Contesting Names and Statues:
Battles over the Louis Trichardt/Makhado 'City-text' in Limpopo Province, South Africa

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This article examines recent contestations over the commemoration of King Makhado of the Venda at the town of Louis Trichardt in Limpopo Province, South Africa. It draws on recent literature by historians and historical geographers in South Africa, Europe and the United States to assist in the analysis of the broader issues embodied in competing interpretations of commemoration. These approaches are applied to a specific case study: the recent controversy over the process of renaming the town of Louis Trichardt/Makhado and the subsequent erection of the King Makhado statue in Louis Trichardt along with the removal of the statue of Louis Trichardt. The controversy focused primarily on the scale and impact of the newly adopted name. The article analyses the politics behind this debate over commemoration. It concludes that the commemoration was an intentional, purposeful plan of the provincial government of Limpopo to rewrite not only the history of the town, but of the whole province in an effort to highlight the historical significance and contributions of African warrior kings who they felt had been marginalised over the years. The article also contends that 'city-texts' in Limpopo province represent an emerging social-political agenda that is prioritising towns and cities as places of commemoration, sometimes at the expense of Afrikaner memorials, and reflects on the utility of the concept of 'scale' as a way of understanding the changing politics of commemoration in Louis Trichardt/Makhado.

Louis Trichardt as 'City-text'

Place-naming and commemoration (as scholars increasingly recognise) involve complex and intertwined sets of social and political relations that change over time. The politics of remembering the past is shaped not just by ideological struggles between social groups, but also by struggles within social groups. In recent years, a dynamic literature has emerged, both in South Africa and internationally, on the political struggles that surround commemorative practices and the locational dynamics underlying these struggles. Internationally, several works have

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highlighted the politics of heroic commemoration.[2] There has also been the growth of literature on the politics of memory and commemoration in South African museums and heritage sites.[3]

This article seeks to make a contribution to this new literature. It has two primary objectives. The first is to provide a brief background to the contestation over how the politics of renaming the town of Louis Trichardt played out, and in turn was shaped by, struggles to construct the geographic scale of Makhado's public commemoration. The second objective is to attempt to put into perspective the sentiments that accompanied the location of Makhado's statue in the centre of the town and the subsequent removal of the statue of Louis Trichardt. Both the names of the town and the statues combine into what is termed for the purposes of this article (drawing on the urban theorist Palonen) a 'city-text'.[4] We will see how the Louis Trichardt 'city-text' became a locus of dispute between different social and political groupings, including the government, the municipality, local political organisations and other concerned groups. Each had different views about the commemoration with divergent visions of what the new discourse on the town should be. This article argues that the 'city-text' resembles a battleground for political control over space and symbols.

In a study on commemorations in Budapest,[5] Palonen shows how place names and statues undergo similar processes as political discourses are created and sedimented through practices of inclusion and exclusion and inscribed through key elements. The Louis Trichardt 'city-text' may be seen in this sense as a system of representation and an object of political identification. As a set of commemorations, it is a 'representation' that aims to establish a particular viewpoint through the inclusion of certain elements for internal coherence, but also the exclusion of others. Structuring the everyday experience of the city and history through public commemoration, the elements of the 'city-text' relate to the construction of politi-

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2   For a selection of recent studies on this issue in Europe and the United States, see J. Duncan and N. Duncan, '(Re)reading the landscape', *Environment and Planning D, Society and Space*, 6(2), 1988, 117-126; G. Gean, 'Remembering Ancestors: Commemorative rituals and the foundation of historicity', *History and Anthropology*, 16(3), 349-361; T.B. Gongaware, 'Collective memories and collective identities: Maintaining unity in Native American social movements', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnology*, 32(5), Oct. 2003, 483-520; B. Schwartz, 'The social context of commemoration: A study in collective memory', *Social Forces* 61(2), Dec. 1982, 374-402; J.V. Wertsch and H.L. Roediger III, 'Collective memory: Conceptual foundations and theoretical approaches', *Memory* 16(3), Feb. 2008, 318-326; T. Ensink and C. Sauer, 'Political Communication as tightrope walking: The German president Roman Herzog's commemorative address in Warsaw, August 1, 1994', *Politics, Groups and the Individual* 5(2), 1995, 37-50; D.H. Alderman, 'Street names and the scaling of memory: The politics of commemorating Martin Luther King, Jr. within the African American Community', *Area*, 35(2). June 2003, 163-177; E. Palonen, 'The city-text in post-communist Budapest: Street names, memorials and the politics of commemoration', *Geo-Journal*, Sep. 2008.

3   For a selection such studies in post-apartheid South Africa, see J. Grobler, 'The Impact of Politics on Heritage and Cultural Tourism in South Africa', *South African Journal of Cultural History*, 22(1), June 2008; A. Grundlingh, 'A cultural conundrum? Old Monuments and new regimes: The Voortrekker monument as symbol of Afrikaner power in a post-apartheid South Africa', *Radical History Review* 81, 2001, 94-112; S. Marshall, 'Gestures of compensation: Post-apartheid monuments and memorials', *Transformation* 55, 2004, 78-95; Marshall, 'Forging national identity: Institutionalising foundation myths through monuments', *South African Journal of Cultural History* 19(1), June 2005; H. Deacon, 'Remembering tragedy, constructing modernity: Robben Island as a national monument' in S. Nuttall and C. Coetzee, eds., *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Memory in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1998), 161-179; P. Davison, 'Museums and the reshaping of memory', in Nuttall and Coetzee, eds., *Negotiating the Past*; J. Grobler, 'The impact of politics on heritage and cultural tourism in South Africa', *South African Journal of Cultural History*, 22(1), June 2008; L. Witz, C. Rassool and G. Minkley, 'Repackaging the Past for South African Tourism', *Daedalus*, 130(1), 2001, 277-296.

4   The concept of the 'city-text', which in the context of this article refers to both the names and statues in relation to space and scale, has been adopted from E. Palonen, 'The City-text in Post-communist Budapest: Street Names, Memorials and the Politics of Commemoration', *GeoJournal*, Sep. 2008. I have avoided being drawn into using 'town-text' in the case of Louis Trichardt which is sometimes considered a town rather than a city. Again the context of the claims and their political underpinnings are more instructive than the formal content [here as town or city].

5   See E. Palonen, 'The City-text in Post-communist Budapest'.

cal discourses and identities. The political contestations concern the proprietorship of the past, the definition of the local hero, and control over the 'city-text'.

The contestations over the Louis Trichardt 'city-text' are reflective of a site of politicking, the paradox of which lies in the fact that it is a set of symbols, perhaps even an ideological matrix in the city. This set of everyday political symbols is deeply embedded in everyday experience, generally noticed when the figure of Makhado is contested or celebrated. Through the act of renaming the city and replacing political symbols – here Louis Trichardt with Makhado – people were engaged in political acts that invest objects and sites with positive and negative connotations. While these changes points toward political developments in the city, they are relevant in discussions of provincial and perhaps even national identity. What are they indicative of? What were their wider political meanings and contents? This article examines both the renaming and replacing of statues. The aim is to further understanding of the processes of political commemorative contestation. The commemoration of Makhado in these contexts can be seen as a 'scaling of memory': a socially contested process of determining the geographic extent to which the Venda leader should be memorialised. This scaling of memory determines, in turn, whether Makhado's memory will transcend traditional racial, ethnic and economic boundaries, or simply reinforce pre-existing categories. Analysing these processes and the differing investments of social groups allows for a fuller appreciation of the historical consciousness and geographic agency of these groups.

Contesting a Name Change

The town of Louis Trichardt is situated at the foot of the Soutpansberg mountain range in the Limpopo province in South Africa. The town originated as a Voortrekker settlement area that was part of the much mythologised 'Great Trek'. Trichardt's group reached the Soutpansberg in 1836, camping near what eventually became the town of Louis Trichardt. After staying for a year Trichardt, who had been keen to establish trade links with the Portuguese in Lourenço Marques (today's Maputo), decided to head for that direction, a decision that proved to be a miscalculation as the journey took seven months to complete. More than half of the group died in a malaria epidemic, including Trichardt's wife. Trichardt and a portion of the group arrived in Delagoa Bay in April 1838. He died on 25 October 1838. Other Trekkers soon settled in the Soutpansberg area, clashing with the Venda people living in the area. The town of Louis Trichardt is said to have been 'founded' in February 1899.[6]

The name-changing process in Louis Trichardt has been highly fraught. Early attempts by the Names Council of the Limpopo Province and the Makhado Municipality to change the name of the town of Louis Trichardt to Makhado were overturned by the South African Geographical Names Council (SAGNC) on the

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6   'Khosikhulu Makhado of the Venda', *Maphungubwe News – The Official Newsletter of the Department of Sports, Arts & Culture*, Limpopo Provincial Government, Heritage Month Souvenir Edition, 2008, pp. 7-8; For the clashes also see Boeyens, J.C.A. 1994. "Black Ivory": The Indenture System and Slavery in Zoutpansberg, 1848-1869. In *Slavery in South Africa: Captive Labor on the Dutch Frontier*, edited by E. Eldredge and F. Morton, 187-214. Boulder, pp.199-205.

grounds that there was already a township called Makhado in the area.[7] The national Council drew the attention of the applicants to the fact that confusion could result from having a duplication of town names and recommended that the applicants either opt for a name other than Makhado or change the name of the existing town of Makhado to something else. The Makhado Municipal Council and Names Committee then provided an alternative name, 'Dzanani'. This name was also ruled out because it was already listed in the register of the SAGNC as another village in the province since 1965. Not dissuaded, the municipal authorities persuaded the people of Dzanani village to change the name of their village to Mphephu, so that the original township of Makhado could change its name to Dzanani, making the name Makhado available for the town of Louis Trichardt. The Names Council insisted that the erstwhile Louis Trichardt was the main centre of the territory, which was commonly known as Vendaland and dominated by the Venda people, to whom Makhado was a very important figure. In 2003 the town's name was changed from Louis Trichardt to Makhado after the SAGNC approved the new name.[8]

Some background about the figure of Makhado is necessary in this discussion. He was a king of the Venda people who ruled from 1864 until his death in 1895. His fortress was on the mountains immediately north of the site where the city would be located (less than two kilometres away). Makhado played a major role in resisting settlement in the area by Trekboers,[9] who came to refer to him as the 'Lion of the North'. After coming to power, Makhado challenged further encroachment on his people's land and was considered as 'the troublesome Venda chief'. After the 1864 death of the VhaVenda chief, Ramabulana, white involvement in the succession dispute between his sons, Makhado and Davhana, caused conflict. Makhado, the eventual victor, retaliated by withholding labour from the Boers and instructing his marksmen to retain the guns of their white employers until the pro-Davhana whites recognised his claim.[10] It is for these reasons that he was honoured with a major town in the Soutpansberg area by the Limpopo provincial government.[11]

Changing of the name of the town from Louis Trichardt to Makhado has sparked intense criticism and controversy from various groups in the region. This decision was perceived to be an imposition of 'ethnic supremacy and tribalism' by those who felt the town should have received a geographically neutral name with no political connotations. Concerned groups raised voices in protest. The

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7   SAGNC is the official body of South Africa that advises the executive branch of the central government in the form of the Minister of the Department of Arts and Culture on new geographical names as well as the changing of existing geographical names.
8   'Battle of Makhado back in court: South Africa', *News24*, 18 Jan. 2006.
9   'Boer(s)' is a Dutch word for farmer(s), which came to denote the descendants of the proto Afrikaans-speaking pastoralists of the eastern Cape frontier in South Africa during the 18th century as well as those who left the Cape Colony during the 19th century to settle in the Boer Republics of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. Like the term Afrikaner, it needs to be discussed in the historical contexts in which it is being used and there is an extensive literature on the dangers of mythologised and ahistorical uses of such terms. See for example L. Thompson, *The Political Mythology of Apartheid* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985).
10   For an official and popular account, see 'Khosikhulu Makhado of the Venda', *Maphungubwe News – The Official Newsletter of the Department of Sports, Arts & Culture*, Limpopo Provincial Government, Heritage Month Souvenir Edition, 2008, 7-8.
11   The provincial government of Limpopo launched 'The warrior kings who fought wars of resistance against colonialism and dispossession' theme in 2004 as an official program to honour a select group of kings through commemorative vehicles such as monuments, place names, books, etc. Former premier Sello Moloto announced this program in his inaugural speech and subsequently in all his State of the Province Addresses as well as at every unveiling ceremony.

Hlanganani ['Come Together'] Concerned Group considered King Makhado as an oppressor, who aggressively expanded his territory in the area by violently subjugating surrounding communities. In calling for a politically and ethnically neutral name, this group claimed that the name Makhado was being imposed by a predominantly Venda council. On 27 February 2003 they handed in a memorandum to the Makhado Municipal Council and conducted a protest march. They suggested a more neutral name such as that of the nearby 'Zoutpansberg' mountain or of a nearby river that would be more suitable.[12]

The Soutpansberg Chamber of Commerce contended that the name change was not economically viable for the business sector. They claimed that it would cost the town R18 million. In the first week of March 2003 the office of former President Thabo Mbeki officially confirmed receipt of an urgent letter from the Chamber of Commerce about the handling of the purported name change. Several Afrikaner groups and political parties including the Democratic Alliance and the Freedom Front recorded their opposition to the name change. The DA insisted that the Names Council had not consulted with the local community and charged it with having failed to produce minutes of public hearings.[13]

The Louis Trichardt Chairpersons' Association[14] fought the name change in the Pretoria High Court. This Association claimed to represent 51 organisations and more than 80,000 residents of the town of Louis Trichardt. It argued that less than 1 per cent of the town's inhabitants had been consulted about the name change and that the advertised public meeting to discuss the change had been rescheduled without any notification, resulting in a very small attendance. Group spokesperson Jeffrey Gohell was quoted saying: 'That name is divisive and makes one tribe superior to the rest.'[15] In November 2005 the Pretoria High Court dismissed the application of the Chairpersons' Association with costs, but gave permission for appeal against the decision. After exercising their right to appeal, the Association gained victory when in March 2007 the Supreme Court of Appeal ruled in their favour. The name change was reversed and officially the town was again called Louis Trichardt.[16]

Contesting Statues

Amidst this contestation over the town's name there was a contest over public commemoration: on 8 September 2005 the Premier of the Limpopo Province, Sello Moloto, unveiled a statue of the Venda king Makhado at the Soutpansberg Tourism Information Centre. At his address given on the occasion of the the official unveiling of the King Makhado statue, Premier Moloto explained his reasons for wanting to honour King Makhado.

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12   See their memorandum handed to the Makhado Municipal Council on 27 February 2003. This group brought together Tsonga-Shangaan, Ba-Pedi and Indian residents of the town.
13   S. Sama Yende, 'New Name Slammed as "Tribalism"', *News24*, 25 Sept. 2005; 'Name change despite ethnic spat', *News24*, 17 Dec. 2005.
14   See also 'Battle of Makhado back in court: South Africa', *News24*, 18 Jan. 2006.
15   S. Sama Yende, 'New skirmish in renaming war', *News24*, 13 Sep. 2005; SamaYende, 'New Name Slammed as "Tribalism"', *News24*, 25 Sept. 2005; 'Louis Trichardt fights new name', *News24*, 19 Aug. 2005.
16   See I. Chipkin, 'Recalling 1910: A Bridge Too Far', *Focus*, 57, May 2010, 23.

King Makhado was a glorious leader who fought colonial battles against the imperialists who wanted to take his land and subjugate his people to oppression. The history of the struggle against colonialism is marked with Makhado's heroic contribution. He is counted amongst the great Kings such as Sekhukhune, and Nghunghunyane, who like Makhado fought fearlessly to restore dignity and self worth to their people … We have clearly indicated that this is being done to assert and reclaim the pride of our people and their heritage as a free nation. The official opening of King Makhado statue, here at the city of Makhado, should be seen as the realization and fulfilment of this pledge.[17]

Earlier in the year, in his state of the province address, the Premier had said:

When we began our term last year we committed ourselves to celebrate the lives and honour the spirits of our historical icons. These are represented by our Kings such as Sekhukhune I, Tshilwavhusiku Makhado and Nghunghunyane … To this end we have constructed and unveiled the statue of King Sekhukhune I in Tjate and are on course with the building of the statues of Makhado and Nghunghunyane before the end of this year.[18]

I interviewed the Premier about his emphasis on the role of these kings. In response to my question on the importance of honouring them, he drew a connection between these colonial-era resisters and the liberation struggle in South Africa.

The rest of the South African cultural and historical landscape is biased towards commemorating the 'Anglo-Boer Wars' and therefore does not give deserved recognition to the role played by African chiefs in defence of their threatened chiefdoms. [These kings] were brave individuals who were the pioneers of the liberation struggle. Long before the ANC was born these kings fought the wars of resistance against colonialism and dispossession … Makhado was never even defeated nor subjugated by the Boers. It is for these reasons that they should be commemorated …[19]

His views were shared by other local political figures. Derrick de Wit, Heritage Manager in the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture in the Limpopo Province had been given the mandate to co-ordinate the erection of these monuments and memorials. The task of conducting research on the individual kings had been assigned to Tlou Setumu, a historian who had produced a series of ten books on

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17 S. Moloto, Address during the official unveiling of King Makhado statue, Makhado, Vhembe District, Speaker's notes, 8 Sept. 2005.
18 State of the Province Address, Sello Moloto, Premier, Second Sitting of the Third Democratic Legislature of Limpopo, 17.2.2005, http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/2005/05021810451001.htm, accessed 12.5.2009.
19 Interview with S. Moloto, former Premier of the Limpopo Province, 1.10.2009.

kings such as Sekhukhune I, Makhado, Mokopane, Malebogo, Makgoba and Ng-hunghunyane (the last-named fought against the Portuguese).[20] De Wit echoed Moloto's sentiments about the historical importance of remembering African leaders.

> Several African kings from this part of the country, which is the Limpopo province, like Dingane and Moshoeshoe in other provinces, have fought battles against the ZAR government which was intent on turning them into refugees in their own land. As a province we also need to show that our forebears contributed to the liberation of this country.

In his last words at the unveiling, the Premier called on the Municipality and the rest of the community to guard the statue: 'We also trust that the Municipality and the members of the community will take it upon themselves to look after this monument of our struggle and protect it from vandals who may want to deprive us of our own heritage.'[21] Just six days after the unveiling, however, the Makhado statue was defaced with the colours of the old South African flag painted across it. The head was painted orange, the torso white and the legs blue. A suspect was arrested, but later released without being charged. No known arrests have been made in connection with the act of vandalism and the statue has since been cleaned. Following the painting of the statue, concerned groups cooperated in attempts to address the issue. Some suggested that the painting was the work of hooligans and should not be viewed in terms of 'white against black' despite the obviously racial associations of the flag and colour symbolism. These commentators noted that white members of the community volunteered to clean the statues.[22] The Vhembe District mayor commented on the painting incident: 'The role and contribution of King Makhado is not written on the statue, but in our souls, brains and hearts, so nobody will erase or destroy the history of the Lion of the North through spray paint or any other equipment.'[23]

Subsequent to the unveiling of the Makhado statue, the statue of Louis Trichardt was removed from its pedestal and stored, initially in a tool-shed and later in a public library. The Municipality claimed that it was considering plans to build a museum which would house all apartheid era historical statues. Would the removal of the Louis Trichardt statue erase or deny his contribution to that town? This is still hotly contested.

It is interesting to reflect here on comparative literature from Central and Eastern Europe. Here there has been a strong tradition of removing statues as part of political protests and changes of power. Palonen argues that this was based on a 'winner takes all' model of history-writing and commemoration. In this model the unpleasant side of history is 'forgotten' through acts of omission or even the removal of figures of ambiguous reputation. These contestations are about compet-

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20   Interview with D. de Wit, Heritage Manager: Department of Sports, Arts and Culture, Limpopo Province, 1.10.2009.
21   S. Moloto, Premier of Limpopo, Address during the official unveiling of King Makhado statue, Makhado, Vhembe District, Speaker's notes, 8 Sep. 2005.
22   This account of the painting draws on the report by A. van Zyl, 'Makhado statue "shamed" by vandals', *Zoutpansberger*, 18 Sept. 2005.
23   N. Gabara, 'Vandals spark racial tension', *Zoutpansberger*, 16 Sept. 2005.

ing claims over history and space, as well as conflicting evaluations of the past and how it should be publicly commemorated.[24]

These reflections are relevant to the Louis Trichardt case study, where both the name and statue of Trichardt were removed by the African National Congress-led province and municipality. This differs from the case of Pretoria, where a statue of Tshwane was erected alongside that of Marthinus Pretorius and where Freedom Park was established next to the Voortrekker Monument.[25] There is a greater sense of inclusion in this case, because all of these are deemed of historical significance as events worthy of commemoration. One cannot displace the other in history.

Thus, as we have seen, the debate over the statue and naming is conceived by local and provincial power-players as a way of challenging traditional white-dominated conceptions of the past. These are seen to have frequently ignored or marginalised the history and contributions of African kings. With the advent of a black government led by the African National Congress, Makhado, who ranks along other highly esteemed kings such as Shaka, Sekhukhune, Moshoeshoe, Malebogo and Mokopane, came to be cast as an official icon of the wars that African kings and their people fought against white colonialists.

'Scale' in Commemorating Makhado

Recent works by geographers like Burk, Johnson, and Mitchell have shown that the location of memorials is a crucial issue and is often highly politicised.[26] When choosing the new name for the town of Louis Trichardt, the Names Council seems to have shown sensitivity to the location of racial communities as well as spatial patterns of commercial development. Consequently, they supported the renaming of this major town in the region which plays host to businesses in which black and white communities unite. However, many groups in the vicinity of the town did not identify with Makhado and public opposition to the renaming and the erection of his monument led to court cases and vandalism. The renaming process was frequently disrupted by the protests of groups who cited the financial costs of changing addresses and the social stigma of being associated with somebody with whom they did not identify. On the other hand, the Names Council felt that Makhado was too important a figure to be consigned to an obscure village. They came to consider this as another reminder of continued inequality and repression, and argued that it was important to keep his memory alive by giving his name to a major town. The renaming and erection of Makhado's statue were also part of a larger project in the Limpopo Province to affirm the historical importance of kings who fought against colonialism and dispossession.

Apart from location, the issue of scale is highlighted by historical geographers. According to Alderman, scale is an intrinsically important facet of memorialising the past and bringing significant public attention to the historical contributions of

24   E. Palonen, 'The City-text in Post-communist Budapest'.
25   Grobler, 'The Impact of Politics on Heritage and Cultural Tourism in South Africa'.
26   A.L. Burk, 'In Sight, Out of View: A Tale of Three Monuments', *Antipode*, 2006, 41-58; N. Johnson, 'Mapping Monuments and the Shaping of Public Space and Cultural Identities', *Visual Communications*, 1(3), 2002, 293-298; K. Mitchell, 'Monuments, Memorials and the Politics of Memory', *Urban Geography*, 24(5), 2003, 442-459.

African figures in the past. The geographic scale on which memory is produced, or commemoration is carried out, determines in large measure which groups will be touched by the memorial meanings being communicated. By expanding the scale of memory, or increasing the geographic extent of commemoration, social actors and groups may attempt to make images of the past accessible to a larger public.[27] Schudson suggests that 'retrievability' is an essential factor in shaping the ultimate power or influence of a cultural object or practice: 'If culture is to influence a person, it must reach the person.'[28] Renaming the town represents a potentially powerful form of commemoration because of its capacity to make certain visions of the past accessible to a wider range of social groups. In contrast, restricting the name of Makhado to a small obscure village in the scale of commemoration can decrease the retrievability and accessibility of the past, i.e. the king's memory and importance, thus limiting the extent to which traditional historical interpretations and valuations can be challenged and changed.

Defining the notion of 'scale' is a complex issue. Howitt has identified three facets of geographic scale – size, level and relation. He has noted that while geographers generally recognise scale in terms of 'size' and 'level within a hierarchy', they have not fully explored the idea of 'scale as a relation between geographic totalities'.[29] In terms of size, the scaling of Makhado commemoration can refer to the area of the town that bears his name. In this context the size of the town would determine the sheer number of residences and businesses identified, by address, with the commemorated figure of Makhado. Addresses are essential to daily activities and represent an important way of inscribing commemorative meanings into a multitude of urban practices and narratives. The scaling of memory through town names can also be defined in terms of level, specifically the level of prominence given to a town name as against one at the local village level.

As Azaryahu has pointed out, there is often a positive correlation between 'the strategic importance of a thoroughfare and the prestige of the associated commemoration'.[30] Although Azaryahu was referring mainly to streets, this is applicable to towns and cities, because a prominent town such as Louis Trichardt with its rich history (and particularly its importance as a tourist attraction) would represent a larger and more significant scale of memorialisation than a small village because of differences in the amount of public exposure and visibility that each brings to Makhado's memorial.

The geographic scale of commemorative town renaming can also be defined in relational terms or the extent to which the town of Louis Trichardt creates associations or linkages between different people in the region. This is what Howitt calls us to pay closer attention to in thinking about 'scale'. Place names have a connectivity that allows them to touch the consciousness of social actors and groups who may or may not identify with the person or event being remembered. However, because of the previously segregated pattern of the development of the town

27   D.H. Alderman, 'Creating a New Geography of Memory in the South: (Re)naming Streets in Honor of Martin Luther King, Jr.', *Southeastern Geographer*, 6, 51-69.
28   M. Schudson, 'The Present in the Past versus the Past in the Present', *Communication II*, 1989, 105-113.
29   R. Howitt, 'Scale as Relation: Musical Metaphors of Geographical Scale', *Area*, 30, 1998, 49-58
30   M. Azaryahu, 'The Power of Commemorative Street Names', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 14, 1996, 311-330.

of Louis Trichardt, when commemorating Makhado the Names Council seems to have been concerned about the location of the town in relation not only to the surrounding white community, but also to the extent to which the town serves as a geographic bridge between ethnic groups in the area. Ultimately, the decision by the Supreme Court of Appeal against the renaming of the town limited the geographic scale of Makhado's commemoration.

Conclusion

Several conclusions can be drawn from these discussions. Firstly, the scaling of the memory of Makhado has indeed been proven to be a consideration by the Names Council and the Makhado Municipality in renaming the town. How does one explain the replacement, as early as March 2002, of the old name (Louis Trichardt) by the new name (Makhado) from the welcoming signs at the northern and southern N1 entrances to the town? The recently published Limpopo Provincial Tourism Board's tourist maps also reflected the name change from the old to the new, even before official approval by the SAGNC. Further, this was shown by the extent to which officials had gone to retrieve the name Makhado from a small obscure village for the main town in order to make it known even to international tourists in the region and by so doing making the images of the past available to a larger array of publics.

'City-texts' in Limpopo Province represent an emerging social-political agenda that is prioritising towns and cities as places of commemoration in ways that challenge the forms of memorialisation established by Afrikaner nationalist memorials. Further examples would include the renaming of the city of Polokwane, which was previously known as Pietersburg after Piet Joubert, the Commandant-General of the ZAR military forces, and that of the city of Mokopane, which was previously called Potgietersrus, after Hendrik Potgieter, another Voortrekker leader.

It can also be suggested, especially in light of the speeches of the former Premier of the Province at several unveilings and in every State of the Province address since 2004,[31] that commemoration was an intentional and purposeful plan by the provincial government of Limpopo to rewrite the history of Louis Trichardt. It was viewed as an attempt to illustrate the important role played by Makhado in that region, as well as an attempt by the province to legitimise the historical significance and contributions of African kings to the South African national historical discourse. This history had been marginalised and misrepresented on the national cultural landscape – a perception that was shared by the former Arts and Culture Minister, Pallo Jordan, when he said in response to a question by a journalist, 'If you came from Mars and you went on the evidence of what is there in these public spaces [in the line of statues, monuments and memorials], you'd come away with the impression that whites were the original inhabitants [of South Africa] and Africans were the immigrants.'[32]

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31   See the Limpopo Provincial Government's Speeches of the Premier 2004-8.
32   Cited in Grobler, 'The Impact of Politics on Heritage and Cultural Tourism in South Africa'.

Lastly, it can be argued that the contestations that arose for or against the new name were concerned not just with the definition of the local hero and the proprietorship of the past, but also with the control of the 'city-text'. Stachel is of the opinion that renaming places and the removal of monuments are often first measures taken upon a political system change, what he calls the 'proclamatory new coding' of a public area. This serves as demonstration of the fact that control over indications and symbols, as well as the political power, has changed hands.[33] It is in this sense of a struggle over control of spaces and symbols that this article has attempted to explore the recent contests over names and statures in Louis Trichardt/ Makhado.

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33   P. Stachel, 'Signs and the City: Meaning and Function of "Heroes Squares" in Central and Eastern Europe' in S. Wahnich, B. Láštocová and A. Findor, eds., *Politics of Collective Memory: Cultural Patterns of Commemorative Practices in Post-War Europe* (2008), 69.