

DECLARATION

I, Tlou Setumu, hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and has never been submitted to any academic institution. The works I have used in here have been acknowledged by means of references. I also accept responsibility of the findings and conclusions drawn in this work.

Tlou Setumu

Date

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Blantina Ramokone “Mafora” Setumu, who, despite her poor health, lack of material resources and other misfortunes in her life, raised me up. To my determined and committed wife, Regina Nape (nee Kgomo), I thank the support she gave me, while our lovely daughters, Makwena, Maphuti, Manoko (President), all inspired me and gave me reason to look ahead with hope.

AKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to generally acknowledge all people with whom I have interacted during the lifespan of this research project. Without this interaction, this project was not going to be possible.

Professor Karin Harris, who was my lecturer at UNISA and later became my MA supervisor at the University of Pretoria, played a very crucial role in my academic life. From UNISA to UP, she guided me through. At UP, as my supervisor, Prof. Harris took care of me like a child of her own. Still at UP, Professor Johan Bergh, who was head of history department, also guided me, especially in my early days of choosing an academic path which I was trying to chart.

Lize Kriel, another lecturer in the history department at UP, helped me, especially in finding more sources for my MA. Mrs. Charlotte van Niekerk was secretary at the history department at UP and she was very helpful and she allowed me access to the computer which I was experimenting for the first time in my life.

After completing my MA at UP, I met heritage practitioners in Limpopo Province where I applied the knowledge I gained from my studies thus far. Ron Viney was South African Heritage Resources Agency Limpopo office and he provided me with platform to express myself and research further. At that point, my research enthusiasm was boosted by heritage and cultural

acquaintances such as Phophi Raletjena, Johnny van Schalkwyk and Sam Moifatswana. I then met Ed Eastwood, a well respected rock art specialist who was by then involved in research work in my home area, Makgabeng. I was very attracted to the fact that Makgabeng, my birthplace, was so much respected in terms of the quality and quantity of rock art it was having. It was a pity that its locals knew very little about the wealth of rock art in their area. Ed was working with Jonas Tlouamma and Elias Raseruthe.

My involvement with history, culture and heritage saw me registering this PhD with Rand Afrikaanse Universiteit (RAU, later changed to University of Johannesburg). At UJ I would like to thank Professor Louis Grundligh for being my supervisor. Professor Peter Alexander (with his UJ Sociology team) helped me so much in terms of theoretic aspect of my PhD topic, especially its link with “globalisation” and “identities”. I later transferred my PhD from UJ to the University of the North (which was later known as University of Limpopo). I was warmly welcomed by Dr. A. V. Dhliwayo as my supervisor. I am thankful to Dr. Dhliwayo for his assistance and also for exposing me to a pool of rich Afrocentric literature.

Still on Afrocentricity, I came into contact with Professor Molefi Kete Asante’s work. Prof. Asante is a leading authority on African culture and philosophy, and is probably best known for his pioneering work on the theory of Afrocentricity. Prof. Asante published over sixty books and published

hundreds of articles which some of them I had the opportunity to read. I also had the opportunity to interact directly with Prof. Asante on line. Then I also had a privilege of meeting and introducing myself to Prof. Asante in Johannesburg in 2007. As I said, he inspired me through his dedication and hard work.

Dr. Eddy Maloka also touched my academic life, first through another academic who also touched my academic life. I knew Dr. Maloka through Professor Greg Cuthbertson of the history department at UNISA. I was Prof. Cuthbertson's student at the third level of my junior degree. After coming into contact with Dr. Maloka's works, I became attracted and I traced him and introduced myself to him telephonically. He was so welcoming. At first I did not believe that an individual can so selflessly be prepared to assist another individual without having physically met before.

My home village boy, Mpho Ngwepe, has been inspiring in the academic field. He is a very brilliant scholar, poet, writer and publisher. We share so many things and he takes a great deal of interest in my works, including this one.

ABSTRACT

Key to this study is the history of Makgabeng, mainly focusing on creation of rural communal identities in that area. Defining identity will be an important aspect for this study in which a deduction will be made on how the Makgabeng communities viewed themselves and were also viewed by those outside their area. The various aspects which shaped and led them to view themselves and be viewed that way over time will all be explained.

The history of Makgabeng was never included in the mainstream just like the history of most of the previously marginalised communities in South Africa. The early history of such communities was documented by Europeans, while those communities did not participate in the production of their own histories and the history of South Africa in general. The history of indigenous communities has been told from the other people's perspectives resulting in huge gaps as well as distorted, prejudiced and subjective accounts of the past. The past of these indigenous communities was mostly preserved in oral traditions and oral history. Therefore, one of the principal aims of this study is to work towards filling the gaps as well as attempting to rectify distortions and myths prevailing in the current texts which were made by authors alien to the indigenous people.

PREFACE

This thesis deals with the history of the Makgabeng area with the main focus on creation of rural communal identities.

In Chapter 1, the name, "Makgabeng, is introduced and traced". Its meaning is interpreted from various sources. Again, in this introductory chapter, the aims, objectives and focus of the study are unpacked. The methodology applied in the study is explained in detail in this chapter while the structural layout is also elaborated. Then the use of sources is discussed as well as the historiographical background of the field of study.

Chapter 2 deals with the theoretic framework in which the salient theoretical aspects of particular importance and relevance to identity in secondary sources, such as debates by various schools of thought on the origin and definition of the concept of communal identity creation, will be discussed. All the theoretical aspects will be applied and interpreted in the subsequent chapters as cross-references.

In Chapter 3, the earliest environmental conditions in the Makgabeng area are discussed and how they affected identities during the earliest occupation of that area. This chapter will trace the earliest occupants of the Makgabeng area, and how their identities were shaped by the environment they lived in. The topography, climate, flora and fauna of the area will be discussed and put into a historical perspective and their impact on identity creation in that area will be looked into.

Chapter 4 deals with the political changes brought by European travellers, missionaries, Boers and the British in the Makgabeng area. The impact of Mfecane/Difaqane on the political identities in the Makgabeng area will be investigated.

In Chapter 5, the changes in religion, social customs, health and education in the Makgabeng area will be looked into in the light of the successive

occupants of the area over time. These changes will be traced from the 1850's.

Chapter 6 will focus on land issues in the Makgabeng area since the 1800's. This will be about land and all its aspects and implications.

Chapter 7 deals with migrant labour, trade and technology. The origin of labour migrancy in Makgabeng will be investigated as well as the impact of the mineral revolution on Makgabeng and the consequences of the migrant labour system.

Chapter 8 is about Makgabeng identities today in which the present identities are looked into against the fact that they had been created from as early as the first human inhabited that area.