein Spelonken, Supt. van Naturellen, 14 Maart 1890.

78. *Ibid.*, p. 18. R442/90, A. Schiel, Coms. Natu. Klein Spelonken, aan Supt. van Naturellen, 14 Maart 1890; See also TA SS2250, p. 175. R1810/90, A. Schiel, Coms. Natu. Klein Spelonken aan Supt. van Naturelle, 23 January 1890.

79. TA SS2206, p. 19. R442/90, A. Schiel, Coms. Natu. Klein Spelonken, aan Supt. van Naturellen, 14 Maart 1890.

people together whom the Commissioner counted. As the commissioner was not satisfied, he should go and count the huts. In conclusion the commissioner requested the government for further instructions.<sup>80</sup>

As a result of his subsequent visits to Makhado, Schiel suggested to the government that although the situation was not encouraging, alternatives to war had to be investigated. According to him Makhado's power could be weakened by recognising his *mahosi* as independent. This policy of divide and rule would encourage them to desert him.<sup>81</sup> In this way Makhado's power base would gradually crumble.

In addition to the policy of "*divide et impera*", he suggested that the position of the Commissioner should be strengthened by a police contingent of 25 men. This arrangement would enable the Blacks to see and feel his power as commissioner. This would no doubt avoid armed confrontation and prevent the shedding of blood.<sup>82</sup>

Before the new Native Commissioner could establish himself effectively, he received information that Makhado had attacked Tshivhase. Without any investigation on the validity of the allegations, he wrote to the Superintendent of Natives. In his letter, Schiel informed the superintendent that Makhado had attacked Tshivhase in order to annex Dzimauli. He felt concerned as Tshivhase was loyal to the government and always paying his taxation.<sup>83</sup> This allegation was not correct. The war in Dzimauli was between Siphuma and Thikasi, who were fighting for the throne of Rammbuda. Dzimauli was not part of Tshivhase's territory.

The presence of Makhado's commando constituted a threat. If he was not told to withdraw his warriors, he would station them there and eventually occupy the land.

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80. *Ibid.*, pp. 19 - 20. R442/90, A. Schiel, Coms. Natu. Klein Spelonken, aan Supt. van Naturellen, 14 Maart 1890

81. TA SS2206, pp. 178 - 179. R442/90, A. Schiel, Coms. Natu. Klein Spelonken, aan Supt. van Naturellen, 14 Maart 1890.

82. TA SS2250, p. 180. R1810/90, A. Schiel, Coms. Natu. Klein Spelonken, aan Supt. van Naturellen, 23 January 1890.

83. TA SS2962, p. 79. R9817/91, A. Schiel, Coms. Natu. Klein Spelonken, aan Supt. van Naturellen, 26 July 1891; See also TA SS3735, p. 177. R5310/93, C. Beuster, Zendingstatie by Schewase, aan P.J. Joubert, Supt. van Naturellen, 5 February 1889.

In this way he would expand his influence to this part of the country.<sup>84</sup> The Native Commissioner went further and pointed out that he had already transmitted this to the government, showing how dangerous it would be if the territory of Rammbuda would be under the jurisdiction of Makhado.<sup>85</sup>

On receipt of this information dated 26 July 1891, the Commandant General wrote to the acting landdrost of Pietersburg on 13 August 1891, that Commandant B.J. Vorster, accompanied by as many men on horseback as possible, should go to Fort Hendrina. It had to act as a warning against Makhado. It had to demonstrate that the government would help Tshivhase. Should Makhado not withdraw his commando and the fighting continue, a strong burgher force should be mobilised.<sup>86</sup> In the event of this continuing, Commissioner Schiel should inform that government by telegram. The government was intent on avoiding armed conflict. At the same time it wanted to protect Tshivhase from Makhado. If Makhado's commando had been withdrawn, then all preparations should be stopped.<sup>87</sup>

As pointed out in the preceding chapter, Tshivhase had an interest in Dzimauli which for two generations had severed connections with him and had become independent. He wanted to reassert his authority by supporting contenders to the throne who would be on his side. These contenders were first Mashila and then Siphuma. Makhado, on the other hand was supporting Tshikosi who had appealed to him for assistance.<sup>88</sup>

Makhado's interest was not to control Dzimauli. He wanted to keep Tshivhase's influence out of this territory by maintaining Rammbuda's independence. In this he had the support of the majority of the population. This was the reason for supporting Tshikosi. On the other hand Tshivhase, who appeared to be on the losing side, had to appeal to the government for assistance, painting the picture that Makhado was

84. TA SS2962, p. 79., R9817/91, A. Schiel, Coms. Natu. Klein Spelonken, aan Supt. van Naturellen, 26 July 1891.

85. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

86. *Ibid.*, p. 71. R9817/91, Commandant Generaal aan Landdrost, Pietersburg, 13 Augustus 1891.

87. *Ibid.*, p. 71. R9817/91, Commandant Generaal aan Landdrost, Pietersburg, 13 Augustus 1891.

88. O.I. - J.M. Rammbuda (about 66 years), Dzimauli, 12-05-1966.

attacking his territory. Hence the numerous reports from the Native Commissioner and local church missionary addressed to the government. The Native Commissioner snatched this as an ideal opportunity for persuading the government to bring Makhado under their control who was a thorn in their flesh.<sup>89</sup>

Whenever Makhado was asked about his involvement in the affairs of Dzimauli, he denied having officially despatched any commando. According to him, the matter was between the princes of Rammbuda - Tshikosi and Siphuma - who were fighting for the throne of Rammbuda. In other words, it was the people of Rammbuda themselves who were settling their differences.<sup>90</sup>

This was the state of affairs between Makhado and the South African Republic during the second half of 1891. While the local missionary felt bound to protect Tshivhase who had allowed him to establish a mission station in his territory, the Native Commissioner who felt undermined by Makhado, the government appeared more cautious and responsible as they viewed the matter globally within the context of their broad policy.<sup>91</sup>

As the government appeared to be delaying in taking drastic steps against Makhado, the commissioner's office intensified its campaign by exploiting the civil war that had been taking place in Dzimauli. Several affidavits made before Captain Schiel on 20 and 22 August 1891 by Thomas Parfuri and Makaramedja, from Tshivhase, reported that Tshikosi had attacked the latter's land about two weeks ago.<sup>92</sup>

Tshikosi was assisted by Makhado's commando under his brother Ramalamula. Several kraals were set on fire and three of Tshivhase's warriors were murdered.

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89. TA SS2962, pp. 127 - 128. R10842/91, A. Schiel, Coms. Natu. Klein Spelonken, aan Supt. van Naturellen, 23 Augustus 1891. See also declarations on pages 130 and 132 which accompanied this Minute. T.V. Bulpin, *Lost trails of the Transvaal*, 6th edition, p. 348.

90. TA SS2962, pp. 116 - 117. R10840/91, A. Schiel, Coms. Natu. Klein Spelonken, aan Supt. van Naturellen, 28 July 1891.

91. *Ibid.*, p. 71. R9817/91, Commandant Generaal, aan Landdrost, Pietersburg, 13 Augustus 1891.

92. *Ibid.*, p. 119. R10840/91, Thomas Parfuri voor A. Schiel, Coms. Natu. 20 Augustus 1891.

The mere fact that Ramalamula was the commander, indicated that Makhado was aware of this attack.<sup>93</sup>

Although Makhado's army had been withdrawn, Tshivhase requested the government to provide him with constables. He was afraid Makhado might attack him again. Tshikosi on his own could not do anything as he had few followers.<sup>94</sup>

The Commissioner informed Tshivhase he could not send constables before verifying the veracity of the allegations and because Makhado's commando was no longer there. He assured Tshivhase that the government would not allow the aggression. Commandant-General Piet Joubert, after receiving complaints from the commissioner, would despatch the Landdrost with a number of burghers to prevent the outbreak of the war.<sup>95</sup>

Even before these affidavits were made, the Commandant-General, who was also Superintendent of Native Affairs, had already taken a decision on the strength of numerous reports from the commissioner and the community of the Spelonken. The District Landdrost, G.G. Munnik, heard that Joubert had instructed the Commandant Barend Vorster to raise a large commando against Makhado on groundless allegations.<sup>96</sup>

Munnik, who could not be influenced by the Native Commissioner and the Soutpansberg Boer community, had on his own developed a liking and a great respect for Makhado. Consequently he intervened in order to prevent conflict. He advised the President that it would be unwise, and therefore futile, to provoke a war against an all-powerful ruler like Makhado at a time when the South African Republic and the Uitlanders were moving towards confrontation. Armed with this

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93. *Ibid.*, p. 119.

94. TA SS2962, p. 121. R10840/91, Makaramedja voor A. Schiel, Coms. Natu. 22 Augustus 1891.

95. *Ibid.*, p. 123. R10840/91, A. Schiel, Coms. Natu. aan Kapitein Shewase, 22 Augustus 1891.

96. G.G. Munnik, *Memoirs of Senator the Honourable G.G. Munnik*, p. 145; TA SS2962, p. 109. R10695/91, G.G. Munnik, Rapport van onderhoud tusschen Landdrost van Pietersburg en kleurling kapitein Magato, 25 Augustus 1891.

assertion, he requested the postponement of any action. He first wanted to go to Makhado to investigate the authenticity of the allegations.<sup>97</sup>

The President, who had no intention of opening another war front, agreed to allow Munnik to find out whether there was any hope to solve the problems and also to find out any truth in the allegations that Makhado was fighting against any *mahosi mahulu* who were loyal to the government. With the President behind him, Munnik left Pietersburg on 17 August 1891 for Fort Hendrina.<sup>98</sup> Here he sent Terry Fitzgerald to Makhado with the message to meet him at 10:00 the following day at Rietvlei, below the mountains on which Makhado's royal residence, was situated. Munnik could not have found a better messenger than Fitzgerald, who was Makhado's friend.<sup>99</sup>

The message was conveyed and agreed upon. Then, on the following day, and at the appointed hour, Munnik and John Cooksley, accompanied by their wives, met Makhado at the chosen spot. Cooksley, a local trader since 1886, had become Makhado's bosom friend and therefore was the right person to accompany Munnik on this mission. The visitors were surprised to see a number of armed men who according to Makhado, were his bodyguards.<sup>100</sup>

After the visitors were entertained with beer, Munnik told Makhado that the President had heard that he (Makhado) and his brother Tshivhase were fighting for supremacy. Makhado immediately denied this allegation and pointed out that he could not have been fighting against a powerful ruler like Tshivhase when all his generals, namely Funyufunyu, Rasivhetshele and Tshikota were with him. Landdrost Munnik accepted the explanation. However, Makhado was aware that District Commandant Vorster and his commando had slept at Dwars River in

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97. G.G. Munnik, *Memoirs of Senator the Honourable G.G. Munnik*, p. 145; TA SS4485, p. 109. R10695/91, G.G. Munnik, Rapport van onderhoud tusschen Landdrost van Pietersburg en kleurling kapitein Magato, 25 Augustus 1891.

98. G.G. Munnik, *Memoirs of Senator the Honourable G.G. Munnik*, p. 146; TA SS2962, p. 109. R10695/91, G.G. Munnik, Rapport van onderhoud tusschen Landdrost van Pietersburg en kleurling kapitein Magato, 25 Augustus 1891.

99. G.G. Munnik, *Memoirs of Senator the Honourable G.G. Munnik*, p. 146.

100. *Ibid.*, p. 146; TA SS4485, p. 109. R10695/91, G.G. Munnik, Rapport van onderhoud tusschen Landdrost van Pietersburg en kleurling kapitein Magato, 25 Augustus 1891.

Botlokwa. He enquired from Munnik the meaning of this military manoeuvre. In his reply Munnik, who was very candid, told Makhado that the presence of Vorster's commando was to assist Tshivhase against him, as Tshivhase was paying his taxes regularly, whereas Makhado did not. Makhado reacted by saying Tshivhase was a dishonest ruler who collected a lot of money from his people and sent very little to the government.<sup>101</sup> He, Makhado, on the other hand, did not pay as this would be a violation of the sovereignty of his people. In conclusion, he requested Munnik to convey his views to the President.<sup>102</sup>

Back at Fort Hendrina, Munnik met Vorster and told him to disband his commando as he was acting on wrong information. Over and above this, it was also the wish of the President to have the commando disbanded. Vorster, who had nursed his grievances against Makhado for a long time and who had been waiting for an opportunity of exchanging blows with him, vehemently objected at first, but later changed his mind in the interest of the Republic. Munnik then returned to Pietersburg fully convinced that Vorster's commando against Makhado was raised on unreliable information which should be dismissed forthwith. He therefore informed the President accordingly.<sup>103</sup>

The way in which Landdrost Munnik averted the military confrontation between Makhado and the South African Republic at this juncture, showed that he was aware of the causes of the turbulent situation in the Soutpansberg, engineered by irresponsible elements on both sides of the spectrum.<sup>104</sup>

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101. G.G. Munnik, *Memoirs of Senator the Honourable G.G. Munnik*, p. 146; TA SS4485, pp. 110 - 112. R10695/91, G.G. Munnik, Rapport van onderhoud tussen Landdrost van Pietersburg en kleurling kapitein Magato, 25 Augustus 1891.

102. G.G. Munnik, *Memoirs of Senator the Honourable G.G. Munnik*, p. 146; TA SS4485, p. 114. R10695/91, G.G. Munnik, Rapport van onderhoud tussen Landdrost van Pietersburg en kleurling kapitein Magato, 25 Augustus 1891.

103. G.G. Munnik, *Memoirs of Senator the Honourable G.G. Munnik*, p. 147; TA SS4485, p. 114, R10695/91, G.G. Munnik, Rapport van onderhoud tussen Landdrost van Pietersburg en kleurling kapitein Magato, 25 Augustus 1891.

104. TA SS4485, p. 115. R10695/91, G.G. Munnik, Rapport van onderhoud tussen Landdrost van Pietersburg en kleurling kapitein Magato, 25 Augustus 1891; G.G. Munnik, *Memoirs of Senator the Honourable G.G. Munnik*, p. 145.

In his interview with Makhado, whom the Commissioner had described as stubborn, rebellious and disobedient, Landdrost Munnik did not use his position as head of the district. Without undermining or belittling Makhado, he took note of his feelings. He also listened to his fears and demands as a leader of a nation. In other words he displayed his skills of impartiality by dealing in this fashion with the matter.<sup>105</sup> It earned him the respect from Makhado and left him pleased as the war was averted. The threat of war however remained.

With District Commander Vorster, who was pushed in as an instrument of quelling the dispute, Munnik told him openly that military intervention was uncalled for as the whole episode was based on fabrications and groundless allegations. Should Vorster persist with his intended attack on Makhado, he would be doing so in contradiction to the wishes of the head of the country.<sup>106</sup>

The government on the other hand was allowed a breather as they had more important issues to settle than that of Makhado. The Soutpansbergers who had initiated this episode, were disappointed, as the bomb they had planted, no longer exploded.<sup>107</sup> They felt robbed of such an ideal opportunity in which the Boer Commando under "Moocomtadie" (Swart Barend Vorster), had heeded their appeal for assistance. This commando had to be disbanded because of Munnik's intervention. The opportunity for crushing Makhado had slipped away. But they had to continue the struggle from other angles as they would not rest or feel secure before Makhado was brought to his knees. In order to counter the recommendations, the Landdrost submitted to the President, they circulated rumours that Makhado's messengers were smuggling large quantities of firearms from Delagoa Bay and Palezoma in Mozambique. They went further and said attempts to monitor the situation were futile as the Blacks avoided the commonly used footpaths.<sup>108</sup>

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105. TA SS4485, p. 113. R10695/91, G.G. Munnik, Rapport van onderhoud tusschen Landdrost van Pietersburg en kleurling kapitein Magato, 25 Augustus 1891; G.G. Munnik, *Memoirs of Senator the Honourable G.G. Munnik*, p. 147.

106. G.G. Munnik, *Memoirs of Senator the Honourable G.G. Munnik*, p. 147.

107. *Ibid.*, pp. 147 - 148.

108. TA SS3024, pp. 29 - 30. R11843/91, B.H. Dicke, Krokodil Rivier, aan Landdrost, 5 September 1891; TA SS3024, p. 28. R11843/91; TA SS3024, p.

As the 19th century was moving to its end, the government of the South African Republic, decided to subjugate all Black peoples under its jurisdiction. This would expand and consolidate its authority in the whole country. All pockets of resistance had to be dealt a severe blow. The first targets were Modjadji, Mmalebogo and Makgoba who were brought under control in 1894 and 1895.<sup>109</sup>

Military campaigns against these rulers were not only undertaken in order to subjugate them, but also to frighten Makhado, who would be the next target. Therefore, these expeditions served as preparation against Makhado, to warn him that should he continue to undermine the authority of the Republic, he would be the next victim.<sup>110</sup>

Meanwhile the Boer community in the Soutpansberg, who could not be satisfied with anything but the total annihilation of Makhado, continued to exert pressure through the Commissioners of the Spelonken and Rhenosterpoort. As the pressure against Makhado gained momentum, the Superintendent of Natives could not close his ears to the complaints. He decided to visit the Spelonken towards the middle of the first half of 1894 in order to listen to their complaints against Makhado, and thereafter to attempt to effect a peaceful settlement. This was the goal of the government which wanted peace. War could be the last resort if other options had failed.<sup>111</sup>

This time he was accompanied by E. Esselen, who represented the Department of Justice, Leo Weinthal, the Chief Editor of the *Pretoria Press*, T.W. Beckett, an influential trader and friend of the government as well as J.D. Gill, a resident of the Spelonken. When they arrived at Doorn River (the so-called "Rubicon of Makhado's territory"), they were prevented from crossing by Makhado's soldiers. The Commandant-General, who had travelled all the way from Pretoria, was

33. R11843/91, G. du Toit, Ryd. Politie, Fort Vella, aan Supt. van Natu. 10 November 1891.

109. J.W.N. Tempelhoff, *Die okkupasiestelsel in die distrik Soutpansberg, 1886 - 1899*, p. 513.

110. *Ibid.* p. 511.

111. R. Wessmann, *The Bawenda of the Spelonken*, p. 118; D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 184; J.W.N. Tempelhoff, *Die okkupasiestelsel in die distrik Soutpansberg, 1886 - 1899*, p. 523.

disappointed. The local Boer Community were not surprised. They were blaming the government for its failure in disciplining Makhado. From that day, they regarded this disappointing experience, as having proved the validity of their allegations against Makhado. Hence from then on they expected the government to act.<sup>112</sup>

Thereafter Joubert returned to Pretoria and submitted a report on his unsuccessful mission with recommendations on what to do next in order to bring Makhado under the authority of the government of the South African Republic. Before any further action was taken, another opportunity to solve the problem offered itself when Leo Weinthal offered his services to go to Makhado as a private person. He would ask for an interview with Makhado. A visit of this nature, which was private and by a private man, could be beneficial to the government. The government agreed. Leo Weinthal then left for Lovedale Park, where J.S. Cooksley arranged a visit to meet Makhado at his royal residence.<sup>113</sup>

The messenger rushed to Luatame and conveyed the message to Makhado, who immediately responded by sending Rasivhetshele to Lovedale Park. Makhado had suggested that Cooksley and his wife be included in the group who wished to visit him.<sup>114</sup>

The visitors were taken to Makwatambani, where Makhado's favourite wife, Mokgadi, resided. They found Makhado there waiting for them. When Leo Weinthal wanted to know from him why he did not recognise the President, Makhado's reply was clear. He acknowledged Paul Kruger as his "father", in other words, as the supreme ruler.<sup>115</sup> He was ready and willing to pay tax to this supreme ruler, but not through an official like Captain Schiel.

Why was Makhado not ready to pay taxation through the Native Commissioner of the Spelonken? The answer to this question was also simple. The office of the

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112. R. Wessmann, *The Bawenda of the Spelonken*, p. 118; D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 184.

113. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 184.

114. *Ibid.*, p. 184.

115. R. Wessmann, *The Bawenda of the Spelonken*, p. 185; D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 143.

Native Commissioner was not properly instituted as it started with João Albasini, who was also the Chief of the Knobneuzen. His successors A.A. Albasini and Adolf Schiel were dressed in the same mantle. To Makhado and the Venda, this office appeared as if it was these officials' main residence.<sup>116</sup>

On the question of whether Makhado would render assistance against Malebogo of Blaauberg in his wars against the Boers, Makhado replied that he could do so - only if asked to do so by the President.<sup>117</sup> When asked whether he would leave his royal residence for the location to be demarcated for him by the government, he did not give a definite answer and left it for the future to decide. He also denied the allegations that he had written to the British government for assistance. On the allegation that he had sent his commando to assist Malebogo against the Boers, he replied that he had nothing to do with Malebogo. When Leo Weinthal wanted to know what Makhado would do if the South African Republic were to make war against him, he said that he was loyal to the President, and that he did not want a conflict. In conclusion Makhado requested Weinthal to convey his views to the President.<sup>118</sup>

From this occasion, which was a fact-finding visit, Weinthal concluded that, although Makhado said he did not want war, he was prepared for it, as new rifles had come from Delagoa Bay the previous month. Large amounts of ammunition and food supplies were also stored.<sup>119</sup> In addition, there were the enormous caves at the back of the range which could accommodate people and their beasts for quite a long time. In the event of the outbreak of war, at least 5 000 men would be needed to operate successfully in those rugged hills.<sup>120</sup>

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116. TA SS4485, p. 61. R10695/91, R. Wessmann, *Zendeling by Makata, Tsakoma, aan Coms. Natu. Spelonken*, 16 January 1895.

117. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 185; R. Wessmann, *The Bawenda of the Spelonken*, p. 143.

118. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 185; R. Wessmann, *The Bawenda of the Spelonken*, p. 143.

119. R. Wessmann, *The Bawenda of the Spelonken*, p. 144.

120. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 185; R. Wessmann, *The Bawenda of the Spelonken*, p. 143.

He further concluded that “a peaceable solution of the problem is still in the range of possibility”. He blamed the Boers, residing in the Spelonken below the mountain because they had worked themselves up into a considerable state of fear, for which there was no tangible reason.<sup>121</sup>

The fact that Makhado’s sons were on their way to Johannesburg with timber to sell, was an indication that he was not prepared to engage the Boers into an armed conflict. Weinthal further advised that in order to prevent the outbreak of war, the government should make use of a man who would deal with the greatest possible tact with Makhado.<sup>122</sup>

Before the government could react the Boers of the Soutpansberg, being impatient as there was a delay in taking drastic steps against Makhado, fired a shot from another angle. This time, Commandant B.J. Vorster, at Rhenosterpoort, reported that Kharivhe, a *khosi* under Makhado’s jurisdiction, was forced to flee for safety. Makhado threatened to attack him. Consequently, Kharivhe asked for protection by the government. Therefore, in order to assist Kharivhe, Vorster wrote to Makhado warning him not to interfere with people who were prepared to subject themselves to the authority of the Republic.<sup>123</sup>

On receipt of this communication, Makhado decided to drive a wedge between the Commissioner of the Spelonken and Pretoria, perhaps in order to ease and cool down the situation. He despatched his Nduna, Rasivhetshele to Kalkbank to inform Vorster that he (Makhado), had deviated from the course he was known to be following, and that he had given orders to his *mahosi* that a census should be taken. This was what Vorster had been hoping for. He immediately informed Pretoria to set aside earlier reports against Makhado and labelled them to be devoid of truth.<sup>124</sup>

As this was a slap in the face for the Commissioner of the Spelonken who had inundated Pretoria with negative reports against Makhado, a rift developed between

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121. R. Wessmann, *The Bawenda of the Spelonken*, p. 145.

122. *Ibid.*, p. 145.

123. TA SS4485, p. 40. R10291/94, B.J. Vorster, Coms. Natu. Kranspoort, Zoutpansberg, aan Kapitein Makhato te Zoutpansberg, 11 October 1894.

124. *Ibid.*, pp. 47 - 48.

Commissioners A. Schiel and B.J. Vorster. This was indicated by Schiel's letter to the Superintendent<sup>125</sup> of Natives after he had visited Makhado on the taking of census. Schiel reported that strong rumours were circulating among the Blacks that Vorster's intention in reporting favourably on Makhado was to be appointed Commissioner for Makhado's territory. According to Vorster, Makhado would obey the government if he was under a Commissioner other than Schiel. As the impression created by Vorster was that Makhado hated him, Schiel suggested that a commission of enquiry be appointed to establish whether it was true that Makhado did not like him.<sup>126</sup> For this purpose Schiel advised that Piet Potgieter, the Commissioner for Waterberg, should be sent to Makhado to investigate allegations against him.<sup>127</sup>

Further light was shed on differences between Makhado and Schiel, when a certain Booi declared before Schiel that Makhado had not changed his stand on hut tax, the taking of census and the demarcation of land. The ruler reiterated his earlier stand that he would rather send his money directly to Pretoria and not through anybody in the Spelonken. This he would do when the money was available. He voiced a strong protest against Schiel, whom he accused of not having brought back his maids who had fled to his arch enemy Davhana. Booi's declaration also revealed that Makhado had issued a strong warning to his Mahosi not to allow any Commissioners' constables to operate in their residence.<sup>128</sup>

Since the discovery of gold in the Witwatersrand in 1886, the South African Republic had undergone social, economic and political changes as foreign nationals flocked in, in order to seek fortune. At the same time, British subjects intent on developing the economic potential of the region, established themselves, to the north

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125. TA SS4485, p. 75. R1136/94, A. Schiel, Coms. Natu. aan Supt. van Naturellen, 7 November 1894. Documents from p. 70 - 77 are also marked R10291/94.

126. *Ibid.* p. 75. R11336/94, A. Schiel, Coms. Natu. aan Supt. van Naturellen, 7 November 1894.

127. TA SS4485, p. 85. R12245/94, A. Schiel, Coms. Natu. aan Supt. van Naturellen, 12 December 1894. Also marked R1136/94.

128. TA SS4485, p. 83. R12179/94, Induna Booi, voor A. Schiel, Coms. Natu. Spelonken, 26 November 1894.

of the Vhembe River, in a territory called Rhodesia, named so after Cecil John Rhodes, the Cape premier who was a driving force in the initiative.<sup>129</sup> The new situation which started taking shape, following the discovery of gold and the British presence in the area north of the Vhembe River, affected the Venda kingdom. Makhado saw in the British allies who would help him against the Boers.<sup>130</sup>

Consequently three English soldiers from Rhodesia on their way from Malebogo in the Blaauberg mountains, visited Makhado in 1894. Their leader was Captain J.H. Taylor who was Chief Native Commissioner of Matabeleland.<sup>131</sup> Whether there was any communication between Makhado and the Rhodesian authorities, no sources could reveal. At any rate it may not be out of the way to presume that they might have come on their own as this tied in well with Cecil John Rhodes' policy of encircling the Boer Republic.<sup>132</sup>

Makhado welcomed their coming. The three Rhodesians promised Makhado military intelligence and possible assistance against the Boers. As their fact-finding visit was a success, they left and went away and returned later with thirteen soldiers, pitching their tents at Tshirululuni, below Makhado's royal residence. As they had promised on their first visit, they showed him how to build fortifications across the plateau and above Mount Sunguzwi (Hanglip).<sup>133</sup>

While Makhado saw in these soldiers allies who would help him, the elders and councillors regarded them as constituting a threat to their existence. They devised plans of frightening them and as strangers they felt scared and decided to leave. Their leader, Captain Taylor, agreed with Makhado that the latter would send his

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129. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 179; C.J. Conerly, *The surrendering of the lands in the Northern Transvaal of Mahosi, Davhana, Makhado, Mphephu and Sinthumule*, p. 38.

130. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 179; C.J. Conerly, *The surrendering of the lands in the Northern Transvaal of Mahosi, Davhana, Makhado, Mphephu and Sinthumule*, p. 38.

131. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, pp. 180 - 181; C.J. Conerly, *The surrendering of the lands in the Northern Transvaal of Mahosi, Davhana, Makhado, Mphephu and Sinthumule*, p. 39.

132. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, pp. 180 - 181; C.J. Conerly, *The surrendering of the lands in the Northern Transvaal of Mahosi, Davhana, Makhado, Mphephu and Sinthumule*, p. 39.

133. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, pp. 180 - 181.

son Sinthumule in 1895 to Rhodesia by ox wagon.<sup>134</sup> The purpose of the visit would be to trade mealies in order to bring back a cannon.

News of Captain Taylor's visit filtered throughout the Spelonken and eventually reached Pretoria. Consequently, General Joubert requested Rev. R. Wessmann of the Berlin Mission Society at Tshakhuma, to deliver a letter to Makhado and to explain its contents.<sup>135</sup>

Joubert's purpose of sending Wessmann to Makhado, was to try to persuade him to listen to and to accept the demands imposed upon him by the government. As this was not a light task, Wessmann felt it wise to take with him a Venda mission station convert called Moses. On their arrival at Luatame, they sent someone to report their presence, and to explain the purpose of their coming.<sup>136</sup> Instead of allowing Wessmann to meet him, Makhado, whose intentions were unknown, directed that the letter that Wessmann brought, should be read to Rasivhetshele, as he himself was indisposed and that he would be available after a week. Wessmann then read the letter as directed.<sup>137</sup>

From Rasivhetshele and Nwaphunga, Makhado's senior wife, based at Malimuwa, Wessmann learnt it would be difficult to persuade Makhado to allow for the taking of census, the counting of huts and the payment of taxation. Rasivhetshele and Nwaphunga also indicated that as far as Makhado's misunderstandings with Captain Schiel were concerned, there was nothing serious. The only thing they wanted from

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134. *Ibid.*, pp. 180 - 181.

135. *Ibid.*, p. 182; R. Wessmann, *The Bawenda of the Spelonken*, p. 117; TA SS4485, p. 57. R11901/94, R. Wessmann, Zendeling by Makata, Tsakoma, aan Coms. Natu. Spelonken, 16 January 1895.

136. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 182; R. Wessmann, *The Bawenda of the Spelonken*, p. 117; TA SS4485, p. 57. R11901/94, R. Wessmann, Zendeling by Makata, Tsakoma, aan Coms. Natu. Spelonken, 16 January 1895.

137. D. Möller-Malan *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 182; R. Wessmann, *The Bawenda of the Spelonken*, p. 117; TA SS4485, p. 57. R11901/94, R. Wessmann, Zendeling by Makata, Tsakoma, aan Coms. Natu. Spelonken, 16 January 1895.

Schiel was that two maids Makhado alleged to have been captured and sent to Davhana, had to be brought back.<sup>138</sup>

Nwaphunga and Rasivhetshele who sympathised with Wessmann for the failure of his mission to convey to Makhado the directives from the government, informed him that they would try to persuade Makhado to allow the government to take census. They had to do this in order to forestall a military confrontation with the South African Republic. They were aware that their nation could not withstand such a military encounter. Makhado was aware of this. They ascribed his unwillingness to negotiate with government officials to the many Whites who had visited him in the name of the government. They further advised, that before a letter was read to him, he must first be spoken to, to avoid embarrassment, as he would be angry to hear the letter read.<sup>139</sup>

This short meeting between Wessmann, Nwaphunga and Rasivhetshele enabled the missionary to gain some insight into the mind and attitude of Makhado, and to change his approach accordingly. He then complied with Makhado's directive and left for Tshakhuma<sup>140</sup> in preparation for a return after a week.

When Wessmann returned to Luatame on 15 January 1895, he was received by *Thovhele*, who took him to Rasivhetshele's house where he found a group of young men, whom Makhado introduced as his councillors, waiting for him. Wessmann did not like this arrangement. It implied that his level of maturity was the same as that of these young men. It was an insult. Despite this disappointment, the letter he brought with him was read in Dutch. As it was read, Makhado interjected, saying it should be read in Venda. Wessmann however, ignored the interjection and read it through in the Dutch language and thereafter explained the contents.<sup>141</sup>

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138. TA SS4485, p. 60. R11901/94, R. Wessmann, *Zendeling by Makata, Tsakoma, aan Coms. Natu. Spelonken*, 16 January 1895.

139. *Ibid.*, p. 63.

140. *Ibid.*, p. 64.

141. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 182; R. Wessmann, *The Bawenda of the Spelonken*, p. 117; TA SS4485, p. 59. R11901/94, R. Wessmann, *Zendeling by Makata, Tsakoma, aan Coms. Natu. Spelonken*, 16 January 1895.

In the letter Joubert indicated he was Makhado's friend, and Makhado should not listen to anybody who might create misunderstanding with the government.<sup>142</sup>

Again Makhado interjected, wanting to know how could he be friendly with anyone who wanted to cut his neck? How could he be on friendly terms with the Native Commissioner? How could he allow his huts to be counted and the taking of census of his people? These points mentioned in the letter constituted, as far as he was concerned an interference with the sovereignty of his kingdom.<sup>143</sup> As for Commissioner Schiel, Makhado had a vendetta against him. The position of the office of Native Commissioner was a threat to the institution of kingship which the Venda regarded highly in their social and political infrastructure. As the package of demands Wessmann brought to Makhado revolved around census, location demarcation and taxation, Makhado objected vehemently pointing out his dissatisfaction and that he was not prepared to go to a location and said: "Ik wil niets van een lokatie hooren."<sup>144</sup>

Over and above this, Makhado explicitly told Wessmann that under no circumstances was he prepared to pay homage to anybody but the Government of the South African Republic. Concerning taxation, Makhado reiterated his previous stand that he would pay only to General Joubert as he had done in the past and to nobody else. By nobody else he meant the Native Commissioner whom he regarded as a junior. Paying taxes to him would imply bowing down to him. Despite this unpleasant event and rowdy objections, Wessmann kept his head and persuaded Makhado to listen to the government in the interest of his country. Makhado, who appeared furious, was adamant in his objections and said if the government wanted

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142. R. Wessmann, *The Bawenda of the Spelonken*, p. 117; TA SS4485, p. 60. R11901/94, R. Wessmann, *Zendeling by Makata, Tsakoma, aan Coms. Natu. Spelonken*, 16 January 1895.

143. R. Wessmann, *The Bawenda of the Spelonken*, p. 117; TA SS4485, p. 61, R11901/94, R. Wessmann, *Zendeling by Makata, Tsakoma, aan Coms. Natu. Spelonken*, 16 January 1895.

144. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 182; R. Wessmann, *The Bawenda of the Spelonken*, p. 117; TA SS4485, p. 61. R11901/94, R. Wessmann, *Zendeling by Makata, Tsakoma, aan Coms. Natu. Spelonken*, 16 January 1895.

to annihilate him, they could do as they please. He then clapped his hands and unceremoniously left for his palace.<sup>145</sup>

Disappointed and dejected. Wessmann left, thinking of this unsuccessful meeting. This was the meeting which was intended to prevent the impending catastrophe which, because of Makhado's uncompromising and firm stand, could engulf the country at any time. He reported to the government what had transpired between Makhado and himself. The two sides were moving towards a bitter conflict which appeared unavoidable as Makhado refused to listen. Of course by complying with the government's demands, would mean the end of Venda sovereign status and demoting himself to the status of a subject of the South African Republic.<sup>146</sup>

The report which Wessmann submitted to the government was in the form of a letter addressed to the Native Commissioner, Captain Schiel for transmission to Pretoria. When Schiel saw the accusations and recriminations levelled against him and his office by Makhado, he decided to clear his name. He shifted the blame on his negative relationship with Makhado to Thomas Pittendrigh, a shopkeeper and Scrutton, a speculator. In his submission to the Superintendent of Natives, on 5 March 1895, he levelled complaints and allegations against these two people. He said that they were influencing Makhado against his police officers. He ascribed all misunderstandings and upheavals in the Soutpansberg to their activities. The influence they had exerted on Makhado had reached such a level that his going to Makhado on official business was of no avail. He further claimed that both Scrutton and Pittendrigh had displayed disloyalty to the South African Republic in its campaign against Malebogo in 1894 and therefore they should have been punished for their behaviour.<sup>147</sup>

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145. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 182; R. Wessmann, *The Bawenda of the Spelonken*, p. 117; TA SS4485, p. 62. R11901/94, R. Wessmann, Zending by Makata, Tsakoma, aan Coms. Natu. Spelonken, 16 January 1895.

146. D. Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 182; R. Wessmann, *The Bawenda of the Spelonken*, p. 117; TA SS4485, p. 63. R11901/94, R. Wessmann, Zending by Makata, Tsakoma, aan Coms. Natu. Spelonken, 16 January 1895.

147. TA SS4485, p. 91. R3216, A. Schiel, Coms. Natu. Spelonken, aan Supt. van Naturellen, 5 March 1895.

The affairs of the Soutpansberg, according to Schiel, could only be solved by a commission of enquiry. As the government had already instituted one, its terms of reference could be extended to accommodate the issues which had come to the surface. The commission would *inter alia* have to go to the Soutpansberg to find out when Makhado would be prepared to allow a census to be taken. It was only after such an investigation that truth would be established. In the event of Makhado's giving permission for the census to be conducted, the government would be in a position to demarcate locations. A report which would be compiled as a result of such investigation would be more reliable than the impressions of a single man. Furthermore the allegations levelled against Captain Schiel himself would also be rectified as these accusations placed him in a bad light.<sup>148</sup>

Captain Schiel's request of using the appointed commission to go to Soutpansberg was positively considered by the government. The Executive Council could not think of any better way to subjugate Makhado than through a commission which would demarcate his location after a census had been taken. As far as Makhado was concerned, to accept this would of course imply subjugation by the government. The appointed commission would operate under the auspices of the Superintendent of Natives.<sup>149</sup>

As the situation in the Soutpansberg called for immediate action, the Superintendent acted quickly and reconstituted a Location Commission as directed by the Executive Council. It consisted of H.P.N. Pretorius, C.D. Potgieter and L.P. de Souza.<sup>150</sup>

The commission was once more entrusted with the task of taking census, the demarcation of the location, and the counting of huts, as well as the investigation of all allegations against Makhado. It was also the task of the commission to inform Makhado what the government expected of him, namely that he should obey the government as other Mahosi did and that he had to pay his arrear taxes.<sup>151</sup>

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148. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

149. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

150. TA SS4485, p. 132. R10291/94, P.J. Joubert, Supt. van Naturellen, aan C. Potgieter, Coms. Natu. Waterberg, 5 April 1895.

151. *Ibid.*, p. 134.

As the government was outlining the activities of the commission, another development emerged. This was a petition alleged to have been signed by citizens of the South African Republic. The petitioners appealed to the government to conduct an impartial investigation into the differences between Schiel and Makhado.<sup>152</sup>

Such an investigation would bring truth to light, as rumours had it that Makhado had shown his willingness to obey the laws of the Republic, provided that the government appointed another Native Commissioner, as he (Makhado) had several complaints against Schiel.<sup>153</sup>

Deep in their hearts the petitioners were convinced that this would prevent the shedding of blood on both sides. They further pointed out that Makhado's people had not yet been charged for the murderous acts they had committed. According to them, should war break out that winter, the Boers would be in a disadvantaged position. Their flocks had suffered from poor grazing while their crops had been destroyed by locusts. Under such conditions they would not be able to face their enemy effectively.<sup>154</sup>

The petition was received but did not deter the government from the course it had spelt out and consequently the newly constituted commission left for Venda and arrived at Fort Hendrina in the Spelonken on 7 May 1895. To expedite the matter, the Native Commissioner Schiel, despatched a messenger to Makhado to inform him of the presence of the commission. Meanwhile, the members of the commission followed him on their way to Luatame. As they travelled, they were flanked by Makhado's armed men on both sides. These men escorted them as far as the foot of the mountain.<sup>155</sup>

Here they encamped not very far from the residence of Tshikota, who was one of Makhado's *mahosi*. At 08:00 the following day the commission sent Bomb Buser,

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152. TA SS4485, p. 143. R6268, EVR1082/95, Kopie Memorie aan Voorzitter en Leden van den E.A. Eersten Volksraad, Pretoria, April 1895.

153. *Ibid.*, p. 143.

154. *Ibid.*, p. 143.

155. TA SS4485, p. 104. R10291/94, L.D. de Souza, Secretaris van Locatie Commissie, aan Supt. van Naturellen, 13 Mei 1895; Seel also TA SS4485, pp. 94 - 95. R3216/95, Kopie Uitvoerende Raadsbesluit art. 244, 5 April 1895.

who had accompanied them to Luatame. The purpose was to inform Makhado that the Location Commission had arrived and that they would like to meet him at a place and time to be decided by him. When they were still waiting for their messenger to come back, *Khosi* Tshikota appeared at 11:00 with 40 of his followers. He informed them that Makhado would like to meet them. Tshikota and his followers led the members of the Commission to Makwatambani, one of Makhado's royal residences.<sup>156</sup>

Here Makhado's spokesman, Funyufunyu, told them he had been sent to represent *Thovhele* who was not in a position to meet them. During these deliberations, he reiterated that *Thovhele* would not allow the taking of the census as well as the demarcation of the location.<sup>157</sup>

When Funyufunyu was still presenting Makhado's message to the commission, Bomb Buser, the commission's envoy, returned and told them that Makhado was ready to meet them the following day. This concluded their discussions with Funyufunyu, after which they turned to their tent.<sup>158</sup>

On the following day (9 May 1895), the commission left at 07:30 and arrived at 09:30 at Luatame. Here they met Makhado at 10:30 with his council. Instead of introducing the matter to Makhado, the chairman of the commission asked *Thovhele* whether Funyufunyu had reported to him what had transpired during the previous day's meeting at Makwatambani. The chairman further wanted to know whether Makhado considered the matter as finalised. Makhado agreed and referred the commission to Mahosi, who unanimously endorsed what Funyufunyu had told them.<sup>159</sup>

The *mahosi* shouted that no census taking, hut counting and land demarcation would be allowed. The whole affair became chaotic as the three points constituted a violation of the sovereignty of the nation. In this turmoil, the chairman failed to

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156. TA SS4485, p. 111. R10291/94, Zitting van de Locatie Commissie te Rietvley onder Magato's Hoofstad, 8 Mei 1895.

157. *Ibid.*, p. 112.

158. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

159. *Ibid.*, p. 114.

convey the government's instructions to Makhado, who was not prepared to listen. He once more repeated his injunction that the boundary of his territory in the south, south-west and west, ran along the Muhohodi and Sand Rivers. Disappointed and angry, the members of the commission who felt derided and undermined, unceremoniously returned to Fort Hendrina.<sup>160</sup>

As they had failed in their mission, the commission then returned to Pretoria and informed the government of their ill-fated attempts to convey to Makhado the government's instructions. It was to them an unfortunate experience and an act of disloyalty on the part of Makhado, who had failed to accept the hand that had been stretched to him.<sup>161</sup>

The commission which Makhado rejected was a highly respected delegation from the government, appointed and constituted in terms of Executive Council Resolution Article 244 dated 5 April 1895. It was empowered to go to Makhado to take a census and thereafter demarcate a location according to the number of his people.<sup>162</sup>

The resolution further stipulated that the whole matter between Makhado and the government would be in the hands of the superintendent and the commissioner.<sup>163</sup> According to the terms of reference, the Location Commission was not expected to discuss with Makhado, the purpose of their mission. They had to tell him what they had come to do without expecting any reaction from him.<sup>164</sup>

Makhado, on the other hand, who had already been informed about the presence of the commission, appeared to have been ready for any incident. That was when the commission pitched up their tent below the mountain, they were surrounded by

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160. *Ibid.*, p. 115.; O. P (S), Transvaal 37/1, Rapport van den Supt. van Naturellen, 1892 - 1898, Staatsdrukkerij van den Z.A.R., Pretoria, Herdrukke Vol. 14, p. 2.

161. TA SS4485, p. 115. R10291/94, Zitting van de Locatie Commissie te Rietvley onder Magato's Hoofstad, 9 Mei 1895.

162. TA SS4485, pp. 94 - 95. R3216/95, Kopie Uitvoerende Raadsbesluit, Art. 244, 5 April 95.

163. *Ibid.*, pp. 94-5.

164. *Ibid.*, p. 105. R3216/95, Kopie Uitvoerende Raadsbesluit, Art. 244, 5, April 1895.

Makhado's armed men for the whole night. In this way the country seemed to be in a state of war.<sup>165</sup>

It was under such an atmosphere that the commission had to pass over the decision of the Executive Council to Makhado who immediately turned that down. The whole episode assumed the shape of a master-servant relationship in which the superior had to impose his decision on the one he believed to be inferior. The idea of census and location involved the whole nation but Makhado was expected to accept that without voicing his feelings.<sup>166</sup>

Makhado's refusal to accept the government resolution on census and the demarcation of locations brought him face to face with the South African Republic. The government, however, would not retreat while Makhado would not listen. Therefore, the gulf of misunderstanding between the two sides continued to widen while the Boers of the Spelonken would not rest until Makhado was destroyed.<sup>167</sup>

Although the course of events in the Soutpansberg had reached the point that action had to be taken, nothing could be done against Makhado. The government had to reckon with other problems. In June 1895 an expedition had to be sent against Makgoba, a very determined ruler who put up substantial resistance.<sup>168</sup>

After the failure of the Location Commission to take census and demarcate Makhado's location, no other steps were taken by the government. The superintendent had already indicated when he sent a communication to Makhado through Wessmann in December 1894, that that letter was the last. Instead he

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165. *Ibid.*, p. 104. R10291/94, L.D. de Souza, Secretaris van Locatie Commissie, aan Supt. van Naturellen, 13 Mei 1895.

166. *Ibid.*, p. 115. R10291/94, Zitting van de Locatie Commissie te Rietvley onder Magato's Hoofstad, 9 Mei 1895.

167. R. Wessmann, *The Bawenda of the Spelonken*, pp. 144 - 145.

168. J.W.N. Tempelhoff, *Die okkupasiestelsel in die distrik Soutpansberg, 1886 - 1899*, pp. 514 - 515. T.V. Bulpin, *Lost trails of the Transvaal*, 6th edition, p. 349.

recommended that the government should take steps against Makhado towards the middle of 1896.<sup>169</sup>

Meanwhile, as the government was busy devising means with which to subjugate Makhado, events within the Venda community played into their hands. Makhado's successes over other *mahosi* in Venda and the government's failure to "discipline" him, created a feeling of superiority and pride within the ruler who had by that time been at the helm of the Venda monarchy for more than three decades. He felt secure, strong and boastful.<sup>170</sup> These emotions most probably created a fertile environment for eroding and corrupting a person, even one of strong character such as Makhado.

Makhado's friend, John Cooksley, had a licensed bar at Lovedale Park which Makhado visited occasionally. Wine and brandy were a scarce commodity in those days. Blacks could only succeed in getting them through back doors. However, Makhado, as *Thovhele* and a friend of Cooksley, had access to the bar. Möller-Malan, who grew up in the area and without whose documentation this episode would not have been preserved for posterity, sketches a scene in which Makhado, who had become fond of liquor, paid Lovedale Park a visit.<sup>171</sup>

He was on his spring wagon, beautifully adorned and drawn by four decorated mules. His senior *mahosi*, Rasivhetshela and Funyufunyu followed behind on horseback dressed in royal regalia, while the coachman had an escort of four with rifles dressed in European styled clothes. In this manner the entourage arrived at Lovedale Park.<sup>172</sup>

To the Venda this was strange, as *Thovhele* and *mahosi mahulu*, were not expected to undertake long trips in order to obtain liquor. This, like any other commodity,

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169. D.Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 182; J.W.N. Tempelhoff, *Die okkupasiestelsel in die distrik Soutpansberg, 1886 - 1899*, p. 525; R. Wessmann, *The Bawenda of the Spelonken*, p. 117.

170. D.Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, pp. 176 - 177; R. Wessmann, *The Bawenda of the Spelonken*, pp. 152 - 153; T.V. Bulpin, *Lost trails of the Transvaal*, 6th edition, p. 349.

171. D.Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 177.

172. *Ibid.*, p. 177.

had to be brought to the royal residence. The people were astonished to find Makhado so far from his home. But they could not do anything, as he had already violated their customs and traditions on several occasions.<sup>173</sup>

Makhado's enemies were quick to see where his weakness lay. He had developed a taste for the liquor sold by the local White traders. It presumably affected his judgement and also weakened his strategic security systems.

This development in Makhado's lifestyle did not just crop up. It was the result of a series of political developments that took place. Outwardly there were manifestations of emotional, physical and intellectual deterioration in the life of the ruler. This was most definitely intricately linked up with development relative to his arch enemy Davhana. Earlier on Makhado appointed Bungeni, a Tsonga ruler, as *khosi* south-east of Luvhola, to prevent Davhana from expanding his territory in the area.<sup>174</sup> It was clear that after almost three decades Makhado still feared the influence of Davhana and the support he enjoyed from especially the Albasini's in the region. Then, in 1894 Davhana died. For Makhado it was a relief, but it had far reaching implications in terms of his political judgments. The threat of Davhana no longer existed. Davhana's successor, Nesengani, could not contest the claim to kingship which his father failed to obtain.<sup>175</sup> For Makhado it meant that he could now relax his defences. It definitely had an effect on the way in which the Venda monarch conducted his day to day activities.

Furthermore the unsuccessful attempts of the government to subjugate him, were to Makhado a sign of weakness. Consequently this, together with advancing age, created in him a misplaced feeling of power. He had nothing to fear - hence he could freely go about anywhere at any time. In this way he played into the hands of enemies.

Following Weinthal's report, it became clear to the government of the South African Republic that any attack on Makhado had to be thoroughly planned. However the

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173. *Ibid.*, p. 177.

174. O.I. - E.N. Mudau (about 73 years), Tshakhuma, 25-01-1977.

175. L.T. Marole, *Makhulukuku*, p. 19.

Boer republic had insurmountable difficulties. On the Witwatersrand the government had to contend with the Uitlander element which were determined at getting a greater political say in the government of Paul Kruger. In the Northern Transvaal the series of wars against Black communities were not yet completed. Between 1890 and 1894 Modjadji, the legendary Rain Queen of the Balobedu, had to be defeated. Her neighbour, Makgoba, also posed a threat. His people were only subjugated in the aftermath of a republican campaign in 1895, following the war against Mmalebogo at Blouberg in 1894.<sup>176</sup> To the north of the Vhembe, British adventurers under the influence of imperial expansion, started colonising the territory that was to become known as Rhodesia. For the South African Republic these conditions were over the short term of great importance. Before taking on Makhado, these problems had to be addressed. Consequently any punitive measures against the Venda ruler were subject to thorough strategic planning.

However Makhado's enemies had increased in the course of time, especially as shown by the attitude of the inhabitants of Malimuwa, during Wessmann's visit at the end of 1894 and the beginning of 1895. It was here that Rasivhetshela and Nwaphunga, one of Makhado's wives, showed their resentment of Makhado's continuous resistance to listen to the government of the South African Republic. Rasivhetshela, who was one of the closest associates of Makhado from the time of his youth had an affair with Nwaphunga of which Makhado was unaware.<sup>177</sup>

It is possible that Wessmann's report to the Commissioner of Spelonken concerning the differences in opinion between Makhado and the inhabitants of Malimuwa made it possible for the republican officials at Fort Hendrina to get valuable information as to Makhado's lifestyle.<sup>178</sup> At this time Makhado's senior sons, Mphephu and Sinthumule, were in Kimberley and Tuli respectively. Thus the inhabitants of Malimuwa Rasivhetshela, Liswe, Makhokha, Makhethekhetha and Nwaphunga in

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176. J.W.N. Tempelhoff, *Die okkupasiestelsel in die distrik Soutpansberg 1886-1899*, pp. 507-15.

177. TA SS4485, pp. 51 - 58. R1190/94, R. Wessmann, *Zendeling by Makato, Tsakoma, aan Coms. Natu. Spelonken*, 16 January 1895; O.I. - Tshivhidzo Musekwa (about 100 years), Tshihanane, 12 July 1971.

178. *Ibid.*, pp. 51 - 58.

conjunction with Mutheiwana of Vuvha, saw this as an opportune moment for the removal of Makhado from the political arena. Some years before, Makhado had already indicated that Maemu, Nwaphunga's son, should succeed him. The sooner this was done, the better for Maemu to be installed as the two contenders, Mphephu and Sinthumule, would not be there. If they were to come back and find Maemu on the throne, they would not do anything, as he would have already established himself.<sup>179</sup> This had to be done as it was much easier to prevent one from becoming a king than to remove him from the throne, as potential opposition would by then have diminished.<sup>180</sup>

These prominent people of Malimuwa where Makhado's second royal residence was situated secretly deliberated on how *Thovhele* could be overthrown to pave the way for Maemu's succession. This did not just come on the spur of the moment. It is possible that some of these people like Mutheiwana, his uncle and Rasivhetshela, his brother on his mother's side, who were very close to Makhado from his youth and the beginning of his reign, might have been replaced by others as close associates. In this way their influence on Makhado might have diminished.<sup>181</sup>

This happened in all royal Venda circles. Those who started with the king usually lost favour with him in the course of time and were replaced by others. This was of course one way of getting rid of close associates and replacing them with new ones, in a situation where a system of modern democratic elections did not exist.<sup>182</sup>

These people knew that they could no longer regain the favour of *Thovhele* and return to their positions of influence. They then instead looked forward and planned to get rid of him in a way that would not lead to armed conflict. Disgruntled people in this situation usually looked for others who were faced with similar problems. It could have been such a situation which brought Malimuwa and the republicans at

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179. O.I. - Tshivhidzo Musekwa (about 100 years), Tshihanane, 12-07-1971.

180. *Ibid.*

181. *Ibid.*

182. According to Venda custom it is difficult to please the king; as they say the position you occupy is slippery as other people also want to be there. In Venda it is expressed as "Musanda hu na vhuredzi".



information reached him, Makhado had already died ten days before. This means Makhado might have died on 23 September 1895. This seems reasonable as the information appeared in *De Volksstem* of 25 September 1895. As this was a weekly, and on occasion biweekly newspaper, the death could have occurred before this date of publication.<sup>187</sup> We will however never be absolutely certain as to the precise date of his death. Part of the problem of determining the date, must be seen against the way in which the Venda community in the late nineteenth century conformed to the use of the Western calendar. It is unlikely that, especially the subjects of Makhado would have been close followers of a European calendar. Consequently the accurate day and date of the passing away of a ruler was of no significance to them. Furthermore it was Venda tradition for the ruler to be buried on the day of his death. Only his close associates would be informed of his death. Gradually the information would siphon through to the community at large. As a result of the intricate interaction between customs and the introduction of new traditions of foreign origin, we thus have a complex situation which makes it impossible for us to determine accurately the date of Makhado's death.

Makhado's tragic death was a cause of national concern to the Venda, as nobody had heard before that he might have been ill. For if he was ill, he could not have been in a position to travel all the way from Luatame to Malimuwa. As the sources say, after drinking, he fell ill, which means he was not ill when he came to Malimuwa.<sup>188</sup>

Wessmann, a contemporary and who appeared to have first hand knowledge of the cause of Makhado's death, ascribed it to an overdose of medicine and blamed Makhado for ignoring the instructions prescribed for the use of the poisonous

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187. T.V. Bulpin, *Lost trails of the Transvaal*, 6th edition, p. 349; D.Möller-Malan, *The chair of the Ramabulanas*, p. 187; R. Wessmann, *The Bawenda of the Spelonken*, p. 119; *De Volksstem*, 25 September 1895; O.I. Kingi Nesangani (about 100 years), Davhana's Location, 14 June 1971; TA SS5002, p. 162. R9582/95, Landdrost, Pietersburg, aan Staats Secretaris, 4 October 1895.

188. R. Wessmann, *The Bawenda of the Spelonken*, p. 118; *Die Volksstem*, 25 September 1895.

medicine. The fact that Wessmann hailed the incident as an end of Makhado's resistance to Boer authority - when he says that the general held the country without the loss of blood for it was these districts which had asked Makhado to listen to Joubert's advice - shows that he probably was aware of a likely plot. At any rate, the informants maintain that Makhado died of poisoning and that the poison came from the Boers at Fort Hendrina.<sup>189</sup>

Although the Boers expressed surprise at the death of Makhado, they felt a sense of relief, because had he lived longer, war would almost certainly have broken out, resulting in the loss of blood. But whether peace would prevail following his death, only the future would tell.<sup>190</sup>

The death of Makhado shocked and stunned the Venda people. For them he had become a hero. He was after all Makhado, the "Lion of the North", who had dominated the historical arena in Venda for 31 years. No other Venda ruler except the legendary Thohoyandou, had spread his influence more throughout Venda than Makhado. In him and through his leadership and statesmanship, the Venda regained their lost glory. The name *Thovhele* Ramabulana was heard throughout the Soutpansberg, as no other ruler could face him on the battlefield. By resisting and repulsing Boer expansionist policy, which was characteristic of European imperialism of the 19th century, for more than 30 years, he kept them out of Venda which enjoyed independence up to the turn of the century. His tragic death, closes a chapter of change and developments.<sup>191</sup>

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189. R. Wessmann, *The Bawenda of the Spelonken*, p. 119.

190. *Die Volksstem*, 25 September 1895.

191. T.V. Bulpin, *Lost trails of the Transvaal*, 6th edition, p. 319; G.G. Munnik, *Memoirs of Senator the Honourable G.G. Munnik*, pp. 145 and 152; TA G.O.V. 1087 PS 50/8/07, Location Commission, No. 138/06, Report of Native Location Commission on proposed location for the Chief Mpefu, 23 March 1907, p. 11; *De Volkstem*, 30 January 1890; R. Wagner Zoutpansberg: the dynamics of a hunting frontier, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Eds.), *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa, 1848 - 1867*, 1987, p. 323; Mayhew, V. (Ed.) *Reader's Digest: Illustrated Guide to Southern Africa*, p. 243.

## CHAPTER 10

### CONCLUSION

Makhado, like any historical character, cannot be studied in isolation, from the events of his times. Such events influenced and shaped his personality. Makhado, the “Lion of the North” grew up in a Venda at a time that that was subject to severe change on account of the presence of White settlers. In this study, to a certain extent a biography of the Venda ruler, several controversial facts in terms of the traditional Venda historiography, and troublesome issues have been addressed. In this the final chapter an evaluation will be given of some of the findings uncovered in the process of research. An attempt will also be made at providing some answers to certain of the issues examined. If other historians, after reading this thesis, will feel motivated to embark on further research involving occurrences in Venda, before and after the turn of the 19th century, the author will have achieved his objective.

When Makhado entered the political arena in 1864, he found the Venda kingdom lacking in political coherence and territorial unity. This was the result of the monarchy’s transformation in order to face up to new challenges from within and without. In essence it dealt with the issue of coping with rapid change. Makhado was in an unfortunate position. If he wanted to centralise the Venda kingdom, he was supposed to have ruled from Dzata. In the face of adversity, and numerous practical obstacles, he was consequently impelled to embark on a life-long project of attempting to revive the Venda kingdom. But as he was at Luatame and not at Dzata, the idea became a chimera.

Makhado from the outset was motivated by the idea that if the Venda were to survive in the region, strong and efficient leadership was imperative. The people were there, but they required a leader who would skilfully brave the storm and direct them in a course of action which would bring opposing groups together. As a united people they would then repel the intrusion of their territory by foreigners. Makhado, no doubt, had the necessary potential. Venda was ripe for his dynamic leadership. He thus crossed the threshold both as an innovator and a leader. From the outset the country appeared to him as an uncultivated field, ready to be ploughed

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and planted with his skills. His initiative and creative leadership was evident in the comprehensive social and military reforms he introduced.

Under Makhado's leadership circumcision lodges were firmly established as they formed the nucleus of his fighting machinery. Being the first circumcised monarch, he set a precedent to his successors. Consequently, circumcision became part of the tradition of the Ramabulana royal house. No uncircumcised prince could hope to ascend the throne. Military battalions and age-groups which he introduced, instilled a sense of pride and patriotism with the people of Dzanani. They looked down upon the Vhaphani of Tshivhase and Mphaphuli and praised themselves as "Mavhoi, takata and Mangoma", who put a stop to Boer encroachment into their country.

By the time the control of the kingdom passed over to Makhado in 1864, the Boers had already entrenched themselves firmly at the foot of Soutpansberg over a period of 16 years. The Venda were against this. They could however do nothing. Confronting the Boers on the battlefield, would be like attempting to cross a river in flood, instead of swimming along the current while waiting for a favourable opportunity to cross. They had to acquaint themselves with White man's techniques of fighting. Hence they joined the hunting parties where they learnt to shoot and later acquired firearms under the guise of helping their masters.

Thus, when differences and disagreements between Makhado and the Boers surfaced, the Venda had been so well armed that they were in a position to defend themselves. The underlying issue for this armed confrontation was land ownership. The Boers' tendency of dividing the land into white farms cut into the heart and soul of what constituted the essential component of Venda society. On the newly demarcated farms there were now people resident who were under the authority of a White farmer. At the same time the Venda rulers started losing their influence and effective control over their subjects. There was a change in the balance of power in the transitional society taking shape on the frontier. As far as the Venda people and their rulers were concerned the new balance was in the favour of the Boers. Traditionally it was assumed in Venda society that the people belonged to the land and not the land to the people. Therefore, to lose control of the land, was tantamount to losing control of the people and the sovereignty of the kingdom.

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The style of warfare which the Venda resorted to was noted for sporadic attacks being conducted on the Whites, followed by the rapid retraction of the forces back into the mountains. They avoided an all-out war against the Boers on the open ground. The conventional strategy of the Boers of fighting from pitched laagers and retaliatory expeditions on horseback, could easily lead to the demise of even the strongest Venda regiments. This type of warfare, which started in 1863, intensified in 1865 and 1866 soon showed up many of the cracks in the defences of the Whites. The Boers became psychologically exhausted, powerless and insecure. Eventually they gave up in 1867.

When the Venda saw them leaving they rushed into town, caused damage and set it on fire. This system of "lata nowa na thanda" (to throw away the snake with the stick that killed it), was done in order to make sure the Boers could not return. This was not an event of minor significance. For no nation on earth could easily decide to abandon a settlement which had been in existence for almost two decades without having lost the will and ability to defend it.

Evacuation implied leaving behind that which they held dear. No wonder contemporary observers described the evacuation of Schoemansdal at the time as the greatest disaster in the short history of the South African Republic.

At the time the Venda people hailed the collapse of Schoemansdal as a major victory. On the other hand, Whites used soft words like "retreat", "withdrawal", and "abandonment" in order to describe what was evidently a national disaster.

It was however overall the consequence of a protracted war which started in 1865. With his victory in 1867 Makhado succeeded in forcing the Boers out of his country for more than 30 years. He emerged victorious, a great leader and remained supreme until his death in 1895.

When the Boers shifted their strategy from military onslaught to diplomatic negotiations, they empowered field cornets and native commissioners to exert pressure on Makhado by demanding taxation. It was for Makhado a humiliation. By the 1880's there were even more attempts at undermining his authority. The most outstanding pressure from White quarters was the appointment of a location

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commission which had instructions to allocate "locations" to the indigenous population of the Transvaal. It had the powers to allocate lands to *mahosi* corresponding with local population numbers.

Makhado, who was more than aware of the power of the Boers, avoided military confrontation. He consequently adopted the tactic of diplomatic resistance. He played off one commissioner against the other, while pretending to acknowledge President Kruger as his overlord. In this way he diffused the local Boers' insistence on military confrontation.

Within the Venda kingdom, Makhado had a formidable task before him. The two territories of Tshivhase and Mphaphuli did not tow his line of getting rid of Boer influence in order to preserve the sovereign status of the kingdom. The rulers of these two territories were afraid of Makhado and the Boers. They subjected themselves to the Boers, but their subjects were thrilled by Makhado's achievements.

In order to have the nation behind him, Makhado prevented Tshivhase from annexing Dzimauli. He invaded Lambani, Mbwenda, Tshimbupfe, Nngwekhulu and Tshivhulana and some Sotho-speaking territories in the south-west. The aim behind these attacks was to encircle Venda in order to make it difficult for the Boers to penetrate. His attacks were so planned and skilfully executed that the Boers had no reason to assist their loyal allies.

Makhado's popularity spread throughout the Soutpansberg. His armies achieved victory after victory until he was the most prominent leader in the northern parts of the South African Republic. Consequently, he succeeded in keeping the Boers out. His status as ruler was above suspicion. The names the Venda gave him "Tshilwavuhisiku-tsha-ha- Ramabulana" (the night fighter of Ramabulana), "Mboho ya Devhula" (the Bull of the North), "Mukukulume wa shango" (the cock of the country), remained living testimonies of his impact on the whole nation.

Names and titles were bestowed on him. The people also praised him in several ways, such as:

Makhado thidigwana ya motse, thidi e se na bogwabo le motho, i tia ka lefifi, Selwabosego sa ga Ramapulana (Makhado a rhizome of a root, a rhizome which paves its way, irrespective of odds, he attacks in the night, the night fighter of Ramapulana)

or

Ndi dzana li malofha, la tshika-muroho fhenywa ... vha ha Nyatshikamba tsho bika phele na vho-mmbwa a vha tsha fema" (He is a bloody child, of one who picks up vegetables bending aside ... a dilapidated pot has cooked a wolf, and dogs cannot breathe).

These and many other praises in the Venda and Northern Sotho languages, are an indication of the extent of his influence and status in Black society.

The essential discourse underlying the praises had a bearing on the fact that the people in the country were in a state of fear. They did not know what he would do next. Makhado's plans and movements were unpredictable. Ultimately he was victorious.

Makhado's achievements remained so indelibly imprinted in the minds of the people that the Ramabulanas regained ascendancy - during his lifetime - over the other royal houses in Venda. This supremacy was passed over to his descendants in the years to follow. This was evident in the colonial and apartheid eras when in every political situation that required leadership, the royal house of Ramabulana, assumed control.

Broadly speaking, Makhado was the most prominent ruler in the nineteenth century South African Republic over a period covering the years 1864-1895. History, however, was against him.

When he wanted to consolidate and revive the Venda kingdom, the South African Republic was extending its authority. The Venda he wanted to revive, the government of the South African Republic wanted to cut into farms. Only part of his land would be available to him and his subjects - in the form of locations. Furthermore, the government wanted to confine the power and authority he had over his people to the fences and beacons of land called a location. He was, under

this type of dispensation relegated to being on the same footing as his subjects. In short the authority he was to wield, would have been subject to the laws of the South African Republic.

His adversaries, the Whites, had some views on Makhado which were recorded in contemporary and subsequent writings. Writers, ranging from government officials, missionaries, journalists to ordinary people, depicted Makhado as good, humane, friendly, kind, great, astute and an able leader who was intent on preserving the independence of his people. They could not have acknowledged his greatness better than elevating his status to that of "The Lion of the North". Even in the present-day Northern Province of post-apartheid South Africa Makhado is still well remembered.

This was Makhado whose death was believed to have been planned and executed with the complicity of the local Boer leadership. His death closed one of the most influential chapters in Venda history.

Those who sought power, either successfully used as their weapons the traditions and customs of both Western Europe and Africa to further their objectives. Makhado, by taking some of the best from his culture, and using what he had learnt from European culture, sought to confront that which he felt was the worst in both cultures. His untimely death at the age of about 55 years, planned by those who desired great power, denies us the opportunity to determine whether a solution, less destructive to the Venda than that of the Mphephu War of 1898, would have emerged.

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## APPENDICES

S.N.123 1839-1871

20TH NOV. 1869

### KONTRACT

Gesloten tusjchen den Wel Edele Heer S.J.P. Kruger, Kommd Generl De Landdrost van Zoutpansberg R.A. van Nispen en de Wel Edele heer D.B. Snyman Kommd benoemd by Uit V Rd besluit art 21 dd 26 Octbr 1869 met de onderstaande kaffer kapiteinen.

Wy ondergeteekunde alle onafhankelyk kaffer kapiteinen van verskillende kaffer stammen, wonende in de Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek, verklaren by dezen elk afzonderlyk, dat wy door deze onze eigen hand teekeninge, door ons gemaakt in tegenwoordigheid van getuigen ons wel en wettig in zonder eenige dwang onderwerpen aan de Regering van de Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek met alle onze onderdanen ... Belovende ons te gedragen zoo als de wetten van de ZAR van ons eischt ... Wy verbinden ons, om aan de bovengemelde Regeringjaarlyks de van ons gevorderde bydrage te betalen, volgens de bestaande wetten in de Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek zonder eenige tegenwerping maar dezelve gewillig te geven aan de voornoemde Regering of aan een daartoe benoemd ambtenaar

#### Kapt der Knobneuztn

X	Maslangi	X	Kawaza
X	Hono	X	Manshevleegen
X	Golene		Ganguangua
X	Makette		Maschoscheotela
	Mangaloe		Sicondo
	Manda		Guegoeini
	Umzinga		Masingani
	Malinge		Mugubi
	Mabongo bongo		Matiwa
	Mamboula afgtvt		Poetie

Galala	Maehila
Papae	Maportie of Mattoun
Sekabana	Subijana
Heetae	Tamsa
Leholi	Pitzie of Kooz
Secovlila	Magovsohiana
Ganjage	Malleka
Metulla	Goeti
Phela of Zwartbooi	Lamoula
Semina	Machen als afgevaardigd
Shinage	Van Machen
Mapapella	Tlink kafferngan
Magoetie	Afgevaardigd van Machen
Malhwona	

Gras broeder van Niunt

Mameha, thans de uittergewoordige van de stamin Malutzula verklaard door alle deze woondeze kaffer kapiten als hun opper hoofd.

Malietzeland Kapt	
Leholdi	Lewiepi
Ramaazapoela	Kobo
Mapiel	Rapoelie
Kommapie	Moetiane
Impijane	Manamelle
Mahouloele vrou	Magage
Mamlelie	Mabotja
Katta	Neomke
Makoewelo	Magwaai
Megaeta	Rampi
Mandamel	Ranmotte
Masahella	

## II

U.R. 15/3/69 –15/3/70

Dinsdag 26 October 1869

Heropening 10 namiddags 4 ure

Alle leden tegenwoordig

Art 21 – Tegenwoordig kaffers van Zoutpansberg van Albasini met name Pandeka en kaffers van Lemondo, Katsikatsi en Tabaan.

De kaffers zyn gekomen naar den Commandant Generaal, die versoekt dat de kaffers zullen gehoord worden door den Uitv: Raad, aangezien de zaken van Zoutpansberg in handen van den Heer St Schoeman als diplomatieke Agent Zyn

.....

De vergadering verdaagt tot den volgenden morgen 7 ure.

Woensdag 27 October 1869

Heropening den 7 ure

Alle leden tegenwoordig alsmede de afgezanten.

ZH Ed vraagt of de kaffers byden Heer Schoeman ..... Wordt gelezen notulen van den Uitv: Raad van 26 en 27 October 1869, bevattend klagten en verzoeken van Pandeka en van afgezanten van kaffer opperhoofden.

Wordt besloten, daaruitalle voorgelegde stukken blykt, dat het aan den Diplomatieken agent niet gelukt is, in het district Zoutpansberg rust, vrede, en orde te herstellen met en onder de naturelle stammen aan den Wel Ed.: Gestrengen Heer St Schoeman als Diplomatieken agent en aan de Wel Ed.: Heeren B.J. Vorster en M.J. Oosthuyzen als mede commissie leden voorloopig ontslag te verleenen uit hun betrekking behoudens verantwoording en verslag .....

Wordt besloten om Tabaan te antwoorden dat het Gouvernement een Commisjiesie sal zenden bestande uit den Commandant Generaal, de Landdrost en Gen Commandant van Zoutpansberg, om de zaken in Zoutpansberg regt te maken.

Wordt besloten aan die commissie op te dragen:

Vrede te sluiten met alle kaffers die zich aan het Gouvernement onderwerpen.

Een lyst op maken van alle kaffers met wien tractaten worden gemaakte inhoudende opgaaf hunner getalstrektheid grond die zy ter bewonning noodig hebben en beschryving hunner grenzen en genegenheid tot betaling van opgave, en:

Van katlaagter en Magata en van anderen die daaraan schuldig zyn te eischen vergoeding van schade door het afbranden van het dorp Schoemansdal en van plaatsen, en uitlevering der geweren die onwettig door kaffers zyn teruggehouden.

Aan de kaffers duidelyk te maken dat ingeval van klagten, zyn zich moeten vervroegen by den Landdrost, hun kenbaar te maken dat geen Diplomatieken agent of Superintendenten meer bestaan maar dat de Landdrost het Hoofd van het district is.

De regeling van de beste wyze waarop en waarmede de opgaven kunnen betaald worden.

De Commijsie zal handelen bymeerderheid van stemmen, waarvan twee een quorum zullen uitmaken.

De Commijsie zal een afschrift van alle hunne documenten laten by den Landdrost van Zoutpansberg.

De Commijsie zal van Magato en ander kaffer kapiteins onderwerping eischen en zoo zy nog in hunne vyandelykheden moeten Willen Volharden, zal Tabaan gevolmagtigd worden hun tot onderwerping te brengen met hulp van Pandeka en andere gouvernementen kaffers. Tabaan zal verantwoording moeten doen van zyne verrigtingen en alle te nemen geweren uitleveren.

De Commijsie wordt gelast alle zoodanige voorstellen aan den Uitv: Raad te doen, welke zullen kunnen strekken tot nut voor het district Zoutpansberg en voorde geheele Republiek ...

### III

S.S. 3062, R.13217/91

Boodschap aan Magato

Kapitein Magato ik stuur een man uit naar u om mijn eigen mond aan u voor te lezen en dat is een geloofwaardige man want hy is een Evengelië Dienaar. Wat hy u voor lees kan u seker ... syn dat het mijn eigen woorden is ik moet u bekend maken zoover als ik ondersoekt gehouden heeft over de questies hier een groot deel op u

gelegd wordt van de schuld, maar ik kan het noch niet allez voor waarheid aan nemen, want ik heeft noch niet gehoord wat u daar tegen te zeggen heeft en om een regtvaardigde uitspraak te doen die al de questies tot niet maakt wensch ik u persoonlykt te zien en van u self te hooren wat dat u my kan vertel om de zaake beter te verstaan als u geneegen is om dat te doen kom dan op de plek wat ik aan uwe Induna September gesegd heeft daar kan ons als vader en kind met elkan der praat ik zal 15 van myne mannen di met my van Pretoria gekommen is mee de brengen en Mr Vorster een van myne Indunas voor Zoutpansberg en myn tolk en een man om teschrijf van wat ons praat u kan ook van uwe Indunas meede brengen en uw tolk en so van uwe mannen om uw op te pasjen. Ik dinkt als u daar komt en ons malkaar ver staat dan zal de oorlog gedaan zijn en u kan rijk en groot worden onder die vrede. Ik stuur Mr Creux als u myn woorde niet verstaan om het u uit te leggen hij heeft van mij de vryheid daartoe ontvangen om het te doenen zooals hij het u uitlegt zal het reg zijn.

Aldus gedaan op den 3 April 1883

(Zog) C. Joubert

Special Commisjaris

#### IV

S.S. 3062, R.13217/91

Antwoord van het Opperhoofd Makhatu aan den afgevaardigde aan hem gesenden door Wel Ed. Heer den Spesialen Commisaris.

Op den 3den April 1883

Ik weet niet dat daar eene oorlog is, het begin daarvan is dat Ntapalale aan Zijn volk zeide kom wij Willen vachten met Makhatu. Zijn volk antwoorde waarom zouden wy vechten? Ntapalale zeide indien gij niet wilt veckten, ga naar Makhatu over. Ik Zond toen naar Mr Fitzgerald om daaromtrent te vragen en ondersoek te doen waarin Mr Albasini kruid aan Zijn volk heeft gegeven en ik vroeg met wien zij oorlog gingen voeren. Mr Fitzgerald antwoord de Blyf niet hier, Gij gaat om gedood te worden. Toen begon Ntapalale's volk op myne afgevaardigden te schitten en een van hen was door de wang geschoten. Ik dag dat de Blanke menschen naar

mij over zouden komen en my mijne opgaven te vragen om te betalen daar ik gewillig was haar te betalen maar niemand kwam ooit voor dat doel naar mij toe. Ik wilde geen oorlog, het volk zoude zeggen, ons opperhoofd Makhatu is ons doodende ons verhinderende om onze mielies te oogsten. Ik wil alleen deze belasting betalen en dna zal het gezien worden dat daar niets dan vrede en vreugde in het land ter is.

Maar ik heb geen lust om de blanke opperhoofden te gaan ontmoeten waar zy verlangen my te gaan. Ik ben niet bang voor hen maar voor die welke hen slechte raad geven en slecht over mij spreken. Ik herinner nog Ramaboya die gedood was door Ramapulana nadat hy geroepen was geworden door de Boeren om met hen over de toestand van het land te spreken.

Dat ik begeer is dit dat de Blanke opperhoofden naby myne plaats zouden komen waar mijn wagen is uit gespannen. Ik zal myne stam oproepen om hen hunne opperhoofden te toonen. De Blanke opperhoofden kunnen met vrede komen. Ik wil vrede en de belasting betalen. Zelfs als zij niet komen. Zal ik achter hen zenden om de belasting te betalen.

(Zog) Ernest Creux V.D.M. Zendeling

Boschkopjes 4 April 1883.

V

S.S. 3062, R, 13217/91

Lagerplaats 4 April 1883

Aan Kapitein Makhatu

Kapitein ik heb uwen boodschap ontvangen met myne rapportganger den Heer Creux, ik ben verblyd te zien dat u gewillig is om de vrede te bewaarden.

Ik bemerk dat gijk geen vertrouwen genoeg stelt in myne oprechtheid, het spijt my maar omdat de vrede eene grootte zaak voor het land is en dat een vader aan zijn kind dat swakt is moet toonene dat hij die zwaktheid er kent, daarom zal ik het oversien en verlang nu van u dat u volgens uwe boodschap een waarbord in geschrift zult geven die u zelf zal moeten onderteekenen van uwe oprechtheid daaruit zal ik zien of uwe woorden uit uwe boodschap zegt gemeend zijn. Ik stuur u die document zamen en als u die onderteekenden zoodra u de eerste voorwaarde voldoen hebt zal er een kans zijn dat wy elkander kunnen zien op een plek waar gy

niet bang belijft te zijn voor verraad en dan zal ik ook gewaarborgd wesen voor verraad en dan kan ons al die questies uit de weg ruimen dat ons als vader en kind kunnen omgaan. En dan die kwaad gedaan heeft kan door die ewt gestraft worden en niet door oorlog. Wat u niet goed verstaan kan zal u door de Heer Creux en Beuster uitgelegde worden.

(Zog) C. Joubert

Speciale Commisjaris

## VI

S.S. 3062, R.13217/91

Document

Ik ondergeteekende kapitein Makhatu verbind mij door myne handtekening om op Maandag den negen den April achtien honderd en drie en tachtig duisend ponden sterling aan de Speciale Commisjaris af te leveren by de drift van Dorenrivier als eerste payment voor die door myn volk aan het Gouvernement der Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek achterstallige belasting en ook als waarborg van de oprechte meening des vredes in myne boodschap vervat.

Ten Tweede. Dat ik my verbind om de lynen tusjchen mij en de andere kapiteins en de Blanke bevolking my door het Britsche Gouvernement aangewezen niet zal overtreden, maar dat ik zal blyven als wachthen ole naolere regeling die door de Conventie door hare Majesteit de Koningin van Engeland en de regering van de Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek bepaald is.

Ik beloof verder dat de bovengemelde duisend ponden sterling op Maandag den negenden April 1883 om twaalf uur des middags op de bepaalde plek zullen zijn.

Als Getuigen. Makhado

C. Beuster Zendeling by Shewase

E. Creux V.D.M. Zendeling by Elim

## VII

S.S. 1364 R.1526/87

Onderhoud op (heden) den 23sten dag van February 1887, tusschen Z. Ed P..J. Joubert, Superintendent van naturellen en Kapitein Magato in het huis in de land van

Magato, district Zoutpansberg ...

Als lede: Tegenwoordig Commisjaris A.A. Albasini, Kapitein Zboril, Landmeter S. Sd Rissik, en de Heer P. Snyman, alsmede F.C. Stiemens als Sekretaris, September, tolk van Magato, alsmede Lourenz, tolk van Commisjaris Albasini ageert als tolken.

Superintendent aan Magato: heb gy iets te zeggen of aan my te vertellen dan kund gy nu hard, open en alles uitspreek en hieri is myn Sekretaris de Heer F.C. Stiemens die kan alles opschryf wat gy wilt hebben en te zeggen heb.

Magato: Neen alles wat ik he zeggen had heb ik aan Commisjaris Albasini gezegd. Ik het nu niets te zeggen.

Superintendent: Ik heb zeker gehoord van de instrooming van menschen naar de goudvelden. Nu daardoor worden de eigenaar van gronden uitgedrukt naar hunne plaatsen en zullen natuurlyk ook hier heen komen en daardoor kan etiyd en oneenigheid ontstaan. Daarom heeft de Regeering my gestuurd om bitijds te zien en om die locaties af te bakenen, zoodat de naturellen ook weten wat hun grond is en niet kunnen verdrukt worden - als er dan eenige inerschryding op de locatie gemaakt wordt, dan zal het Gouvernement er dadelyk naar zien en ook de naturellen helpen dat zij niet verdrukt, anders en den overtreders straffen, maar omdat te kunnen doen wil, het Gouvernement van de menschen intiekken de bakens opmaken, en de lijnen afgebakend hebben. En nu ben ik ook nar hier gekomen om jou locatie aan te wijzen.

Magato: Ik heb goed gehoord - Er Zyn plaatsens zoaals die van Snyman en anderen. In de vlakte waar myne schapen op loopen en welke door my gebrucht zenden als hulle daarop komt en skade gedaan vindt komt rusie - u moet ook met andere kapiteins spreken.

Superintendent: Iedere kapitein krygt zyne eigene locatie, en gy Magato moet ook hard uit spreken van al wat gy te zeggen heb zoodat er vrede kan blyven.

Magato: Ik ben bly dat u my hebt komen zien bij en in myn stad - De Vlakte wil ik

niet graag verliezen want daar loopt myn vee, achter den berg gee ik niet omdat er daar menschen gaan wonen .....

Ik heb 50 onder Kapiteins onder my ...

Superintendent: Dan wil ik van jou weten welke grond gy dan als joune wilt beschoud hebben.

Magato: Nu weet ik zelf niet want vroeger was het geheele land Ramapoelanie zijn, maar een ding is zeker, ik wil niet onderste veld nich verliezen.

Superintendent: Tot hoever rekend gy onderste veld.

Magato: Mijn lyn is Doornrivier tot by Levobo en dan met de berg langs-Dan weer van oorsprong van Doornrivier naar Machaba daarvandaan naar punt Zoutpansberg aan Brakrivier (de Zoutpan ingesloten) en van daar naar Krokodilrivier - Dit beschoud ik als myn lyn en genoegzaam.

Superintendent: Ik kan nu niet zien hoe groot de grond is, de landmeter moet dit zien.

Magato: Mach de grond dan e veer gesneden? Daarvoor heb ik belasting betaald ...

Gecertificeerd als de correcte inhoud van het plaats gevonden onderhoud.

P.J. Joubert

Commandant Generaal en Supt. Nat.

F.C. Stiems Secretaris Loc. Comm.

### VIII

S.S. 4485 R.11901 S.R.173/95

Tsakoma, 16 January 1895

Aan den Wel Edl. Heer Naturelle Commisaris, Spelonken

We Edel Heer!

Naar ontvangst van W. Edele brief van 3 Jan. d.j. ingesloten een brief van Z. Ed. Gestr den Superintendent van naturellen ben ik onmiddelyk na Magato gegaan om hem de brief van Z. Ed. Gestr te vertalen 'n myn beste invloed te gebruiken, hem te bewegen aan de bevel der Hoog Edl. Regering gehoor het geven

.....  
 Toen viel Magato my in de redenen en Zeid: Dit is alles niets het hoofd van de zak is, ik moet goed vriend wezen met de commissaris, en moet de hutten laten tellen, sensus laten opnemen, en in de locatie gaan

.....  
 Ik vroeg toen Magato over de andere punten van den brief: Makato zeid: Ik zal nooit toelaten, dat de hutten geteld worden en sensus opgenomen wordt en in de locatie zal ik niet gaan, ik wil niets van een locatie hooren.

Ik zeid toen: Gy moet my nu moi zeggen, hoe ik moet antwoorden: Toen zeid Magato: Ik will zelf na Pretoria gaan. Piet Joubert moet niet hier komen ik zal zelf na Pretoria gaan, maar ik zal slechts een woord met Piet Joubert praten en dit is: Ik will onder niemand staan als direct onder het goevernement. Ik will belasting betalen op dezelfde wyze, zoals ik verledene jaan aan Piet Joubert betaald het, maar aan niemand anders.

Ik zeid aan hem, dit zal u niets helpen want U hoord ji, dat Piet Joubert ... zegt, dat de belasting by het Commissaris kantoor moet betaal worden

.....  
 Ik praade toen, moi en zeid: Magato u moet tochy niet zoo praten, ik kom nooit, om mooj met u te spreken. Toen sprong hy op en riep: Ik heb maar een woord en dit heb ik gezecht en dit zeg ik nu weder: Ik will geen locatie en geen sensus, en wanneer het goevernement wil komen, om my dood te maken kunnen ze maar komen, nu is het klaar. Toen klappte hy in de handen en ging weg

.....  
 Het spyd my ten zeerste dat ik niet in geslagt ben Magata te bewegen na de bevelen

der Regering te luisteren niet tegenstaande ik my de grootste moeite gegeven heb. Dat Magato zelf na Pretoria zal gaan is dwaasheid om te gloven, zyn plan is alleen om onder hoegenaamd geen commissaris staan. ...

Ik was verwonderd te zien, dat Magato in de laatste tyd nieuwe muren en schanzen opgepaakt heeft ...

Ik heb de eer te zyn

Wel Edele Heer, U Edele dienstwillige dienaar

R. Wessman, Zendeling by Makata

## IX

S.S.4485 R.10291/94

Zitting van de Locatie Commissie, Magato's Hoofdstad op 9 Mei 1895

De Commissie is zoals gister besloten den berg heden opgegaan naar Magato's Hoofdstad en ontmoeten Magato aldaar met een groot getal induna's.

De Voorzitter zeide aan Magato dat hy Tromp gisteren ontmoet had en hem in kennis gestel heeft met het doel de commissie en dat Tromp het (Magato) zulks zehar reeds heef mede gedeeld wat tusschen de Commissie en Tromp gesproken is, Magato antwoorde ja: Daarop vroeg de voorzitter hem of wy moeten beschouwen dat de zaak daarmede afgehandeld is. Daarop Magato antwoordde, hier zyn al de induna's laat ze praten, wat zy zeggen kan ik niet veranderen, ik heb niets verder te zeggen.

Eenparig antwoordde de induna's bevestigend wat Tromp aan de Commissie reeds heeft gezegd n. 1 dat ze niet toelaten zullen de hutten te tellen en den grond weer te snyden.

De voorzitter zeide dat de lyn voor ongeveer 5 jaren geleden door generaal Joubert voorloopig bepaald was en zulks werd alleen gedaan om de witmensen die als occupauken heb land indringen to wyzen hoever ze kunnen occupeeren nog altyd onmogelyk de locatie lynen vast te stellen voor en alleer dat zy een behoorlyk census van de stam van Magato heeft. De Commissie is nu hier om de census op te maken en de locatie afgebaken.

Hierop antwoordde Magato heb is onnodig om verder te praten, de lyn is goed zoals het is n 1 Doornrivier en Zandrivier.

De Commissie Vertrokke hierop.

(wg) H.P.N. Pretorius

Voorzitter

(wg) Carl S. Potgieter, lid

(wg) J. de Souza

Lid en Secretaris

## SOURCES CONSULTED

### 1. Oral information

#### Fieldwork

##### Alilali, Jack

Interviewed at Khosi Tshikonelo's royal residence, Soni, on 20 December 1979. At the time of interview, his age was estimated at about 78. He grew up at Tshitungulwane and Tshivhulana. He was a brilliant narrator whose sphere of interest was the history of South-eastern Venda. His knowledge on Makhado was general.

##### Booi, Malakia

Interview with him was in most cases, informal. He is a retired teacher, whose interest is on the history of Venda in general, and that of his clan, Vhandalamo, in particular. He has several works on Venda history in his possession. He can participate freely in any discussion on Venda history. He is a descendant of Mmboi, who was one of the victims of ill-treatment by the Boers of Schoemansdal which together with other factors led to the outbreak of hostilities between Makhado and the Boers, which ended with the abandonment of this town in 1867. Mmboi's elder brother was Funyufunyu or Tromp, who was the Commander-in-Chief of Makhado's armies.

##### Bulala, William

Interviewed at Tshiphuseni, Masia, on 20 January 1980. He was about 70 years old. He knew only the history of the Vhalaudzi of Masia. His knowledge of Makhado was of a general nature.

##### Davhana, D.M.K.

He was instrumental in arranging my interview with his father on 14 June 1971. As a favourite of his father, he was in a position to learn much more about the history of the Ramabulanas and the whole of Venda. Although he could not succeed his father as Khosi, he succeeded him in his historical knowledge. He has several publications on Venda history in his possession. I had several discussions with him on this subject.

Dzivhani, S.M.



Interviews with him were held on several occasions between 1970 and 1975 and were sometimes informal. As one of earlier Venda historiographers, teacher, church leader and musician, I had to learn a lot from him. He was born 12 years before Makhado's death. He knew the history of the Ramabulana, Tshivhase and Mphaphuli dynasties well. Whenever I visited his office, I always found him ready to receive me. This was S.M. Dzivhani, the first certified Venda teacher in 1913.

Dzwedzhi, Makhado

Interviewed on 23 June 1983, at Mauluma. She was a brilliant narrator. Her name came from Makhado himself. Her mother was a younger sister of one of Makhado's principal wives, Midana who was Mphephu's mother. This old lady who was almost 100 years old, grew up at Makhado's royal residence, Luatame. She was so sincere and honest that she refused to relate what she did not see. Therefore, her valuable account was based on what she saw and heard.

Giesekke, E.D.

There was no interview with her. The information she supplied was part of the speech, she delivered in 1954, on the occasion of the dedication of the Schwellnus Memorial Church in 1954, at Tshakhuma. She was the only surviving child of Rev. E. Schwellnus, who founded Tshakhuma Mission Station in 1874, during the Life and Times of Makhado. Her father, Rev.

Schwellnus, and his successor Rev. R. Wessmann, had much to do in the affairs between Makhado and the South African Republic. She was about 70 years old in 1954.

#### Makananise of Tshimbupfe

Interviewed at Tshimbupfe on 19 December 1979. He knew much about the history of Tshimbupfe. His knowledge on Makhado and Western Venda, was of a general nature. He was about 75 years old.

#### Makaulule, Ratshili Aaron

Interviewed at Vuvha on 29 December 1982. He was about 82 years old. Being cousin of Makhado as his father was Limani's brother, he knew much about Makhado's birth and early life. His father's elder brother Mutheiwana Tshipfulambwa was the ruler of Vuvha, who took it over from Limani.

#### Makhadzi of Mashau

Interviewed at Mashau on 21 March 1980. She was about 80 years old. She related the relationship between the Ramabulanas and Vhafamadi of Mashau.

#### Makhadzi Mukhudwana

Interviewed at Tshimbupfe on 19 December 1979. She was about 80 years old. She came from Tshivhulana. Her information was on the history of Tshivhulana and Tshimbupfe.

#### Maphiswana, D.A.

Interviewed at Maranzhe on 14 September 1982. He was 85 years old. He related the relationship between Tshivhase and Ramabulana.

#### Mashamba, Frank

Interviewed at Tshitununi on 27 December 1979. He was about 60 years old. He knew much about the history of Vhaluvhu of Mashamba and Mulima. He had a general knowledge on the history of the Ramabulanas.

Mashau, William

Interviewed at Mashau on 28 December 1979. Although he was about 40 years old, he could relate the history of Vhafamadi with confidence as well as their contact with Davhana and Makhado.

Matamela, George Tshiokhotho

Interviewed on 13 July 1971 at Tshiswenda. He was above 90 years old. He knew much about Makhado.

Matumba, Mavhungu

Interviewed at Tshikomani on 23 January 1983. He was about 70 years old. As Limani's nephew he knew much about Makhado's early life and his circumcision.

Mavhunga and Ramatsitsi

Interviewed on 12 July 1971 at Tshiomvani. They belonged to the Mouxu age group. At the time of interview, they were about 95 years old. They were proud Vhailafuri who related the events during Makhado's times with confidence. The fact that by the time Makhado died, they were already in a position to handle firearms, placed them in a position of having witnessed some events.

Menne, T.C.

Interviewed on 12 December 1987 on his farm Boschkoppies. Menne was the grandson of J.S. Cooksley, Makhado's friend. He knew much about Makhado's attack on Nthabalala and Begwa in the Spelonken.

Motenda, M.M.

Interviewed at Ngwenani of Themeli on 24 June 1973. He was about 80 years old. It was a great privilege to have an interview, with this old man, who was one of early historiographers. He related the history of Western Venda with ease, including the arrival of Joao Albasini at Luonde.

Mudau, E.N.



Interviewed at Tshakhuma on 25 January 1977. He was about 73 years old. Having an interview with him was a great privilege, as he too was one of the early historiographers. Mudau was a Venda patriot who had the interest of the Venda people in his heart. His position as School Inspector enabled him to travel widely. This brought him into contact with nearly all Venda Chiefs from whom he collected a lot of information. He was instrumental in bringing back those Vhavenda who had lost their identity. He had collected a lot as far as the history of Venda, was concerned. My contact with him was a source of inspiration and encouragement in my studies.

Mugivhi, B.

Interviewed at Hamutsha, Tshituwani on 31 December 1985. He was about 73 years old. From him I learnt the history of Vhalaudzi of Govhamasenga, Civil War between Mukhesi and Mugivhi, as well as Makhado's intervention in order to restore peace.

Musekwa, Tshivhidzo

Interviewed on 12 July 1971. When Makhado died in 1895, he was a young man who could handle a rifle. He was staying at Tshipange. He related the events during Makhado's reign, with

confidence. He had no doubt himself about the accuracy of his account. His age group was Malatwa, Takata or Mauxu.

Mutsila, Z.

Interviewed on 26 December 1987 at Sibasa. He was 68 years old.

Ndou, Mamphideni

Interviewed on 1 March 1971 at Soni. He was about 100 years old. He knew the arrival of Monene and Albasini at Luonde very well.

Nemauluma, Tshivhuyahuvhi

Interviewed on 13 June 1971 at Tshivhulani. He was about 105 years old. He was the son of Nndwayamiomva. He knew the struggle between Makhado and Davhana very well as well as the history of the Ramabulana dynasty.

Nemavhulani of Mavhulani

Interviewed at Tshimbupfe on 19 December 1979, where he had to settle after having been forcefully removed from his land Mavhulani, as a result of the apartheid policy of the South African Government, in order to pave the way for the landless Tsonga. Apart from the history of the Vhatamba of Tshilindi and Mavhulani, he had no knowledge about Makhado.

Nengovhela, Kone

Interviewed on 24 August 1980 and 31 December 1982, at Khumbe. She was about 100 years old. She could relate with ease the history of Lwamondo, Tsianda, Makhado, Tshivhase, Mphaphuli and Rammbuda. She had heard about Makhado when she was young while her mother told her about the Swazi invasions. Her father Gelebe was a younger brother of Phophi who fought for supremacy with Raidimi. The latter rushed to Makhado for assistance who contrary to expectations, supported Phophi.

Nesengani, A.T.

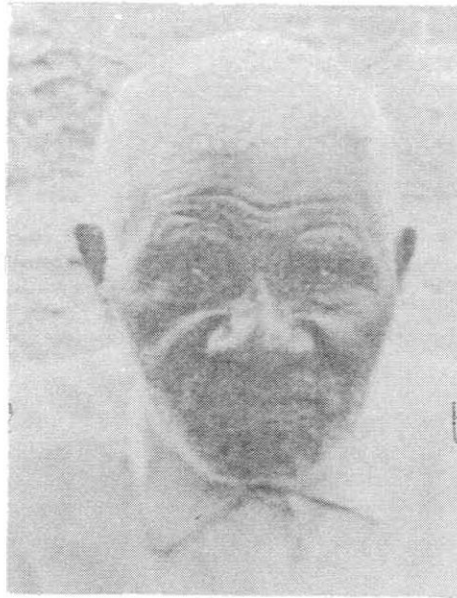
He was born in 1916 at Luvhola. As an agricultural extension officer he travelled widely throughout Venda. This exposed him to many people from whom he learnt a lot on Venda history. He knows the history of the Ramabulanas as he is one of their descendants. He can relate freely the struggle from supremacy between Makhado and Davhana, his great-grandfather. Interview with him was informal.

Nesengani, Kingi



Interviewed on 14 June 1971 at his royal residence. He was about 95 years old. Further interviews with him were of an informal nature. This grandson of Davhana, Makhado's elder brother was a gifted narrator with a retentive memory. His account of Venda royal history started from Egypt through Central Africa, into Venda. He could recite the genealogies of Monarchs from Mwali to himself. His account of the struggle between Davhana and Makhado was fascinating. His collection of royal relics from antiquity earned him the respect of contemporary chiefs.

## Netshiendeulu, Nthangeni



Interviewed on 30 March 1973 at Tshiendeulu. Being the only surviving Ngomakhosi, which age group was circumcised about 1890, he was about 105 years old. This was the last circumcision lodge of the times of Makhado. Although his memory was fading, he could relate the arrival of Vhasenzi under Dambanyika and their settlement at Lwandali where the first Dzata was established. He referred to the Vhasenzi as Vhalozwi and he could also differentiate between Thohoyandou and Tshisevhe, and indicated that the former was the son of Masindi. He had in his possession a drum which he called Ngomalungundu, general sacred relics made of iron, which if brought to the attention of archaeologists, could contribute greatly in supplying dates for some events. Some of these pre-historic relics are ceremonial assegais, Ludo, decorated ceremonial assegais and Tshilengendu. Archaeologists and anthropologists who maintained that the Nzhelele Dzata was the first settlement of Vhasenzi in Venda, were proved wrong by Netshiendeulu's account, as his descendants were the custodians of the first royal grave of the Senzi royal family this side of the Vhembe river. Apart from this Dzata, there are also other ruins which the Vhasenzi found at Lwandali i.e. the ruins of Mmbwayapenga's ancestors.

## Netshimbupfe, Matamela

Interviewed on 23 March 1965 at Tshimbupfe. He was about 70 years old. He knew the history of the Vhalaudzi of

Govhamasenga very well and had general knowledge of some events during the times of Makhado.

Netshimbupfe, Tshisevhe

Interviewed on 20 August 1980 at Miluwani. She was about 80 years old. As a daughter of Makwarela Mphaphuli, and granddaughter of Maboho Newamondo, she knew the history of the two dynasties well. She also knew the events of the times of Makhado. When this thesis was written, she was still alive.

Netshitungulwane of Tshitungulwane

Interviewed on 14 February 1980 at Sibasa. He was about 58 years old. He related the history of his Vhandalamo clan but had no knowledge of Makhado. As a victim of forced removal, he was very bitter for having been removed from his land, Tshitungulwane and placed under Chief Netshimbupfe.

Phophi, W.M.D.

Interviewed at Tshifudi on 14 May 1987. He was 78 years old. As an ethnologist and author, he knew much about the history of Venda. There was hardly any aspect of Venda history, of which he had no knowledge. The struggle for supremacy in Dzimauli was his baby. He had conducted extensive research on Venda royal dynasties. Some of these he published in *Muvenda* (Journal of Birou ya Tshivenda). Whenever he was asked about an event, on Venda history, he spoke with confidence and authority. He assisted Prof. G.P. Lestrade and Dr N.J. van Warmelo in their activities on Venda royal dynasties. During the interview, he could point out files on nearly every aspect of Venda culture and custom. The local Venda radio had the privilege of preserving some of his research projects on cassettes. No other Venda had conducted any research on Venda culture and customs as he did. To him research was a source of pleasure.

Phosiwa, Khorommbi

Interviewed on 29 December 1982 at Mauluma. He was 70 years old. He gave a fascinating account of Makhado and his times, as he was born in the vicinity of the royal residence.

Radzilani, Mathede

Interviewed on 12 July 1971 at Vhulaudzi. He was about 95 years old. This old man had a brilliant memory. He was born during Makhado's reign and belonged to the Mouxu age group. He related events during Makhado's reign with ease.

Ramabulana, A.

Interviewed on 29 October 1986 at Makwarela. He was about 70 years old. As a grandson of Makhado, he had heard much about him. His father Tshikhudo, Makhado's son, was born during the conflict between Makhado and Davhana. He related this struggle for supremacy between the two brothers at Vuvha and Luonde, as well as Makhado's trip to Tshakhuma, Lwamondo, Mbilwi, Luaname and Dzimauli to demand tribute and loyalty from these territories. He also related how Makhado annexed Vhulaudzi, Tshifhire and Tshifulani, as well as his attack on Magoro. He successfully portrayed the course of events which compelled Makhado to assist Tshikosi in his bid to ascend the throne of Dzimauli.

Ramabulana, J.K.

Interviewed at Thohoyandou on 7 August 1991. He was 68 years old. He related the struggle for supremacy between Siphuma and Tshikosi with ease.

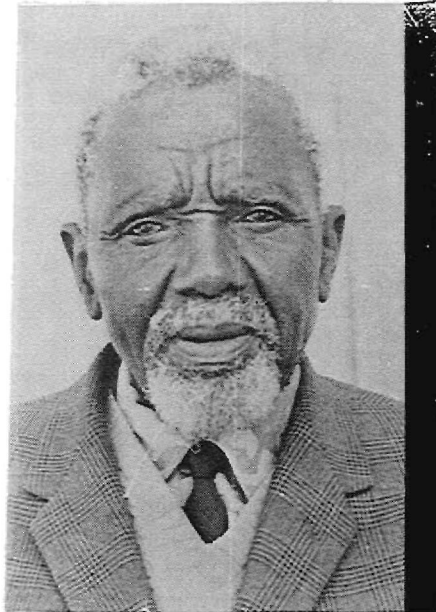
Ramatsitsi, Jack

Interviewed on 12 July 1971 at Tshiomvani. He was about 95 years old. When Makhado died in 1895, he was a young man. He gave an account of Ramabulana's history including the times of Makhado. He related boldly and authoritatively.

Ramavhoya, Alilali

Interviewed on 29 December 1982 at Rabali. He was about 100 years old. Although he belonged to the Thahamirivha age group, he knew much about events during Makhado's times. He related the struggle between Ramavhoya and Ramabulana, Siphuma and Tshikosi as well as civil wars in Thengwe.

Rambuda, J.M.



Interviewed at Dzimauli on 12 May 1966. He was 66 years old. Being a son of Tshikosi, he gave a fascinating account of the strife between Siphuma and his father. To him the history of Dzimauli was still clear and vivid. He used to be approached by many researchers in this respect. As far as events in Dzimauli were concerned, he was a source of information. As a church and community leader, he left behind written notes, some of which are in the possession of the author.

Ramphiri of Tsianda

Interviewed on 31 December 1986 at Tshituwani, Hamutsha. She was about 90 years old. She knew only the history of Tsianda.

Ramovha, Mutshena



Interviewed at Mulezhe on 20 May 1989. She was about 105 years old. She was probably the only surviving daughter of Makhado in 1989. She knew her father very well and related several events during his reign. She also related the history of Tshivhase, Mphaphuli and Rammbuda dynasty. It was a privilege to learn from someone who was Makhado's child. Her mother was Funyufunyu's daughter. She related events during her father's reign with confidence.

Ramovha, S.

He was requested to supply answer to a questionnaire on Venda history. This he did but mainly on Vhandalamo of Ramovha. He was 76 years in 1988.

Ramutumbu, Jim

Interviewed on 14 September 1980 at Manamani. He was about 95 years old. He had heard about Makhado when he was still young. He confined his narrative to Mphaphuli as well as the conflict between Davhana and Makhado. He was staying at Luonde and accompanied Mphehu to Vhuxwa in 1898 - 1899. He belonged to Rammbiyana's Takata/Malatwa/Mauxu age group.

## Ravele, Muthombeni

Interviewed at Mauluma on 21 January 1983. He was about 69 years old. He is a great grandson of Nndwayamiomva who grew up with Makhado and whom Makhado posted at Mauluma in order to keep a watchful eye on the activities of Davhana, who had fled to Albasini. He related Makhado's birth and early life as well as the life of Nndwayamiomva. He described the cattle-milking incident which triggered the outbreak of the war between Makhado and the Boers in 1867.

## Ravhura, Tshikhudo

Interviewed on 2 January 1988 at Lunungwi. He was about 80 years old. As a great grandson of Tshisevhe, he knew much about Thohoyandou and Tshisevhe.

## Sigwavhulimu of Tshimbupfe

Interviewed at Manobi, Tshimbupfe on 23 March 1965. She was about 108 years old. She saw the Swazi invasions of Venda in 1869, and had a good knowledge of the history of Tshimbupfe and Masia. She had a brilliant memory.

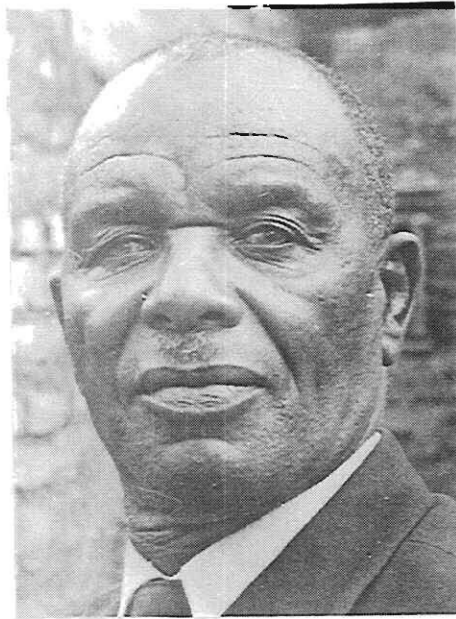
## Singo, Matamela

Interviewed at Rasikhuthuma on 27 December 1979. He related the history of Ramabulana and how his grandfather Mulelu led Makhado's army into Tsianda to support Mukhesi in his struggle for succession, against Mugivhi. He was about 75 years old. After finding out that Mugivhi was his cousin, Mulelu recommended the division of Tsianda between Mugivhi and Mukhesi. In this way, he ended the hostilities between the two brothers.

## Sitholimela, Madzinge

Interviewed on 13 July 1971, at Mauluma. He belonged to the Mouxu age group. He knew much about events during the times of Makhado.

Tshikonelo, son of Madadzhe (Chief)



Interviewed at Soni on 20 December 1979. He was about 85 years old. He confined his narrative to Mphaphuli and Tshivhase dynasties.

Tshivhase, Nyadenga

Interviewed at Tshakhuma on 15 May 1963. She was about 80 years old. Her account of the history of Tshivhase dynasty was the best of all those interviewed. She moved with ease from Tshivhase, Mphaphuli, Rammuda to Makhado. She had a wonderful memory. Of the 360 wives of Ramaremisa Tshivhase, she was the most favourite.

Van Warmelo, N.J.

Interviewed in September 1983 in his office, in the Department of Co-operation and Development. He was 78 years old. During his time as government ethnologist for almost half a century, he had contact with many chiefs in Southern Africa in general, and Venda in particular. He produced valuable contributions in Venda culture, tradition, history and religion. As a grandson of Rev. N.J. van Warmelo of Schoemansdal he had close historical ties with the Soutpansberg. He enlightened me on many issues in Venda history. This interview was followed by exchange of letters in which additional information was supplied. With his knowledge of 31 languages, this great South African participated in the beginning and development of Venda orthography. It is

difficult to touch any aspect of Venda history without coming into contact with his writings.

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- b. Geheime minute.
- c. Briewe-boeke, 1881 - 1900.
- d. Inkomende stukke.
- e. Uitgaande stukke.

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T. 159 Argief van Landdrost Zoutpansberg, 1864 - 1899 [LS].

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- b. Briewe-boeke.

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- b. UR Aanwins 20: Kopiee Uitvoerende Raadsbesluite, 28-6-1858 - 9-1-1866.

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3. A371 S.P. Engelbrecht - Acquisition.
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## OPSOMMING

Die tydperk tussen 1836 en 1864, wat 'n voorspel tot Makhado se regeringstydperk vorm, is gekenmerk deur 'n troonopvolgingstryd tussen Ramabulana en Ramavhoya. Hierdie stryd het ook met die aankoms van die Voortrekkers onder leiding van Louis Tregardt in 1836 en Andries Hendrik Potgieter in 1848 saamgeval. Dit is juis in hierdie tydperk dat Ramabulana sy koningskap herwin het en sodoende sy familie se dominansie bevestig het met betrekking tot heerskappy oor die Venda-nasie. In hierdie magstryd het die Tlokwa en die Voortrekkers 'n belangrike rol gespeel. Die feit dat die Zoutpansbergdorp, aanvanklik bekend as *Oudedorp* en later as *Schoemansdal*, in 1848 tot stand gekom het, was bevestiging van die feit dat die Voortrekkers gekom het om te bly.

Ramabulana het baie seuns gehad van wie Davhana, Rasikhuthuma, Nthabalala en Makhado die belangrikste was. Schoemansdal het ontwikkel as 'n jag- en handelsdorp en die inwonertal van die Boerebevolking het toegeneem. Van hulle het selfs die grondgebied binnegedring, wat die Venda vanselfsprekend as hulle eie beskou het. Wit mense het hulle nie alleen op die dorp gevestig nie, maar ook plase tot stand gebring en ontwikkel.

Dié nuwe aankomelinge het Ramabulana onveilig laat voel en hy het sy koninklike tuiste, Tshirululuni, verlaat en hom in Bambalani gevestig waar hy in 1864 oorlede is. Ná sy dood het, soos gebruikelik in die Venda-gemeenskap, 'n magstryd om die troonopvolging tussen sy vier seuns ontstaan. Ten spyte van die feit dat sy oudste seun, Davhana, geskik was om op te volg, het hy nie oor 'n toereikende magsbasis beskik nie. Daar is selfs beweer dat hy 'n aandeel in die dood van sy vader gehad het.

Behalwe dat die jongste seun, Makhado, sy pa se gunsteling was, het baie mense hom gesteun. Aangesien hy sêlf die besnydenisritueel deurloop het, het hy veral die steun van die besnedenes geniet. *Makhadzi* Nyakhuhu en *khotsimunene* Madzhe het openlike voorkeur aan hom gegee. Hierdie ondersteuning het Makhado in staat

gestel om sy ouer broers die loef af te steek. Hy het die troon bestyg en Davhana weggedryf van Vuvha af. Laasgenoemde vlug toe vir skuilplek na die Goanese handelaar en boer, João Albasini, in Luonde.

In daardie stadium was Albasini die opperhoof van die plaaslike Tsonga-bevolking. Hy het beduidende militêre mag gehad

Die nuwe *Thovhele*, Makhado, het sy koninklike residensie na Luatame verskuif. Nadat hy homself daar ingeburger het, het hy 'n krygsmag gestuur om Davhana by Luonde aan te val. Davhana, bygestaan deur Albasini en sy Tsonga-krygers, het daarin geslaag om die aanval af te weer. Hierdie ondersteuning van Albasini aan Davhana het vyandskap tussen Makhado, Albasini en die Boeregemeenskap tot gevolg gehad. Makhado was onder die indruk dat die wit gemeenskap en Albasini vir Dhavana as die *Thovele*, die opperheerser van die Venda-nasie, beskou het.

Vanuit die staanspoor het Makhado as heerser die oogmerk gehad om die Venda-koninkryk te laat herleef. Gerugsteun deur sy oom, Madzhie, het hy sy invloedseer nougeset afgebaken en sosiale, politieke en militêre hervormingsmaatreëls ingevoer. Ook het hy ouderdomsregimente en militêre bataljons aangestel. Hierdie middele moes hom in staat stel om sy oogmerke te bereik. Ter aanvang het hy 'n feitesending onderneem na Tshakhuma, Lwamondo, Mbilwi, Mukumbani en Dzimauli sodat hy duidelikheid kon kry oor sy status as *Thovhele*.

Intussen het die Boere hul bedrywighede voortgesit en werknemers asook belasting van die Venda geëis. Dié Venda-werknemers wat aan jaggeselskappe deelgeneem het, het hulleself bewapen met hul werkgewers se vuurwapens. Met dié dat sake op die plase op die spits gedryf is, het Boere geëis dat hul vuurwapens teruggegee word. Makhado en Madzhie het gereageer deur te eis dat Davhana uitgelewer word. Uiteindelik het die witmense se klaarblyklieke beskerming en bevoordeling van Davhana, probleme tussen Monene en Albasini, omstandighede vererger. Grondeise was aan die orde van die dag en die algemene toestande op blanke plase het tot die uitbreek van vyandelikhede.

As gevolg van die feit dat vreedsame onderhandelinge skipbreuk gelei het, is kommandant-generaal Paul Kruger opdrag gegee om 'n republikeinse krygsmag na

Soutpansberg te lei. Hierdie krygsmag kon nie in hul doelwit slaag nie en moes na Schoemansdal retireer, Die dorp is op 15 Julie 1867 ontruim en die Vendas het die nedersetting tot op die grond toe vernietig.

Ná die onttrekking van die Boere, wat gretig was om terug te keer, het hulle 'n groep vrywilligers onder leiding van Stefanus Schoeman gestuur om republikeinse beheer oor die gebied te herwin. Hierdie poging was ook onsuksesvol en is gevolg deur 'n besoek van President M.W. Pretorius en Kommandant-Generaal Paul Kruger met die doel om oor 'n vredesverdrag te onderhandel. Albasini het tussenbeide getree en, met die goedkeuring van die regering, die Ngoni en Swazi versoek om Makhado te "dissiplineer".

Makhado het die aanval afgeweer en sterker as ooit tevore uit die stryd getree. Paul Kruger het daarna Soutpansberg besoek om die deelnemers aan die vredesonderhandelinge te verseker dat, indien hulle 'n regeringsooreenkoms onderteken, hulle beskerming sou geniet indien hulle deur die *Mabunyu* - die Swazi's - aangeval sou word. Ongelukkig is die werklike heersers nooit in vredesonderhandelinge betrek nie.

Terwyl Makhado en die Boere nog in 'n woordstryd gewikkel was, is Duitse en Switserse sendinggenootskappe (onderskeidelik in 1872 en 1875) toestemming gegee om sendingstasies in die gebied op te rig. Hulle het later as bemiddelaars in die voortslepende konflik betrokke geraak. In 1877 het Sir Theophilus Shepstone namens Brittanje Transvaal geannekseer en gesprek met die hoofmanne gevoer sodat skikkings bereik kon word en die betaling van belasting verseker kon word. Nadat die Britse magte in 1881 die gebied verlaat het, het die Boere hul posisie weer bevestig.

Op hierdie stadium het Makhado reeds twee mislukte pogings aangewend om koeëlvaste medisyne van Vhukalanga te kry. Gebeure in Tsianda en Lwamondo wat gedui het op burgerlike onrus, het al sy aandag in beslag geneem. Ook het hy, deur die anneksasie van Tshivase se gebied, sy eie grondgebied uitgebrei. Toe hy hoor dat Tshivase hom met die sake van Dzimauli bemoei, het Makhado vinnig tussenbeide getree. Hy het Dzimauli uitgedruk en sy eie kandidaat, Tshikosi, aan bewind gestel. By wyse van magsvertoon het hy Mbwenda, Lambani, Tshimbupfe,

Nngwekhulu, Tshivhulana, Moletsi en Matlala aangeval om die Boere uit die gebied te hou. In Tshabwa het hy Begwa en Nthabalala aangeval.

Die Boere het tussenbeide getree en Makhado moes terugval. Hierna het die Boere stelselmatig druk toegepas deur die plaaslike veldkornette en kommissarisse opdrag te gee om belastings te hef. Makhado het weer eens weerstand gebied. Die nuutingestelde lokasiekommissie het hom in 1887 en 1895 besoek ten einde sy grondgebied op 'n voorskriftelike wyse af te baken. Hierdie besoeke was egter 'n mislukking. Intussen het ander dwingende probleme daartoe gelei dat die regering se aandag van Makhado afgetrek is.

Makhado het intussen behep geraak met sy prestasies. Sy morele standarde het agteruitgegaan en hy was dikwels afwesig van sy koninklike verblyfplek. Sy vyande het hom uitoorlê en vergiftig. Makhado is in September 1895 dood. Hy is hoog deur mense aangeslaan, maar het uiteindelik voor versoeking geswig. Indien hy sou bly leef het, sou hy dalk planne kon bedink waardeur die pas markeer kon word totdat die Boere Transvaal ná die Anglo-Boereoorlog verloor het.

## SUMMARY

The period between 1836 and 1864 constituted a prelude to Makhado's reign. It was characterised by a war of succession between Ramabulana and Ramavhoya which coincided with the arrival of the Voortrekkers under the leadership of Louis Tregardt and Andries Hendrik Potgieter respectively in 1836 and 1848. In this period Ramabulana regained his kingship and thereby secured the dominance of his family in respect of ruling the Venda people. The Tlokwa and the Boers played an important role in this process. The Boers had come to stay. Evidence of this new trend was the fact that they established in 1848 the town of Zoutpansbergdorp or "Oudedorp" which later became known as Schoemansdal.

Ramabulana had many sons of whom Davhana, Rasikhuthuma, Nthabalala and Makhado were the most important. Schoemansdal developed as a hunting and trading town. The number of the local Boer population increased. Many of them penetrated the whole territory which the Venda considered as their own. Apart from the village the Whites established and developed farms.

Ramabulana felt unsafe in the vicinity of the newcomers. He consequently left his royal residence, Tshirululuni, and ultimately settled at Bambalani where he died in 1864. His death, as was customary in Venda society, was followed by the struggle for succession among his four sons. The eldest son, Davhana, did not doubt his eligibility to succeed, but he lacked a power base. It was alleged that he had been instrumental in causing the death of his father.

The youngest son, Makhado, in addition to being his father's favourite, had many people behind him, especially the circumcised people. He had personally undergone that rite. *Makhadzi* Nyakhuhu and *Khotsimunene* Madzhe only had eyes for him. With this support Makhado was able to outwit his elder brothers. He ascended the throne and drove Davhana away from Vuvha. The latter fled for sanctuary to the Goanese trader and farmer, João Albasini at Luonde. Albasini at the time was the paramount chief of the local Tsonga population. He had a substantial military capacity.

The new *Thovhele*, Makhado, moved his royal residence to Luatame. Once he established himself there, he despatched an army to attack Davhana at Luonde. Supported by Albasini and his Tsonga warriors, Davhana repulsed the attack. This support which Albasini gave to Davhana, created a feeling of enmity between Makhado and Albasini as well as the Boer community. Makhado was under the impression that they, the Whites along with Albasini, recognised Davhana as *Thovhele* - the supreme ruler of the Venda people.

From the outset Makhado, as ruler, had the objective of reviving the Venda kingdom. Backed by his uncle, Madzhie, he reorganised his territory, initiated social, political and military reforms. He introduced age regiments and military battalions. These were the crucial means which would enable him to achieve his objectives. To begin with, he undertook a fact finding tour to Tshakhuma, Lwamondo, Mbilwi, Mukumbani and Dzimauli in order to ferret out any opposition to his status as *Thovhele*.

Meanwhile the Boers increased their activities. They demanded labourers and tribute in the form of taxes from the Venda. The Venda who joined the hunting parties eventually armed themselves with the firearms of their masters. When clashes cropped up on farms, the Boers demanded that their firearms be returned. Makhado and Madzhie responded by demanding the extradition of Davhana. The Whites' protection of Davhana, problems between Monene and Albasini, land ownership and the general conditions on farms, led to the outbreak of hostilities.

As a result of the collapse of peaceful negotiations, Commandant General Paul Kruger was instructed to lead a republican army into the Soutpansberg. The army failed to achieve its objective. They consequently withdrew to Schoemansdal and the town was evacuated on 15 July 1867. The Venda came down and reduced the settlement to ashes.

After the evacuation the Boers, who were eager to return, sent a group volunteers under the command of Stefanus Schoeman to restore republican authority. Also this attempt was unsuccessful. Then followed a visit by President M.W. Pretorius and Commandant General Paul Kruger. They tried to negotiate a peace settlement.

Albasini stepped in, and with the blessing of the government, invited the Ngoni and Swazi to “discipline” Makhado.

Makhado repulsed the attack and emerged from the conflict stronger than ever. Paul Kruger then visited the Soutpansberg in order to assure the participants in peace negotiations that should they agree to sign the contract with the government, they would be protected against attacks by Mabunyu - the Swazi. Unfortunately the real rulers were not involved.

While Makhado and the Boers were still at least verbally in conflict, German and Swiss Missionaries appeared respectively in 1872 and 1875. They were permitted to establish mission stations. Later on they became involved in the continuing conflict as mediators. In 1877 Sir Theophilus Shepstone annexed the Transvaal. He held talks with the chiefs in order to negotiate treaties with them and secure the payment of taxes. After the British left in 1881, the Boers again came in.

By this time Makhado had failed twice in his attempt to obtain a bullet-proof medicine from Vhukalanga. Events in Tsianda and Lwamondo attracted his attention to settle the civil strife. He extended his territory by annexing Tshivhase's lands. When he heard that Tshivhase had an interest in Dzimauli, he intervened, pushed the latter out and installed his candidate, Tshikosi. He flexed his muscles and attacked Mbwenda, Lambani, Tshimbupfe, Nngwekhulu, Tshivhulana, Moletsi and Matlala. This he did in order to keep the Boers out.

In Tshabwa, he attacked Begwa and Nthabalala. The Boers intervened and Makhado retreated. Thereafter the Boers asserted their pressure by demanding taxes through the local field cornets and commissioners. Makhado once more resisted. The newly instituted Location Commission visited him in 1887 and 1895 in order to demarcate his location. This was of no avail. Meanwhile the government's attention was diverted from Makhado by other pressing problems.

Makhado became obsessed with his achievements. His moral standards degenerated and he felt free to satisfy his longing for pleasures by leaving the royal residence. His enemies trapped and poisoned him. He died in September 1895. In this way the man who the people believed was great, succumbed. Had he lived perhaps he

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would have devised some means of marking time until the Boers lost the Transvaal after the Anglo-Boer War.

## KHAULEDZO

Tshifhinga tsha u bva 1836 tsho vha thangela kha muvhuso wa Makhado. Khatsho ho bvelela muvhango wa vhukoma (vuhosi) vhukati ha Ramabulana na Ramavhoya we wa kudana na u swika ha Mavhuru vho rangwa phanda nga Louis Tregardt na Andries Hendrik Potgieter nga 1836 na 1848. Huno Ramabulana o mbo di fheleledza o vhuzelela vhukomani hawe. Ngauralo a khwathisa mndu yawe kha u vhusa Vhavenda.

Henefha vhadogwa na Mavhuru vho thusa nga maanda uri dzembe li vhuzelele mufhinini. Vhunga Mavhuru vho da tshothe, vho mbo di fhata dorobo ya Zoutpansbergdorp/Oudedorp nga 1848 ye nga murahu ya vho pfi Schoemansdal.

Arali e Thovhele Ramabulana o vha e na vhakololo vhanzhi vhe khavho ha pfalesa Davhana, Rasikhuthuma, Nthabalala na Makhado. Schoemansdal ya bvela phanda sa dorobo ya vhuzwimi na vhusavhi. Mavhuru vha thoma u anda. Vhanwe vhavho vha ita Mukundulela, vha wanala vho no vha vhukati ha Vhavenda. Nga nnda ha dorobo iyi, Makhuwa vha thoma dzibulasi, zwi tshi swika ndevheni dza Ramabulana, a wana Tshirululuni hu sa tsha dzulea. Huno a pfulutshela Bambalani he a dzamela hone nga 1864.

Zwenezwo ha mbo di bvelela muvhangisano vhukati ha vhakololo vhawe vhana vhunga vhu sa fhiwi sa vhuswa.

Arali e Davhana tanzhe lawe, ho ngo vhuza a tima-tima. Huno o ro shaya vhatikedzi nge a hwedzwa bome-pome la uri o shela mulenzhe kha lufu lwa khotsi awe. Ngeno lupedzi lwa vhakololo, Makhado we a vha e mbiluni ya khotsi awe, a wanala e na vhatikedzi vhanzhi, zwihulusa kha avho vho rubaho, nge na ene a vha o ruba. Hafhu Makhadzi Nyakhuhu na Khotsimunene Madzhie vho vha vho dzula vho lavhelesa ene. Huno nga yeneyi thikhedzo, Makhado a totomowa vhukati ha vha komana vhawe. Zwenezwo a mbo di vhubwa vhukoma. Hu si kale a shakula Davhana vuvha, we a vho shavhela Luonde ha Tshiwawa, he a dziela hone.

Henefha Luonde ndi hone he Tshiwawa mushavhi na rabulasi o bvaho Genoa, a vha o dihahedza hone. Nga tshifhinga itsho Tshiwawa o vha e khosi khulu ya Vhatonga. Huno o vha e na maswole a si na vhukono.

Nga ngeno Dzanani, Thovhele muswa a pfulusela musanda wawe Luatame. Afha ho mbo di vha hone Musanda muhulu. Huno a mbo di ramba tshiala tsha ya Luonde u shakula Davhana. Mmbi i tshi shoma ya wana Davhana o ditika nga Tshiwawa na Vhatonga, o sema mano. Mmbi ya Makhado ya shakulwa. Yeneyi tsireledzo ye Tshiwawa a tikedza ngayo Davhana, yo mbo di vha u simuwa ha vhuswina vhukati ha Makhado na Tshiwawa, zwa pfukela na kha Mavhuru nge Makhado a ri vha khou tanganedza Davhana sa Thovhele.

U bva henengei mathomoni Makhado o mbo di kavhiwa nga muhumbulo wa u vusulusa vhukoma ha Venda. Zwenezwo, a tshi farisana na khotsimunene wawe Madzhie, a mbo di dzudzanya shango lawe, a bvedza tshanduko kha vhutshilisani, kuvhusele na kha kulwele. A bvedza mirole na zwithamugana zwa kulwele. Hezwo zwo itelwa uri a kone u swikela zwipikwa zwawe. Hu si kale a mbo fara lwendo lwa u ya Tshakhuma, Lwamondo, Mbilwi, Mukumbani na Dzimauli a tshi itela u dzinginyisa vhavhusi uri a vhone arali vha tshi kha di dzhia vuhosi ha Ramabulana vhu tshi kha di vha vhuhulwane Venda.

Huno arali hu nga ngei kha Mavhuru zwiito zwavho zwa di anda zwi tshi ya. Ha pfala uri vha toda vhashumeli na muthelo kha Vhavenda. Arali vhe Vhavenda vhe vha takalela zwa vhuzwimi vho mbo di wanala vho no dishomedza nga zwigidi zwa vhashumelwa vhavho. Musi nzulele i tshi shanduka dzibulasini, Mavhuru vha tshi ri zwigidi zwavho zwi vhuise, Makhado na Madzhie vha ri vhuise Davhana. Huno tsireledzo ya Davhana, na u sa pfana ha Monene na Tshiwawa, vhune ha shango na nzulele ya dizbulasini, zwa mbo di bvedza mifhirifhiri. Ha ri nyambedzano dza mulalo dzi songo bvedza tshithu, Paul Kruger (Boulo), a mbo di bvelela Soutpansberg na mmbi. Nge mmbi ya kundwa u swikela zwe ya dela zwone, ya humela Schoemansdal. Huno nga 15 Fulwana 1867, vha mbo di longa thundu dzavho, vha sia dorobo u mudi wa lungane. Vhavenda vha tshi vhona mavhuru vha tshi goda, buse li tshi duba, goloi dzo livha tshipembe vha mbo di shoma, vha fhisa dorobo yothe ya sala yo tou lore.

Naho zwo ralo Mavhuru vha hana u lala na bune. Vha rumela tshigwada tsha vho diimisaho nga tshothe, tsho rangwa phanda nga S. Schoeman (Tshigomana) uri tshi vhuwedzedze zwe vha tangulwa Venda. U balelwa ha tshigwada itshi, ha kombetshedza Phuresidennde M.W. Pretorius na Mukomandanti Jenerala Kruger u tou bva nga tsha Vhukoma, nge vha ri mbila yo kundwa mutshila nga u rumela, fhedzi zwa di konda. Tshiwawa a ri litshani hu dzhene mne. Huufha ndo no di tendelwa u ramba Vhangoni na Maswadzi. A vha Makhado ndi do mu vhea vhudzuloni hawe. Nga ngoho Mabunyu vha tshotela Venda, vha tshi swika Dzanani zwe vhutoto, Makhado vha mu sia o mela mamvele tshothe. Ndi hone Boulo a tshi ri ndi a vhuzelela uri havho Vharema vha no do tenda u tangedza nyambedzano dza mulalo, vha saina kontiraka na Muvhuso, a vha tsha do dovha vha tshotelwa nga Mabunyu ngauri muvhuso u do vha tsireledza. Tsho tabelaho ndi nge vho-nemashango vha Venda vha si shele mulenzhe kha nzudzanyo iyo.

Zwenezwo Makhado na Mavhuru vha sa tsha dahisana fola, ha mbo di swika vhafunzi vha Majeremane na Maswisa nga 1872 na 1875. A-vha vho tendelwa u thoma zwitasi. Huno nga murahu vha vho vha vho-nendila vha u dzudzanya mulalo. Theophilus Shepstone a mbo di dzhia Transvaal nga 1877. Huno a dalela mahosi a tshi ambedzana navho nga zwa mulalo na uri vha thele muthelo. Musi Maisimane vho no lela muri gwalani nga 1881, Mavhuru vha do-vha vha vhuya.

Nga tshifhinga tshenetsho Makhado o vha o no di kundwa luvhili u wana mushonga Vhukalanga une wa do kona u phephisa gulu kana wa dzivhela muthu uri gulu i si dzhene khae. Tsianda na Lwamondo ha bvelela mifhifihiri ye ya ita u ri a dzhenelele. Nga thungo a thuba mashango a ha Tshivhasa uri shango lawe li tatamuwe. Hu tshi pfala uri Tshivhase u todou thuba Dzimauli, Makhado a dzhenelela, a mu shakula, a dzhenisa a re wawe Tshikosi. Zwi kha di vha zwo ralo, Makhado a dia Mbwenda, Lambani, Tshimbupfe, Nngwekhulu, Tshivhulana, Moletsi na Matlala. Izwi zwo itelwa uri Mavhuru vha si wane nzanyo ya u dzhena ngayo Venda.

Ngei Tshabwa a dia Begwa na Nthabalala. Mavhuru vha phalala, Makhado a humela murahu. U bva afho Mavhuru vha thoma mutsiko wa u toda muthelo, vha tshi shumisa dzifilidi-khenete na dzikhomishinari. Naho zwo ralo, Makhado a ri la

da afha li a kovhela. Khomishini ya dzilukasi ye ya vha i tsha di bva u vhumbwa, ya dalela Makhado nga 1887 na 1895 uri i mu tshetshela lukasi yawe. Na zwenezwi a zwo ngo bveledza tshithu. Nga tshifhinga tshenetsho Mavhuru vho vha vho fara ludongo nga hu fhisaho. Vha tshi dzimela uno mulilo, ha duga ula. Ngauralo vha lavhelesa manwe masia. Ngeno kha Makhado, a mbo zwimbelwa nga vhukoni hawe. Kutshilele kwawe kwa tsela fhasi. Zwa pfamoni zwi tshi vho nga a zwi tsha takadza, a vho wanala nda hu songo fanelaho Thovhele. Zwenezwo maswina awe a mbo di mu fasha, a mu shelela tshefu ye ya mu lwadza. Huno a mbo di dzama nga nwedzi wa Khubvumedzi 1895. Nga yeneyi ndila munna we shango la mu dzhia e muhulwane, a mbo dinengiswa nga bodelo la burani lo faredzwa nga mufumakadzi wawe muhulwane. Hunwe ngavhe a tshile o vha a tshi do vha o vhamba manwe maano a u lindedza Mavhuru u swikela Maisimane vha tshi dzhia Transvaal.