

**THE SETTLEMENT NEXUS OF THE SOUTHERN
TSWANA ON HILLTOPS AND VALLEYS IN PRESENT
DAY SOUTH EAST BOTSWANA IN THE 19TH CENTURY**

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

MAGISTER ARTIUM (HISTORY)

in the

Faculty of Humanities

University of Pretoria

Pretoria

June 2008

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I am grateful to the Head of Department, Professor J.S. Bergh, for having recognized the academic potential in my person and subsequently facilitated my admission at the University of Pretoria to read for a Master of Arts Degree in History.

I am equally indebted to Professor Fred Morton for having suggested the research title of this study.

I am exhilarated to extend my sincere gratitude to my supervisors, Doctor J.E.H. Grobler and Professor A.S. Mlambo, for their meticulous mentorship and professional expertise in this study.

I highly acknowledge Mr. Glorious Bongani Gumbo for having encouraged and motivated me throughout my study period at the University of Pretoria.

Special thanks and accolades go to the various and invaluable personnel in respect of their assistance at the following libraries and museums: The University of Botswana library, the Botswana National Archives and Records Service library, the Department of Meteorological Services library, the Botswana National Museum and Art Gallery library, Kgosi Bathoen II Museum, Kgosi Sechele I Museum and Phuthadikobo Museum.

The Departments of Surveys and Mapping and Teaching Service Management are highly recognized for their excellent service delivery and sponsorship respectively.

A sincere gratitude is also directed to all the informants for their valuable time and academic contribution in this study.

The other members of staff in the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies and many others elsewhere, who either directly or indirectly contributed in this study, are highly acknowledged for their intellectual effort and zeal.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Bakwena, Bangwaketse, Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela, Bahurutshe boo-Manyana, Batlokwa and Balete, are some of the Setswana-speaking peoples in Botswana today. The Bakwena, the Bangwaketse and the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana, are concentrated in the Kweneng and Southern Districts respectively. Both districts lie south west of Gaborone, the capital city of Botswana. The Bakgatla are concentrated in the Kgatleng District, which lies north east of Gaborone. Both the Batlokwa and Balete, on the other hand, occupy the South East District, which lies south east of Gaborone. Map 1 which is included in this study, shows the geo-political positions of these districts, the City of Gaborone, and the relative sizes and positions of the reserves and villages of the Bakwena, Bangwaketse, Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela, Balete, and Batlokwa in present day south east Botswana.¹

The Bakwena, Bangwaketse, Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela, Bahurutshe boo-Manyana and Batlokwa are of Sotho-Tswana pedigree.² By contrast, the Balete are of Nguni origin.³ Both the Sotho-Tswana and the Nguni were early Iron Age farmers,⁴ who originated in West-Central Africa, in the region of the Cameroon Mountains and the Benue Cross River valley. Map 2 shows the migrations of these peoples from Central Africa to Southern Africa.⁵ In Southern Africa, the former settled on the interior highveld between the Gariiep and Vaal rivers in the 13th or 14th century,⁶ while the latter settled

¹ Map 1 that shows the districts, the city of Gaborone, and the respective villages of the Bakwena, Bangwaketse, Bakgatla, Balete and Batlokwa, was adapted from Sandy and Elinah Grant, Decorated Homes in Botswana, Mochudi, Phuthadikobo Museum, 1995, p 17.

² Neil Parsons, A New History of Southern Africa, London, Macmillan, 1993, p 43. See also Kevin Shillington, History of Southern Africa, Gaborone, Longman, 2002, pp 24-25.

³ Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, Historical Dictionary of Botswana, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1989, p 66.

⁴ Kevin Shillington, History of Southern Africa, Gaborone, Longman, 2002, pp 11-12.

⁵ Graham Parker and Patrick Pfukani, History of Southern Africa, London, Bell & Heyman, 1975, p 20. See also map 2, p 16.

⁶ N. E. Davis, A History of Southern Africa, England, Longman, 1978, p 13. See also Graham Parker and Patrick Pfukani, History of Southern Africa, London, Bell & Heyman, 1975, p 26.

on the fertile coastal plains between the Indian Ocean and escarpment of the Drakensberg Mountains by the 16th century and middle of the 17th century.⁷ Map 3 in this study, shows the Bantu movements into Southern Africa and their areas of settlements.⁸ From about the 16th century onwards, some Nguni migrants crossed the central Drakensberg from the Tugela headwaters, and settled on the eastern highveld in the Sotho-Tswana country. A splinter group from the Ndzundza and Manala chiefdoms eventually adopted the Tswana language and culture and called itself the Balete on arrival at Ramotswa.⁹

Between AD 1400 and 1500, the Sotho-Tswana population spread itself from Pretoria in the east to the Kalahari in the west, and from the junction of the Great Marico and Odi (Crocodile) rivers in the north to the Vaal (Lekwa) River in the south.¹⁰ The Sotho-Tswana are also known to have had a long history of decorating their homes as well as the skills in working in clay. The confirmation of the historical existence of their skills and techniques can be found in the archaeological remains of their hut floors in many parts of modern South Africa and Botswana. In the 19th century, the Tswana who settled in present day south east Botswana perpetuated their decorative skills.¹¹ The oral traditions trace back the ruling lineages of the Tswana states to the Witwatersrand area to around the 13th -15th centuries. From about the 16th century onwards, there is archaeological evidence of stone walled villages. By the mid 18th century, there is still archaeological evidence of large towns on the northern Witwatersrand that spread to the east, west and south.¹² The Tswana are believed to have lived in the area usually known as the Transvaal mainly on the highveld around the area of what is now Pretoria. Some of them lived as far west as modern Zeerust. A group that included the ancestors of the Bakwena, Bahurutshe, Bangwaketse and Bakgatla is known as the Baphofu Confederacy. The group occupied the country between the Great Marico and Crocodile rivers in the western Transvaal. Between the

⁷ Gideon S. Were, A History of South Africa, London, Evans Brothers Limited, 1982, p 10. Also see Graham Parker and Patrick Pfukani, History of Southern Africa, London, Bell & Heyman, 1975, p 24.

⁸ Map 3 which shows the movements and areas of settlements of the Sotho-Tswana and the Nguni in southern Africa was adapted from Graham Parker and Patrick Pfukani, History of Southern Africa, London, Bell & Heyman, 1975, p 21.

⁹ Neil Parsons, A New History of Southern Africa, London, Macmillan, 1993, pp 36, 46.

¹⁰ Thomas Tlou and Alec Campbell, History of Botswana, Gaborone, Macmillan, 1997, pp 103-104.

¹¹ Sandy and Elinah Grant, Decorated Homes in Botswana, Mochudi, Phuthadikobo Museum, 1995, p 46.

¹² Neil Parsons, A New History of Southern Africa, London, Macmillan, 1993, p 43.

16th and early 18th centuries, the Baphofu Confederacy broke into groups which later moved westwards into the present day south east Botswana in the 19th century.¹³

An understanding of the settlement sites and patterns of the Tswana is predicated on the observations of their interaction with their respective environments, a study of archaeological and anthropological data and an examination of their histories. Historically, present day south east Botswana has comprised a variety of groups of the Tswana people with different and / or specialised adaptations and hence the different settlement sites and patterns. Water, among others, has been an omni-present force which dictated their movements and settlement sites and situations. The establishment of their settlements included the care of increasing numbers of livestock that tended to be become more anchored to the water sources such as pans, open wells and rivers. The care of arable areas was also another important consideration. That was particularly the case because the Tswana were fulltime, subsistence mixed farmers. An archaeological and ethnographic research has indicated that the adaptations of the people with access to rivers tended to be more permanent than those of people in hostile areas that lacked surface water such as the Kalahari Desert. A reliable or adequate water supply was critical for both the Tswana and their livestock in present day south east Botswana in the 19th century.¹⁴

Today the six Tswana groups trace their origins to the Transvaal highveld; the Bakwena from Magaliesberg Mountains (Mabyanamatshwaana / Majwanamatshwana) (Swartkoppies) near present day Pretoria, the Bangwaketse from either Rathateng (near what is now Buffelsdrift or the confluence of the Crocodile and Great Marico rivers) or Mosweu (near the Crocodile Pools on the Notwane River), the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana from their capital, Karechuenya / Kaditshwene, (on Tshwenyane or Enzelsberg Mountain), around the headwaters of the Great Marico and Elands rivers or north of modern Zeerust, the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela from the Pilanesberg Mountains (north of modern Rustenburg), the Batlokwa from Tlokwe or Potchefstroom (south of the Witwatersrand or north of the Vaal River) and the Balete from Bopedi in the

¹³ Thomas Tlou and Alec Campbell, History of Botswana, Gaborone, Macmillan, 1997, pp 95, 96, 104.

¹⁴ R. Renne Hitchcock, Mary R. Smith and Robert K. Hitchcock, "Introduction," in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, p xiv.

Limpopo area (or Lekgopung in the neighbourhood of modern Pretoria or Tshwane).¹⁵ Map 4 shows the approximate positions of the places of origin of the Bakwena, Bangwaketse, Bahurutshe boo-Manyana, Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela, Balete and Batlokwa in the 18th and 19th centuries in the present day Republic of South Africa. It also shows the positions of their settlement sites (and some major stopovers) in present day south east Botswana in the 19th century.¹⁶

Those groups migrated from the Transvaal, possibly, among other reasons, due to the disruptions of the *Mfecane*, with its epicenter in Natal, and later after suffering from the Transvaal Boers' demand for more land and cheap labour.¹⁷ They left at different periods of time and established their respective capitals in the south east of what later came to be called Bechuanaland, now Botswana. Map 5 roughly depicts the approximate migratory routes from the Transvaal highveld and the dates for settlement in then Bechuanaland, now Botswana, in the 19th century.¹⁸

Historically, the Bangwaketse settled on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill in Kanye in 1853, the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana on Boswelakgosi hill in Manyana in 1858, the Bakwena on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill in Molepolole in 1863, the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela on the slopes of Phuthadikobo hill in Mochudi in 1872, the Balete at the foot of Makoloboto hill in Ramotswa in 1875 and the Batlokwa on the banks of the Notwane River in Moshaweng or Tlokweg in 1887.¹⁹

¹⁵ Neil Parsons, *A New History of Southern Africa*, London, Macmillan, 1993, pp 43-47. Also see Thomas Tlou and Alec Campbell, *History of Botswana*, Gaborone, Macmillan, 1997, pp 104-106, Isaac Schapera, "Notes on the early history of the Kwen (Bakwena ba ga Sechele)," in *Botswana Notes and Records*, Vol 12, Gaborone, The Botswana Society, 1980, p 83, Kevin Shillington, *History of Southern Africa*, Gaborone, Longman, 2002, p 24, and group interview: Lebanka Matshitse, 1932, Farmer, and Montle Matshitse, 1942, Reed flute expert, at Ramotswa on 24 August 2005.

¹⁶ Map 4 that shows the positions of the places of origin and the settlement sites of the Batswana was designed by the Department of Surveys and Mapping, Gaborone, Botswana, 2007.

¹⁷ Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, *Historical Dictionary of Botswana*, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1989, pp 56, 76-77.

¹⁸ Map 5 that depicts the historical migrations from the Transvaal into Botswana was adapted from *Botswana National Atlas e-Book*, Gaborone, Botswana, Department of Surveys and Mapping, 2000, p 5.

¹⁹ See a map (figure 1.7) in *Botswana National Atlas e-Book*, Gaborone, Botswana, Department of Surveys and Mapping, 2000, p 5. Also see the various maps on the villages (Molepolole, Kanye, Manyana, Mochudi, Ramotswa and Tlokweg) that show the hills and

Be that as it may, oral traditions and secondary sources suggest that the Bakwena were the pioneers in the south east region. To that end, the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana, Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela, Balete and Batlokwa settled on the land previously owned by the Bakwena.²⁰ Between 1875 and 1882, the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela, Batlokwa and Balete, asserted their independence by way of a collective, armed struggle against their hosts, the Bakwena. The Bahurutshe boo-Manyana still live primarily in the Southern District as subordinates of the Bangwaketse.²¹

The ethnic groups under study had since remained in their respective districts and villages up to today. They are a part of the 50% of the population that speak the Setswana language in Botswana.²² The total population of Botswana estimated for 2005 was 1.83 million and it grew at a rate of 3.5 % per annum.²³ According to the 2001 population census, Kweneng had a population of 230,335, Ngwaketse 113,704, Kgatleng 73,507, and South East 60,623 respectively. Molepolole had 54,561, Kanye 40,638, Mochudi 39,349, Tlokweng 21,133, Ramotswa 20,680, and Manyana 3,185 people respectively.²⁴

Botswana is a landlocked country in the centre of Southern Africa. It is bordered by Namibia to the west, Zambia and Zimbabwe to the north and north east, and the Republic of South Africa to the south and south east.²⁵ For clarity, map 6 and map 7 graphically depict the scenario.²⁶ Botswana's surface area is 582,000 square kilometres

rivers to which reference is made in the text. The maps were designed by the Department of Surveys and Mapping, Gaborone, Botswana, 2005.

²⁰ Sandy and Elinah Grant, Decorated Homes in Botswana, Mochudi, Phuthadikobo Museum, 1995, pp 19, 26.

²¹ Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, Historical Dictionary of Botswana, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1989, pp 19-20, 47. Also see Leach Tlhomelang, "Bahurutshe bo-Manyana," a dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts at the University College of Botswana, 1977, p 24.

²² "Essential Facts," in Discover Botswana, Gaborone, Botswana, Department of Tourism, 2004, p 5.

²³ "Essential facts about Botswana," in Investors' Guide to Botswana, Gaborone, Botswana, Imprint Botswana, 2005, p 5.

²⁴ Populations of Towns, Villages and Associated Localities, Central Statistics Office, Gaborone, Botswana, Government Printer, 2002, pp 9-54.

²⁵ "Essential facts about Botswana," in Bajanala: A Tourist Guide to Botswana, Vol 5, Gaborone, Botswana, Department of Tourism, website: www.botswanaturism.org, p 2.

²⁶ Map 6 was adapted from "Essential facts about Botswana," in Investors' Guide to Botswana, Gaborone, Botswana, Imprint Botswana, 2005, p 7. Also see map 7 that shows Botswana's

of which 80% is covered by the Kalahari Desert sands, which were unsuitable for the agro-pastoral way of life typical of the Batswana already mentioned above, in the mid 19th century.²⁷ The Bakwena, Bangwaketse, Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela, Balete and Batlokwa reserves, constitute 27 845 square kilometres of Botswana's total surface area.²⁸ Besides, 17% of the land is reserved for national parks and game reserves, and 22% is further designated for wildlife management.²⁹

After having successfully penetrated south east Bechuanaland, now Botswana, the various ethnic groups effectively settled on hilltops and valleys. Their systematic hexagonal settlement patterns³⁰ can not only be understood, analysed, and interpreted in terms of a sense of fear or insecurity from the *Mfecane* phenomenon from the early 1820s to the late 1820s, and the Transvaal Boers' expansionist policies from the 1830s to the 1860s. A logical analysis and interpretation can also be done in terms of their nucleated settlement patterns based on the precedence of descent and age set organisation, the inequalities in population distribution, the fairly or evenly distributed renewable and non-renewable resources (clay, timber, water, grass species, fertile soils, veld products, wild game, stones and iron ore), prestige, the magico-religious beliefs, the threats from periodic floods, absolute and relative autonomy, the vegetation types and patterns, relief and drainage, the proximity of watercourses, the settlement sites and their areas, and space on hills and valleys, in present day south east Botswana in the 19th century.

In between those selected, spectacular hills and valleys, ran a network of seasonal rivers and streams that guaranteed a regular supply of water for them, their livestock, and the wild animals. The selected hills and valleys mainly suited their cultures (artistic skills in building stone walls and relatively durable clay house and *malwapa* walls and nucleated settlement patterns), their fulltime agro-pastoral and part-time

boundaries with her neighbours which was adapted from N. E. Davis, *A History of Southern Africa*, England, Longman, 1978, p 1.

²⁷ "Essential Facts," in *Discover Botswana*, Gaborone, Botswana, Department of Tourism, 2004, p 5.

²⁸ Isaac Schapera, *The Tswana*, London, International African Institute, 1953, pp 11, 34.

²⁹ "Essential facts about Botswana," in *Bajanala: A Tourist Guide to Botswana*, Vol 5, Gaborone, Botswana, Department of Tourism, website: www.botswanaturism.org, pp 3-4.

³⁰ John P. Pfeiffer, *The Emergence of Society: A Prehistory of the Establishment*, New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1977, p 122.

hunting and gathering life styles in the mid 19th century. The various maps of the respective six villages, clearly show the positions and shapes of, and space on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill in Kanye, Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill in Molepolole, Boswelakgosi hill in Manyana, Phuthadikobo hill in Mochudi and Makoloboto hill in Ramotswa, vis-à-vis the valleys (e.g. Borakalalo, Moshaweng, Kanye *wa marapalalo*) and seasonal rivers (e.g. Tshwaaanyane, Mmamokhasi, Sethugetsane, Kolobeng, Notwane, Taung and Maratadiba).

All the villages boast of hills of different shapes and heights, valleys with gently steeped slopes and dense grass, trees and thick soil cover. The settlement nexus, on those hills and valleys, by the Bakwena, Bangwaketse, Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela, Bahurutshe boo-Manyana, Batlokwa and Balete, was not haphazard but well planned and orderly, although the groups occupied their spheres of influence in different periods of time in present day south east Botswana in the 19th century.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It is the intricacies in history that, among others, this thesis seeks to establish in much more detail and interpret possibilities of socio-economic and political concerns that the members of the said groups found themselves in, in the 19th century in Southern Africa. The study seeks to establish from a variety of sources, the reasons why the Bakwena, Bangwaketse, Bahurutshe boo-Manyana, Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela, and Balete and Batlokwa respectively settled on top and on the slopes of particular hills and in valleys in the proximity of seasonal rivers, in present day south east Botswana in the 19th century.

In this study, settlement is understood and defined as the people's permanent habitat or where they lived. It is a unit or organized group of people making a living out of their surrounding environment. It is also a dynamic state of human physical patterns on a landscape. The aspects of settlement are site (the ground or environment on which the settlement stands, e.g. a river bank or mountain), situation (the location of the settlement in relation to its surroundings, e.g. the fields, grazing areas, water resources), and pattern (the way the various components or homesteads of the settlement are distributed within a particular area; they are nucleated if they cluster

together as in large villages). Living in large nucleated villages was a long established custom among the Setswana speaking Batswana. The chiefs regarded the concentration of their followers in a central settlement as a priority, because it enabled them to easily govern and control them. The villages were divided into wards and the centre of the village was the main *kgotla*. The villages varied in settlement sites and area, the population density and complexity and stage of development.³¹

THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was carried out in six large villages namely Molepolole, Kanye, Mochudi, Tlokweng, Ramotswa and Manyana. These villages lie in the south eastern part of Botswana. Mochudi, Tlokweng and Ramotswa lie east of the Ramatlabama-Francistown-Bulawayo railway line and along the Botswana-South Africa boundary, which was determined by the London Convention on 27 February 1884 in order to stop the Afrikaner aggression and advancement northwards.³² Molepolole, Kanye and Manyana lie west of the said railway. Generally, these villages lie in close proximity to one another in the region. Molepolole, Kanye, Manyana, Mochudi, Tlokweng and Ramotswa are in a radius of 60, 80, 50, 30, 2 and 20 kilometres respectively from Gaborone. All the said villages boast of hills of different shapes and heights, and valleys with gently steeped slopes and dense grass, trees and thick soil cover.

The aim of the study is to objectively and constructively contribute to the reconstruction of the histories of the above-mentioned ethnic groups, with particular emphasis on their settlement sites, situations and patterns on some particular hills and valleys. The study also seeks to fill in gaps that were either consciously or unconsciously created by some scholars in the past. Previous studies (as demonstrated in the literature review) had made overstatements about their historical heritage, by

³¹ R.M.K. Silitshena and G. McLeod, Botswana: A Physical, Social and Economic Geography, Gaborone, Longman, 1998, pp 278, 282, 287. Also see Goh Cheng Leong, Certificate Physical and Human Geography, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1970, p 312, Adam Kuper, "Social Aspects of Kgalagari Settlement," and R. Renne Hitchcock, Mary R. Smith and Robert K. Hitchcock, "Introduction," in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, pp 256, xiv.

³² "Botswana's international and other boundaries," in Botswana National Atlas e-Book, Gaborone, Botswana, Department of Surveys and Mapping, 2000, pp 5, 177.

emphasising their forced migrations (due to frequent outbreaks of wars and invasions), which were perpetuated by the strongest groups in Southern Africa and in present day south east Botswana in particular, in the 19th century. The conclusions made thereof, were based on the assumptions that the said groups were always entangled in frequent outbreaks of warfare and inevitable incidents of pillage of cattle, and that their subsequent settlement on particular hills, was mainly for refuge and self defence strategies from external enemies, namely the fierce Kololo of Sebetwane, the audacious Ndebele of Mzilikazi, and the Transvaal Boers, who were respectively competing for scarce resources. The stone walls on particular hills were, inter alia, cited as concrete and valid, archaeological evidence to validate the above claims. To that endeavour, understatement was made about the Tswana's socio-economic outlooks, development and adaptations in present day south east Botswana in the 19th century.

The main objective of this study is to establish the other reasons (or factors) as to why the Bangwaketse, the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana and the Bakwena settled on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill in 1853, Boswelagosi hill in 1858 and Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill in 1863 respectively, as well as why the Bakgatla settled on the slopes of Phuthadikobo hill in 1872, the Balete on the high but flat ground near Makoloboto hill and the Notwane River in Ramotswa valley in 1875, and the Batlokwa on a high ground on the banks of the Notwane River in the Moshaweng valley in 1887. Finally, the study is important because it adds more value and scope to existing knowledge on those issues already alluded to, and enhances further corroboration on the said histories by other researchers. The main argument is that there were other credible and valid socio-economic factors or allurements (in addition to warfare), which influenced the subsequent settlement sites and patterns of the groups under study, on the said hills and valleys in the 19th century.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In his book, *The Emergence of Society*, published in 1977, John E. Pfeiffer made credible statements about the intricacies of the nature of humankind, his choice of habitat and nature of settlement pattern, and the significance of religion, during the prehistoric evolutionary stages of nomadic hunting and gathering and early subsistence

farming. These intricacies can be best understood within the contexts of climatic changes, sheer coincidence, and inexorable growth of population. Overpopulation, famine, the threat of famine, and the failure of the old reliable methods of obtaining foods and / or failure of nature or wilderness, and sufficient knowledge about what lay ahead, especially the abundant game, water, great limestone shelters and caves, were the socio-economic allurements responsible for the forced migrations. The hilltop sites were strategic, because they were in line with the established ritual of height as a symbol of dominance, and climbing and looking up as a symbol of deference. Besides, the monumental stone architecture, symbolised power and priestcraft, whereby there were enough rocks and enough people taking orders in Southern Africa. Besides, the centres on hilltops offered panoramic views of the countryside. In addition, the most formidable sites, surrounded by thick stone walls, also served as fortresses to be defended in times of trouble. Since war was chronic, proximity created a source of tension. The risk of fighting between villages increased, so that a village had to be large enough to defend itself.³³ Nevertheless, this thesis seeks to establish and cross-check, as to whether the above factors were also applicable to the migrations and the subsequent settlement nexus on hills and valleys of the Tswana groups under study, in present day south east Botswana in the 19th century.

Generally, the histories of the Sotho-Tswana were homogenised by some scholars. The bias was derived from the historical perception or stereotype that the Batswana in general, were homogenous in terms of their socio-economic and political organisation and origins. As per this perception, the Batswana were collectively regarded as a single ethnic group which was mainly characterised by frequent splits due to father-son succession disputes over chieftainship.³⁴ It is no wonder, that the Batswana were treated as mere offshoots, separatists or seceders.³⁵ Regrettably, the same bias was adopted in respect of the settlement nexus of the Bakwena, Bangwaketse, Bahurutshe boo-Manyana, Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela, Balete and Batlokwa in present day south east Botswana. Throughout their entire histories, the above ethnic groups were portrayed as always caught in a perpetual state of warfare over pillage of cattle and repudiation of

³³ John P. Pfeiffer, The Emergence of Society: A Prehistory of the Establishment, New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1977, pp 19, 20, 22, 32, 33, 35, 253, 278, 410, 461.

³⁴ J. Ramsay, B. Morton, and T. Mgadla, Building a Nation, Gaborone, Longman, 1996, p 25.

³⁵ Isaac Schapera, The Tswana, London, International African Institute, 1953, p 9.

tribute. The succession disputes and splits were also regarded as chronic phenomena. An alliance system was believed to have been the main unifying factor against one another and against foreign aggression, primarily from the Kololo, the Ndebele, and the Boers of the Transvaal. Particular hills such as Kanye (Ntsweng) and Kgwakgwe in Kanye, Molepolole (Ntsweng), Dimawe, Boswelakgosi and Dithubaruba in Kweneng, and Phuthadikobo in Mochudi, were regarded as natural fortresses.³⁶ The subsequent settlement on such hills and at the foot of Phuthadikobo hill by the Bangwaketse, Bakwena, Bahurutshe boo-Manyana, and the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela respectively was, therefore, only associated with defensive politics of war. The general picture suggests that the concerned parties were absolutely obsessed with warfare for the largest part of the 19th century.³⁷ This is indeed an exaggeration and distortion of socio-economic and political realities. This thesis, therefore, seeks to highlight and demonstrate that there were other socio-economic allurements (e.g. space, prestige, iron ore, water sources) to the said hills in the 19th century.

In his book, *The Tswana*, published in 1953, Isaac Schapera included an analysis of the settlement patterns of the Tswana. Schapera stresses that the Tswana lived in large compact settlements led by chiefs. For example, approximately 40,000 Bakwena, 39,000 Bangwaketse, 20,000 Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela, 9,500 Balete, and 2,300 Batlokwa occupied tribal territories, whose total surface areas ranged between 15,000, 9,000, 3,600, 178 and 67 square kilometres respectively. The villages were normally situated on the banks of some rivers or at other places where water was readily accessible, and in the past, preference seemed to have been given to sites where hills afforded protection against enemy raiders. Besides, in the past, the people often moved because of war and famine among other reasons.³⁸ However, this thesis seeks to discuss the relevance of such factors in the context of specific groups (e.g. the Bakwena, Bangwaketse, Bahurutshe boo-Manyana, Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela, Balete and Batlokwa), specific hills and rivers, and time frame in present day south east Botswana.

³⁶ Thomas Tlou and Alec Campbell, *History of Botswana*, Gaborone, Macmillan, 1997, pp 146-156, 165-166. Also see J. Ramsay, B. Morton, and T. Mgadla, *Building a Nation*, Gaborone, Longman, 1996, pp 25-29, 41-54.

³⁷ J. Ramsay, B. Morton, and T. Mgadla, *Building a Nation*, Gaborone, Longman, 1996, pp 25-29, 65-75, 101-112.

³⁸ Isaac Schapera, *The Tswana*, London, International African Institute, 1953, pp 11, 34, 35, 36.

In his book, *Traditional Histories of the Native Tribes of the Bechuanaland Protectorate*, published in 1954, Isaac Schapera wrote extensively on the histories of the Bakwena, Bangwaketse, and Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela. However, Schapera mainly emphasised about the 1820s, inter alia, the father-son succession disputes and splits among all the groups, and in particular the recurrence of the pillage of cattle between the Bakwena and Bangwaketse, and the Bakwena and Bakgatla, the demand for tribute by the Bakwena and Bangwaketse from the Bakgatla and Balete respectively, and the positive and negative consequences of the war between the Bangwaketse and the Balete in 1881.³⁹ However, this thesis adds and emphasises various factors (e.g. space, prestige, water sources, iron ore deposits, magico-religious beliefs, a tradition of building stone walls, competition, etc.) that influenced the settlement nexus of the above groups on or near particular hills (Kanye (Ntsweng) in Kanye, Molepolole (Ntsweng) in Molepolole, Phuthadikobo in Mochudi, and Makoloboto in Ramotswa) in the post *Mfecane* and 1852 Boer-Bakwena war period.

In Schapera's book, *Traditional Histories of the Native Tribes of the Bechuanaland Protectorate*, V. Ellenberger wrote on the histories of the Batlokwa and Balete. Ellenberger therein emphasised the stopovers, splits, and migratory routes of the Batlokwa from Tlokwe to Moshaweng. Ellenberger also commented on the succession disputes and splits of the Balete, the ineffectiveness of the alliance of the Bangwaketse, Bakgatla ba Moshupa and Bahurutshe boo-Manyana against the Balete in 1881, the repudiation of tribute obligation as the reason why the Balete abandoned Mmankgodi in Kweneng in favour of Ramotswa in 1875, and the catastrophic rinderpest of 1896 that wiped almost all the cattle in Ramotswa. All in all, Ellenberger implies that both the Batlokwa and Balete were always caught in a perpetual state of fission.⁴⁰ In contrast, this thesis seeks to explain and emphasise other factors in the settlement sites and patterns of the Balete and Batlokwa on flat but relatively high land on the banks of the Notwane River in Ramotswa in 1875 and Moshaweng in 1887 respectively. This

³⁹ Isaac Schapera, *Traditional Histories of the Native Tribes of Bechuanaland Protectorate*, Cape Town, The Lovedale Press, 1954, pp 1-25, 83-87, 154-187.

⁴⁰ V. Ellenberger, "Ba-ga-Malete," in *Traditional Histories of the Native Tribes of Bechuanaland Protectorate*, Cape Town, The Lovedale Press, 1954, pp 189-218, 219-240.

includes factors such as the proximity of watercourses and the threats of periodic floods from the Notwane River.

In their book, *Building a Nation*, published in 1996, Jeff Ramsay and associates imply that the main objective of warfare was to achieve glory and prestige. They also imply that victory depended on the military superiority of the armies. They, therefore, therein emphasise the military superiority of the Kololo and the Ndebele over the allied Bangwaketse and Bakwena from 1824 to 1840, the Boers against the Bakwena and their allies (Bangwaketse, Bakgatla ba ga Mmanaana, Bakaa) in 1852, and the effectiveness of the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela-Batlokwa-Balete alliance against the Bakwena from 1875 to 1881, and the functional role of Dimawe, Boswelakgosi, and Dithubaruba as natural fortresses, during surprise night and dawn raids on the victims dwelling on such hills. On the basis of military superiority, the Bangwaketse, Bakwena, Kololo, and Ndebele became too obsessed with warfare to the extent of always being engaged in reprisal pillage of cattle and competition for tribute and captives comprising adult women, girls and boys. With a big commando force comprising 430 Boer horsemen and over 600 Africans, the Boers led by Scholtz, crushed their opponents at Dimawe and subsequently withdrew but taking with them many cattle, 143 captive women and children and property belonging to the Bakwena and English traders, which they later auctioned. Up to 90 Batswana were killed in battle as opposed to 36 Boers. Despite the defeat, Sechele's success in resisting the Boers greatly increased his following from 3,620 in 1849 to about 20,000 in 1857 at Dithubaruba. On the other hand, the successful Bakgatla-Batlokwa-Balete alliance against the Bakwena functionally resulted in the change of balance of power in the region and absolute independence for the former.⁴¹ Be that as it may, this thesis emphasises other economic allurements of Bahurutshe boo-Manyana to Boswelakgosi hill in 1858 and the Bakwena to Dithubaruba hill from 1853 to 1863, and explains the reasons why Dithubaruba hill was abandoned in 1863 in favour of Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill. It also provides other contexts as to why the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela, Batlokwa and Balete settled on the slopes of Phuthadikobo hill, on gently sloping land at Moshaweng, and at the foot Makoloboto hill in Ramotswa respectively, in the second half of the 19th century.

⁴¹ J. Ramsay, B. Morton, and T. Mgadla, *Building a Nation*, Gaborone, Longman, 1996, pp 66-75, 84-96, 109-112.

In their book, *Historical Dictionary of Botswana*, published in 1989, Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, emphasise the military superiority of the Boers against the Bakwena, and that of the combined forces of the Bakgatla, Balete and Batlokwa against the Bakwena. A large commando under Commandant Scholtz invaded the Bakwena mainly to break the power of Chief Sechele, who had been welcoming refugees from the Transvaal and acquiring guns and gunpowder, and to extradite the Bakgatla ba ga Mmanaana leader, Mosielele, who unceremoniously fled the Transvaal rather than submit to the Boers' demand for labour. Eventually, the Boers scattered the powerless Bakwena and burned the so-called fortress of Dimawe, and sacked the London Missionary Society mission of David Livingstone at Kolobeng. The commando also killed between 60 to 100 Bakwena as opposed to 36 Boers, looted 3,000 cattle and other Bakwena property, and captured about 250 women and children for use on the Boer farms, as apprentice labour. The Bakwena fled to Dithubaruba, but Scholtz did not further pursue them, because he wanted to avoid further Boer casualties.⁴² This thesis, however, argues that the Boers' defeat of the Bakwena in 1852, may not have influenced the settlement nexus of the Bangwaketse on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill in 1853, the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana on Boswelakgosi hill in 1858, and the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela at Phuthadikobo hill in 1872.

Thomas Tlou and Alec Campbell in their book, *History of Botswana*, published in 1997, rather contradict Jeff Ramsay and associates, and Fred Morton and associates, in terms of statistics and conclusions on the war between the Boers and the Bakwena and their allies in 1852. They argue that Scholtz commanded a combined commando of 430 Boers and 800 Batswana auxiliaries. The main objective was to extradite Mosielele, but Sechele did not comply. Therefore, Scholtz resolved to disarm Sechele so as to make him submit to the Boer rule. The Battle of Dimawe was a success for the Batswana, because they killed 36 Boers and thus halted the Boers' invasion. Besides, sections of the Bakwena army retaliated and burnt the Boers' farms and looted their cattle, and the Boers abandoned their farms and a laager on the Marico River and moved eastwards. In addition, only 80 Batswana were killed and over 200 women and children taken prisoner, but most of them were later able to escape. The authors also

⁴² Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, *Historical Dictionary of Botswana*, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1989, pp 11, 12.

argue that the population of the Bakwena and their newcomers grew from 300 in 1843 to 3,650 in 1849, and to 20,000 at Dithubaruba, after the Battle of Dimawe. It follows that the Bakwena increased and became strong, mainly on account of immigration by other Batswana. After the *Difaqane*, the Bangwaketse and Bakwena stayed together, because they found strength in numbers, and besides, there was much less room for moving around, hence neither the Bakwena nor Bangwaketse had shifted their huge settlements since 1865. The authors then concluded, “It was because of the wars of the *Difaqane* that Batswana *merafe* united and became large, and it was through fear of future wars that they remained in large settlements. This helps to explain why settlements like Molepolole and Kanye are so large today.”⁴³ Nevertheless, this thesis seeks to state categorically that the Bangwaketse and Bakwena were distinguishable polities from each other and as such they never stayed together in present day south east Botswana in the 19th century. Each one settled on a separate, suitable hill site (large village) that offered all the necessary advantages and which, at the same time, had definite geographical boundaries.⁴⁴ Both the Bangwaketse and Bakwena had abundant land and easy access to the Kgalagadi, since they were predominantly hunters and pastoralists in the region.⁴⁵ Besides, both the Bangwaketse and Bakwena took their cattle into the Kgalagadi seasonally to graze only in areas near the pans, which held water.⁴⁶ Both groups further heavily invested in permanent and durable houses due to the availability of building materials such as clay and soil oxides, timber, and grass in their spheres of influence.⁴⁷ Moreover, having built permanent structures on hills, both groups then committed themselves to their hill site villages, property and mass living.⁴⁸ Finally, the settlement patterns that showed a decided preference for close and dense

⁴³ Thomas Tlou and Alec Campbell, History of Botswana, Gaborone, Macmillan, 1997, pp 165, 166, 170.

⁴⁴ Leonard D. Ngcongco, “Aspects of the History of Bangwaketse to 1910,” a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Philosophy at Dalhousie University, April 1977, pp 60, 100-101.

⁴⁵ Sandy and Elinah Grant, Decorated Homes in Botswana, Mochudi, Phuthadikobo Museum, 1995, p 26.

⁴⁶ R. K. Hitchcock, “Traditional Response to Drought in Botswana,” in Symposium on Drought in Botswana, Gaborone, The Botswana Society in collaboration with Clark University Press, 1978, p 94.

⁴⁷ Sandy and Elinah Grant, Decorated Homes in Botswana, Mochudi, Phuthadikobo Museum, 1995, pp 21, 33.

⁴⁸ John E. Pfeiffer, The Emergence of Society, New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1977, p 22.

settlement in large villages near watercourses were the traditions of the Bangwaketse and Bakwena and other Tswana groups.⁴⁹

In his book, *A New History of Southern Africa*, published in 1993, Neil Parsons implies that the political histories of the Bangwaketse and Bakwena are intertwined with those of the Kololo and Ndebele. Both the Kololo and Ndebele are associated with terror and insatiable taste for tribute. Both the Kololo and the Ndebele impoverished the Bangwaketse and the Bakwena by looting their cattle. In that endeavour, the Kololo went into battle with the Bangwaketse and Bakwena forces at Losabanyana, north west of Kanye. The great king of the Bangwaketse, Makaba, was killed in this battle. However, Sebetwane of the Kololo was also seriously wounded in the chest, and it was that wound that finally opened up and caused his death in 1851. The Bakwena capital at Dithubaruba was burnt down, when the Bangwaketse revenged in 1826. The Kololo had displaced the Bakwena in 1824. The Ndebele of Mzilikazi also specialised in integrating captives in their society. Thus young men from the conquered groups became soldiers in the regiments of the permanent army, while the young women were married to more senior men.⁵⁰ However, it is felt that the subsequent settlement of the Bangwaketse and Bakwena on Kanye and Molepolole hills in 1853 and 1863 respectively, after the Mfecane wars, was neglected by Parsons. This thesis, therefore, seeks to fill that gap.

In his book, *The Zulu Aftermath*, published in 1998, J.D. Omer-Cooper emphasises the diffusion theory. Omer-Cooper argues that the Kololo and the Ndebele changed the balance of power in present day south east Botswana, when they successfully overpowered the allied Bangwaketse, Bakwena, Bahurutshe, and Bakgatla contingents at Losabanyana in 1824. That was simply because the two invaders brought with them new battle tactics, which their victims were not familiar with, but which tactics they later adopted to their advantage in 1826. As a genius Commander, Sebetwane invented swift night attacks on surrounded enemies. Sebetwane was also very daring in his advance to the enemy, and thus by placing his men in front and the women behind the

⁴⁹ Leonard D. Ngcongco, "Aspects of the History of Bangwaketse to 1910," a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Philosophy at Dalhousie University, April 1977, pp 172, 101.

⁵⁰ Neil Parsons, *A New History of Southern Africa*, London, Macmillan, 1993, pp 86-88.

cattle, Sebetwane routed the whole of his enemies at one blow. The Bangwaketse only defeated the Kololo at Dithubaruba, when they co-opted two English traders, Bain and Biddulph, who were armed with guns, in addition to surrounding the enemy by night and then making a surprise attack at dawn. To that end, Dithubaruba, as a natural fortress, was rendered ineffective, if ever it was! The Tswana devoted much of their attention to agriculture and their military methods were little developed. The Ndebele, under Mzilikazi, also caused disarray among the so-called most powerful Bangwaketse and the Bakwena, simply because they specialised in surprise encirclement of the enemy at night and dawn, and total smashing of the enemy.⁵¹ Omer-Cooper had, however, neglected the factors that led to the Bakwena's abandonment of Dithubaruba hill in 1863 in favour of Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill and Bangwaketse's settlement on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill in 1853. This thesis, therefore, seeks to fill that gap.

Sandy Grant also emphasises the diffusion theory and therefore, implies that the advent of externally induced warfare gave impetus to the building of stone walls on particular hills in present day south east Botswana solely for defence measures. However, military factors do not explain everything and Grant thus concludes, "defence under a military leader (the chief) may explain a settlement's origin though it may have little to do with its later growth. The attacks that were made on Kanye (1798/9), Mochudi and Molepolole (1875), as well as the defensive walls at Kanye and Dithejwane....show that the defence was a very real function of these places."⁵² Nevertheless, this thesis seeks to put into proper perspective that the stone walls at Mochudi (on the slopes of Phuthadikobo hill) and Molepolole hill, were constructed mainly as perimeter boundary fences between compounds and these hills never served as battle grounds in 1875. The 1875 battle between the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela and the Bakwena, was fought in an open sandy area called Mosanta, near the Makakatlela hill, north of Phuthadikobo hill. On the other hand, the 1876 war of retribution was fought on the outskirts of Molepolole hill.⁵³ The subsequent settlement of the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela

⁵¹ J. D. Omer-Cooper, The Zulu Aftermath, England, Longman, 1998, pp 93, 117, 118, 131, 138, 140,

⁵² Sandy Grant, "Reduced almost to nothing? Chieftaincy and a traditional town. The case of Linchwe II Kgafela and Mochudi," in Botswana Notes and Records, Vol 12, Gaborone, The Botswana Society, 1980, p 89.

⁵³ Group interview: Ngakale Kgetlwe, 1927, Headman of Arbitration, and Montshiwa Semaru Kgosing Mabodisa, Headman of Arbitration, at the Main *kgotla* in Mochudi, on 13 June 2005.

on the slopes of Phuthadikobo hill in 1872, and the Bakwena on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill in 1863, was not influenced by fear of a looming war. The Bakgatla did not intrude in the Kwena territory, because they were allowed to settle there by Sechele. On the other hand, the Bakwena reached a truce in 1853 with the Boers. So, Grant's comment about the stone walls in Mochudi and Molepolole in 1875 is out of context and misleading. Historically in Molepolole, stone walling was normally used for purposes of marking familial territorial units, that is, it was used to enclose a yard. The stones are commonly known as *phate ya lentswe* and were obtained from under ground on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill and Borakalalo valley. The stones were, therefore, used for marking the foundations of houses and courtyard walls on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill.⁵⁴ According to oral traditions, the stone walls on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill had nothing to do with anticipated war, but however, added beauty and value to the houses and *malwapa* walls that were stylishly decorated with grey, red, and yellow clay oxides.⁵⁵

J.E.H. Grobler has also written on the socio-economic and political spectrums of the history of the Bakwena ba ga Sechele in the pre and post Boer-Batswana war of 1852. Grobler proposes that there were peaceful relations between the Bakwena and the Boers from 1853 to 1864. That was because Jan Viljoen successfully brokered peace, through diplomacy, between Sechele and the Boers of the South African Republic. Through the peace initiatives of Viljoen, the Transvaal authorities recognised the independence of the Bakwena community. Viljoen and other peace-loving Boers neither regarded nor referred to Bakwena as enemies, but rather treated them as neighbours with whom the Transvaal Boers had to co-exist. The mention of Dithubaruba, as an historical landform, has mainly to do with mutual peace

Also see J. Ramsay, B. Morton, and T. Mgadla, Building a Nation, Gaborone, Longman, 1996, p 110.

⁵⁴ One Setlhaolo, "An ethno-historical perspective on the use of raw materials for demarcating space in Molepolole from 18th century to the present," a dissertation submitted to the History Department of the University of Botswana in partial fulfilment of the Bachelor of Arts Degree, April 2003, p 22.

⁵⁵ Group interview: Mmabuta Mhalapitsa, Senior General Duty Assistant, and Letsweletse Ramatlakapela, General Duty Assistant, at the Kgosi Sechele I Museum in Molepolole, on 14 November 2005.

negotiations between Jan Viljoen and Sechele.⁵⁶ Grobler does not, however, give reasons why Dithubaruba hill was finally abandoned in 1863 in favour of Molepolole hill. This thesis, therefore, seeks to fill that gap. It also treats the 1853 truce between the Boers and the Bakwena at Dithubaruba hill in the context of the subsequent settlement nexus of the Bangwaketse on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill in 1853, the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana on Boswelakgosi hill in 1858, the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela on the slopes of Phuthadikobo hill in 1872, and the Batlokwa on the banks of the Notwane river at Moshaweng valley in 1887.

In his book, *A History of Southern Africa*, published in 1978, N.E. Davis acknowledges that generally the histories of the Sotho-Tswana and even those of the ethnic groups under study in particular, had been consciously homogenized, to a large extent, by some scholars in the past. The political aspects overshadowed the socio-economic aspects since most of the authors were biased towards the politics of war. There is great substance in Davis's observation that "the history of Southern Africa is largely concerned with the movements, meetings, rivalries and conflicts between the various peoples who have settled in the region." Davis further advises that, "it is important to have some understanding of the geography of Southern Africa to appreciate fully the history of the area," because "the physical factors of landscape, climate, soils and the presence of valuable minerals decide, to a large extent, where man will settle, what food can be hunted, gathered or grown, where livestock can be grazed and where industrial development can take place."⁵⁷

GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

In retrospect, the researcher tends to agree with Davis. The Bakwena, Bangwaketse, Bahurutshe boo-Manyana, Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela, Balete and Batlokwa, selected and settled on strategic spheres of influence as unique political and cultural entities in present day south east Botswana. The foundations of their chiefdoms were laid with dexterity on particular hilltops and valleys. The space on their respective hilltop sites

⁵⁶ J. E. H. Grobler, "Jan Viljoen, the South African Republic and the Bakwena, 1848-1882," in the *South African Historical Journal*, No 36, Pretoria, University of South Africa, 1997, pp 244-254.

⁵⁷ N. E. Davis, *A History of Southern Africa*, England, Longman, 1978, p 2.

differed, and that was congruent with their population densities at the time. Besides, this thesis seeks to cross-check and demonstrate that the above factors were some of the other main factors that influenced the settlement nexus of the said six groups on particular hills and valleys in the 19th century. It can still be emphasised herein that an area with an intricate blend of hills, rivers, valleys and diverse but valuable soil and vegetation types, had the potential of attracting each ethnic group to effectively occupy it on permanent basis. The basic considerations of geological aspects of relief and drainage, types of rocks, climatic conditions of the region, watercourses, and types of soil and vegetation, were in tangent with each group's well established systems of farming, hunting and gathering, housing, and patterns of art and craft. The forces of nature such as floods and droughts characterise the natural environment of humankind. It follows that a sound knowledge of the trends or the climate and weather systems can influence humankind's daily activities, for example, the food eaten, the types of crops grown, the death rates, and the exposure to diseases.⁵⁸

It is extremely important to note that each group's settlement site and pattern were influenced by the nature of the hills and landscape and the forces of nature for survival and adaptation purposes. There is no doubt that the various groups considered factors such as space, accessibility of water sources, iron ore and building materials, and vulnerability to periodic floods, prior to selecting a permanent site for settlement in present day south east Botswana in the 19th century. This thesis, therefore, seeks to re-emphasise some of the above-mentioned factors in the settlement nexus of the said ethnic groups on hills and valleys. It is acknowledged that generally the rivers provide, inter alia, fresh water supply for domestic consumption. However, some rivers change their courses from time to time and even display seasonal variations in the amount of water discharged. Other rivers may suffer from ill-drained marshes and stagnant waters leading to ill health and water borne diseases.⁵⁹ The ethnic groups under study, therefore, chose to settle permanently in present day south east part of Botswana, on hills and valleys whose geology, relief, drainage and soil and vegetation patterns, blended well mainly with their agro-pastoral and housing life styles and needs.

⁵⁸ Goh Cheng Leong, Certificate Physical and Human Geography, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1983, p 114.

⁵⁹ Ibid, p 56.

The hardveld rocks in the hills in the south eastern areas of the region comprise old sedimentary, metamorphic and igneous rocks known as Basement complex rocks around the Gaborone area.⁶⁰ The older sedimentary rocks include the sandstones, quartzite, conglomerate shale, dolomite and limestones. The shales, sandstones, conglomerates and quartzites are reddish in colour, which is an indication of the presence of iron oxides (e.g. found at Ramotswa, Kanye, and Molepolole). The sandstones, shales, limestones and dolomite are good aquifers and are, therefore, important as sources of ground water in terms of springs (e.g. found at Ramotswa, Kanye and Molepolole), because the water percolating through these rocks may dissolve them and thus produce cavities, which may later fill with water.⁶¹

It is important to note that south east Botswana, relative to the central and western districts, was well endowed in terms of rainfall (or water sources), the durable timber and hard firewood, the veld products and wild game, the iron ore deposits, the fertile soils and good pastures. These were some of the conditions that influenced the said ethnic groups to settle on particular hills and valleys in the 19th century. For further clarification, see the Botswana maps (numbered 8) that show the distribution of rainfall, main rock groups, soils and vegetation to which reference is made in the text.⁶² The major source of water was rain and water was a very crucial resource for domestic use, the growth of crops and nurturing of pastures for domestic livestock and wild animals. Besides, the ground water in the south east was usually fresh, unlike in the Kalahari Desert where it was saline, and, therefore, unfit for consumption by people and livestock. Furthermore, the depth of the water table was shallow in the south east but became lower towards the south west, where about two thirds of Botswana's total surface area was covered by the red-grey Kalahari Desert sandy soils. The south east region was generally a blend of average monthly winter temperatures of about 13 degrees Celsius, mean annual rainfall of between 450 and 550 millimetres, and less rocky and red-grey desert sandy soils which were well drained, but unsuitable

⁶⁰ "Geology, Relief and Drainage," in Botswana National Atlas e-Book, Gaborone, Botswana, Department of Surveys and Mapping, 2000, p 2.

⁶¹ R.M.K. Silitshena and G. McLeod, Botswana: A Physical, Social and Economic Geography, Gaborone, Longman, 1998, pp 8, 9, 45.

⁶² The maps were adapted from Secondary School Atlas, Cape Town, Longman, 1997, p 23.

for crop farming.⁶³ However, the more widespread chestnut-brown or sandy loam soils in the south east were well drained and good for crop production.⁶⁴ The continuous plant growth was possible because the plants did not have to contend with very cold temperatures. The vegetation comprised mainly tree and bush savanna, partial arid and shrub savanna, and hill woodland and dense grass cover, for grazing and thatching purposes respectively.⁶⁵

The ethnic groups under study did not merely rush in, but first painstakingly assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the areas of settlement and then identified the strengths which outweighed the weaknesses. The settlement nexus of the Bangwaketse on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill (1853), the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana on Boswelakgosi hill (1858), the Bakwena on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill (1863), the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela on the slopes of Phuthadikobo hill (1872), the Balete at the foot of Makoloboto hill (1875), and the Batlokwa on the banks of the Notwane River (1887), was not by coincidence or chance, but was deliberate and well planned. A great sense of pride was applied and contentment was realised in the process. As already indicated, the said groups built big and permanent villages on hilltops and valleys in present day south east Botswana in the 19th century, on account of spacious land, prestige, the availability and accessibility of building materials and water in their respective spheres of influence. It is also acknowledged that whereas warfare played a significant role in some cases especially those of the Bangwaketse and Bahurutshe boo-Manyana, there were, however, other important, concurrent socio-economic pulling factors. In the other cases, the socio-economic aspects superseded the role of warfare.

METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

There are many techniques that can be used for data collection. These include quantitative and qualitative research methods. The researcher, however, recognised the value in consciously combining both qualitative and quantitative methods, and that is

⁶³ R.M.K. Silitshena and G. McLeod, Botswana: A Physical, Social and Economic Geography, Gaborone, Longman, 1998, pp 38, 42, 45, 47, 69.

⁶⁴ "Botswana Climate: Geology, Soils and Vegetation," in Secondary School Atlas, Cape Town, Longman, 1997, p 23.

⁶⁵ R.M.K. Silitshena and G. McLeod, Botswana: A Physical, Social and Economic Geography, Gaborone, Longman, 1998, pp 64, 65, 69, 70-73. Also see "Botswana Climate: Geology, Soils and Vegetation," in Secondary School Atlas, Cape Town, Longman, 1997, p 23.

referred to as a mixed methods approach.⁶⁶ The overall purpose was to produce a balanced research report, by taking advantage of both methods. The emphasis was much more on the qualitative method wherein in-depth oral interviews, direct observation, primary and secondary sources formed the bulk of the research activity. This is because the qualitative research is more suited to providing an in-depth insight into the past activities and struggles of the human society and an overall valid picture of society and social reality.⁶⁷

The standardized, open-ended oral interviews were effectively conducted face-to-face⁶⁸ and on an one-to-one or a group basis,⁶⁹ and written notes were recorded in a notebook to be used as reference.⁷⁰ The venues were mainly the Tribal Administration Offices and some respondents' homes in Kweneng, Southern, Kgatleng and South East Districts. Those were deliberate settings in which both the researcher and his respondents, felt most relaxed and comfortable with one another. Besides, those were environments and conditions in which the respondents felt comfortable, secure, and at ease enough to speak openly about their point of view.⁷¹ The heterogeneous sample seemed to be relevant and appropriate to the question being addressed and included men and women of varying ages, occupations, with both informal and formal educational backgrounds, and ideological or philosophical convictions, in the six targeted villages.

The researcher made use of well established interview techniques when approaching his informants. His objective was to tap out as many diverse facts as possible about the research question. The questions were clear, succinct, and devoid of any ambiguities which could result in ambiguous answers and contexts. As already pointed out, the

⁶⁶ Website: <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/qualdeb.htm>, 2006, p 1.

⁶⁷ Michael Haralambos and Martin Holborn, Sociology: Themes and Perspectives, London, Unwin Hyman, 1990, p 721.

⁶⁸ Ina Bertrand and Peter Hughes, Media Research Methods, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p 78.

⁶⁹ Michael Haralambos and Martin Holborn, Sociology: Themes and Perspectives, London, Unwin Hyman, 1990, p 736.

⁷⁰ Website: <http://www.managementhelp.org/research/overview.htm>, 2006, p 1.

⁷¹ Website: <http://www.okstate.edu/ag/agedcm4h/academic/aged5980a/5980/newpage21.htm>, 2006, p 4.

questions required the respondents to answer in their own words,⁷² that is, to compose their own answers rather than choose between a number of given answers.⁷³ The questionnaire consisted of opener, follow-up, opinions-values, feeling-behaviour, suggestions, argument, and reasons why questions. The success of the interview, and the quality of the data collected, depended on the researcher's willingness to listen attentively but without prejudice or judgement, and to make the respondent(s) feel completely comfortable. The researcher was prepared thoroughly in terms of the subject matter, and appreciation of the personal and cultural circumstances of the respondents was paramount during the interviews. The researcher kept a low profile and never badgered the respondents,⁷⁴ let alone asked embarrassing questions dealing with personal or private matters.⁷⁵ Confidentiality was also guaranteed where it was absolutely necessary.

The researcher also made a conscious effort to be unbiased and did not try to influence how the respondents answered the asked questions, by either pressurising them to answer the questions in the quickest and shortest time permissible, despite the nature of their complexity, or running out of patience and complete the sentences or answers on their behalf. The researcher also avoided outright prestige bias, which is the tendency for respondents to answer in a way that makes them feel better.⁷⁶ The researcher also spoke and conducted the interviews in Setswana, the language spoken too by almost all respondents. The majority of the respondents talked with the honesty and openness the researcher was seeking and as such they gave full, honest, and open answers, that is, they responded objectively in their own terms and through their own linguistic structures. The concepts and words used by both the researcher and respondents were clarified on the spot, and issues were explored in greater depth.

⁷² Ina Bertrand and Peter Hughes, Media Research Methods, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p 72.

⁷³ Michael Haralambos and Martin Holborn, Sociology: Themes and Perspectives, London, Unwin Hyman, 1990, p 730.

⁷⁴ Ina Bertrand and Peter Hughes, Media Research Methods, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, pp 73, 75.

⁷⁵ Website: <http://www-static.cc.gatech.edu/classes/cs6751-97-winter/Topics/quest-design/>, 2006, p 6.

⁷⁶ Website: <http://www-static.cc.gatech.edu/classes/cs6751-97-winter/Topics/quest-design/>, p 6.

The researcher, however, did not completely disregard the paramount importance of closed or fixed-choice questions in the research. The closed questions were, therefore, limited to the last stage of the interviews solely for statistical and confirmatory purposes.⁷⁷

The researcher also employed concurrent direct observation, and open and closed questions as effective strategies for data collection for the research. That was because the researcher was equally aware that simple observation may not provide the information sought or may provide only ambiguous data. So, asking the respondents on the spot, helped to clarify what was being observed at the time.

The researcher carried out a fieldwork audit of the six villages in terms of the sites on which the villages were originally founded or established. The objective was to further explore and confirm what was alluded to during the oral interviews and in the secondary sources. The researcher surveyed all the six villages and noted the different shapes, heights and positions of the hills vis-à-vis the geographical positions of the old clay and iron ore mines, the arable fields and pastures, the proximity of significant seasonal rivers and springs, the types of soils and vegetation and the myths associated with particular hills. The digital maps depicting the geographical positions of the hills (Kanye [Ntsweng] in Kanye, Molepolole [Ntsweng] in Molepolole, Boswelakgosi in Manyana, Phuthadikobo in Mochudi, and Makoloboto in Ramotswa) vis-à-vis the proximity of primary watercourses (Pharing gorge, Tshwaanyane, Kolobeng, and Notwane) were constructed, as further evidence of the settlement nexus of the ethnic groups already alluded to in present day south east Botswana in the 19th century. The researcher further noted the position of the stone walls on Dithubaruba hill south west of Molepolole, Kanye (Ntsweng) hill in Kanye and Boswelakgosi hill in Manyana, and the grinding stones at the foot of Dimawe hill, as further archaeological evidence in the study.

Finally, the researcher considered both primary and secondary sources in order to be able to investigate the subject under discussion. The other supplementary and complementary primary and secondary sources were examined in the Kgosi Bathoen II

⁷⁷ Michael Haralambos and Martin Holborn, Sociology: Themes and Perspectives, London, Unwin Hyman, 1990, p 730.

Museum in Kanye, Kgosi Sechele I Museum in Molepolole, Phuthadikobo Museum in Mochudi, Botswana National Museum and Art Gallery and Library in Gaborone, Botswana National Archives and Records Service Library in Gaborone, Department of Meteorological Services Library in Gaborone, and the University of Botswana Library. The main objective was to maintain the credibility of the study among other criteria and to enhance further corroboration by other scholars on the same subject matter in the future.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE BAKWENA ON MOLEPOLOLE (NTSWENG) HILL IN 1863

My objectives in this chapter are to highlight the origins of the Bakwena in the Transvaal and their major stopovers within the Transvaal and south east Botswana that preceded their final settlement on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill in Molepolole in 1863. I also highlight in general the reasons associated with the abandonment of those major settlement sites. The approximate dates for the settlement at and / or for the subsequent migration from the major settlement sites shall be provided where it is possible in this chapter. Finally, I explain the reasons why the Bakwena settled on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill in 1863.

The Bakwena are considered first because they are generally acknowledged to be the pioneers in present day south east Botswana as well as being senior in rank to all the other ethnic groups under study.⁷⁸ Historically and chronologically, the Bakwena became the hosts of the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana (1858), the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela (1872), the Balete (1853-1863), and the Batlokwa (1887) respectively. Those ethnic groups settled in present day south east Botswana in the second half of the 19th century.⁷⁹ The Bakwena are believed to have already penetrated Kweneng by 1730⁸⁰ and by the middle of the 19th century, they were well established in Kweneng.⁸¹ The Bangwaketse are believed to have been derived from the Bakwena around 1740⁸² and

⁷⁸ Isaac Schapera, "Notes on the early history of the Kwena (Bakwena ba ga Sechele)," in Botswana Notes and Records, Vol 12, Gaborone, The Botswana Society, 1980, p 83.

⁷⁹ Sandy and Elinah Grant, Decorated Homes in Botswana, Mochudi, Phuthadikobo Museum, 1995, pp 19, 26.

⁸⁰ Leonard D. Ngcongco, "Aspects of the History of Bangwaketse to 1910," a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Philosophy at Dalhousie University, April 1977, p 43.

⁸¹ Sandy and Elinah Grant, Decorated Homes in Botswana, Mochudi, Phuthadikobo Museum, 1995, p 26.

⁸² Isaac Schapera, "Notes on the early history of the Kwena (Bakwena ba ga Sechele)," in Botswana Notes and Records, Vol 12, Gaborone, The Botswana Society, 1980, p 83, and "A short history of the Bangwaketse," in Traditional Histories of the Native Tribes of Bechuanaland Protectorate, Cape Town, The Lovedale Press, 1954, p 1.

were already settled in the Kanye area by 1795.⁸³ Be that as it may, the Bangwaketse, the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana, the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela, the Balete and the Batlokwa are collectively treated as ‘late comers’ in the region in comparison to the Bakwena. It is equally important to point out here that Molepolole hill is also commonly known as Ntsweng hill in the Bakwena traditions. The names, Molepolole and Ntsweng, shall therefore be used interchangeably in this chapter and the subsequent chapters in this study. Molepolole village was named after Molepolole hill and / or the Setswana expression, “*O mo lepolole*” which is translated as “provide him or her with the answer” in a riddle. The Bakwena venerate a crocodile (*kwena*).⁸⁴

The Bakwena had, by the beginning of the 1860s and for many years, been looking for a spacious, auspicious, hilltop village site that was not yet claimed by another group in Kweneng. The Bakwena travelled extensively in Kweneng, whereupon they painstakingly and relatively compared the advantages and disadvantages of each settlement site. The Bakwena finally settled on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill in Molepolole in 1863, after many years of relocation from one village site to another. Of all the village sites, Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill in Molepolole was the best suited for a planned, permanent, nucleated settlement pattern. Molepolole had since become the tribal town of the Bakwena. The settlement of the Bakwena on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill was, therefore, a dream come true.⁸⁵ Map 9 depicts the strategic position of Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill vis-à-vis Dithubaruba hill, the distribution and the proximity of the seasonal rivers as sources of water supplies, the Borakalalo valley, and the other abandoned settlement sites. It also indicates the location of the other important hills in the history of the Bakwena in the 19th century.⁸⁶

From Mabyanamatshwaana or Swartkoppies (1651-1655) near present day Brits in South Africa, the major stopovers of the Bakwena included Rathateng (1655) near the junction of the Odi (Crocodile) and Marico rivers and not far from what is now

⁸³ Sandy and Elinah Grant, Decorated Homes in Botswana, Mochudi, Phuthadikobo Museum, 1995, p 16.

⁸⁴ Interview: Batshwentse Mosarwa, 1927, Headman of Arbitration, at the Main *kgotla* in Molepolole on 8 June 2005.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Map 9 which shows the strategic position of spacious Ntsweng hill vis-à-vis the proximity of Tshwaanyane River, Borakalalo valley, and Kobokwe cave to which reference is made in the text was designed by the Department of Surveys and Mapping, Gaborone, Botswana, 2005.

Buffelsdrift, Mosweu near the Crocodile pools (1740), Odi, Phuthadikobo hill (1770), Shokwane hill about 30 kilometres north of Molepolole (1770-1790, 1807-1822), Dithejwane (1790-1795, early 1820s), Mothathe (1820s), Lephephe (1829-1833), Tshwenyane near present day Zeerust (late 1830s), Tshonwane hill east of present day Ramotswa (1843), Kolobeng River (1845-1851), Dimawe hill (1851-1852), Dithubaruba-Dithejwane hills (1853-1863), and finally Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill (1863-1937).⁸⁷

There are many reasons that persuaded the Bakwena to keep moving from stage to stage on their migration from Mabyanamatshwaana to Molepolole and within Kweneng. Those reasons included the severe drought (*leuba*) and famine in 1651, between 1790-1810 and 1847-1851, the succession disputes in the 1820s and early 1830s, the Kololo, Ndebele and Boer incursions in 1824-26, 1829-37 and 1852 respectively, the threats from the tsetse fly and malaria caused by mosquito bites in 1863.⁸⁸ The immediate cause for the migration from Mabyanamatshwaana was an outbreak of a terrible famine (*tlala e e boitshegang*) that resulted in the scarcity of food and water and the death of cattle coupled with a reluctance to continue to occupy one area in a situation of drought. To this one can add the personal ambition and lust for power on the part of *kgosi* Kgabo II.⁸⁹ Subsequently, the Bakwena periodically moved progressively further to the west in search of fresh water supplies, pastures and wild animals to hunt. They also attempted to avoid exposure to external attacks firstly from the Kololo of Sebetwane,⁹⁰ secondly from the Ndebele of Mzilikazi who raided both the Bakwena and Bangwaketse for cattle and the latter “were forced westwards into

⁸⁷ Isaac Schapera, “Notes on the early history of the Kwena (Bakwena ba ga Sechele),” in Botswana Notes and Records, Vol 12, Gaborone, The Botswana Society, 1980, pp 83-87. Also see Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, Historical Dictionary of Botswana, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1989, pp 28, 63, 68 and Map 4 that shows the place of origin and the major stopovers of the Bakwena in the present day Republic of South Africa and south east Botswana was designed by the Department of Surveys and Mapping, Gaborone, Botswana, 2007.

⁸⁸ Isaac Schapera, “Notes on the early history of the Kwena (Bakwena ba ga Sechele),” in Botswana Notes and Records, Vol 12, Gaborone, The Botswana Society, 1980, pp 83-87. Also see the interview: Keineetse Sebele, 1938, Businessman, at Molepolole on 3 November 2005.

⁸⁹ Leonard D. Ngcongco, “Aspects of the History of Bangwaketse to 1910,” a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Philosophy at Dalhousie University, April 1977, p 50.

⁹⁰ Isaac Schapera, “Notes on the early history of the Kwena (Bakwena ba ga Sechele),” in Botswana Notes and Records, Vol 12, Gaborone, The Botswana Society, 1980, pp 86.

more arid country to escape the raiding armies,”⁹¹ and thirdly from the Transvaal Boers.⁹²

As already indicated above, the Bakwena had occupied the Dithubaruba-Dithejwane hills from 1853 to 1863 before opting for Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill in 1863. Dithubaruba is a big hill of which the western side is flat topped. It was that flat topped part that both Sechele [Chief of the Bakwena] and Mosielele [Chief of Bakgatla ba ga Mmanaana] and their families occupied after the Boer-Bakwena war of 1852. The rest of the community lived at the foot of the hill on the banks of the Dithejwane River. Generally the area was swampy and thus was auspicious in terms of a reliable water supply for the Bakwena and their livestock. Nevertheless, Dithubaruba was finally abandoned in favour of Molepolole because of limited space, population growth and land degradation. Moreover, the swampy areas became the breeding ground for the mosquito that caused malaria.⁹³ Normally, malaria maintained its seasonal endemic character by being most active in the late summer and autumn months after the summer rains.⁹⁴ The seasonal pools in the Dithejwane River especially posed a serious threat to the lives of the Bakwena because their traditional houses were not mosquito proof.

Following their decision to abandon Dithubaruba, the Bakwena selected and settled on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill in 1863. They selected Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill because in relative terms, it was a big flat-topped hill with steep cliffs to the south, south east, and south west, and the northern side was gently undulating from the top to the Borakalalo valley below. Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill stood at an altitude of 1130 metres⁹⁵ and covered a total surface area of about 56,000 square metres,⁹⁶ which was enough to accommodate the whole community whose preferred settlement pattern was

⁹¹ Alec Campbell and Graham Child, “The Impact of Man on the Environment of Botswana,” in Botswana Notes and Records, Vol 3, Gaborone, The Botswana Society, 1971, p 97.

⁹² Janet Parsons, “Kolobeng: Home of the Livingstones and the Bakwena, 1847-1852,” Gaborone, courtesy of the Archaeology Unit of the Botswana National Museum and Art Gallery, p 2.

⁹³ Interview: Keineetse Sebele, 1938, Businessman, at Molepolole on 3 November 2005.

⁹⁴ “Bechuanaland Protectorate Annual Reports of 1912/13/29,” Botswana National Bibliography, Vol 10-29, p 25.

⁹⁵ E. R. Jayaratne and V. Ramachandran, “A Comparative Study of the Lightning Incidence in Gaborone and Molepolole,” in Botswana Notes and Records, Vol 29, Gaborone, The Botswana Society, 1997, p 45.

⁹⁶ Kawina Power Kawina, “Kgosi Sechele I Museum,” Molepolole, 2004.

based on precedence of descent and age set organization. By 1857 the Bakwena population at Dithubaruba was estimated to be 20,000,⁹⁷ and therefore, Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill was comparatively more suitable for a growing population of that magnitude. As already indicated above, the space on Dithubaruba hill was limited and only reserved for the royals. On the other hand, the space on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill was large enough to cater for both the royals and the commoners. The Bakwena's settlement on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill was ideal because they could live together in a cluster in a big village, which was divided into wards for effective central and local government strategies. Besides, overcrowding was not yet anticipated. And when overcrowding finally set in, the valley (Borakalalo) below Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill was still a reserve to be effectively occupied by the growing population. The Bakwena community remained on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill for 73 years and that suggests that they were content with their hilltop site, which was selected in 1863.⁹⁸

In 1852, the Transvaal Boers attacked, defeated and burnt down the Bakwena's village at Dimawe. Nevertheless, after the decisive Boer-Bakwena war of 1852 at Dimawe hill, the Boers and the Bakwena reached a truce in 1857 that lasted for many years.⁹⁹ It was not, therefore, solely on the basis of the fear of future wars that the Bakwena chose and settled on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill, but rather because Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill was habitable and prestigious. Moreover, Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill was also not prone to malaria as opposed to Dithubaruba hill, since this locality was not swampy because topographically it was characterised by deep gorges.¹⁰⁰ The particular gorges on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill efficiently expedited drainage of the surface runoff during the severe thunderstorms. Molepolole (Ntsweng), as a hilltop village, was then and is still naturally cushioned against flash floods. Finally, the pools in the

⁹⁷ J. Mutero Chirenje, "Tswana Intercourse with Traders; German Missionaries come to Bechuanaland, 1850-1860," in A History of Northern Botswana 1850-1910, London, Associated University Press, 1877, p 64.

⁹⁸ Interview: Keineetse Sebele, 1938, Businessman, at Molepolole on 3 November 2005.

⁹⁹ Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, Historical Dictionary of Botswana, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1989, pp 11-12, 14, 111.

¹⁰⁰ E. R. Jayaratne and V. Ramachandran, "A Comparative Study of the Lightning Incidence in Gaborone and Molepolole," in Botswana Notes and Records, Vol 29, Gaborone, The Botswana Society, 1997, p 50.

Tshwaanyane River were not yet, according to Bakwena tradition, breeding grounds for the mosquitoes that caused malaria.¹⁰¹

Another reason why the Bakwena settled on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill was because it was strategically positioned vis-à-vis the most reliable water sources. To the south west, there were narrow gorges that led to the fresh waters of the Tshwaanyane River that ran through the natural ravine below. In that regard, the sustainable water supplies for both the community and the livestock were readily accessible within a reasonable proximity to the village. Besides, the water table at the foot of the hill was highly elevated, and therefore, shallow wells were dug and those provided the fresh ground water for the human consumption. Besides, the grey clay (daga) with which the Bakwena women constructed and maintained the relatively durable walls of huts and courtyards (*malwapa*), was readily available at Borakalalo valley. The women conveniently walked short distances to and from the mine area. The grey, red, and yellow soil oxides for decorating the walls of huts and inner household courtyards (*malwapa*) were also readily mined at Dishabanyana on top of Molepolole (Ntsweng) as well as at Borakalalo.¹⁰² The habit of colouring and decorating the walls of houses and *malwapa* in different shades was the privilege and creativity of an individual family.¹⁰³ Besides, to have beautifully painted house and *malwapa* walls was the pride of the home owners, particularly the women folk, because they had to combine the roles of architect, builder and artistic designer.¹⁰⁴ It was the habit that each individual family decorated their own houses and *malwapa*. That was an area where women had to demonstrate their sophisticated socio-cultural artistic skills.¹⁰⁵ The additional building materials from Borakalalo valley included the durable building poles from the *mogonono* (silver leaf tree), *mohudiri* (*Combretum apiculatum*), and *monato* (*Burkea africana*) trees, and the perennial tall, coarse, stemmy, fibrous grass species such as

¹⁰¹ Interview: Batshwentse Mosarwa, 1927, Headman of Arbitration, at the Main *kgotla* in Molepolole on 8 June 2005.

¹⁰² Interview: Batshwentse Mosarwa, 1927, Headman of Arbitration, at the Main *kgotla* in Molepolole on 8 June 2005.

¹⁰³ Group interview: Mmabuta Mhalapitsa, 1954, Senior General Duty Assistant, and Letsweletse Ramatlakapela, 1979, General Duty Assistant, at the Kgosi Sechele I Museum in Molepolole, on 14 November 2005.

¹⁰⁴ Sandy and Elinah Grant, *Decorated Homes in Botswana*, Mochudi, Phuthadikobo Museum, 1995, p 14.

¹⁰⁵ Group interview: Mmabuta Mhalapitsa, 1954, Senior General Duty Assistant, and Letsweletse Ramatlakapela, 1979, General Duty Assistant, at the Kgosi Sechele I Museum in Molepolole, on 14 November 2005.

motsikiri (*Eragrotis pallens*) and *tshikitshane* (*Stipagrotis uniplumis*) for thatching the traditional houses.¹⁰⁶ So, the settlement on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill was advantageous because the Bakwena community readily exploited the building materials of the area without literally having to travel long distances to procure such.

Since there was, after 1863, neither short-term threat of warfare nor long-term anticipation of war in the future, the Bakwena heavily invested in a durable and permanent infrastructure in addition to committing themselves to Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill. To crown it all, the Bakwena culturally developed the art of dry stone walling and the magnificent dry stone walls on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill and Borakalalo were mainly constructed as perimeter boundary fences.¹⁰⁷ The stones are commonly known as *phate ya lentswe* and were obtained from under ground on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill and the Borakalalo valley. The stones were also used for marking the foundations of the houses and the courtyard walls on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill. According to the oral traditions, the stone walls on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill had nothing to do with an anticipated war, but however, added beauty and value to the houses and *malwapa* walls that were stylishly decorated with grey, red, and yellow clay oxides.¹⁰⁸ The settlement pattern of the Bakwena was then planned and orderly to the extent that, by the 1870s the village on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill was evaluated as follows by a medical doctor and natural scientist, Emil Holub: “Viewed from the grassy valley in which we were standing, Molepolole appeared undeniably the most picturesque of all the Bechuana towns...”¹⁰⁹

Another reason why the Bakwena settled on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill was that it was endowed with iron ore, which was important in the manufacturing of durable tools and weapons like knives, sickles, hoes, spear heads and axes, and all these were used for

¹⁰⁶ H. J. van Rensburg, “Range Management in Botswana,” in Botswana Notes and Records, Vol 3, Gaborone, The Botswana Society, 1971, pp 114, 116- 118.

¹⁰⁷ Sandy and Elinah Grant, Decorated Homes in Botswana, Mochudi, Phuthadikobo Museum, 1995, p 41.

¹⁰⁸ One Setlhaolo, “An ethno-historical perspective on the use of raw materials for demarcating space in Molepolole from 18th century to the present,” a dissertation submitted to the History Department of the University of Botswana in partial fulfilment of the Bachelor of Arts Degree, April 2003, p 22. Also see the group interview: Mmabuta Mhalapitsa, Senior General Duty Assistant, and Letsweletse Ramatlakapela, General Duty Assistant, at the Kgosi Sechele I Museum in Molepolole, on 14 November 2005.

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in Sandy and Elinah Grant, Decorated Homes in Botswana, Mochudi, Phuthadikobo Museum, 1995, p 20.

various purposes and tasks. In order to claim exclusive rights to mine and process iron ore into the above tools and weapons, the Bakwena community had to settle permanently on the hill, because it was not yet claimed by any other ethnic group in the region.¹¹⁰ Besides, geologically, about 40% of the central Molepolole area consisted of quartzite, which was rich in iron ore, and the northern area consisted of sandstones, mudstones and shales, which were good aquifers of ground water.¹¹¹

The periphery of Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill was equally attractive to the Bakwena since they were fulltime, mixed subsistence farmers and part-time hunters and gatherers. In this regard, the Borakalalo valley favoured the practice of those economic activities. The Borakalalo valley was a suitable grazing area of the cattle, goats and sheep which the Bakwena kept as a source of meat, both sour and fresh milk and bride wealth.¹¹² Besides, the cattle could be slaughtered to celebrate very important occasions like birth, initiation, marriage and death.¹¹³ The *mosu* (*Acacia tortilis*) and *mongana* (Black thorn) trees, and *moretlwa* (Wild raisin) bush, were a source of palatable pods and valuable browsing for livestock respectively.¹¹⁴ In addition, the good quality perennial grasses such as *mhaga* (*Panicum maximum*), *phoka* (*Urochloa trichopus*) and *mosekangwetsi* (*Cenchrus ciliaris*), which survived underneath thorn bushes and among rocks, provided food for livestock.¹¹⁵ Besides, the Borakalalo valley and its periphery consisted mainly of chestnut-brown soils, which comprised 65% sand, 20% silt and 15% clay-sized particles, humus and important minerals such as phosphorus, potash and magnesium, and were, therefore, suitable for subsistence arable farming.¹¹⁶ The main crops were sorghum and millet. The seeds were sown by the wasteful method of broadcasting by hand and the cultivation of small fields was

¹¹⁰ Interview: Batshwentse Mosarwa, 1927, Headman of Arbitration, at the Main *kgotla* in Molepolole on 8 June 2005.

¹¹¹ E. R. Jayaratne and V. Ramachandran, "A Comparative Study of the Lightning Incidence in Gaborone and Molepolole," in Botswana Notes and Records, Vol 29, Gaborone, The Botswana Society, 1997, p 51.

¹¹² Isaac Schapera, The Tswana, London, International African Institute, 1953, p 23.

¹¹³ Thomas Tlou and Alec Campbell, History of Botswana, Gaborone, Macmillan, 1997, p 114.

¹¹⁴ H. J. van Rensburg, "Range Management in Botswana," in Botswana Notes and Records, Vol 3, Gaborone, The Botswana Society, 1971, pp 116-118.

¹¹⁵ R.M.K. Silitshena and G. McLeod, Botswana: A Physical, Social and Economic Geography, Gaborone, Longman, 1998, p 69. Also see H. J. van Rensburg, "Range Management in Botswana," in Botswana Notes and Records, Vol 3, Gaborone, The Botswana Society, 1971, p 113.

¹¹⁶ R.M.K. Silitshena and G. McLeod, Botswana: A Physical, Social and Economic Geography, Gaborone, Longman, 1998, p 64.

done by women using hand hoes. The fields were normally weeded only once and the crop rotation and the fertilization of the soil with manure were not practiced.¹¹⁷ Livestock keeping and crop farming complemented each other. When the crops failed due to drought, the Bakwena therefore, relied on their livestock for food. Conversely, in years of good rainfall and plentiful harvest, they relied on their crops and allowed their livestock to increase in number.¹¹⁸

Furthermore, the valley and its periphery were well stocked with wild animals that the Bakwena hunted for meat and skins. The much-sought-after animals for meat included the roan, sable, tsesebe, buffalo, impala, kudu, wildebeest, hartebeest, springbok and the gemsbok. These were sensitive grazers that only moved beyond the boundaries of Kweneng when the vigour of the perennial grassland deteriorated, that is, when the bushy plants encroached into the open grassland. Rhino and elephant were mainly hunted for ivory and skins.¹¹⁹ On the other hand, the gathering of veld products that included the fruits, roots and berries were common seasonal activities among the Bakwena women. The gathered wild produce was rated in importance according to ease of collection, the length of the season and abundance.¹²⁰ For example, the women gathered *mmopudu* (*Mimusops zeyheri*) fruits in September on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill, *morula* (*Sclerocarya caffra*) fruits and *moretlwa* (*Grewia flava*) berries for brewing the traditional beer, *mmilo* (*Vangueria infausta*) and *moretologa* (*Ximenia Americana*) fruits, which were rich in vitamins from January to March and from February to March respectively in the valley.¹²¹

Moreover, the Bakwena community mainly used fire for cooking, roasting and warmth throughout the year. The most preferred tree species for firewood were the *mogonono* and *mohudiri*, whose wood provided long lasting ambers and hot fires that did not emit much smoke, and were readily available in the Borakalalo valley and the periphery.

¹¹⁷ Isaac Schapera, Rainmaking Rites of Tswana Tribes, Cambridge, African Studies Centre, 1971, p 12.

¹¹⁸ R.M.K. Silitshena and G. McLeod, Botswana: A Physical, Social and Economic Geography, Gaborone, Longman, 1998, p 87.

¹¹⁹ Alec Campbell, and Graham Child, "The Impact of Man on the Environment of Botswana," in Botswana Notes and Records, Vol 3, Gaborone, The Botswana Society, 1971, p 93.

¹²⁰ R.M.K. Silitshena and G. McLeod, Botswana: A Physical, Social and Economic Geography, Gaborone, Longman, 1998, pp 77.

¹²¹ Interview: Batshwentse Mosarwa, 1927, Headman of Arbitration, at the Main *kgotla* in Molepolole, on 8 June 2005.

Either the women collected the firewood by head load or men by ox-drawn wagons or sledges.¹²²

For health reasons, the medicinal plant such as *sengaparile* (Devil's claw) was readily available and harvested in an ecological way in the Borakalalo valley and Kweneng west. The Bakwena used it for its healing properties and treatment of a wide range of illnesses such as rheumatism, arthritis, high blood pressure, stomach and skin disorders and skin problems.¹²³ The traditional anti-septics applied after male circumcision which included the *kgophane* (*Aloe zebrine*), *khupamarama* and *moretologa* roots, were procured from the valley. The roots were boiled and the initiates drank the concoction to avoid possible death from pneumonia or septicaemia. The concoction speeded up the healing of the wounds.¹²⁴ The Bakwena, therefore, settled on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill because generally the tree and bush savanna, grass and soil types in the valley were very useful on account of their durable timber, fruit, browse qualities, healing purposes, thatch and crop production potentials respectively.¹²⁵

The Bakwena were known to be a highly religious people. In terms of the Bakwena's magico-religious convictions, it was logical to settle on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill in order to co-exist with their ancestors (clan founders, heroes, warriors), whom they strongly believed dwelt in the Kobokwe Cave, located in a high cliff south of the hill. The ancestral spirits (particularly those of the strong chiefs who had ruled well and brought success to the entire community) ensured that the Bakwena community lived according to the traditional laws and customs, that is, by revering the aged and those in authority, being self-controlled, courteous and hospitable, respecting the property rights of others and being united all the time. The bad conduct such as the moral degeneration, the disregard for authority and the practice of witchcraft angered the ancestral spirits to the extent that they punished the offenders with sickness, death, hail, lightning and severe drought. The chiefs were the direct link between the

¹²² Interview: Batshwentse Mosarwa, 1927, Headman of Arbitration, at the Main *kgotla* in Molepolole, on 8 June 2005. Also see R.M.K. Silitshena and G. McLeod, Botswana: A Physical, Social and Economic Geography, Gaborone, Longman, 1998, p 250,

¹²³ R.M.K. Silitshena and G. McLeod, Botswana: A Physical, Social and Economic Geography, Gaborone, Longman, 1998, pp 83-84.

¹²⁴ Interview: Keineetse Sebele, 1938, Businessman, at Molepolole on 3 November 2005.

¹²⁵ H. J. van Rensburg, "Range Management in Botswana," in Botswana Notes and Records, Vol 3, Gaborone, The Botswana Society, 1971, p 114.

Bakwena community and their ancestors. Procedurally, the chiefs visited the cave to talk to their ancestors on behalf of the tribe on matters of public interest. They asked their ancestors for rain during severe droughts, for health during sickness, for success in a battle and hunting and for protection against witchcraft.¹²⁶ The cave was also believed to be the home of a huge snake with multiple heads, which symbolised the presence, mystical and spiritual powers of the Bakwena ancestors. During the night, the snake could be seen by virtue of a peculiar light (glittering eyes) in the vicinity of the cave.¹²⁷ The same light could be seen crossing from one hill to another.¹²⁸ The snake could be seen during the day on land, in the vicinity of Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill, and it was traditionally recognised, respected and honoured as *Mokwena*.¹²⁹ It was clear that reptiles (snakes) were peculiar creatures that occupied a special place in the mythologies of the Bakwena, and they were often attributed with supernormal powers wherever they occurred.¹³⁰ So, the existence of the cave, which was associated with the presence of the ancestors, functionally strengthened unity and discipline among the Bakwena on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill. The Bakwena felt watched most of the time by the ancestral spirits. Besides, the Bakwena most felt the symbolic presence and the mystical powers of both the human spirits of the long dead and the nature spirits of the earth on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill. The nature spirits of the earth were strongly believed to be invisible but dwelling in the rocks and boulders on the hill and in the forest in the Tshwaanyane ravine. Chief Sechele I and his trusted rain doctors (who were sourced from the Bakalanga, Bapedi, Shangane and Babididi ethnic groups), readily obtained some of their knowledge, wisdom and insights from the said spirits especially when performing annual rain-making rituals at a secluded grove on the hill.¹³¹ The spirits were thought to pay close attention to the lives of their living descendents and therefore, were the most suitable links between the Bakwena community and *Modimo* (God), who was the main source of life, rain, good health,

¹²⁶ Tduetso Setsiba, "The Cave of Fear and Evil," in *Monitor*, Vol 6, No 02, 16 January 2006, p 10. Also see Thomas Tlou and Alec Campbell, *History of Botswana*, Gaborone, Macmillan, 1997, pp 115-116.

¹²⁷ Interview: Batshwentse Mosarwa, 1927, Headman of Arbitration, at the Main *kgotla* in Molepolole, on 8 June 2005.

¹²⁸ Tduetso Setsiba, "The Cave of Fear and Evil," in *Monitor*, Vol 6, No 02, 16 January 2006, p 10.

¹²⁹ Interview: Batshwentse Mosarwa, 1927, Headman of Arbitration, at the Main *kgotla* in Molepolole, on 8 June 2005.

¹³⁰ Ronald Auerbach, "First steps in Setswana Herpetology," in *Botswana Notes and Records*, Vol 18, Gaborone, The Botswana Society, 1986, pp 71, 74.

¹³¹ Interview: Keineetse Sebele, 1938, Businessman, at Molepolole on 3 November 2005.

fertility, food and protection.¹³² The spirits could avert or improve a situation such as lack of rain and / or a threat of a severe drought. So, the Bakwena felt mystically insured against any possible danger and greatly honoured to be living in close proximity and in harmony with their ancestors and the nature spirits of the earth on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill. To crown it all, the rain medicines that comprised the *magogodi a noka* or refuse from the river banks (like twigs, leaves and moss), tadpoles and mud, abounded in the nearby Tshwaanyane River.¹³³

Furthermore, the Bakwena settled on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill at the time when it was highly prestigious to occupy hilltops. The Bangwaketse and Bahurutshe boo-Manyana were already settled on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill and Boswelakgosi hill by 1853 and 1858 respectively. In relative terms, Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill offered the Bakwena an unobstructed, panoramic view from all angles of the countryside, which was also well stocked with wild animals. As a security measure, from that vantage point the Bakwena community was safe from big and dangerous animals like elephants, buffaloes and rhinos, and also from predators like lions that followed the movements of both these as well as small and less dangerous animals.¹³⁴

Historically, the Bakwena and Bangwaketse were rivals and their rivalry was epitomized by the reprisals in the pillage of cattle and the wars of retribution in the region.¹³⁵ The Bangwaketse were the first to take refuge temporarily on a spacious and seemingly unconquerable, big, flat topped hill called Kanye (Ntsweng) in 1798/99. They, however, settled on it permanently in 1853, whereas the Bakwena opted for a rather smaller hill called Dithubaruba, which was found by the Kololo and Bangwaketse to be insecure in 1824 and 1826 respectively. Presumably, the Bakwena settled on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill in 1863 in order to match what they perceived to be a trend set by the Bangwaketse as far back as 1853. The Bakwena also settled on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill presumably to equate and demonstrate their paramountcy and supremacy to their subordinates, the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana, by settling on a

¹³² John S. Mbiti, Introduction to African Religion, Oxford, Heinemann, 1991, p 52.

¹³³ Interview: Keineetse Sebele, 1938, Businessman, at Molepolole on 3 November 2005.

¹³⁴ Interview: Batshwentse Mosarwa, 1927, Headman of Arbitration, at the Main *kgotla* in Molepolole, on 8 June 2005.

¹³⁵ Isaac Schapera, "A short history of the Bangwaketse," in Traditional Histories of the Native Tribes of Bechuanaland Protectorate, Cape Town, The Lovedale Press, 1954, pp 3-4.

bigger hill as compared to Boswelakgosi hill, which was settled on by the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana in 1858. Boswelakgosi hill was bigger than Dithubaruba hill, on which the Bakwena were settled at that time. Perhaps the Bakwena's relocation from Dithubaruba hill and their subsequent settlement on the spacious Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill, was an expression of a diplomatic prima-facie case against the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana's better choice of a hill for settlement in present day south east Botswana. The Bakwena probably felt somewhat challenged by their subordinates. Logically, it was uncultured of the commoners to settle on a somewhat bigger hill than that of their hosts, who were entitled to an annual tribute in agricultural produce.¹³⁶ As already indicated, the differences in the size of the hilltop sites reflected the differences in the powers of the respective chiefs.¹³⁷

In conclusion the Bakwena settled on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill on account that the hill was more spacious and harboured iron ore deposits and red-brown soil oxide for decorating the walls of houses and courtyards. Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill was also home of their ancestors. The hill was also in close proximity to the reliable water sources and the building materials especially the grey clay daga and thatching grasses, which were readily procured in the Borakalalo valley. The community only had to travel short distances while exploiting those evenly distributed, renewable resources. The establishment of Molepolole village on the Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill was also geographically strategic in respect of a long distance trade, whose main exports were elephant tusks, skins and ostrich feathers. Molepolole lay along the missionary road to the north, which was popularised by missionaries such as Robert Moffat, David Livingstone, John Mackenzie and others. The route stretched from Kuruman via Mafeking to Kanye, Molepolole and Shoshong.¹³⁸ The Bakwena commanded access to the natural resources of the Kgalagadi because they occupied part of the fringes of the

¹³⁶ Leach Tlhomelang, "Bahurutshe bo-Manyana," a dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts at the University College of Botswana, 1977, p 10.

¹³⁷ Daniel Caister, "Archaeological Perspectives on settlement patterns in South East Kweneng District," in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, p 92.

¹³⁸ Leonard D. Ngcongco, "Aspects of the History of Bangwaketse to 1910," a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Philosophy at Dalhousie University, April 1977, p 154.

Kalahari Desert and thus in the 1860s and 1870s Molepolole hill prospered as the nexus of the trans-Kgalagadi trade in ivory, ostrich feathers, and karosses.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, Historical Dictionary of Botswana, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1989, p 81.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE BANGWAKETSE ON KANYE (NTSWENG) HILL IN 1853

My objectives in this chapter are to firstly highlight the settlement pattern and origins of the Bangwaketse and secondly the reasons why they subsequently migrated from one settlement site to another in the Transvaal and Gangwaketse. Thirdly, I state and explain the reasons why the Bangwaketse eventually settled on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill in 1853.

I also herein state that Kanye hill is also known as Ntsweng as per the traditions of the Bangwaketse. The names, Kanye and Ntsweng, shall be used interchangeably in this chapter and the subsequent chapters. Kanye also refers to the name of the village and / or the tribal capital of the Bangwaketse. Kanye, as a village or a tribal capital, was named after Kanye hill (commonly known as Ntsweng). The name Kanye was also adopted from the Ndebele's slogan, "*masifekanye!*" (let us all die once!). The slogan suggested that Mzilikazi's Ndebele warriors were determined to sacrifice their lives in their endeavour to rob the powerless Bangwaketse community of their valuable cattle in the late 1820s and early 1830s. According to the Ndebele language, "*kanye*" means 'one' and / or 'once' depending on the intonation and the context in which it is used. In addition the name Kanye was derived from "*kanya*" (hit hard) in the Bangwaketse's expression, "*re tla ba kanya*" (we will hit them [Ndebele] hard).¹⁴⁰

The Bangwaketse are considered second in this study because they are believed to be an offshoot of the Bakwena. The Bangwaketse also venerate a crocodile (*kwena*) and they customarily acknowledge the Bakwena as their seniors in the tribal rank. Nevertheless, both the Bangwaketse and the Bakwena claim a common descent from the Bakwena of Chief Mogopa while the latter were still settled in the southern bushveld along the Crocodile (Odi) River from the Pretoria area to its confluence with

¹⁴⁰ Group interview: Modientsho Mathiba, 1932, Headman of Arbitration, and Mokue Malau, 1916, Reverend, at Ntsweng in Kanye, on 7 June 2005. Also see Oarabile Noko, "Kgosi Bathoen II Museum," Kanye, 1999, p 2.

the Marico River in the north in the 17th and early 18th centuries.¹⁴¹ The ‘disregard’ of the chronology in the presentation and discussion of the histories of the Bangwaketse and the Bakwena is deliberate in this study. This does not imply that the reasons for their settlement on Kanye (1853) and Molepolole (1863) hills respectively are compromised or invalidated. Conversely, I do acknowledge that the Bangwaketse settled on Kanye hill in 1853 before the Bakwena settled on Molepolole hill in 1863. Nevertheless, the settlement of the Bangwaketse on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill in 1853 does not imply that the Bakwena lacked a culture of living on a hilltop or that the Bangwaketse first settled in present day south east Botswana long before the Bakwena did.

After having successfully established their geographical and political frontiers in Gangwaketse, the Bangwaketse felt very satisfied and subsequently settled permanently on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill, which stood adjacent to the Kgwakgwe hill to the south. Their settlement on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill was carefully planned and was in accordance with their tradition of living near watercourses,¹⁴² since they were fulltime mixed farmers and part-time hunters and gatherers. The Bangwaketse then established a big, nucleated village with distinct wards on the Kanye hill. It was on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill in Kanye that the Bangwaketse continued to build their houses with more taste and comfort.¹⁴³ Kanye (Ntsweng) hill in Kanye had since become the tribal capital of the Bangwaketse since 1853. That prestigious hilltop site was first identified by Chief Makaba II (1790-1824) in the 18th century. Makaba II was a successful military leader who increased the size, power and wealth of the Bangwaketse by means of cattle raiding.¹⁴⁴ Kanye village lies 50 kilometres west of present day Lobatse in the Southern District.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Isaac Schapera, “A short history of the Bangwaketse,” in Traditional Histories of the Native Tribes of Bechuanaland Protectorate, Cape Town, The Lovedale Press, 1954, p 1. Also see Neil Parsons, A New History of Southern Africa, London, Macmillan, 1993, p 46.

¹⁴² Leonard D. Ngcongco, “Aspects of the History of Bangwaketse to 1910,” a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Philosophy at Dalhousie University, April 1977, p 101.

¹⁴³ J. Ramsay, B. Morton, and T. Mgadla, Building a Nation, Gaborone, Longman, 1996, p 29.

¹⁴⁴ Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, Historical Dictionary of Botswana, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1989, pp 55, 73.

¹⁴⁵ Oarabile Noko, “Kgosi Bathoen II Museum,” Kanye, 1999, p 2.

The Bangwaketse are an offshoot of the Bakwena. They are believed to have seceded when the Bakwena lived at Mosweu (a fertile valley in the vicinity of the Crocodile Pools on the Notwane River) either during the reign of Kgabo I (c.1625-c.1655) or Chief Motshodi (1740-1765) at Phuthadikobo hill. The Bangwaketse were then led either by Makaba 1 or his son, Mongala. Alternatively, the Bangwaketse traditions also suggest that it was Chieftain Ngwaketse who seceded with his followers, and thus they adopted the name of the secessionist leader. The secessionist may have had the desire to qualify for the full enjoyment of the complete range of rights and privileges accorded to an autonomous chief such as being the recipient of the tribute (*sehuba*). Generally, the Bangwaketse wanted to declare their independence by searching for and settling on a suitable locality that would constitute a definite geographical base for their polity. The Bangwaketse feared that as long as they settled on the land belonging to or regarded as belonging to another chieftom, they would inevitably be expected to pay tribute.¹⁴⁶ During their migrations, they settled at various sites in Gangwaketse. They were highly mobile because they were determined “to grab as much land as possible and they were also fleeing from their enemies”¹⁴⁷ notably the Kololo (1824-1826) and the Ndebele (1829-1837) of Sebetwane and Mzilikazi respectively.¹⁴⁸

Their many camping sites included Kgale or present site of the Roman Catholic Mission at Kgale, Sengoma hill south of Ramotswa, Ntsotswane hill east of Manyana, Potsane east of Lekgolobotlo, Seoke near Lobatse, Pitsa hill overlooking Lobatse, Makolontwane north east of Moshaneng and between Moshaneng and Moshupa, Maakame near Mabule on the banks of Molopo River, Setlhabatsane west of Moshaneng, Sebatleng west of Kanye hill (1790), Pitsaneng east of Kanye between Gakgolo and Mafhikana hills, Mokakanana near Mafikeng, Motlhwareng or present site of Sebako ward (1815), Tlhorong near Ranaka (1823), Kgwakgwe hill south of Ntsweng or Kanye hill (1824-26), Selokolela south west of Kanye, Lwale hill near Moshaneng or north west of Moshupa (1830), Lotlhakeng (1832), Dutlwe pan (1834), Monnyelatsela near Ghanzi or Gantsi, Lehututu, Male near Moshaneng, Diphawana

¹⁴⁶ Leonard D. Ngcongco, “Aspects of the History of Bangwaketse to 1910,” a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Philosophy at Dalhousie University, April 1977, pp 55-56, 67-75, 100.

¹⁴⁷ Oarabile Noko, “Kgosi Bathoen II Museum,” Kanye, 1999, p 1.

¹⁴⁸ Isaac Schapera, Traditional Histories of the Native Tribes of Bechuanaland Protectorate, Cape Town, The Lovedale Press, 1954, pp 7-8.

and Segeng near Sesung south of Kanye (1852), and Kanye (Ntsweng) hill (1853) during the reign of Gaseitsiwe (1846-1889).¹⁴⁹ Map 10 depicts the strategic position of Kanye (Ntsweng) hill vis-à-vis water sources (Pharing gorge, Mmamokhasi and Sethugetsane rivers). It also shows how big and spacious it was to suit a dense settlement pattern.¹⁵⁰

Most of the settlement sites were located in the region that was strategically endowed with permanent springs and large land and aquatic wild animals. The above mentioned conditions then suited the Bangwaketse's agro-pastoral and hunting life styles and needs. For example, Selokolela valley had many springs that supported the capital of the Bangwaketse. There were also springs, which gave rise to swampy conditions at Kanye as late as about 1920. On the other hand, the eland, wildebeest, elephant, rhino and giraffe populated an area between Kanye and Moshupa and beyond. Moreover, the southern Kalahari Desert had occasional springs because the water table was still high, and wild animals were much more plentiful. During the rains, there were large numbers of elephant, buffalo, rhino, zebra, tsessebe and impala along the eastern fringes of the Kalahari, some 40 or more kilometres west of the railway. Until the 1850s, the elephant, buffalo, hippo, rhino, waterbuck, reedbuck and tsessebe were common on the headwaters of the Molopo.¹⁵¹

The Bangwaketse were the first to take refuge temporarily on a big, flat-topped Kanye (Ntsweng) hill in present day south east Botswana in as far back as 1798/99. They eventually settled on the hill in 1853 because it was not yet claimed by any chiefdom. Like the Bakwena, the Bangwaketse settled on a big flat-topped hill because it was invaluable in terms of water sources, space, and natural topographical and geological features. In terms of defence, Kanye (Ntsweng) hill had proved to be very helpful to the Bangwaketse community in the past. That was simply because it was naturally endowed with very steep sides particularly to the west, north and east and ascension to the top was only possible on the gentle southern side. The possible attacks from the

¹⁴⁹ Isaac Schapera, "A short history of the Bangwaketse," in Traditional Histories of the Native Tribes of Bechuanaland Protectorate, Cape Town, The Lovedale Press, 1954, pp 1-11.

¹⁵⁰ Map 10 showing spacious Ntsweng hill vis-à-vis Pharing gorge and Mmamokhasi River was designed by the Department of Surveys and Mapping, Gaborone, Botswana, 2005.

¹⁵¹ Alec Campbell, and Graham Child, "The Impact of Man on the Environment of Botswana," in Botswana Notes and Records, Vol 3, Gaborone, The Botswana Society, 1971, pp 99, 100, 107.

predators or even the foreign invasions were logically expected to be launched from the south. For example, following his defeat by the Bakwena, Makaba II (1790-1824) took refuge on top of Kanye hill which he fortified with stone walls. When he was attacked about 1798 or 1799 by some Barolong boo-Ratlou, Korana and Griqua led by a European renegade named Jan Bloem, he beat off the attack so successfully that none of his cattle were looted. The battle was fought at Matlhabanelong on the slopes of Kanye (Ntsweng) hill just east of where the mission hospital stands today. On the basis of past experience, the Bangwaketse settled on that hill in 1853 because it was already fortified against future invasions in addition to being a symbol of pride. The same hill could still be advantageous in respect of security against the Boers, in the event they launched a surprise attack. Historically, by 1824 the Bangwaketse state was already established as the strongest of the Tswana societies. In 1826 the Bangwaketse held a distinction record of being the only people who defeated the Kololo at Dithubaruba hill. Their achievement had to be celebrated by and equated to settling on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill. Besides, the hill was spacious and therefore suitable for the establishment of a new village with zoned wards led by the senior headmen. The headmen acted as checks and balances to limit the growth of absolutism at the centre or isolationism and secessionist tendencies at the periphery.¹⁵²

Another reason why the Bangwaketse settled on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill was because it had an advantage of a very deep, permanent gorge called Pharing. The gorge is located in the north east steep slopes among the rocks. During the wet and dry seasons, the Bangwaketse community fetched fresh spring water at that gorge. To that end, the women were saved the burden of travelling long distances to fetch the water at the neighbouring rivers to be used for various purposes in the households. Besides, there were swampy conditions at the foot of or south of Kanye (Ntsweng) hill. In that regard, some wells were also conveniently dug to the depth of the permanent water table at the foot of the hill. The wells served as both short and long-term sources of water. The area where the old post office stands today used to be a swampy area and that is where the said wells were dug. Besides, the gorge also channeled the water down to a pool at the foot of or north of Kanye (Ntsweng) hill, where both the wild animals and the

¹⁵² Leonard D. Ngcongco, "Aspects of the History of Bangwaketse to 1910," a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Philosophy at Dalhousie University, April 1977, pp 35, 91, 103, 110,120.

domestic livestock conveniently watered.¹⁵³ The pool has since become a part of the greater Mmakgodumo dam presently located north of Kanye (Ntsweng) hill. Chief Bathoen II and his age set regiment, the Maisantwa, constructed the dam in 1940. At the time, it was called the Bathoen II Irrigation Dam. Its water was then used to irrigate the vegetables which were granted to the schools in Kanye. Apart from its historical value, the dam is today one of the tourist attraction sites in Kanye. It is also a major source of water for both the domestic and wild animals.¹⁵⁴ Moreover, the iron ore with which specialists (men) manufactured iron-bladed hand hoes, axes, spears and knives was also readily available in some rocks on Ntsweng hill.¹⁵⁵

The other reason why the Bangwaketse settled on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill was that it was not very dangerous as compared to the nearby Kgwakgwe hill, which was about 1450 metres above sea level and just a few kilometres south of Kanye (Ntsweng) hill.¹⁵⁶ Today Mmamokhasi ward in Kanye is located near the Kgwakgwe hill. The past experience had shown that Kanye (Ntsweng) hill was not a habitual habitat of a *kgwanyape*, a dangerous, huge rain snake. The *kgwanyape* lived in the numerous caves on the Kgwakgwe hill, although it sometimes came to enjoy a 'bath' in the pool north of Kanye (Ntsweng) hill. The *kgwanyape* had, in the past, unleashed hailstorms and tornadoes on the Bangwaketse, especially when the women 'trespassed' the Kgwakgwe hill to collect some firewood. The Bangwaketse, therefore, settled on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill because it was relatively safe, since it did not have many caves that could allure the *kgwanyape*. For security reasons, the Bangwaketse created a big space between them and the *kgwanyape* by settling on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill north of the Kgwakgwe hill. Besides, a Seipope Cave on Ntsweng hill was a home of the nature spirits of the earth, which the Bangwaketse felt more comfortable with. The spirits were a source of a heavy precipitation without lightning, thunder and hailstones, which

¹⁵³ Group interview: Modientsho Mathiba, 1932, Headman of Arbitration, and Mokue Malau, 1916, Reverend, at Ntsweng in Kanye, on 7 June 2005.

¹⁵⁴ Oarabile Noko, "Kgosi Bathoen II Museum," Kanye, 1999, p 2.

¹⁵⁵ Group interview: Modientsho Mathiba, 1932, Headman of Arbitration, and Mokue Malau, 1916, Reverend, at Ntsweng in Kanye, on 7 June 2005

¹⁵⁶ Georges Ekosse and Bernard Vink, "The Kgwakgwe Manganese Oxides in the Kanye area, Southern Botswana-Evidence for a Shallow Aqueous Palaeo-Environment," in Botswana Notes and Records, Vol 30, Gaborone, The Botswana Society, 1998, p 147.

the Bangwaketse feared a lot.¹⁵⁷ A hailstorm was symbolically ‘calmed down’ by knocking together an axe and a hoe and shouting “*a e ye godimo!*” Only the old men and women performed the ritual. The first borns in the various families were allowed by tradition to eat the hailstones symbolically to ward off the hailstorms.¹⁵⁸ A gently rain (*medupe*) without lightning and thunder usually fell, when a Bangwaketse tribal rain doctor offered a ‘doctored’ and live black ox, as an appeasement, to the cave spirits.¹⁵⁹ The spirits were also a trusted source of the first rain of a season called *sephai*, particularly when they were traditionally appeased in the rain kraal in the backyard of the chief on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill. In the month of August or the beginning of September, the chief normally instructed the tribal rain doctor to pile up the branches of a *morobe* tree (*Ehretia hottentotica*) in a heap on a rain hearth. The heap was then sprinkled with other rainmaking medicines and set alight. As the smoke ascended to the sky, the clouds began to sway and the rain fell,¹⁶⁰ much to the delight of the community. So, the Bangwaketse settled on Ntsweng hill on account of a mutual relationship that existed between them and the nature spirits of the earth that dwelt in the nearby cave. The Bangwaketse were, therefore, the sole beneficiaries of the mystical powers and blessings of and unlimited protection from the said spirits. The Bangwaketse, therefore, recognised the symbiotic relationship by holding a harvest thanksgiving (*dikgafela*) festival every year. Usually in September, some women representing their respective families took a basketful of corn to their chief’s main *kgotla* on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill. They came in procession and ward by ward, and as they went along, they sang rain songs and others in which they praised their chief for having given them rain. Some of the corn was given to the rain doctor as payment and also stored in the chief’s granaries for tribal needs (in times of a severe drought). The remainder was made into beer for consumption during a big public festival on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill.¹⁶¹ It flows that the Bangwaketse identified well with Kanye (Ntsweng) hill culturally and symbolically.

¹⁵⁷ Group interview: Modientsho Mathiba, 1932, Headman of Arbitration, and Mokue Malau. 1916, Reverend, at Ntsweng in Kanye, on 7 June 2005.

¹⁵⁸ Interview: Makirika Sebati, 1920, Headman of Arbitration, and Ramolelwane Pelotsame, 1925, Deputy Headman of Arbitration at Goo-Sebati *kgotla* in Kanye, on 16 October 2005.

¹⁵⁹ Group interview: Modientsho Mathiba, 1932, Headman of Arbitration, and Mokue Malau. 1916, Reverend, at Ntsweng in Kanye, on 7 June 2005

¹⁶⁰ Isaac Schapera, *Rainmaking Rites of Tswana Tribes*, Cambridge, African Studies Centre, 1971, p 125.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, p 126.

Furthermore, the Bangwaketse settled on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill because the natural vegetation on Ntsweng hill and the valley below consisted mainly of tree and bush savanna. The vegetation was subsequently invaluable on account of its timber, fruit and browsing qualities. The *mosu* (*Acacia tortilis*) and *mongana* (Black thorn) trees and *moretlwa* (Wild raisin) bush, were sources of palatable pods and valuable browsing leaves for livestock respectively. The *mosetlha*, *mokala*, *monato*, *morula* and *mokgalo* woods were mainly used for carving pestles and mortars, eating wooden bowls and milking buckets. The *mmopudu* and *motlhatswa* fruits were seasonally harvested, among others, on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill and the adjacent hills. The good quality perennial grasses such as *mokhasi* and *sanyane* were readily harvested at the swampy areas at the Mmamokhasi River and the rocky areas on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill and the neighbourhood respectively. Such grasses were used for making traditional baskets (*ditlatlana*). The available thatching grasses included *tshikitshane* and *seloka*. So, the Bangwaketse's settlement on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill was a wise decision because both men and women walked short distances while they exploited the natural resources to improve their standard of living. Besides, the Kanye area just like the Molepolole area was endowed with the chestnut-brown soils and good pastures which favoured them to practice fulltime mixed farming in the neighbourhood. Moreover, their cattle, goats and sheep conveniently watered at the seasonal pools on the Mmamokhasi and Sethugetsane rivers.¹⁶² As already indicated above, the Kanye area was also densely populated with large and small wild animals. To that end, the Bangwaketse community continued to practice part time hunting to supplement their diet. The Bangwaketse were not inconvenienced in their daily chores and seasonal activities.

As already indicated in this chapter, some chiefs of the Bangwaketse had always had an agenda of securing a prestigious hilltop site that had all the necessary advantages. Makaba II had harboured that ambition up to 1824, but his ambition was shattered by the invasion of the Kololo. At the time of the invasion, the Bangwaketse were then living at Kgwakgwe hill which was close to Kanye hill. Makaba II was killed in a

¹⁶² Group interview: Nametsegang Kebuseofe, 1969, Administration Officer, Molefe Lemme, 1975, Grounds man, and Punnie Modisane, 1974, Museum Officer, at the Kgosi Bathoen II Museum in Kanye, on 16 October 2005.

battle that was fought at Losabanyana, south east of present day Moshaneng. The Bangwaketse then led by Sebege, the regent (1825-1844), abandoned the Kgwakgwe hill and retreated to Selokolela, south west of the Kanye hill. The subsequent Ndebele invasions of and splits among the Bangwaketse also derailed the achievement of that ambition or vision. In the 1830s the Bangwaketse retreated deep into the Kgalagadi only to return to Gangwaketse in 1842. Nevertheless, that ambition was achieved in 1853 by Chief Gaseitsiwe (c.1820-1889) who ruled from 1853 to 1889. A fear of a possible invasion from the Boers had died away. Besides, the two sections of Bangwaketse were then living side by side in the same locality, that is, in the vicinity of the Kanye (Ntsweng) hill. Those led by Senthufe were settled where the Lobeko ward is now located, while those led by Gaseitsiwe and Segotshane were settled at Nyorosi hill where the Tsope ward is now located.¹⁶³ The subsequent settlement of the Bangwaketse on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill in 1853 was a dream come true which was overdue. The hill was not yet claimed for its prestige by any chiefdom in Gangwaketse.

On the other hand, the Bangwaketse's settlement on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill was presumably a kind of 'show off' to their nemesis, the Bakwena. At the time, the Bakwena were still stuck on a smaller hill, Dithubaruba, whose surface area failed to accommodate the whole community in 1853. The Bangwaketse warriors had been to Dithubaruba in 1826 to drive away the Kololo of Sebetwane who had not only robbed them of their cattle but also displaced the powerless Bakwena in 1824. The Bakwena kingdom was already badly fragmented by the dynastic squabbles after Motswasele II's assassination in 1821 at Shokwane. From Dithubaruba, Moruakgomo's homeless Bakwena retreated to Lehututu in the Kalahari Desert to save their lives. Sebege's army of about 4,000 men tactfully attacked Dithubaruba at dawn and burnt it down. The army also killed many defenceless Kololo and looted their 2,000 cattle and a few sheep and a vast number of shields, assegais and battle axes. Sebetwane and his followers then retreated farther north, that is, to the Chobe-Zambezi region. Subsequently, the Bangwaketse became famous as a great fighting nation. Their victory at Dithubaruba somewhat superseded their shameful defeat at Losabanyana and

¹⁶³ Isaac Schapera, "A short history of the Bangwaketse," in Traditional Histories of the Native Tribes of Bechuanaland Protectorate, Cape Town, The Lovedale Press, 1954, pp 6-11. Also see Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, Historical Dictionary of Botswana, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1989, p 109, and Thomas Tlou and Alec Campbell, History of Botswana, Gaborone, Macmillan, 1997, p 153.

the fall of Makaba II. Perhaps the contempt for the Bakwena's weakness and their choice of a hilltop site gained momentum from 1826. The settlement of the Bangwaketse on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill in 1853 was then probably an expression of that contempt. To the Bangwaketse, Kanye (Ntsweng) hill was a symbol of status and dominance in the region. That was because historically the Bangwaketse held a distinction record of having warded off the attacks of the Barolong boo-Ratlou, Korana and Griqua led by Jan Bloem and the grand alliance of the Batlhaping, Batlhwere, Bakwena, Bahurutshe and Korana led by Moabi in 1808 on Ntsweng hill.¹⁶⁴ Besides, it was then prestigious for the Bangwaketse to settle permanently on a hilltop site because generally "hilltop sites were in line with the established ritual of height as a symbol of dominance and climbing and looking up as symbols of deference"¹⁶⁵ in the history of humankind. Moreover, high mountains and hills are apt symbols for the dwelling or place of the manifestation of a transcendent God (Supreme Being) and the spirits of the earth.¹⁶⁶

The Bangwaketse may have settled on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill on account of an immediate fear of an anticipated war of retribution particularly from the Boers because they (Bangwaketse) were allies of the Bakwena during the Dimawe war in 1852. Kanye (Ntsweng) hill could possibly still offer the same known advantages. Besides, the truce that the Boers and Bakwena reached in 1853 did not rule out a surprise attack from the Boers. That was so, because the Boers did not directly extend the same overture to the Bangwaketse after the war. The Bangwaketse also settled on Ntsweng hill on account of space, prestige, pomposity, the accessibility of water supplies and iron ore deposits.

Generally, Kanye was a peaceful and secure hilltop village whose western boundary extended to the Kgalagadi Desert, and hence the Bangwaketse gained access to a trans-

¹⁶⁴ Leonard D. Ngcongco, "Aspects of the History of Bangwaketse to 1910," a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Philosophy at Dalhousie University, April 1977, pp 87, 91, 113, 117, 119, 120. Also see J. Ramsay, B. Morton, and T. Mgadla, Building a Nation, Gaborone, Longman, 1996, pp 67-68, Isaac Schapera, "A short history of the Bangwaketse," in Traditional Histories of the Native Tribes of Bechuanaland Protectorate, Cape Town, The Lovedale Press, 1954, p 7, and Thomas Tlou and Alec Campbell, History of Botswana, Gaborone, Macmillan, 1997, p 154.

¹⁶⁵ John E. Pfeiffer, The Emergence of Society: A Prehistory of the Establishment, New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1977, p 85.

¹⁶⁶ Geoffrey Parrinder, Religion in Africa, London, Penguin Books, 1969, p 44.

Kgalagadi trade. In the 1860s, Kanye prospered as a trading centre in ivory, skins and ostrich feathers¹⁶⁷ and its population grew from about 6,000 to 20,000.¹⁶⁸ Besides, in the 1870s it expanded greatly when the Bakgatla ba ga Mmanaana under Chief Mosielele established the Gamafikana ward in the valley below Kanye (Ntsweng) hill.¹⁶⁹ Due to ample land on the hill, the Bangwaketse easily established a big and permanent village, which was further subdivided into wards led by senior headmen for effective administration purposes. The Bangwaketse preferred a close and dense settlement pattern based on the precedence of descent and age set organisation. In the centre of the hill were the chief's main *kgotla* and the tribal cattle kraal, which were hemmed in by the horseshoe clusters of nuclear families and wards organised in order of historical seniority. The houses and *malwapa* were mainly painted with a distinctive red-brown clay oxide, which was readily abundant where the Beyond Petroleum (BP) filling station stands today.¹⁷⁰ The other important grey and yellow oxides were accessible at Tsope, south west of Kanye (Ntsweng) hill.¹⁷¹ Some homes were enclosed by stone walls which resisted all kinds of weather and therefore, needed no or little maintenance as compared to the clay walls, which necessitated regular seasonal repairs of the damages caused by rain. The stone walls added value to the beautifully decorated houses and *malwapa*.¹⁷²

In conclusion, the Bangwaketse were mainly allured to Ntsweng hill by the fear of an anticipated war of retribution particularly from the Boers, the symbolic presence of the nature spirits of the earth which they heavily relied on for rain, the spacious and flat land, the sustainable water supply at the Pharing gorge, the abundant iron ore deposits, the fertile soils and good pastures and the much important building materials that included thatching grasses, various clay oxides and stones.

¹⁶⁷ Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, Historical Dictionary of Botswana, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1989, pp 41, 55.

¹⁶⁸ J. Ramsay, B. Morton, and T. Mgadla, Building a Nation, Gaborone, Longman, 1996, p 102.

¹⁶⁹ Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, Historical Dictionary of Botswana, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1989, p 55.

¹⁷⁰ Group interview: Modientsho Mathiba, 1932, Headman of Arbitration, and Mokue Malau, 1916, Reverend, at Ntsweng in Kanye, on 7 June 2005.

¹⁷¹ Individual interview: Obiditse Tafhi, 1914, Pensioner, at Ntsweng, and Mmasetshabane Nyere, 1941, Housewife, at Tsope ward in Kanye on 16 October 2005.

¹⁷² Interview: Kesolofetse Pule, 1946, Housewife, at Kanye on 16 October 2005.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE BAHURUTSHE BOO-MANYANA ON BOSWELAKGOSI HILL IN 1858

My objectives in this chapter are to highlight the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana's place of origin, the reasons for their migration from the present day Republic of South Africa to south east Botswana and their subsequent settlement site and pattern in present day south east Botswana in the 19th century. Another objective is to state and explain the reasons why the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana settled on the Boswelakgosi hill in 1858. The Bahurutshe boo-Manyana are considered third in this study because they later became the subordinates of the Bakwena and the Bangwaketse respectively.

It is important to note that the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana later venerated a baboon (*tshwene*) instead of an eland (*phofu*) as a result of a baboon incident between Motebele (the heir) and his younger brother, Motebejane, at Tshwenyane hill in the former western Transvaal. Motebele had captured the baboon during a hunting expedition and had intended to keep it as part of his paraphernalia for rituals. Motebele had then entrusted the baboon to Motebejane who accidentally became careless and let it escape much to the annoyance of Motebele. Motebele flogged Motebejane for his carelessness and for the loss of the baboon. The two brothers subsequently quarrelled and split in the 16th century. A large portion of the people who remained with Motebejane at Tshwenyane adopted a totem of the baboon while Motebele's followers retained the *phofu* totem and moved northwards to the Limpopo valley.¹⁷³

Today the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana live in Manyana village in the Southern District under the paramountcy of the Bangwaketse chief. Manyana village is located on the banks of the Kolobeng River and along the boundary between Kweneng and Southern Districts in present day south east Botswana. The Bahurutshe boo-Manyana and their

¹⁷³ Neil Parsons, *A New History of Southern Africa*, London, Macmillan, 1993, pp 45. Also see Leach Tlhomelang, "Bahurutshe bo-Manyana," a dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts at the University College of Botswana, 1977, pp iii, 3-4, 5.

village have been named after Chief Manyane.¹⁷⁴ Manyana is a tiny village that is neatly tucked between the hills and the Kolobeng River meanders through it. The village is famous because the Mmasechele Cave, whose San rock paintings are dated about 2,000 years ago, is located in the Kolobeng hills to the west. The cave has been named after the Bakwena queen mother, Mmasechele. She had sought refuge in the cave during the Dimawe battle in 1852. She was heavily pregnant at the time and had to be protected and kept safe from the intense battle that was going on between the Transvaal Boers and the Bakwena and their allies. Another historical pride of the village is David Livingstone's tree. This *Ficus ingens* or *moomu* tree stands in the centre of the village and its shade has served as a clinic, a maternity, a church and a place where the Bakwena villagers used to gather to learn from David Livingstone and his wife in the past. Both the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana and their superiors, the Bakwena, treat the Dimawe hill, the cave and the tree with high esteem.¹⁷⁵ The Bakwena may have allowed the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana to settle in Manyana village to technically safeguard their historical heritage.

The Bahurutshe boo-Manyana trace their origin to the present day Mabyanamatshwaana / Majwanamatshwaana (Swartkoppies) and / or Tshwenyane (Enzelsberg) hill in the fertile Marico district in the Republic of South Africa.¹⁷⁶ In 1832 Mzilikazi of the Ndebele had also desired the Marico district as a site for the establishment of his new capital, Mosega, south of modern Zeerust, where he established the barracks for several of his regiments. The Bahurutshe boo-Manyana's subsequent migration from Majwanamatshwaana (near the modern town of Brits) to Tshwenyane (about 25 kilometres north east of modern Zeerust) was due to a dynastic rivalry and a severe drought and famine (*tlala e e boithegang*) that resulted in a serious economic or agricultural crisis especially a scarcity of food and water. They were in search of a new and a favourable area with diverse economic allurements.¹⁷⁷ Severe

¹⁷⁴ Leach Tlhomelang, "Bahurutshe bo-Manyana," a dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts at the University College of Botswana, 1977, pp iii, 3-4, 5.

¹⁷⁵ Tduetso Setsiba, "Manyana: A village rich in history," in *Monitor*, Vol 7, No: 37, 18 September 2006, p 7.

¹⁷⁶ Neil Parsons, *A New History of Southern Africa*, London, Macmillan, 1993, pp 45. Also see J. D. Omer-Cooper, *The Zulu Aftermath*, England, Longman, 1998, pp 141, 143.

¹⁷⁷ Leonard Ngcongco, "Precolonial Migration in Southeastern Botswana," in *Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape*, Gaborone, Heinemann

droughts were one of the causes of fission because subsistence farming usually became difficult and the rulers were subsequently blamed for the impasse. Besides, when a group of people lived in one place or area for a long time, the land became over-used and degraded through livestock herding, soil tilling, the collection of wild food, hunting and the clearing of the bush. Moreover, the surface water became scarce.¹⁷⁸ If water was plentiful, they could have settled permanently in one area, but when the water supplies were depleted, they had to migrate to new and more dependable long term sources of water. The need for water, new pastures and unoccupied land was critical for them and their livestock. They also had to make specialised adaptations to the new environments in order to eek a reasonable living.¹⁷⁹

Tshwenyane [Kaditshwene] was naturally endowed with iron and copper deposits, the fertile soils, the good pastures at its outposts and the stones for the construction of the stone-walled enclosures in the early 19th century.¹⁸⁰ In the early 19th century, Tshwenyane [Kaditshwene] was estimated by a missionary traveller, John Campbell, to have had between 13,000 and 16,000 people¹⁸¹ and 50 wards.¹⁸² Nevertheless, a further rivalry for chieftainship resulted in yet another migration from Kaditshwene to Borutoe / Borutwe east of Great Marico River near the present day Mangope siding in the Rustenburg district, where the group lived until about 1858.¹⁸³

Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, p 26, and “Aspects of the History of Bangwaketse to 1910,” a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Philosophy at Dalhousie University, April 1977, pp 50, 61, 71-73. Also see J. D. Omer-Cooper, The Zulu Aftermath, England, Longman, 1998, pp 141, 143.

¹⁷⁸ Thomas Tlou and Alec Campbell, History of Botswana, Gaborone, Macmillan, 1997, pp 96, 103.

¹⁷⁹ R. Renne Hitchcock, Mary R. Smith and Robert K. Hitchcock, “Introduction,” in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, p xiv.

¹⁸⁰ Kevin Shillington, History of Southern Africa, Gaborone, Longman, 2002, pp 24-25.

¹⁸¹ Monica Wilson, “Problems for research in Tswana history,” in Botswana Notes and Records, Vol 3, Gaborone, The Botswana Society, 1971, p 71.

¹⁸² Kevin Shillington, History of Southern Africa, Gaborone, Longman, 2002, p 25.

¹⁸³ Leonard Ngcongco, “Precolonial Migration in Southeastern Botswana,” in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, p 26. Also see Leach Tlhomelang, “Bahurutshe bo-Manyana,” a dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts at the University College of Botswana, 1977, pp 4-7.

However, in 1853, the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana, now living at Manyana in the Southern District, came into conflict with the Transvaal Boers.¹⁸⁴ That was because the Transvaal Boers regarded the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana as their servants since they [Bahurutshe boo-Manyana] lived on their land. Consequently, in 1858 the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana migrated from Borutoe in the Transvaal to escape the Boers' constant harassment particularly their demand for unpaid labour and sought refuge from Sechele, who was then living at Dithubaruba hill.¹⁸⁵ Besides, Chief Mangope 1 of the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana had been temporarily captured as a hostage to assure his people's cooperation.¹⁸⁶ However, Chief Mangope I managed to escape.

From Borutoe, the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana led by Chief Mangope I crossed the Great Marico River¹⁸⁷ and then headed for Dimawe hill, which was near the fresh waters of the Kolobeng River.¹⁸⁸ The Bahurutshe boo-Manyana finally settled on Boswelakgosi hill in 1858 until 1875 or 1878.¹⁸⁹ The Bahurutshe boo-Manyana then established a big village on Boswelakgosi hill. They used stones which they methodically arranged in circular patterns to mark the foundations of their houses. It was on Boswelakgosi hill that the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana continued to enjoy a relative autonomy from the Bakwena in Kweneng. Boswelakgosi hill had since become a socio-political monument of the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana in present day south east Botswana. Map 11 shows the strategic position of Dimawe and Boswelakgosi hills vis-à-vis the proximity of the Kolobeng River and Monneng grassy valley to which reference is made in the text.¹⁹⁰ Another map 4 shows the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana's place of

¹⁸⁴ Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, Historical Dictionary of Botswana, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1989, p 47.

¹⁸⁵ Leach Tlhomelang, "Bahurutshe bo-Manyana," a dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts at the University College of Botswana, 1977, p 8.

¹⁸⁶ J. Ramsay, B. Morton, and T. Mgadla, Building a Nation, Gaborone, Longman, 1996, p 88.

¹⁸⁷ Leach Tlhomelang, "Bahurutshe bo-Manyana," a dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts at the University College of Botswana, 1977, p 3.

¹⁸⁸ J. Ramsay, B. Morton, and T. Mgadla, Building a Nation, Gaborone, Longman, 1996, p 89.

¹⁸⁹ Group interview: Mareko Abel Mosielele, 1924, Headman, Joseph Motlhaikana Mangope, 1929, Headman of Arbitration, Simon Letlole, 1947, Headman of Arbitration, and Senye Mokokwe, 1936, Headman of Arbitration, at the Main *kgotla* in Manyana, on 4 November 2005.

¹⁹⁰ Map 11 which shows the strategic position of Dimawe and Boswelakgosi hills, Monneng valley and the Kolobeng River was designed by the Department of Surveys and Mapping, Gaborone, Botswana, 2005.

origin and the position of their settlement site in present day Republic of South Africa and south east Botswana respectively in the 19th century.¹⁹¹

The Bahurutshe boo-Manyana settled on a relatively smaller flat-topped hill compared to either Kanye or Molepolole hill, possibly on account of a sense of insecurity for life and property or a fear of an anticipated surprise attack mainly from the Boers. Prior to their secession from the Transvaal, a decisive war had occurred in 1852 between the Boers and the Bakwena at Sechele's capital, Dimawe, simply because "the Boers hated Sechele for the hospitality he showed towards the people who fled the Transvaal to get away from the Boer aggression and oppression."¹⁹² Of particular reference was when Sechele refused to extradite to the Transvaal the Bakgatla ba ga Mmanaana leader, Chief Mosielele, who unceremoniously fled the Transvaal rather than submit to the Boers' demand for labour. Consequently the Boers attacked and defeated the Bakwena who then fled to Dithubaruba.¹⁹³

The news of the defeat of the Bakwena by the Boers and their subsequent forced migration to Dithubaruba hill further terrified the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana who still lived in constant harassment by the Boers. Besides, Mangope's eldest son, Kontle, had already fled the Transvaal with his regiment (that comprised men and women who were conscripted to work on Boer farms) and settled on the Bakwena's settlement ruins at Dimawe. Moreover, the Boers were infuriated by the sudden loss of labour and thus issued Chief Mangope with an impossible ultimatum demanding the return of his son and his regiment to the Transvaal. As it was expected, Mangope sensed a danger in the Boer threats, since he could not persuade his son to return to the Transvaal. In the event of his failure to fulfill the conditions put forward to him by the Boers, Mangope was left with no choice but to flee the Transvaal whilst it was still safe to do so in

¹⁹¹ Map 4 which shows Bahurutshe boo-Manyana's places of origin and major stopovers in the modern Republic of South Africa and south east Botswana was designed by the Department of Surveys and Mapping, Gaborone, Botswana, 2007.

¹⁹² Leach Tlhomelang, "Bahurutshe bo-Manyana," a dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts at the University College of Botswana, 1977, p 7.

¹⁹³ Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, Historical Dictionary of Botswana, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1989, pp 11-12.

1858.¹⁹⁴ Historically, Boswelakgosi hill had proved to be an impregnable hilltop site during the 1852 battle because the Boer commando was unable to move out Sechele's regiments who held their positions on it until nightfall.¹⁹⁵ In the event of a repeated attack from the Boers in particular, Boswelakgosi hill could still be a secure hilltop site. Besides, it was flat-topped and ideal for a close or dense settlement pattern. Due to ample space, the new village could still be divided into wards, each headed by a headman for administrative purposes.¹⁹⁶

As already pointed out, Kontle had already claimed and settled at Dimawe hill, and therefore it was logical for Mangope to choose Boswelakgosi hill, which stood idle and unclaimed for its advantages. If Mangope settled at Dimawe hill, then that could have been interpreted as an untimely relinquishing of power to Kontle, the eldest son and heir apparent. Generally, but typical of Batswana custom, a chief's home, a courtyard and a cattle kraal were strategically placed in the centre of a village. Around him were grouped nuclear families which were organised in order of historical seniority, the senior being closest to the chief and the junior a little further away and the in-migrant groups placed on the outskirts.¹⁹⁷ In this context, that type of a settlement pattern could have been distorted, if the larger group led by Mangope settled at Dimawe. On Boswelakgosi hill, the tradition was maintained because it was a new site for a permanent village and there was enough space.¹⁹⁸ The Bahurutshe boo-Manyana's settlement site and pattern on the hill were characterised by a big, stone walled cattle kraal in the centre of the village, numerous clusters of homesteads which were enclosed by stone walls and the foundations of the houses which were clearly marked by stones which were systematically arranged in circular patterns. Besides, at the time the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana settled on Boswelakgosi hill, Sechele and Mosielele and their families were living exclusively on the limited space on Dithubaruba hill, while the rest occupied the foot of the hill and the valley particularly the Baletle and the

¹⁹⁴ Leach Tlhomelang, "Bahurutshe bo-Manyana," a dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts at the University College of Botswana, 1977, pp 7-9.

¹⁹⁵ J. Ramsay, B. Morton, and T. Mgadla, Building a Nation, Gaborone, Longman, 1996, p 90.

¹⁹⁶ Interview: Mareko Abel Mosielele, 1924, Headman, at the Main *kgotla* in Manyana, on 4 November 2005.

¹⁹⁷ Sandy and Elinah Grant, Decorated Homes in Botswana, Mochudi, Phuthadikobo Museum, 1995, p 21.

¹⁹⁸ Interview: Mareko Abel Mosielele, 1924, Headman, at the Main *kgotla* in Manyana, on 4 November 2005.

German missionaries.¹⁹⁹ So, the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana settled on Boswelakgosi hill because Dithubaruba hill was already overpopulated.

As indicated above, the Bahurutshe in general and the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana in particular, were historically accustomed to living in a secure capital, Kaditshwene, which was strategically located on a summit of Tshwenyane Mountain and near a water course, the Great Marico River. The summit of the mountain (Tshwenyane) was only accessible through one path. Their cattle kraals were chiefly built of stone. Their circular houses were usually decorated and painted in yellow and red clay oxides and their style reflected a germ of genius. They also showed their ingenuity by keeping their houses and yards very clean in addition to smelting both iron and copper in a clay furnace almost equal in hardness to a stone. The capital had its own wells, fields and households of metalworkers, carvers of the local soapstone for smoking pipes and a rainmaker around the mountain top. In the later 17th century and early 18th century, the Bahurutshe kingdom stretched as far as modern Rustenburg and the Pilanesberg hills.²⁰⁰ It therefore follows that the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana settled on Boswelakgosi hill in 1858 because of a desire for the same sentiments. Boswelakgosi hill was ideal because it was close to Kolobeng River whose waters they exploited together with their domestic livestock. The area in the Monneng valley, which stretched from the outskirts of the Boswelakgosi hill to Manyelanong hill to the east, was generally swampy and the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana readily fetched the water there during the wet seasons. Besides, most probably the advice from their hosts, the Bakwena, may have influenced their choice of a settlement site on Boswelakgosi hill as a long-term measure. That was on accounts that while at Kolobeng, the Bakwena were afflicted by the 1847-1851 severe drought whereupon the Kolobeng River, (then dubbed “the river that never dries up”), dried up, and no rain fell and the crops failed for four years. Hunger was so intense that the Bakwena subsisted on *motlopi* (*Boscia albitrunca*) roots which were cut fine, ground and eaten as a porridge substitute. In 1852 Sechele took his people to Dimawe which was a more secure place a few kilometres upstream near present day Manyana.²⁰¹ According to Hitchcock, the Bakwena were so desperate to the extent that

¹⁹⁹ Interview: Keineetse Sebele, 1938, Businessman, at Molepolole on 3 November 2005.

²⁰⁰ Neil Parsons, *A New History of Southern Africa*, London, Macmillan, 1993, pp 45-46.

²⁰¹ Janet Parsons, “Kolobeng: Home of the Livingstones and the Bakwena, 1847-1852,” Gaborone, courtesy of The National Museum and Art Gallery, pp 1-2. Also see A.C. Campbell,

the rain doctors were called in, one of whom received permission to exhume the body of a child who had died the previous year so that the body parts could be used as rainmaking medicines. The men spent a great deal of their time hunting, while the women and the children gathered roots. The famine was acute to the extent that the Bakwena survived the previous six months entirely on locusts. The Bakwena finally moved immediately to a place they hoped would be more auspicious.²⁰²

The other reason why the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana settled on Boswelakgosi hill was because it was naturally endowed with additional wild food produce such as *mogogorwane* (*Stychos coculeoides*), *mmilo* (*Vangueria infausta*), *mmopudu* (*Mimusops zeyheri*), *motlhatswa* (*Ficus ingens*), *morula* (*Sclerocarya caffra*), *mokhumpata* (*Grewia flavescens*) and *motsotsojane* (*Grewia retinervis*). The fruits were rich in vitamins. On the other hand, the grey and yellow oxides for the decoration of the walls of their houses were readily exploited in the outskirts of Boswelakgosi hill and on the banks of the Kolobeng River in particular. The red oxide and the clay for making clay pots were mined respectively at Bopharangwe and Phokotlhe near Manyelanong hill. In the open grassland, the *motsikiri*, *makurwana*, *seloka* and *tshikitshane* grass species were available for thatching purposes. Moreover, the reeds, *letlhokwa*, *mophakwane* and *tlhatlha* for making traditional baskets were readily available from the Kolobeng River. The Bahurutshe boo-Manyana, therefore, led a relaxed way of life on Boswelakgosi hill because almost all that they needed was available and within reach in their sphere of influence in present day south east Botswana.²⁰³

Conversely, the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana settled on Boswelakgosi hill in Kweneng for symbolic reasons. They came as refugees and subsequently accepted a patron-client relationship which was expressed through recognising Sechele as the Paramount Chief and as well as paying tribute. Their settlement on Boswelakgosi hill may have been an attempt to match the standard of living that the Bakwena seemed to have set by settling

“The 1960’s Drought in Botswana,” in Symposium on Drought in Botswana, Gaborone, The Botswana Society in collaboration with Clark University Press, 1978, p 100.

²⁰² R.K. Hitchcock, “The Traditional Response to Drought in Botswana,” in Symposium on Drought in Botswana, Gaborone, The Botswana Society in collaboration with Clark University Press, 1978, p 92.

²⁰³ Group interview: Nyolo Mangope, 1927, Headman of Arbitration, and Lekgotla Molefe, 1834, Headman of Arbitration, at the Main *kgotla* in Manyana, on 8 June 2005.

on Dithubaruba hill in 1853. In relative terms, it may have been a gesture of caricature on the part of Chief Mangope. The Bahurutshe boo-Manyana including their chief were still commoners despite what looked like they had equal status and the same identity. Their initiation and rainmaking ceremonies, regiments, system of succession to chieftainship, taboos and other rituals were more or less the same as those of the Bakwena. Their settlement on Boswelakgosi hill on the outskirts of Kweneng suggested their acceptance of a refugee or a commoner status. In relative terms, they were politically autonomous but matters of defence and foreign relations were in the hands of Sechele.²⁰⁴

In conclusion, the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana settled on Boswelakgosi hill in 1858 mainly due to a suspected Boer attack and that the hill was near the water course, the Kolobeng River. The area between the Dimawe and Boswelakgosi hills was generally fertile and suitable for arable farming. It was characterised by a combination of chestnut-brown sandy loam and clay soils.²⁰⁵ The soils were also called Ferruginous Tropical loamy soils and were well drained.²⁰⁶ The pools in the nearby Kolobeng River did not easily dry up and were subsequent converging places for both big and small land and aquatic wild animals and the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana did not, therefore, travel long distances while hunting. The wild animals included, inter alia, the hippos, elephants, buffalos, rhinos, giraffes, kudu, impala, steenboks, warthogs, hyenas, klipspringers and the leopards. Fish was also plentiful. The Monneng valley was also designated a grazing area for the cattle, sheep, goats and horses. The valley was also a source of various thatching grasses and clay oxides.²⁰⁷ By settling on Boswelakgosi hill, they were in fact perpetuating their long established tradition of living on top of a secure hill with almost all the necessary advantages. Their settlement pattern on Boswelakgosi hill was almost a replica of the old one at Kaditshwene on the summit of Tshwenyane Mountain in the Transvaal. The Bahurutshe boo-Manyana were

²⁰⁴ Leach Tlhomelang, "Bahurutshe bo-Manyana," a dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts at the University College of Botswana, 1977, pp 10, 11.

²⁰⁵ R.M.K. Silitshena and G. McLeod, Botswana: A Physical, Social and Economic Geography, Gaborone, Longman, 1998, p 65.

²⁰⁶ "Botswana Climate: Geology, Soils and Vegetation," in Secondary School Atlas, Cape Town, Longman, 1997, p 23.

²⁰⁷ Group interview: Nyolo Mangope, 1927, Headman of Arbitration, and Lekgotla Molefe, 1934, Headman of Arbitration, at the Main *kgotla* in Manyana, on 8 June 2005.

comfortable with their choice of a habitat for more than 17 years. Boswelakgosi hilltop village was only abandoned following the death of Mangope in 1875 or 1878. Chief Mangope was then buried in the cattle kraal on the hill, hence the name Boswelakgosi suggests the place where he died and was subsequently buried.²⁰⁸ In 1875 or 1878, Kontle, the successor (1875-1893), relocated the village from Boswelakgosi hill to a new site in the Monneng open grassland between Boswelakgosi and the Kolobeng hills. However, the site was prone to water logging although it was in close proximity to the waters of the Kolobeng River, which were frequented by both big and small land and aquatic animals like elephants, rhinos, giraffes, kudu, impala, duikers, hippos, water hogs, etc.²⁰⁹

In 1881 Kontle relocated the capital to the banks of the Kolobeng River near the Kolobeng hills to the west. That was because there was a dire need to shorten the distances the women used to walk during the dry season to fetch the drinking water.²¹⁰ It was customary for a new *kgosi* upon installation to move the capital of his state to a new location of his choice or at least to a different one from that occupied by his predecessor. The chosen settlement site with a good water supply and fertile lands did not only bring a fortune to the community, but also greatly enhanced his status. The chief's reputation and popularity were also often determined by the nature of the rainfall during his period of rule. Such a measure was also a practical expression of his wisdom and godlike qualities. The relocation also had symbolic implications for the *kgosi* and the life of the state as a whole because it was a way of re-organising the settlement and locating himself and his three wives and heirs centrally, to avoid possible conflicts which might arise between one generation of leadership and the next. If Kontle did not relocate the village from Boswelakgosi hill, then he was forced to continue to live alongside his father's many wives, all of whom wanted their sons to become heirs.²¹¹ Chief Mangope had eleven wives and more than forty children among

²⁰⁸ Interview: Mareko Abel Mosielele, 1924, Headman, at the Main *kgotla* in Manyana, on 4 November 2005.

²⁰⁹ Interview: Mareko Abel Mosielele, 1924, Headman, at the Main *kgotla* in Manyana, on 4 November 2005.

²¹⁰ Leach Tlhomelang, "Bahurutshe bo-Manyana," a dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts at the University College of Botswana, 1977, p 12.

²¹¹ G. J. Hardie, "The Dynamics of the Internal Organisation of the Traditional Tribal Capital, Mochudi," in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape,

whom Sebogodi and Suping were potential rivals. After protracted quarrels and misunderstandings with Kontle, Sobogodi and Suping went back to the Transvaal, where they established their own states at Motswedi and Suping or Suping Stadt respectively. Moreover, the relocation of the tribal capital allowed for the nucleated settlement pattern to be dynamic and to accommodate some changes as they became necessary. In other words, the movement of the tribal capital was a technique of expansion. The new village was hierarchically divided into the Gora-Mosielele ward or the Chief's ward and four wards namely Mankwe, Manailana, Seaila and Gora-Nkgwe which belonged to the relatives of the royal ward. The Gora-Modise, Gora-Nthomanyane, Sebako, Poane, Monneng and Go-Kgonyana wards belonged to the commoners. When Kontle died in 1893, his son, Mosielele, succeeded him and retained the ward structure.²¹²

Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, pp 205-206. Also see Leonard D. Ngcongco, "Aspects of the History of Bangwaketse to 1910," a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Philosophy at Dalhousie University, April 1977, p 102, and Isaac Schapera, The Tswana, London, International African Institute, 1953, p 60.

²¹² Leach Tlhomelang, "Bahurutshe bo-Manyana," a dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts at the University College of Botswana, 1977, pp 14, 25, 29. Also see Leonard D. Ngcongco, "Aspects of the History of Bangwaketse to 1910," a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Philosophy at Dalhousie University, April 1977, p 103.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE BAKGATLA BA GA KGAFELA ON THE SLOPES OF PHUTHADIKOBO HILL IN MOCHUDI IN 1872

My objectives in this chapter are to identify the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela's place of origin in the present day Republic of South Africa and the reasons for their subsequent migration to present day south east Botswana in the 19th century. Another objective is to highlight their settlement site and pattern in Mochudi. Coupled with this, I intend to explain the reasons why the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela settled on the slopes of Phuthadikobo hill in Mochudi in the 19th century.

Unlike their counterparts (the Bakwena, Bangwaketse, Bahurutshe boo-Manyana, Balete and Batlokwa) in the present day south east Botswana, the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela venerate a monkey (*kgabo*). Like their counterparts, the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela kept livestock (cattle and goats), grew crops (sorghum, millet, beans, melons), hunted and collected wild food.²¹³ Their village, Mochudi, has been named after the Bakwena chief, Motshodi or Motshudi. Mochudi had served as the capital of the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela since 1872.²¹⁴

The Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela trace their place of origin to the Pilanesberg Mountains in the western Transvaal. Map 4 shows their place of origin in the present day Republic of South Africa. It also shows the position of their settlement site in present day south east Botswana.²¹⁵ They subsequently came to settle in present day south east Botswana as an offshoot of the Bakgatla ba ga Moseitlha in the former western Transvaal, after

²¹³ Thomas Tlou and Alec Campbell, History of Botswana, Gaborone, Macmillan, 1997, pp 95, 104, 113.

²¹⁴ Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, Historical Dictionary of Botswana, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1989, p 79.

²¹⁵ Map 4 that shows the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela's place of origin in the Republic of South Africa and the position of Mochudi in south east Botswana was designed by Department of Surveys and Mapping, Gaborone, Botswana, 2007.

²¹⁵ Isaac Schapera, Rainmaking Rites of Tswana Tribes, Cambridge, African Studies Centre, 1971, p 9.

the death of Chief Pilane in 1848 at the Pilanesberg Mountains, north of Rustenburg.²¹⁶ Just like the Bakgatla ba ga Mmanaana of Mosielele (1852) and Bahurutshe boo-Manyana of Mangope (1858), the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela left the Transvaal due to the Boers' demand for cheap labour. From 1860 to 1869, Kgamanyane (1848-1874) facilitated farm labour to Paul Kruger who later became the President of the then South African Republic. In 1869 Chief Kgamanyane repudiated the Boers' demands for farm labour, whereupon Kruger is said to have thrashed him in public in front of his people. Then in 1869 or 1870, Kgamanyane and his people 'trekked off' from the western Transvaal to settle at Mochudi in 1871 or 1872 with the permission of Chief Sechele of the Bakwena.²¹⁷

When they originally left the Pilanesberg district, the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela camped for about two years at Tshwene-Tshwene hill. However, Tshwene-Tshwene was abandoned because the baboons destroyed much of the crops in the fields. They (baboons) also competed with the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela for the seasonal wild fruits and berries.²¹⁸ Besides, Tshwene-Tshwene was still within the reach of the 'oppressive' Boers and the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela felt insecure. Moreover, Sechele had already predetermined their final area for settlement on a long-term basis at Phuthadikobo hill on the banks of the Notwane River.²¹⁹ They thereafter crossed the Marico River and settled at the foot of Phuthadikobo hill in Mochudi which was then the territory of the Kwena tribe.²²⁰ Phuthadikobo was a small flat-topped hill with a very limited space when compared with both Kanye and Molepolole hills and Boswelakgosi hill in Manyana. Map 12 clearly shows the strategic position of Phuthadikobo hill on the banks of a watercourse, the Notwane River. It also indicates how vulnerable Phuthadikobo hill and Mochudi village were in respect of the periodic floods from the Notwane River, although it was invaluable in terms of water supplies

²¹⁶ Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, Historical Dictionary of Botswana, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1989, pp 55-56.

²¹⁷ Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, Historical Dictionary of Botswana, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1989, p 58. Also see J. Ramsay, B. Morton, and T. Mgadla, Building a Nation, Gaborone, Longman, 1996, p xii.

²¹⁸ Group interview: Rammono Mongale, Headman of Arbitration, Monono Rammala, 1951, Headman of Arbitration, R. Pheto, Headman of Arbitration, Ngakale Kgetlwe, 1927, Headman of Arbitration, and Montshiwa Semaru Kgosing Mabodisa, Headman of Arbitration, at the Main *kgotla* in Mochudi, on 2 October 2005.

²¹⁹ Isaac Schapera, Rainmaking Rites of Tswana Tribes, Cambridge, African Studies Centre, 1971, p 2.

²²⁰ *Ibid*, p 2.

to the Bakgatla and their livestock. Moreover, it demonstrates that the threat from the floods from the Notwane and Metsimotlhaba Rivers, during severe thunderstorms, was the main factor that influenced the choice of the settlement site and pattern of the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela in Mochudi.²²¹ Map 4 also shows the position of the place of origin of the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela from the present day Republic of South Africa in the 19th century.²²²

Motsemotlhaba joins the Notwane from the west before reaching Phuthadikobo hill and both rivers often flooded the surrounding flat land in summer.²²³ For days at a time, it was impossible for Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela to reach Boseja, the lands areas and the river villages beyond.²²⁴ The Notwane originates around the Lobatse area whereas Metsimotlhaba originates from Gangwaketse. If it rained heavily in both regions, then the floods hit Mochudi. Regrettably, the only documented evidence includes the photographs which were taken by Isaac Schapera and Sandy Grant in 1945 and 1992 respectively.²²⁵ Even today the floods are still a threat. During severe thunderstorms, the Notwane usually floods the surrounding areas within a radius of 100 metres or more from its banks. The water in the river channel may rise to 10 metres and about 5 metres on the banks. For example, the 10-15 February 2006 Notwane River floods almost flooded the three churches located on a slightly high ground 100 metres away from the Notwane River bank.²²⁶

The Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela's nucleated settlement pattern was generated from the conceptual model of the social status of the society which followed traditional rules and age set organisation. It was also based on a centralised concept of government that

²²¹ Map 12 which shows the strategic position of Phuthadikobo hill vis-à-vis the proximity of the Notwane River, was designed by the Department of Surveys and Mapping, Gaborone, Botswana, 2005.

²²² Map 4 that shows the place of origin of the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela in the present day Republic of South Africa was designed by the Department of Surveys and Mapping, Gaborone, Botswana, 2007.

²²³ Isaac Schapera, Rainmaking Rites of Tswana Tribes, Cambridge, African Studies Centre, 1971, p 9.

²²⁴ Sandy Grant, Mochudi around the time of Independence, Mochudi, Phuthadikobo Museum, 2002, p 22.

²²⁵ Photographs in the Phuthadikobo Museum which show the Notwane River floods in Mochudi were taken by Isaac Schapera and Sandy Grant in 1845 and 1992 respectively.

²²⁶ Interview: Robert K. Masibi, 1955, Station Commander, and Modisaotsile Seratswe, 1971, Sergeant, at Mochudi Police Station, on 23 May 2006.

focused on the central office of the chief. The chief subsequently inherited the office and controlled all the civic functions of the state including the legislative, judiciary, defence and land allocation. The subsequent disposition of wards was determined not by chance, numbers or personal inclination, but by the status of each ward and by the geographical division or tribal section to which one belonged. Generally, the village was organised into a number of territorially-based clusters of citizens with both kin and non-kin affiliation to the chief and each ward was controlled and directed by its own headman or leader.²²⁷ The Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela dexterously built their distinct tribal capital on the slopes of Phuthadikobo hill in Mochudi in present day south east Botswana. Mochudi was, therefore, a large, permanent, nucleated village or agro-town, which was epitomized by well defined wards and separate zones for renewable resources such as grazing and arable lands, forest and veld products, water resources, wildlife and clay oxides of various texture and colour. The village was separated from the grazing and cultivation areas in order to reduce the possibility of crops being destroyed by livestock and to avoid environmental problems like the degradation of the range lands in the village, mainly as a result of overgrazing and deforestation. It was also important to enforce a communal responsibility for the sharing of veld products and clay soils for building purposes, to avoid their over-exploitation.²²⁸ The related families typically grouped themselves in semi-circular or horse-shoe patterns on the gentle slopes of the hill. Generally, the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela built rectangular and circular rondavels, whose thatched roofs provided sufficient overhang (wide eaves) to protect the stylishly decorated clay walls from the damaging heavy rain and the sun. A skirting wide enough to include the posts, protected both the posts and the wall from absorbing the water, and thus reduced the chance of collapse. The lifetime of clay walls required regular maintenance and repairs at intervals, which entailed replastering and recolouring. The homesteads were generally enclosed by stone and clay walls. The black, rich yellow and red-brown and white were the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela's classical clay oxides with which they artistically decorated the walls of their houses and *malwapa* in south east Botswana. The Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela's traditional

²²⁷ G. J. Hardie, "The Dynamics of the Internal Organisation of the Traditional Tribal Capital, Mochudi," in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, p 205.

²²⁸ R.M.K. Silitshena and G. McLeod, Botswana: A Physical, Social and Economic Geography, Gaborone, Longman, 1998, pp 96-98, 276.

physical planning also incorporated the *lelwapa* (inner courtyard), *patlelo* and *kgotla*. The *lelwapa* was strictly a private area where, inter alia, wedding formalities took place. The big and small *malwapa* walls were intended to provide privacy and protection from the wind and dust. The marriage, remembrance and sometimes funerals, were the major social occasions, which demanded the renewal and re-decoration of the entire *lelwapa* and its *lekgapo* floor. The selection of suitable soils (a clay loam mix) called *tsopane*, were mixed with cow dung as the prerequisites for the construction of both durable walls and courtyard floors. The *patlelo* was a semi-private area that was shared by the entire extended family; when large numbers of visitors needed to be accommodated, they were always able to overflow from the *lelwapa* into the *patlelo*. The *kgotla*, though small, was a public area which was hemmed in by homesteads which were constructed in a horse-shoe or semi horse-shoe pattern.²²⁹ The main *kgotla* which was headed by the chief was the centre of the village. Meetings of importance for the whole community and the discussions of questions of general concern in the village were held at the main *kgotla*. It also functioned as a court for both civil and criminal cases. *Kgotla* meetings and cases were also held and tried and settled respectively in various wards.²³⁰ The main *kgotla* was, therefore, one of the most sacred and prominent emblems of heritage because it was where the rituals, trials, sentences, punishment and other court dramas took place. The main *kgotla* also boasted of a big tribal kraal made of wooden stockade in which cattle were held.²³¹

The Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela may have been influenced by the Bakwena's oral traditions to settle on the western slopes of Phuthadikobo hill in order to save their lives and property. That could have been the case because the Bakwena, under Chief Motshodi, had lived around Phuthadikobo hill in the early 18th century.²³² Presumably in 1872 Sechele then warned the Bakgatla in advance about the dangerous Notwane River floods, when he allowed them to settle in Mochudi at the time. In respect of a sustainable water supply, the Notwane River was strategic of Phuthadikobo hill. As

²²⁹ Sandy and Elinah Grant Decorated Homes in Botswana, Mochudi, Phuthadikobo Museum, 1995, pp 22, 26-29, 40, 48, 58, 84, 85, 90.

²³⁰ Anita and Viera Larsson, Traditional Tswana Housing, Lund, Department of Building Function Analysis, School of Architecture, Lund University, 1984, pp 28-30.

²³¹ Sandy Grant, "The national heritage that is the *kgotla*," in Mmegi, Vol 22, No 49, 1 April 2005, p A2.

²³² Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, Historical Dictionary of Botswana, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1989, p 79.

already mentioned, if it rained heavily in either of the region, the Bakgatla were guaranteed of water channeled to Phuthadikobo hill or Mochudi via the Notwane and Metsimotlhaba rivers particularly if Phuthadikobo hill or Mochudi lacked localised rains.

Another reason why the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela settled on the slopes of Phuthadikobo hill was because the hill had other secondary advantages. The grey clay for building strong house and courtyard walls was readily exploited at the base and east of the hill.²³³ Moreover, since the Bakgatla depended much for their material well-being upon adequate and timely rains, both Phuthadikobo hill and Notwane River were sources of hill medicinal charms and rain snakes and aquatic rainmaking medicines. The most important rain medicines were the *kgwanyape*'s eggs, flesh, hair, dung, vomit and the water from its pool, the dung of a hyrax, the chyme and hair of a klipspringer, the branches of a *modumela* tree, the *monwametse*, *mogokare*, *morarwana* and *mosobagadi* roots, some green twigs of *mosimama*, the roots and leaves of *mabofe*, the *mpherefere* beans, a *dirapila* bush, a river reed, *senanatswii* or a rain frog and *magogodi* or the river refuse. These and many others were mixed with *tshitlho* (a sooty paste from a rain horn) in the rain pots in the rain kraal, which was located on the Phuthadikobo hill. The chief and his trusted tribal rainmakers or the tribal rainmakers alone, privately prepared the rain medicines and performed the annual rainmaking ritual in seclusion on the hill.²³⁴ So, the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela's motive for settlement at Phuthadikobo hill was well planned and intended to exploit, to the maximum, the available renewable resources and to improve their standard of living in present day south east Botswana.

The Bakgatla preferred a nucleated settlement pattern which was based on a system of descent and an age set organization. However, there was a limited space on the Phuthadikobo hill. The slopes of the hill were, therefore, spacious enough to suit their social and administrative forms.²³⁵ Kgamanyane's courtyard (*kgotla*) and the cattle

²³³ Interview: Monono Rammala, 1951, Headman of Arbitration in Mochudi, on 2 October 2005.

²³⁴ Isaac Schapera, *Rainmaking Rites of Tswana Tribes*, Cambridge, African Studies Centre, 1971, pp 38-59.

²³⁵ Sandy and Elinah Grant, *Decorated Homes in Botswana*, Mochudi, Phuthadikobo Museum, 1995, p 22.

kraal were located in the centre in the Kgosing ward, which was then surrounded by other wards in order of precedence namely the Morema, Tshukudu, Mabodisa and Manamakgote. Each ward was named after and headed by its senior headman.²³⁶ Men of the royal lineage headed the Kgosing ward and its offshoot, Morema, which was located north west of the *kgotla*. The Tshukudu ward comprised older Bakgatla stock and was located south and south west of the *kgotla* whereas the Mabodisa ward was located in the east on the northern slopes. The Manamakgote ward was located in the north west beyond the Morema ward and it comprised predominantly aliens who were incorporated into the tribe long ago. The sections were customarily and hierarchically ranked such that the outskirts of the town were inhabited by the wards least in order of seniority belonging mostly to people of alien origin. In contrast, the royal wards were situated in the centre around the chief and his *kgotla*.²³⁷ The related families typically grouped themselves on a gently sloping ground in semi-circular or horseshoe patterns in compounds that consisted of central houses and small, separate and adjacent houses including magnificent clay granaries. The Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela built distinct double and single walled rondavels whose thatched roofs provided sufficient overhang to protect the decorated clay walls from the rain and the sun. The women gathered the various white clay oxides in the village at the Notwane river bank, Mabodisa ward, Rra Tswiitwii (at the base and east of Phuthadikobo hill) and Mabodisa ward and Segakwaneng area. The clay for making clay pots was also readily exploited at Tsope near the Matshabe cave on the Manamakgote hill, south west of Phuthadikobo hill.²³⁸ The clay pots were used mainly for cooking purposes, storing and preserving rain water and for brewing and storing of traditional beer. The rain water which was stored in the clay pot was normally cool and clean and it also retained its natural taste.²³⁹ Like Phuthadikobo hill, Matshabe cave was equally important to the Bakgatla ba ga

²³⁶ Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, Historical Dictionary of Botswana, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1989, p 79.

²³⁷ Isaac Schapera, Rainmaking Rites of Tswana Tribes, Cambridge, African Studies Centre, 1971, p 5. Also see G. J. Hardie, "The Dynamics of the Internal Organisation of the Traditional Tribal Capital, Mochudi," in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, p 207.

²³⁸ Sandy and Elinah Grant, Decorated Homes in Botswana, Mochudi, Phuthadikobo Museum, 1995, pp 13, 14, 22, 26, 28, 48. Also see the group interview: Ngakale Kgetlwe, 1927, Headman of Arbitration, and Montshiwa Semaru Kgosing Mabodisa, Headman of Arbitration, at the Main *kgotla* in Mochudi, on 13 June 2005.

²³⁹ "Nkgo: The traditional clay pot," in Enviromag, Gaborone, Benbell, August / September 2005, p 15.

Kgafela. In the past, the people (witches) who were allegedly accused and found guilty of causing lightning to strike others or set fire to their huts were accordingly executed at the Matshabe cave.²⁴⁰

The Bakgatla's settlement pattern and house plans on the slopes of Phuthadikobo hill were purely prestigious in the region because the Bakgatla had a long tradition of working in clay and of developing techniques for ensuring its durability by mixing it with cow dung and ash from a burnt *morula* wood. The presence of cattle also meant that ample cow dung was freely available for women who wished to maintain their homes. The use of cow dung ensured the durability of both the structure of a building and its decorated surface.²⁴¹ The black-coloured mixture was used to plaster the surface of walls of the houses and *malwapa*. On the other hand, a mixture of cow dung and water was smeared over the floors to get a hard and smooth surface and the patterns were drawn in the mixture with the fingers or the side of the hand. After drying, the floors were swept clean of the loose particles of the cow dung. The *lelwapa* linked together two or three houses mainly for sleeping and storage and it was the heart of the dwelling. The *lelwapa* was the living room of the family and it was where, inter alia, small children played, the visitors were received, the meals were eaten, the cooking was done, the fires were often lit on the cold evenings and mornings in winter and also an important space for the ceremonial events like weddings and funerals. The Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela used mainly the more sophisticated Boer or Afrikaner technique of thatching. The bundles of heavy and more stiff grass were spread out over the battens starting from the bottom and going upwards towards the apex. The seed ends were placed upwards and the cut ends downwards. The grass was then sown onto the roof with a string (*kgobati*) of a *mooka* tree bark or sisal using a wooden needle. The down ward ends of the grass were smoothed with a wooden shovel. Generally, the average thickness of the grass was around 18 centimetres and the condition of the thatching was good and lasted for at least 30 years. The main maintenance entailed the

²⁴⁰ Isaac Schapera, *Rainmaking Rites of Tswana Tribes*, Cambridge, African Studies Centre, 1971, p 62. Also see the group interview: Ngakale Kgetlwe, 1927, Headman of Arbitration, and Montshiwa Semaru Kgosing Mabodisa, Headman of Arbitration, at the Main *kgotla* in Mochudi, on 13 June 2005.

²⁴¹ Sandy and Elinah Grant, *Decorated Homes in Botswana*, Mochudi, Phuthadikobo Museum, 1995, pp 46, 55, 58, 85.

elimination of termites.²⁴² It is then no wonder that a medical doctor and natural scientist, Emil Holub reacted in the 1870s that “Mochudi struck me as one of the cleanest Bechuana towns that I ever saw.” Between 1930 and 1937, a British Resident Commissioner for the Bechuanaland Protectorate, Sir Charles Rey, also considered and rated Mochudi as the best built village in the territory. That was because the huts were beautifully thatched, the walls cleanly plastered and decorated with most artistic designs and quite clean. Each hut was surrounded by a courtyard and a wall built of rock and clay and plastered to perfection with a mixture of cow dung which kept out ants.²⁴³ The species of trees whose timber was widely used for the posts, beams, dowels, battens and rafters were readily available in the communal land in the village and its periphery. These included the *mogonono*, *mosetlha*, *motlopi*, *mogwane*, *modubu* and *monato*. The timber from those trees was also used for making the homemade chairs and stools. On the other hand, the timber from the *moloto* and *mogotlho*, *mokgalo* and *morula* trees was used for the carving of the pestles, the yokes, the mortars and small and big eating bowls and spoons respectively. The men used the axes to cut the tree trunks and big branches, whereupon they brought the timber to the village by ox-wagon and / or sledge or simply carrying it on their shoulders.²⁴⁴

Generally, Mochudi was a good place for settlement on permanent basis. Due to favourable environmental conditions, the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela effectively subsisted mainly on animal husbandry and the cultivation of crops supplemented by hunting and the collection of edible wild plants. The land was flat and most of the southern portion of Kgatleng was thickly covered with thorn bush and good tracts of fertile clay and loam soils, which favoured the growth of, inter alia, sorghum, beans and melons. Farther north, the trees were more widely spaced and varied and there were many patches of open grassland which was well stocked with grasses of food value, notably *Digitarias* for livestock that comprised cattle, sheep and goats. However, a heavy

²⁴² Anita and Viera Larsson, Traditional Tswana Housing, Lund, Department of Building Function Analysis, School of Architecture, Lund University, 1984, pp 55, 57, 61, 106, 120, 124.

²⁴³ Sandy and Elinah Grant, Decorated Homes in Botswana, Mochudi, Phuthadikobo Museum, 1995, pp 20, 46.

²⁴⁴ Group interview: Ngakale Kgetlwe, 1927, Headman of Arbitration, and Montshiwa Semaru Kgosing Mabodisa, Headman of Arbitration, at the Main *kgotla* in Mochudi, on 13 June 2005. Also see Anita and Viera Larsson, Traditional Tswana Housing, Lund, Department of Building Function Analysis, School of Architecture, Lund University, 1984, pp 108-109.

blanket of loose red Kalahari sand was unfit for cultivation and many areas in the north were, therefore, excellent for cattle ranching.²⁴⁵ The Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela, therefore, established their cattle posts at Lekgalong to avoid land degradation in the village in terms of overgrazing. The Bakgatla men also did a communal hunt (*letsholo*) at Lekgalong because wild animals such as kudu, impala, steenbok and duiker were still relatively easy to find. The *morula* and *moretologa* fruits and *moretlwa* berries were also readily available and gathered by women in the village. The other important renewable resources from the river included the *motlhatlha* grass for making the baskets (*ditlatlana*) and beer strainers (*metlhotlho*) and the reeds for making the mats and winnowing baskets (*maselo*).²⁴⁶

The settlement nexus of the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela on the gentle slopes of the Phuthadikobo hill was not necessitated by an anticipated war or a sense of fear or insecurity from the Boers. The proximity of a watercourse and the availability of the building materials were of paramount importance. It was already 20 years after the decisive Boer-Bakwena (and their allies) war at Dimawe hill in 1852. The Boers did not either further attack the Bakwena then based at Dithubaruba hill or the Bangwaketse on Ntsweng hill. The Boers rather recognised the independence of the Bakwena in 1853.²⁴⁷ Besides, in 1857 the Boers, via Jan Viljoen, sent the Hermannsburg (Lutheran) German missionaries to Sechele's capital, Dithubaruba hill to strengthen their mutual friendship.²⁴⁸ The Bakwena had settled at Dithubaruba hill from 1853 to 1863 and that was a clear indication that the Boer threat was out of the question and that generally there was peace in the region. Besides, the Boers neither attempted to extradite the Bakgatla boo-Mmanaana from Dithubaruba hill in 1853 nor the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana from Boswelakgosi hill in 1858 in Kweneng. So, when Sechele conceded to the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela's request to settle in Kweneng particularly at Phuthadikobo hill in 1872, the latter did not expect the Boers to extradite

²⁴⁵ Isaac Schapera, *Rainmaking Rites of Tswana Tribes*, Cambridge, African Studies Centre, 1971, pp 9, 11.

²⁴⁶ Group interview: Ngakale Kgetlwe, 1927, Headman of Arbitration, and Montshiwa Semaru Kgosing Mabodisa, Headman of Arbitration, at the Main *kgotla* in Mochudi, on 13 June 2005.

²⁴⁷ J.E.H., Grobler, "Jan Viljoen, the South African Republic and the Bakwena, 1848-1882," in *South African Historical Journal*, No 36, Pretoria, University of South Africa, 1997, p 254.

²⁴⁸ J. Mutero Chirenje, "Tswana Intercourse with Traders; German Missionaries come to Bechuanaland, 1850-1860," in *A History of Northern Botswana 1850-1910*, London, Associated University Press, 1877, p 70. Also see Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, *Historical Dictionary of Botswana*, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1989, p 111.

them to the Transvaal. They also did not associate Sechele's overture with an anticipated surprise attack in the future because a Bakwena-Bahurutshe boo-Manyana patron-client relationship seemed to be causing no disgruntlement from the subordinates. Besides, inadequate space on top of the hill could have resulted in absolute overcrowding which in turn could have necessitated urgent relocation of the village. Moreover, the Bakgatla's choice of a settlement pattern, already alluded to, could have become a failure or incongruous to their long established social organisation and administrative forms. In the absence of external threats, the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela were at liberty to establish a permanent, nucleated, agro-town or village on the slopes of Phuthadikobo hill in 1872.

The 1875 and 1876 skirmishes between the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela and the Bakwena over the pillage of cattle,²⁴⁹ the Bakgatla's repudiation of tribute obligations and the struggle for the control of the waters of the Madikwe and the Notwane rivers,²⁵⁰ were merely temporary incidents that did not warrant the fortification or relocation of either the Bakwena's or the Bakgatla's capital. Besides, neither Molepolole hill nor Phuthadikobo hill became a battle ground to suggest that the stone walls on Molepolole hill and those found in various compounds on the slopes of Phuthadikobo hill and Manamakgote were indeed built in anticipation of a war from either party. Besides, the 1875 battle ground was the Mosanta (sandy area) near Makakatlela hill north of Phuthadikobo hill,²⁵¹ while in 1876 the concerned parties clashed on the outskirts of Molepolole hill. The Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela had raided the Bakwena cattle posts south of Molepolole hill but the former were easily spotted and subsequently ambushed.²⁵² The Molepolole hill provided an excellent panoramic view of the countryside. As already mentioned, the magnificent stone walls on both Molepolole hill and the slopes of Phuthadikobo hill were historically constructed as the perimeters of boundary fences

²⁴⁹ J. Ramsay, B. Morton, and T. Mgadla, Building a Nation, Gaborone, Longman, 1996, p 110.

²⁵⁰ Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, Historical Dictionary of Botswana, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1989, p 20.

²⁵¹ Group interview: Ngakale Kgetlwe, 1927, Headman of Arbitration, and Montshiwa Semaru Kgosing Mabodisa, Headman of Arbitration, at the Main *kgotla* in Mochudi, on 13 June 2005.

²⁵² J. Ramsay, B. Morton, and T. Mgadla, Building a Nation, Gaborone, Longman, 1996, p 110.

in respect of a nucleated settlement pattern based on precedence of descent and age set organisation.²⁵³

In conclusion, the settlement nexus of the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela on the slopes of the Phuthadikobo hill was largely influenced by the threats of periodic river flooding from the Notwane and Metsimotlhaba rivers, their magico-religious beliefs, their desire to exploit the waters of the Notwane River, their preferred nucleated settlement pattern which was based on the status of both the society and the respective wards and a centralised concept of government, a lack of enough space on the hill and the topography of the land. However, the building materials which were freely available in the village included the various clay oxides, cow dung, stones, timber, grasses and water. The settlement of the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela on the slopes of Phuthadikobo hill was, therefore, carefully planned and orderly. Generally, Mochudi was endowed with sustainable renewable resources such as grazing and arable lands, forest and veld products, water resources, wild animals and clay oxides of various texture and colour. In relative terms, the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela's permanent infrastructure on the slopes of Phuthadikobo hill in present south east Botswana, was highly prestigious. The stone walls on the slopes of Phuthadikobo hill added value and beauty to the otherwise stylishly decorated walls of the rondavel houses and *malwapa*. The Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela had not relocated their agro-town and Phuthadikobo hill had become their tribal capital since 1872. The Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela's settlement in Mochudi in respect of the chosen site, the situation, the pattern and function was, therefore, indeed a success.

²⁵³ Sandy and Elinah Grant, Decorated Homes in Botswana, Mochudi, Phuthadikobo Museum, 1995, pp 22, 41.

CHAPTER SIX

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE BALETE NEAR MAKLOBOTO HILL IN RAMOTSWA IN 1875

My objectives in this chapter are to highlight the Balete's settlement site, pattern and situation, place of origin in the Republic of South Africa, major stopovers in both the Republic of South Africa and present day south east Botswana and the reasons for the migration from the Republic of South Africa to south east Botswana. The other objective is to state and explain why the Balete settled near Makoloboto hill in Ramotswa in 1875.

The Balete became acculturated Sotho-Tswana on the Transvaal highveld during the 16th century. They migrated across the Transvaal highveld and travelled extensively to settle permanently in Ramotswa in present day south east Botswana in the middle of the 19th century, that is, three years after the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela. They left the Transvaal because they could not tolerate the Boers' demand for labour.²⁵⁴ The settlement of the Balete in Ramotswa was characterised by utmost determination and a careful selection of options especially of an ideal nucleated settlement pattern that had been tried before or whose details of operation were best known. The other features included a conscious intent, customary planning and a control over the exploitation of the natural resources and above all, a calculated inconsiderateness to their respective primary and secondary masters, the Bakwena and Bangwaketse. Out of desperation, Mokgosi I settled the Balete on a relatively high but flat land near Makoloboto hill in Ramotswa in 1875. The entire Ramotswa area was already claimed by the Bangwaketse. The Balete successfully established a large, nucleated agro-town or village. Ramotswa village was sited on a small communal area that was nevertheless essential for a full range of economic activities on which they depended. These included subsistence mixed farming, hunting and gathering and the mining of iron ore. The settlement nexus of the Balete was, therefore, largely influenced by topography,

²⁵⁴ Leonard Ngcongco, "Precolonial Migration in Southeastern Botswana," in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, pp 28-29.

the distribution of fertile soils, a reliable and adequate water supply, abundant iron ore deposits, the kinship relations²⁵⁵ and a renowned system of land tenure and allocation.²⁵⁶ Their settlement pattern and situation in present day south east Botswana, reflected a complex tripartite system of a large central town surrounded by arable land areas beyond which were cattle posts.²⁵⁷ Historically, the Balete became great skilled mine workers in the vicinity of modern Thabazimbi district in the Transvaal. Endowed with a rich iron technological tradition, the Balete were then able to produce some implements and tools from strong iron that was smelted and mixed with charcoal.²⁵⁸

Unlike their counterparts, the Balete venerate a buffalo (*nare*). They trace their place of origin to the Pedi kingdom (on the north eastern Transvaal highveld) around the northern Drakensberg in the Limpopo area or the neighbourhood of modern Pretoria or Tshwane in the 18th century. The Pedi kingdom controlled trade from the interior in ivory, cattle, furs as well as a local production of copper, gold and iron.²⁵⁹ As already indicated, the Balete were of Ndebele speaking origins and constituted one of the smaller tribal groups namely the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana (1858), the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela (1872) and the Batlokwa (1887), who settled in present day south east

²⁵⁵ R.M.K. Silitshena, "Population movements and settlement patterns in contemporary Botswana," in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, p 33. Also see B.K. Temane and M. York-Smith, "Towards a National Settlement Policy," in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, pp 284-285.

²⁵⁶ Robert K. Hitchcock and A.C. Campbell, "Settlement patterns of the Bakgalagari," in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, p 153. Also see B.K. Temane and M. York-Smith, "Towards a National Settlement Policy," in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, p 284.

²⁵⁷ Robert K. Hitchcock and A.C. Campbell, "Settlement patterns of the Bakgalagari," in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, p 148.

²⁵⁸ Leonard Ngcongco, "Precolonial Migration in Southeastern Botswana," in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, p 25.

²⁵⁹ Group interview: Lebanka Matshitse, 1932, Farmer, and Montle Matshitse, 1942, Reed flute expert, at Ramotswa on 24 August 2005. Also see Leonard D. Ngcongco, "Aspects of the History of Bangwaketse to 1910," a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Philosophy at Dalhousie University, p 61 and Neil Parsons, A New History of Southern Africa, London, Macmillan, 1993, pp 41-42.

Botswana in the second half of the 19th century.²⁶⁰ Just like the Bakgatla ba-Mmanaana, the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana and the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela, the Balete of Mokgosi 1 (1820-1886) came into conflict with the Transvaal Boers over patron-client or labour relations in 1852.²⁶¹ They subsequently sought refuge from Sechele of the Bakwena, who was then established at Dithubaruba hill, a ‘natural fortress.’²⁶²

Apart from the Boer ‘harassment,’ the history of the Balete was mainly characterised by splits due to father-son succession disputes, forced migrations due to a severe drought (1790-1810) and its associated effects of scarcity of food and water and cattle loss, poverty, repudiation of tribute and a desire to be absolutely independent of the Bakwena.²⁶³

During their migrations from the Limpopo area, the Balete camped at many hills in the proximity to rivers en route Dithubaruba. The major rivers in the Transvaal included the Olifants (Ngoretele) in the neighbourhood of modern Pretoria or Tshwane, Madikwe or Marico, Phalalwe, Notwane or Ngotwane and Taung. The major hills and hilly areas included the misty Hartebeestfontein (naturally endowed with iron ore deposits, specularite, waterfalls and springs), Magaliesberg, Zwartuggens, Rabogadi (iron ore), Ramotswa, the banks of the Taung river between Ramotswa and Mogobane (near the range of hills comprising Marete, Seoposengwe, Mamaering, Matlaphekwe, Setobe, Makanangwane, Ralenyana, and Mogobane), Thamaga and finally Dithubaruba, where they temporarily lived from 1853 to 1863.²⁶⁴ Map 4 shows the Balete’s place of origin and some of their major stopovers in the present Republic of South Africa and south east Botswana.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁰ Sandy and Elinah Grant, Decorated Homes in Botswana, Mochudi, Phuthadikobo Museum, 1995, pp 19, 26.

²⁶¹ Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, Historical Dictionary of Botswana, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1989, p 66.

²⁶² J. Ramsay, B. Morton, and T. Mgadla, Building a Nation, Gaborone, Longman, 1996, p 91.

²⁶³ Odirile Mmipi, “The founding and history of the village of Gabane, 1892-1966,” a research essay submitted to the Department of History of the University of Botswana in fulfilment of the requirements for the course ‘Research Projects in History’ (H403) in April 2000, pp 5-8. Also see Neil Parsons, A New History of Southern Africa, London, Macmillan, 1993, p 50.

²⁶⁴ V. Ellenberger, “Ba-ga-Malete,” in Traditional Histories of the Native Tribes of Bechuanaland Protectorate, Cape Town, The Lovedale Press, 1954, pp 189-218.

²⁶⁵ Map 4 that shows the place of origin and the major stopovers of the Balete was designed by Department of Surveys and Mapping, Gaborone, Botswana, 2007.

While at Dithubaruba, the Balete were not accorded the rights and status to settle on top of the hill. As already mentioned, the top part was exclusively reserved for Sechele and Mosielele and their immediate families. Generally, the space was very limited on top of the hill.²⁶⁶ Besides, the history of the Bakwena was characterised by a willingness to incorporate and assimilate displaced peoples during and even before the *difaqane*.²⁶⁷ According to their settlement pattern, the Bakwena, however, placed the commoners on the outskirts of the settlement to serve as the town's front line of defence against outside invaders. It was the commoners' geographical position in relation to the centre by which their status was confirmed.²⁶⁸ It was not surprising then that the Balete (1853-1863) and the Hermannsburg missionaries (1857-1860) were contemptuously made to settle on the outskirts of Dithubaruba hill, on an open and relatively high ground west of Dithejwane River. That was simply because they were commoners of Nguni (as opposed to Sotho-Tswana) and German origins respectively. At face value, Sechele did not recognise the Balete as equals, although they co-existed with the Bakwena. By the same token, Sechele did not regard the German missionaries as personal friends because they were not an important factor in the religious life of the Bakwena and besides, they were, in his opinion, not wiser than him in matters of scripture.²⁶⁹ For the next decade, the Balete became accustomed to living on a high ground near a watercourse. When they moved from Dithubaruba, the Balete settled temporarily at Mmankgodi hill with the Bahurutshe boo-Mokhibidu until 1875. One can say they were further 'indoctrinated' on a nucleated settlement pattern on the spacious and relatively high ground at the foot and north of Mmankgodi hill. In 1875,

²⁶⁶ Interview: Keineetse Sebele, 1938, Businessman, at Molepolole on 3 November 2005.

²⁶⁷ Fanuel Nangati, "Early Capitalist Penetration: The Impact of Precolonial Trade in Kweneng, 1840-1876," in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, p 140.

²⁶⁸ G. J. Hardie, "The Dynamics of the Internal Organization of the Traditional Tribal Capital, Mochudi," in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, p 206.

²⁶⁹ Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, Historical Dictionary of Botswana, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1989, p 66. Also see J. Mutero Chirenje, "Tswana Intercourse with Traders; German Missionaries come to Bechuanaland, 1850-1860," in A History of Northern Botswana 1850-1910, London, Associated University Press, 1877, pp 70-73.

they moved again this time for Ramotswa in repudiation of Sechele's demand of tribute.²⁷⁰

Unlike the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana and boo-Mokhibidu, who enjoyed their relative autonomy within the territorial boundaries of the Bangwaketse and Bakwena respectively, the Balete resolved to assert their absolute autonomy outside the territorial boundaries of both the Bangwaketse and the Bakwena.²⁷¹

In terms of the effective occupation of the region, the Bakwena and the Bangwaketse and their respective subordinates and the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela were already prosperous and well established to the south west and south east respectively by 1875. Both the Bangwaketse and the Bakwena were political and economic giants based on Kanye and Molepolole hills respectively. For example, the Bangwaketse traded in ivory, skins and ostrich feathers. They also became prosperous in cattle which they procured through cattle raiding. The Bakwena also became the most powerful and prosperous nation in the region because they traded in ivory, ostrich feathers and karosses.²⁷² By 1874, the Balete were not yet autonomous of the Bakwena and were still looked upon more or less as intruders or refugees.²⁷³ Besides, they had not yet laid claim to a land they would proudly call their reserve in the future, and as such they were very anxious to do so in the quickest time possible. The only available land they could claim lay to the south east between the Notwane and Taung Rivers in particular. The area comprised mainly small isolated hills, flat land and tree and bush savanna. However, according to the Keate Award of October 1871, the land or territory legitimately belonged to the Bangwaketse by virtue of being 'early comers' in the region.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁰ V. Ellenberger, "Ba-ga-Malete," in Traditional Histories of the Native Tribes of Bechuanaland Protectorate, Cape Town, The Lovedale Press, 1954, p 212.

²⁷¹ Group interview: Lebanka Matshitse, 1932, Farmer, and Montle Matshitse, 1942, Reed flute expert, at Ramotswa on 24 August 2005.

²⁷² Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, Historical Dictionary of Botswana, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1989, pp 55, 64, 81, 88.

²⁷³ Isaac Schapera, "A short history of the Bangwaketse," in Traditional Histories of the Native Tribes of Bechuanaland Protectorate, Cape Town, The Lovedale Press, 1954, p 15.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid*, p 13.

Nevertheless, in 1875, the Balete effectively occupied the said area, which they named Ramotswa to suggest that they had long last become free of the bondage they suffered since they co-existed with the Bakwena in Kweneng. The Balete settled on a high ground north of and near the Makoloboto hill and the Notwane River to the east. The hills offered relative safety from the periodic floods from the Notwane and Taung Rivers during severe thunderstorms. Map 13 clearly shows the geographical position of the hill and the rivers to which reference is made in the text. It also shows how the topography of the area influenced the Balete's settlement site and pattern in Ramotswa.²⁷⁵

Strategically and politically, the Balete were relatively out of reach of the Bakwena and / or the Bangwaketse. The Balete were then able to gradually repudiate their tribute obligations to their primary and secondary superiors namely the Bakwena and the Bangwaketse.²⁷⁶ In the early stages of their settlement in Ramotswa, they were still obliged to recognise either Sechele or Gaseitsiwe as their Paramount Chief as long as they continued to occupy their territories.²⁷⁷

Another reason why the Balete settled on a relatively high but flat ground in the valley was because they had a long tradition of settling on an open grassland in present day south east Botswana. Historically the Balete did not settle on any hill in present day south east Botswana. Prior to settling at Dithubaruba hill in Kweneng, the Balete had settled and set their cattle posts on an open, flat land near Baratani hill. A permanent spring on the north west slopes of the Baratani hill had provided sufficient water for them and their livestock.²⁷⁸ So, upon leaving Bahurutshe boo-Mokhibidu at Mmankodi hill in 1875, the motive was not a dire competition to settle on a hill, but to claim and effectively settle on a spacious flat land that eventually allowed them to establish a big village with a main *kgotla* and distinct wards. The land stretching from Makoloboto hill to Magopane hill to the west was large enough to cater for the

²⁷⁵ Map 13 which shows the strategic position of Makoloboto hill vis-à-vis the proximity of the Notwane River and Magopane hill was designed by the Department of Surveys and Mapping, Gaborone, Botswana, 2005.

²⁷⁶ Group interview: Lebanka Matshitse, 1932, Farmer, and Montle Matshitse, 1942, Reed flute expert, at Ramotswa on 24 August 2005.

²⁷⁷ Isaac Schapera, "A short history of the Bangwaketse," in Traditional Histories of the Native Tribes of Bechuanaland Protectorate, Cape Town, The Lovedale Press, 1954, p 13.

²⁷⁸ Interview: Moreti Tshephe, 1936, Headman, at Otse Main *kgotla*, on 26 October 2005.

establishment of the premeditated village. The settlement nexus of the Balete near Makoloboto hill shortened the distance they walked to fetch the water from the Notwane River.²⁷⁹

Besides, the Balete's settlement on a high ground near Makoloboto hill was equally a security measure against river flooding caused by the Notwane River located east of the village. During severe thunderstorms, the raging floods spread as far as more than 100 metres from the river bank. In the past some people and livestock were swept away by the raging floods. Makoloboto hill was relatively flat topped and it could be helpful in times of emergency. The known and recollected cases concerned the 1905 and 1945 floods which also hit Mochudi.²⁸⁰ Even in 2006, the Notwane River was still a danger to the lives of the Balete particularly those who lived within 100 metres radius of the river bank. For example, 20 Ramotswa residents, whose homes were reduced to debris that floated on murky waters alongside bloated carcasses of goats and calves, were saved from drowning by an airborne Botswana Defence Force rescue team. Three corpses were fished out of the flood waters and crops were also badly affected.²⁸¹ In addition, the Balete may have been warned about the Notwane floods in 1875 because they were close allies of the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela.²⁸²

The other reason why the Balete settled at Makoloboto hill was because the hill was near another hill, Magopane, which harboured iron ore. Their settlement at Makoloboto hill equally and politically accorded them unlimited rights to exploit the abundant iron ore in the rocks located on Magopane hill to the west. The Balete miners walked short distances from the main village to the mine area and back. Regrettably, the mine area had since been designated a residential plot of Olefile Raijabai Morekwa.

²⁷⁹ Group interview: Lebanka Matshitse, 1932, Farmer, and Montle Matshitse, 1942, Reed flute expert, at Ramotswa on 24 August 2005.

²⁸⁰ Interview: Tonnore Basime, 1929, Housewife, at Ramotswa on 4 June 2005.

²⁸¹ See the various reports on the 10-15 February 2006 flash floods by Bame Piet, "Floods displace families," in *Mmegi*, Vol 23, No 21, 10 February 2006, p 4, Tirelo Ditshipi, "Floods of mixed fortune," in *The Midweek Sun*, 15 February 2006, p 4, Mirriam Gondwe, "Monster deluge drowns Ramotswa," in *Sunday Standard*, 12-18 February 2006, p 1, and Bame Piet, "Floods kill two in Taung," in *Mmegi*, Vol 23, No 21, 13 February 2006, p 2.

²⁸² J. Ramsay, B. Morton, and T. Mgadla, *Building a Nation*, Gaborone, Longman, 1996, p 110.

Morekwa had subsequently filled up the pit with some rock debris. However, the plot and its periphery still boast of evidence of iron ore rocks and slag.²⁸³

The Balete settled on the high but flat ground between Makoloboto and Magopane hills in order to be equally safe from the periodic floods from the Notwane River. They also positioned themselves to exploit the water and iron ore by just walking short distances. The area was also spacious enough to establish a big village with distinct wards and houses. Their houses were culturally decorated with grey, red-brown and limestone oxides and also thatched according to both traditional and Boer methods. The boundaries between the various homes were clearly defined by hedges of cut thorn bush. The creation of Ramotswa as a big tribal capital was the most distinctive cultural and political achievement of the Balete in present day south east Botswana. Ramotswa, as an agro-town, was not relocated because of external threats or warfare, a shortage of water, the periodic localised flash floods and widespread river flooding, a degradation of an environment and a loss or damage of productive land. Historically, the Balete were geographically pinned against a border with the South African Republic. As such they were desperately short of farming land and their hunting opportunities were restricted in contrast to their western neighbours.²⁸⁴ The Balete, however, effectively fought and claimed Ramotswa in order to improve their standard of living. The settlement nexus of the Balete at Makoloboto hill was legitimised when they decisively defeated the Bangwaketse regiments on Makoloboto hill on 10 November 1881. Gaseitsiwe's son, Bathoen, led the Maisantwa and Matlotlakang regiments and was determined to expel the Balete from Ramotswa by force. However, the Balete heavily defeated the Bangwaketse regiments by killing more than 100 men, while they (Balete) lost more than 80 men. The Balete then claimed Ramotswa by both conquest and prescription. Gaseitsiwe recognised the Balete as an independent tribe and agreed to a delimitation of a boundary with them. He also undertook not to attack them again. The Balete were henceforth to live on a land relatively sufficient for all their normal requirements in Gaseitsiwe's country. The Balete also undertook not to interfere with or engage in any hostile action against the Bangwaketse without first submitting the

²⁸³ Group interview: Lebanka Matshitse, 1932, Farmer, and Montle Matshitse, 1942, Reed flute expert, at Ramotswa on 24 August 2005.

²⁸⁴ Sandy and Elinah Grant, Decorated Homes in Botswana, Mochudi, Phuthadikobo Museum, 1995, pp 21, 26, 38, 41.

matter to arbitration.²⁸⁵ The Balete's relocation from Kweneng in 1875 was subsequently a steppingstone to attaining absolute independence.

It is equally important to note that the Balete tolerated 28 years of refugee status before they attained absolute independence and their settlement nexus at Makoloboto hill had to be celebrated by all, hence the adage *ra mo tswa*. It suggested that the Balete (through their war plan, *Tsietsa Motswana*), had outwitted Bathoen and his regiments and the subsequent victory brought about their independence that was overdue! The same adage also implied that the Balete finally seceded from Kweneng to become autonomous. A very long stone wall that cut across the Makoloboto hill was helpful in terms of effective defence during the 1881 Balete-Bangwaketse battle. Ramotswa was worthy fighting for because it was strategically auspicious in terms of surface and underground water supplies from the Notwane River in the east and Taung and Metsemaswaane Rivers to the west.²⁸⁶ The swampy areas on the Notwane River were believed to be inhabited by a snake that vomited water (*noga e e kgwang metsi*). Such swampy areas favoured the growth of *tthatlha* for making baskets, beer strainers and mats.²⁸⁷ They also claimed exclusive rights to the iron ore deposits around Magopane hill with which they made durable iron-bladed tools and weapons like hand hoes, axes, spears and knives. The neighbouring hills and tree and bush savanna were also abounding with wild fruits such as *moretlwa*, *mmilo*, *mothakolane*, *mmopudu*, *maruswa*, *moretologa* and *morula*.²⁸⁸

In comparison to other villages, Ramotswa was also abounding with wild animals which included, inter alia, kudu, duiker, steenbok, leopard and klipspringer. The klipspringer was the main rainmaking medicine (*ke modira pula*) and was relatively abundant in the outskirts of Ramotswa on the Sepetlo hills to the west. The klipspringer's carcass was normally ripped open and the river refuse (*magogodi*) and

²⁸⁵ Isaac Schapera, "A short history of the Bangwaketse," in Traditional Histories of the Native Tribes of Bechuanaland Protectorate, Cape Town, The Lovedale Press, 1954, pp 13, 14, 16, 19. See also Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, Historical Dictionary of Botswana, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1989, p 101.

²⁸⁶ Group interview: Lebanka Matshitse, 1932, Farmer, and Montle Matshitse, 1942, Reed flute expert, at Ramotswa on 24 August 2005.

²⁸⁷ Interview: Tonnore Basime, 1929, Housewife, at Ramotswa on 4 June 2005.

²⁸⁸ Group interview: Lebanka Matshitse, 1932, Farmer, and Montle Matshitse, 1942, Reed flute expert, at Ramotswa on 24 August 2005.

other small animals (killed during a drive hunt) were piled on it and set alight. As the smoke rose into the air, some rain bearing clouds formed and a heavy rain (devoid of lightning and thunder) fell shortly thereafter. Like their counterparts, the Balete strongly believed that a severe drought and or lack of rain could result from human misconduct and that a Supreme Being and ancestral spirits were the providers of rain particularly when they were accordingly appeased. It is important to note that rain was extremely important not only to the Balete in Ramotswa but also to other Tswana groups to the extent that “rainmaking [*go fetlha pula*] was everywhere held to be an attribute of the chiefship, and a chief’s reputation and popularity were often determined by the nature of the rainfall during his period of rule. Some of the rites he performed himself, others were carried out at his request or under his supervision by professional rainmakers [*baroka ba pula*] and other members of the tribe.”²⁸⁹

Subsequently, Chief Mokgosi, the tribal rain doctors and the male age regiments officially performed the annual rainmaking rituals at a sacred open space at the foot and east of Lentswe la Baratani or Hill of Lovers. The hill was originally called Madilotsane because its outskirts and summit had to be avoided by the entire community. The ancestral spirits were believed to dwell at the summit and were active in their daily chores especially at dusk and during the night. The hill was not climbed at will lest the ancestral spirits were offended. Today the hill is commonly known as Lentswe la Baratani in memory of a young man and woman who climbed it to be free. That was after their respective families disapproved of their marriage. The couple was never seen again. Ever since, the hill was believed to be haunted. However, the hill was also believed to be a powerhouse in terms of sources of rain, medicinal herbs and spring water for both the Balete and their livestock during a drought period. It is still the case today. The Balete, therefore, felt safe and happy in Ramotswa. Their settlement in Ramotswa was a blessing because they were the sole beneficiaries of the said resources on the hill.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁹ Isaac Schapera, *The Tswana*, London, International African Institute, 1953, p 60.

²⁹⁰ Interview: Moreti Tshephe, 1936, Headman, at Otse Main *kgotla*, on 26 October 2005. Also see the group interview: Lebanka Matshitse, 1932, Farmer, and Montle Matshitse, 1942, Reed flute expert, at Ramotswa on 24 August 2005.

Ramotswa was also endowed with suitable fertile soils for arable farming. The chestnut-brown, sandy loam soils were well distributed in Ramotswa and favoured the growth of cereals (sorghum), legumes and cucurbits.²⁹¹

²⁹¹ Interview: Keikaneng Mokgosi, 1932, Senior Chief Representative, at Ramotswa on 4 June 2005.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE BATLOKWA AT MOSHAWENG OR TLOKWENG IN 1887

My objectives in this chapter are to highlight the Batlokwa's place of origin and the reasons for their migration from the present day Republic of South Africa to south east Botswana. The other objectives are to highlight their settlement site, pattern and situation and to state and explain why they settled on the banks of the Notwane River in Moshaweng in the 19th century.

The Batlokwa trace their place of origin to Potchefsroom (Tlokwe) after which they derived their name around the late 16th century. In the mid 18th century, they migrated north to the Pilanesberg hills due to either the 1651 or 1790 - 1810 severe drought in southern Africa.²⁹² Drought is a natural hazard that originates from a deficiency of precipitation that results in a water shortage for some activities or groups of people. It is the consequence of a reduction in the amount of precipitation over an extended period of time, usually a season or more. The reduction of precipitation is often associated with other climatic factors such as high temperatures (greater sunshine), high winds (severe dust storms), low relative humidity and less cloud cover. The other consequences include reduced crop yields, streamflow, wetlands and groundwater recharge, degraded wildlife habitats, increased evaporation and transpiration and widespread bushfires.²⁹³ Just like their predecessors namely the Bakgatla ba-Mmanaana (1852), Balete (1853), Bahurutshe boo-Manyana (1858), Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela (1872), the Batlokwa also left the Transvaal on account of the Boers' demand for labour. The subjection of the Batlokwa to servitude by the Boers finally ended "when a Boer attempted to rape one of the wives of the Batlokwa Kgosi Matlapeng (1835-1880), the *kgosi* shot the villain and led his people to Sechele's."²⁹⁴ The major camps after the incident included Motlhatseng or Motlhapotseng, Letlhakane near

²⁹² Interview: Mashiakgomo Ramabe Gaborone, 1930, Headman of Arbitration, at the Main *kgotla* in Tlokwe, on 1 June 2006. Also see Neil Parsons, A New History of Southern Africa, London, Macmillan, 1982, p 46, 50.

²⁹³ An article on "Drought," in the World Meteorological Organisation Magazine (WMO), No 989, 2005, pp 15, 17.

²⁹⁴ J. Ramsay, B. Morton, and T. Mgadla, Building a Nation, Gaborone, Longman, 1996, p 94.

Mmudungwana hills, Tshwene-Tshwene (1872-1880), Lemunyana hill, and Moshaweng or Tlokweng (1887).²⁹⁵ From 1880 Chief Gaborone (ruled from 1880-1931) led the Batlokwa from Tshwene-Tshwene in the Transvaal via Lemunyana and settled them in 1887 at Moshaweng on the banks of the Notwane River and subsequently acknowledged the overlordship of the Bakwena.²⁹⁶ Map 4 shows the position of the place of origin and some major stopovers of the Batlokwa in the present day Republic of South Africa. It also shows the position of the place of their settlement in present day south east Botswana in 1887.²⁹⁷

Geographically, Tlokweng was a small territory that was not large enough to sufficiently satisfy Batlokwa's normal requirements particularly agricultural needs. In 1887 Fort Gaborone was founded adjacent to the Batlokwa village of Kgosi Gaborone, after the declaration of the territory north of Molopo River by the British to be the Bechuanaland Protectorate in 1885.²⁹⁸ To that end, the Batlokwa were politically hemmed in by the South African Republic to the east, the Balete to the south, the Bakgatla to the north and the Bakwena to the west.

The Batlokwa originally venerated a leopard (*nkwe*). Nevertheless, they later adopted an ant bear (*thakadu*) as their totem. That was because an ant bear's hole which then contained some water bailed them out to quench their thirst, during a very long and tiring migration (journey) northwards across the Witwatersrand.²⁹⁹ The Batlokwa are a people whose lives were driven and sustained by agricultural practices such as the rearing of livestock and growing of crops on a small communal land throughout the years in Tlokweng. They are also known for their rich and long standing cultures which include, among many others, the homestead burials of the dead. In the past, the Batlokwa chiefs and village elders shouldered the responsibility of preserving and

²⁹⁵ V. Ellenberger, "Batlokwa," in Traditional Histories of the Native Tribes of Bechuanaland Protectorate, Cape Town, The Lovedale Press, 1954, pp 231-235.

²⁹⁶ Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, Historical Dictionary of Botswana, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1989, pp 39-40.

²⁹⁷ Map 4 that shows the Batlokwa's place of origin and settlement in the Republic of South Africa and south east Botswana respectively was designed by the Department of Surveys and Mapping, Gaborone, Botswana, 2007.

²⁹⁸ Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, Historical Dictionary of Botswana, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1989, pp 16, 40, 126, 127.

²⁹⁹ Interview: Mashiakgomo Ramabe Gaborone, 1930, Headman of Arbitration, at the Main *kgotla* in Tlokweng, on 1 June 2006. Also see Neil Parsons, A New History of Southern Africa, London, Macmillan, 1993, p 46.

allocating land to the people (community) according to their needs in their respective wards (*dikgotlana*). Today, Tlokweng village is a victim of urbanization because of its proximity to Gaborone.³⁰⁰

As a matter of fact, the Batlokwa were the last ethnic group to settle in the present day south east Botswana on a small communal land. Be that as it may, the Batlokwa established a large and nucleated village with the traditional institutions of the *kgotla*, the chief and headmen on the banks of the Notwane River. The *kgotla* was not only the central political institution but also the focus of the village life and was, therefore, strategically located in the centre of the village that served as the tribal capital of the Batlokwa. The tribal chief and headmen, in consultation with their tribesmen and through the village *kgotla*, determined the settlement site and pattern on their communally held land. They also maintained law and order, handled the land management and planning matters and adjudicated over disputes.³⁰¹ The subsequent village was further zoned into wards, residential, arable, livestock grazing, hunting, gathering and woodlot areas and water points. The Batlokwa's settlement pattern and planning process were influenced by the topography of the land coupled with their ideal land use patterns, cultural practices and the availability of renewable resources, particularly the thatching grasses, clay oxides and water. The Batlokwa built houses whose walls and roofs were respectively made of clay and thatched according to both traditional and Boer methods. The roofing methods differed in respect of the type of grasses used, the way the grasses were tied to the wooden roof structure and the quality and durability thereof. The central village was primarily occupied by the members of the core tribal group and secondarily by various commoners. The permanent settlement of the Batlokwa in Tlokweng required determination and a conscious intent. The reliable and adequate water supplies, good soils for cultivation, sustainable pastures for livestock, and generally a higher rainfall in south east Botswana, were clearly the necessary conditions for their permanent settlement in Tlokweng.³⁰² Generally, the

³⁰⁰ See an article, "Chief Spokes [Gaborone] speaks about land," in the *Enviromag*, Gaborone, Benbell, August / September 2005, p 9.

³⁰¹ Malcom J. Odell Jr, "The Evolution of a Planning and Development Strategy for Communal Areas in Botswana," in *Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape*, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, pp 327-328.

³⁰² Group interview: Kgosintwa Gaborone, 1937, Headman of Arbitration, Norman Kwate Matsetse, 1933, Headman of Arbitration, Elijah Wetshoemang Bogatsu, 1926, Headman of

reliable water supplies had been an omni-present force that dictated the movement and settlement sites and patterns not only for the hunting and gathering but also for the pastoral and agricultural peoples including the Batlokwa. Dependable, long-term sources of water had to be found because water was critical for both the Batlokwa and their livestock.³⁰³ Defence considerations did not play any part on the settlement site and pattern of the Batlokwa, although there were hills in close proximity to the village.

In 1884 the western frontier of the South African Republic was concluded between the British and the Boers.³⁰⁴ On the other hand, the frontiers of the Bakwena, Bangwaketse, Bahurutshe boo-Manyana, Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela and Balete were already well defined but not yet formally commissioned between 1884 and 1887. Proclamation 9 of 1899 established the Bangwaketse, Bakwena and Bakgatla reserves, and those of the Balete and Batlokwa were created in 1909 and 1933 respectively.³⁰⁵

The pre - 1887 political developments therefore influenced the settlement of the Batlokwa on the east banks of the Notwane River in Moshaweng in 1887. The settlement of the Batlokwa in Moshaweng or Tlokweng was a matter of Hobson's choice. As already indicated, politically and chronologically, they were the last group to settle in present day south east Botswana, twelve years after the Balete. As it was expected, most of the land was already claimed by other ethnic groups in the region. namely the Bakwena to the west, the Bangwaketse and Bahurutshe boo-Manyana to the south west, the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela to the north and the Balete to the south, in present day south east Botswana in 1887. Due to pressure, the Batlokwa had virtually no choice but to settle on the land already claimed by the Bakwena, who were historically the pioneers of the region. Politically, the Batlokwa were obliged to recognise and pay tribute to Sechele as their Paramount Chief, a situation that the Balete and the Bakgatla had already repudiated since 1875. If the Batlokwa did not

Arbitration, and Mackenzie Kelapile Rapoo, 1941, headman of Arbitration, at Tlokweng Main *kgotla* on 9 June 2005.

³⁰³ R. Renne Hitchcock, Mary R. Smith and Robert K. Hitchcock, "Introduction," in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, p xiv.

³⁰⁴ "Botswana's international and other boundaries," in Botswana National Atlas e-Book, Gaborone, Botswana, Department of Surveys and Mapping, 2000, p 177.

³⁰⁵ Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, Historical Dictionary of Botswana, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1989, p 104.

satisfy the above mentioned conditions, Sechele was likely to curtail their desire to settle permanently in Moshaweng.

The other political reason why the Batlokwa settled at Moshaweng was because they hoped to enjoy relative autonomy in both short and long terms. Diplomatically, the Batlokwa were instigated by Sechele to leave Tshwene-Tshwene, so that their settlement in Moshaweng would neutralise the link between the Balete and Bakgatla. On the other hand, the Batlokwa were willing to leave the Transvaal so as to be out of reach of their superiors, the Boers.

Moshaweng literally means a sandy area. Moshaweng or Tlokweg, therefore, boasted of the sand, sandy loam and clay soils and their distribution determined where the village and subsistence mixed farming were to be located. The reason why the Batlokwa settled on a relatively high but gently sloping land on the banks of the Notwane River was to avoid the periodic, but widespread river flooding from the said river.³⁰⁶ In present day south east Botswana, excessive rainfall events which were produced by severe thunderstorms could produce a large amount of water in a short period of time across the local areas. The excess of water could overwhelm the local watershed and produce river flooding. Some homes and crop fields could also be flooded due to a high intensity of rains. The widespread river flooding occurs in all climates, but it is in dry land areas where the problem is more acute. On the other hand, the localised and widespread flash floods are often started off by intense thunderstorms that cause a heavy rainfall. The flash flooding results when the severe thunderstorms stall or move very slowly, causing a heavy rainfall over a relatively small or intensive area or when they move quickly, but keep passing over the same area, and this phenomenon is called training. The flash floods normally rise rapidly with little or no advance warning. The severe thunderstorms are also capable of producing large, damaging hail, strong surface winds (derechoes), lightning and thunder and tornadoes.³⁰⁷ An assessment of the topography of Moshaweng and the distribution of

³⁰⁶ Interview: Mashiakgomo Ramabe Gaborone, 1930, Headman of Arbitration, at the Main *kgotla* in Tlokweg, on 1 June 2006.

³⁰⁷ An article on "Floods," in the *World Meteorological Organisation Magazine*, (WMO), No 989, 2005, pp 15-16. Also see C. Donald Ahrens, *Meteorology Today: An Introduction to Weather, Climate and the Environment*, United States of America, Brooks and Cole, 2000, pp 382, 391, 402.

its associated soil types, dictated that the village site be located on a rather high but firm ground to prevent the identified hazards mentioned above. Drainage was superb at the chosen site because the land sloped gently to the river. Historically and chronologically, the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela and the Balete were, in the past, affected by the localised flash floods and or river flooding. And by 1887, they were still vulnerable as long as the climatic conditions continued to prevail in present day south east Botswana. The prevention of the possibility of the loss of lives and the collapse of houses (poorly built structures) was paramount, when the Batlokwa decided to establish a village at Moshaweng in 1887. Besides, the sandy loam soil at the selected site was hard enough to guarantee firm clay foundations of the houses.³⁰⁸

Apart from being safe from the localised flash floods and river flooding, the selected land was spacious enough to suit their nucleated settlement pattern, which was based on a precedence of descent and age set organisation. The Batlokwa's subsequent infrastructure on the banks of the Notwane River was carefully planned and orderly. Their housing pattern was culturally distinguishable from their counterparts. The Batlokwa built prestigious rondavels and ordinary houses whose roofs were thatched with the *mhutho*, *motshikiri* and *bojwang jwa dinonyane* respectively. The rondavels that were thatched with the first two types of grass were associated with the royals and the well-to-do families. The remainder was typical of low class. In the first case, the neat bundles of suitably cut rather than pulled grass were sown to the roof structures and then worked into an even surface using a wooden paddle. In the second case, the loose bundles of low quality grass were tied to the roof structures. The thatching grasses were readily exploited in the limited communal land. The walls of their houses were decorated with a combination of limestone (white chalk), yellow (*mmu wa mmapaane*) and grey-black (*mosidi*) oxides. The grey-black daga and limestone were readily available on the banks of the Maratadiba River to the east. The royal homes encircled the main *kgotla* and the tribal cattle kraal in well-defined yards and those of the commoners hemmed them in. The *kgotla* and the cattle kraal were fenced with a wooden stockade and played a functional role. It was at the main *kgotla* that all the female and male novices first gathered to receive preliminary guidance and counseling

³⁰⁸ Interview: Mashiakgomo Ramabe Gaborone, 1930, Headman of Arbitration, at the Main *kgotla* in Tlokwen, on 1 June 2006.

before they traditionally enrolled for an intense three-month initiation course in winter. Both sexes were also fortified against some evil influences (*ba jisiwa tshitlho kana ba thaiwa*) at the main *kgotla* before they left for their respective camps in the village. Unlike the girls, all the boys were canned on their bare backs (*ba kgwatha*) at the main *kgotla* to test their endurance of pain. Before graduation, all the males, then recognised as mature young men (*makolwanyane*), also slept in the cattle kraal for fourteen days.

The reasonable proximity of the Notwane River to the west was another reason why the Batlokwa settled at Moshaweng. The periphery of the village was about 200 metres or more from the river bank. The Notwane River was, therefore, the main source of both surface and ground water for the Batlokwa in the village. At the lands and cattle posts, the Maratadiba River to the east was also a source of water for the Batlokwa and their livestock. Besides, the clay dominated area around the Lemunyana hill was reserved for pastures and hunting, since it was prone to waterlogging. The sandy areas were also reserved for pastures. The grazing areas were also limited to the west of the Notwane River in the greater Gaborone district and its environs that comprised Kgale, Bonnington, Broadhurst, Sebele, Glen Valley and Odi.³¹⁰ Map 14 clearly shows the geographical position of the rivers, pastures, fields and main *kgotla*, to which reference is made in the text. It also shows how limited the land was in Moshaweng.³¹¹ Nonetheless, the Batlokwa managed to sustain their standard of living by effectively practicing pastoral and arable farming throughout the years. Their subsistence farming was also supplemented with part-time hunting of wild animals and the collection of wild food in the limited communal land.

However, from an economic point of view, Moshaweng was not after all a bad area for settlement. Like Ramotswa and Mochudi, Moshaweng was endowed with a limited number of wild animals, but abundant wild products. The Batlokwa were at liberty to

³⁰⁹ Sandy and Elinah Grant, *Decorated Homes in Botswana*, Mochudi, Phuthadikobo Museum, 1995, p 29. Also see Interview: Mashiakgomo Ramabe Gaborone, 1930, Headman of Arbitration, at the Main *kgotla* in Tlokwen, on 1 June 2006.

³¹⁰ Interview: Mashiakgomo Ramabe Gaborone, 1930, Headman of Arbitration, at the Main *kgotla* in Tlokwen, on 1 June 2006.

³¹¹ Map 14 which shows the strategic position of the old main *kgotla* vis-à-vis the Notwane and Maratadiba Rivers and the location of the grazing areas and fields in the Moshaweng valley, was designed by the Department of Surveys and Mapping, Gaborone, Botswana, 2005.

hunt (part-time) the wild animals such as hartebeest, wildebeest, bush pig, klipspringer, springhare, impala, steenbok, duiker, springbok and kudu.³¹² They also gathered the wild products which comprised green leafy vegetables, bulbs and roots, beverage plants, berries, fruits, nuts and seeds, and mushrooms. The wild food resources, which were available and exploited in the communal land in Tlokweg, offered a substantial variety to their diet as well as different tastes or flavours and food textures.³¹³ To crown it all, the vegetation type consisted of tree and bush savanna and hill woodland and, therefore, hard firewood was then readily available for warmth and cooking purposes in their households.³¹⁴

It is equally important to note that the settlement nexus of the Batlokwa at Moshaweng in the second half of the 19th century, was largely influenced by Sechele's instigation and a promise of land on which to settle permanently. It was then unlikely that their former superiors, the Transvaal Boers, could attack them [Batlokwa] in Moshaweng. As a matter of fact, the Transvaal Boers did not extradite the Bakgatla ba-Mmanaana in 1852/3, the Balete in 1853, the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana in 1858 and the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela in 1872. That was because the 1853 truce between the Boers and the Bakwena, brought peace in the region that lasted for many years.³¹⁵ Besides, the Bakgatla-Balete-Batlokwa-Bakwena and Balete-Bangwaketse civil wars had already stopped by 1882.³¹⁶ The Batlokwa, therefore, settled in Tlokweg at the time when peace was prevailing in the region. Their main worry was the limited communal land. However, the Batlokwa adapted to the circumstances that prevailed at the time. The Batlokwa have remained in Tlokweg since 1887.

³¹² Louis Grivetti and Fredrick Mogome, A report on "A survey of food availability among the Batlokwa-ba-Moshaweng of Tlokweg, South East District, Republic of Botswana," presented to the Director of Medical Services, Ministry of Health, Labour, and Home affairs, Gaborone, Republic of Botswana, Botswana National Bibliography 2685, 1974, pp 25, 40.

³¹³ Louis Grivetti, A report on "Wild Food Resources at Tlokweg: Wild Plants," presented to the Director of Medical Services, Ministry of Health, Gaborone, Republic of Botswana, Botswana National Bibliography 2792, 1975, pp 2-13.

³¹⁴ R.M.K. Silitshena and G. McLeod, Botswana: A Physical, Social and Economic Geography, Gaborone, Longman, 1998, pp 71-73.

³¹⁵ J.E.H., Grobler, "Jan Viljoen, the South African Republic and the Bakwena, 1848-1882," in South African Historical Journal, No 36, Pretoria, University of South Africa, 1997, p 254.

³¹⁶ Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, Historical Dictionary of Botswana, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1989, p 20.

In conclusion, the Batlokwa were the last group to settle in the present day south east Botswana. They settled in a valley on a relatively high but firm ground that gently sloped to the Notwane River to the west. They settled at Moshaweng because it was the only available limited space in the south east. Their predecessors had already effectively occupied the other spacious areas. Though limited, the land in Moshaweng favoured the fulltime practice of mixed farming because it was also endowed with similar, fertile sandy loam soils, which were found and well distributed in Molepolole, Kanye, Manyana, Mochudi and Ramotswa. Like their counterparts, the Batlokwa were, therefore, at liberty to grow a variety of crops such as sorghum, maize, beans, watermelons and pumpkins. The sandy loam areas around Mabutswe hill, Maratadiba and Letlapa were reserved for arable farming. The pastures were generally good and were located near reliable watercourses namely the Notwane, Maratadiba and Segoditshane rivers. Moshaweng village was well drained and safe from the periodic, but localised flash floods and river flooding caused by severe thunderstorms and the overwhelmed Notwane River to the west respectively. The land on which the village was built naturally and gently sloped to the river. The excessive rain water, during severe thunderstorms, was efficiently and expeditiously channeled to the Notwane River. Unlike the villages of Mochudi and Ramotswa, Moshaweng (Tlokweg) village was never hit by the river flooding that was occasioned by the Notwane River. Apart from a favourable topography, the rainwater easily seeped into the sands, which were widely distributed in the north and east of the village. The Maratadiba River was deep enough and the chances of it overflowing were minimal. Like in Molepolole, Kanye, Manyana, Mochudi and Ramotswa, the vegetation in Moshaweng comprised mainly tree and bush savanna. The vegetation was crucial because it tended to intercept the rainfall or stabilise the soil with its root structure. It is important to note that the sparser the plant cover, the more vulnerable the topsoil is to the dislodgement and removal by the raindrop impact and surface runoff. Generally, rainfall was reliable in south east Botswana. A reliable rainfall played a vital role in the development and distribution of desirable vegetation. But the variability and extremes of rainfall could lead to soil erosion and land degradation. Finally, Moshaweng village was almost on par with the other villages in respect of the availability and accessibility of the building materials such as the thatching grasses, clay, posts, beams, dowels, battens, rafters, cow dung and water.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

The Bakwena, Bangwaketse, Bahurutshe boo-Manyana, Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela, Balete and Batlokwa trace their origins to the former Transvaal province of South Africa. They subsequently migrated from the Transvaal and settled in present day south east Botswana at different places and in different periods of time. Generally their migrations from the Transvaal had been attributed to a combination of issues. These include factors such as economic crises due to major, severe droughts and famine (*tlala e e boitshegang*) and their menacing effects of scarcity of water and food and loss of cattle, the secessions, the personal ambitions, lust for power and the desire to accumulate or increase wealth in cattle and tribute by secessionists, a pressure due to a population growth in otherwise dense and permanent settlements, the land degradation through the livestock herding, soil tilling, the need to collect wild food and hunt wild animals, the split-ups (fissions) and the creation of new, ruling lineages, some chiefs' desire to establish big villages further divided into wards under the leadership or superintendence of senior headmen, a pull of economic allurements in the form of abundant game, reliable water sources, iron ore deposits, fertile land and favourable pastures in new and apparently better endowed areas, the father-son succession disputes, the love of adventure, a sense of fear or insecurity and constant harassment by the Boers.³¹⁷

The further migrations of the Bakwena, Bangwaketse and Balete in present day south east Botswana in the nineteenth century, had been attributed specifically to the father-son succession disputes and predatory and / or anticipated attacks from the Kololo (1824-1826), the Ndebele (1828-1837), the Boers (1852-1853) and a repudiation of the patron-client relationships expressed through the payment of tribute in cattle and agricultural produce respectively.³¹⁸

³¹⁷ Leonard D. Ngcongco, "Aspects of the History of Bangwaketse to 1910," a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Philosophy at Dalhousie University, April 1977, pp 48, 49, 50, 54, 58, 61, 72-74, 131-132. Also see Thomas Tlou and Alec Campbell, History of Botswana, Gaborone, Macmillan, 1997, pp 95-96, 103-106, 113.

³¹⁸ Isaac Schapera, "Notes on the early history of the Kwena (Bakwena ba ga Sechele)," in Botswana Notes and Records, Vol 12, Gaborone, The Botswana Society, 1980, pp 83-87, and "A short history of the Bangwaketse," in Traditional Histories of the Native Tribes of

The settlement sites and situations of the Bakwena, Bangwaketse, Bahurutshe boo-Manyana, Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela, Balete and Batlokwa had been found to have been largely influenced by the desire to establish big villages in areas not yet claimed by any group, the search for fertile land, pastures and reliable water sources for them and their livestock, the need to carry out extended hunting expeditions, the availability of and accessibility to wild food, building materials, iron ore deposits and the magico-religious convictions.

It follows that the subsequent settlement nexus of the Bakwena, Bangwaketse and Bahurutshe boo-Manyana on hilltops, the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela on the slopes of a hill and the Balete and Batlokwa in valleys, in present day south east Botswana in the 19th century, had been specifically and mainly attributed to prestige, space, the proximity of watercourses (rivers and springs), the accessibility of building materials (timber, grass, clay and soil oxides), the wide distribution of the fertile soils and sustainable pastures, the abundance of wild animals and wild products, the abundance of iron ore, the threats from periodic flash floods and river flooding during severe thunderstorms and magico-religious beliefs. The suspected attacks from the Boers only played a major role in the choice of the settlement sites of the Bakwena on Dithubaruba hill in 1853, the Bangwaketse on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill in 1853 and the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana on Boswelakgosi hill in 1858 particularly after the Boer-Bakwena war of 1852. On the other hand, a suspected war of retribution from the Boers did not play any role on the settlement nexus of the Bakwena on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill in 1863, the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela on the slopes of Phuthadikobo hill in 1872, the Balete near Makoloboto hill in 1875 and the Batlokwa on the banks of the Notwane River in Moshaweng in 1887. Everlasting peace was already sealed between the Boers and the Bakwena. Nevertheless, in all the cases, there were also other important, concurrent socio-economic pulling factors between 1853 and 1887.

The settlement of the Bakwena, Bangwaketse, Bahurutshe boo-Manyana, Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela, Balete and Batlokwa in present day south east Botswana was carefully

Bechuanaland Protectorate, Cape Town, The Lovedale Press, 1954, pp 1-11. Also see Odirile Mmipi, "The founding and history of the village of Gabane, 1892-1966," a research essay submitted to the Department of History of the University of Botswana in fulfilment of the requirements for the course 'Research Projects in History' (H403) in April 2000, pp 5-8, and Neil Parsons, A New History of Southern Africa, London, Macmillan, 1993, p 50.

planned according to Tswana customs and traditions. The chosen settlement sites and the subsequent nucleated settlement patterns resulted in the formation of relatively large agro-towns or villages. These were organised into well defined wards based on precedence of descent. The wards were laid out in a concentric fashion, in terms of which each ring represented a social group,³¹⁹ and had access to sections of arable, pastoral, hunting and gathering areas.³²⁰ The respective agro-towns of the Tswana communities were not only typically modelled on a centralised concept of government focused on the chief and his kgotla,³²¹ but were also organised into clusters of circular hamlets separated from one another by either narrow lanes or broad roads to enable the citizens to drive a team of oxen or cart.³²² The territorially-based clusters of people had both kin and non-kin affiliation to the leader.³²³ The agro-towns also became the tribal capitals of the said ethnic groups. The differences in the size of the capitals reflected the differences in the power of the respective chiefs because the definition of power was associated with the access to the resources.³²⁴

The reasons for the settlement on hilltop sites and river banks in the valleys that had been identified in this study were found to be peculiar to some of the cases studies. The need to exploit the iron ore deposits was only applicable to the Bangwaketse, Bakwena and Balete because the rock types in their chosen settlement sites were particularly rich

³¹⁹ R.M.K. Silitshena, "Population Movements and Settlement Patterns in Contemporary Botswana," in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, p 38.

³²⁰ Adam Kuper. "Social Aspects of Kgalagari Settlement," in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, p 258.

³²¹ G. J. Hardie, "The Dynamics of the Internal Organization of the Traditional Tribal Capital, Mochudi," in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, p 205.

³²² B. K. Temane and M. York-Smith, "Towards a National Settlement Policy," in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, p 284.

³²³ G. J. Hardie, "The Dynamics of the Internal Organization of the Traditional Tribal Capital, Mochudi," in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, p 205.

³²⁴ Daniel Caister, "Archaeological perspectives on settlement patterns in South East Kweneng District," in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, pp 92, 93.

in iron ore. The magico-religious beliefs which impacted on the settlement situations were mainly and exclusively attributed to the Bakwena, Bangwaketse and Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela because they mostly felt the presence and significance of the human and nature spirits of the earth in the caves on their chosen hills. The prestige associated with a hilltop site was mainly associated with the Bakwena, Bangwaketse and Bahurutshe boo-Manyana because they were pioneers in the region in terms of chronology. The threats emanating from river flooding were applicable to the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela, Balete and Batlokwa simply because they collectively chose to settle on the banks of the Notwane River. They were collectively late comers and as such they had a limited choice. The need to access the building materials and other crucial renewable resources such as the grazing and arable lands, the veld products, the wild animals, and sustainable water sources cut across the socio-economic spectrums of all the ethnic groups. That was mainly because all the ethnic groups were fulltime, mixed subsistence farmers and part-time hunters and gatherers. Most traditional hunting and the associated appropriation of natural commodities was done primarily for subsistence.³²⁵ There was generally and traditionally some control over the hunting and gathering, the cutting of wood and the digging of earth or clay to avoid environmental problems of over-exploitation of wildlife resources and veld products and deforestation.³²⁶ Besides, a higher rainfall and the availability of both surface and shallow ground water attracted the Tswana and their livestock to the south east areas.³²⁷ The agro-pastoral areas were also attractive mainly because the chestnut-brown soils were widely distributed and the natural vegetation consisted of plant and grass types that have developed over a long period of time. They have therefore adapted to the local conditions of temperature, water supply, relief and soils. The

³²⁵ Fanuel Nangati, "Early Capitalist Penetration: The Impact of Precolonial Trade in Kweneng, 1840-1876," in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, p 141.

³²⁶ B. K. Temane and M. York-Smith, "Towards a National Settlement Policy," in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, p 285. Also see R.M.K.Silitshena and G. McLeod, Botswana: A Physical, Social and Economic Geography, Gaborone, Longman, 1998, p 276.

³²⁷ B. K. Temane and M. York-Smith, "Towards a National Settlement Policy," in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, p 285. Also see R.M.K. Silitshena and G. McLeod, Botswana: A Physical, Social and Economic Geography, Gaborone, Longman, 1998, pp 42, 46-47, 70.

quality of the water was higher and suitable for consumption by both the Tswana and their livestock and for the growth of crops. To the contrary, the rainfall tended to decrease towards the potentially hostile Kalahari Desert to the south west. The desert was mainly covered with red-grey sand soils which were unfavourable for the growth of crops.³²⁸

The Bangwaketse, Bakwena and Bahurutshe boo-Manyana settled on big flat-topped hills, whereas the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela, Balete and Batlokwa settled on the banks of the Notwane river in present day south east Botswana. It was furthermore established that the Bangwaketse were the first to settle on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill in 1853, following the decisive battle between the Boers and Bakwena at Dimawe hill. The Bangwaketse presumably anticipated a war of retribution from the Boers because they were the allies of the Bakwena during the said war. The settlement of the Bangwaketse on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill was also symbolic of their military superiority and prestige as a great fighting nation as well as an economic giant in trade in ivory, skins and ostrich feathers. It is against this historical background that the reasons for the settlement of the Bangwaketse on Kanye (Ntsweng) hill, may have set a precedence to the choice of the settlement site and pattern of the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana on Boswelakgosi hill in 1858 and the Bakwena on Molepolole hill in 1863.

Unlike the Bangwaketse and Bakwena, in 1858 the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana settled on a relatively smaller flat-topped hill called Boswelakgosi. That was on account of a suspected extradition mission by their former superiors, the Boers. The Boers had in 1852 defeated the Bakwena and their allies following Sechele's refusal to extradite Mosielele to the Transvaal. The Bakwena then fled to Dithubaruba for safety. The Bahurutshe boo-Manyana consequently did not trust the Boers, although the Boers and the Bakwena had made a truce in 1853. The truce was further sealed when the Boers, via Jan Viljoen, placed the German missionaries at Sechele's capital, Dithubaruba hill,

³²⁸ Adam Kuper, "Social Aspects of Kgalagari Settlement," in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, p 258. Also see R.M.K.Silitshena and G. McLeod, Botswana: A Physical, Social and Economic Geography, Gaborone, Longman, 1998, pp 42, 64, 65, 69, 70, and an article on "Climatic factors in land degradation," in the World Meteorological Organisation Magazine, (WMO), No 989, 2005, p 10.

in 1857.³²⁹ Besides, just like Kanye (Ntsweng) hill in Kanye or Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill in Molepolole, Boswelakgosi hill in Manyana was spacious enough to suit a nucleated settlement pattern based on a precedence of descent and age set organisation. Moreover, Boswelakgosi hill was near a watercourse, the Kolobeng River, and was also abounding with veld products. Similarly, the Monneng valley below Boswelakgosi hill was endowed with fertile soils, extensive grazing areas, wild animals and building materials. Presumably the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana were mimicking their hosts, the Bakwena, who were already settled on Dithubaruba hill.

In contrast to the Bahurutshe boo-Manyana, in 1863 the Bakwena abandoned a relatively smaller flat-topped hill, Dithubaruba, in favour of Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill, which was rather bigger, flat-topped and spacious just like Kanye (Ntsweng) hill in Kanye. The immediate reason for the evacuation of Dithubaruba hill was the outbreak of malaria caused by mosquito because the area was generally swampy throughout the year. However, the Bangwaketse and Bakwena were archrivals and their rivalry was historically epitomized by reprisals over pillage of cattle. So, the Bakwena settled on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill perhaps because they felt motivated to match the standard set in 1853 by their rivals, the Bangwaketse. Both hills were spacious and each provided an adequate panoramic view of the valley in Kanye and Molepolole respectively. The settlement of the Bakwena on Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill may also have suggested that they were also a political and economic giant to be reckoned with in the region. Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill was also auspicious because it was near a watercourse, the Tshwaanyane River, and the building materials (clay and stones) were readily accessible in the Borakalalo valley and on top of the hill. Moreover, Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill was also economically endowed with iron ore and wild fruits, just like Kanye (Ntsweng) hill in Kanye. The Borakalalo valley in Molepolole provided similar economic advantages in respect of the easy practice of fulltime mixed farming and part-time hunting and gathering. Both the Bakwena and Bangwaketse most felt the presence of their ancestral and nature spirits of the earth on their respective hilltop sites.

³²⁹ Fred Morton, Andrew Murray, and Jeff Ramsay, Historical Dictionary of Botswana, London, The Scarecrow Press, 1989, pp 11-12, 14, 111.

On the other hand, the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela (1872), the Balete (1875) and Batlokwa (1887) settled on a relatively high ground on the banks of the Notwane River in order to avoid periodic river flooding. Topographically, Mochudi was generally flat. Unlike their predecessors, the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela settled on the slopes of the Phuthadikobo hill. Like their predecessors, the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela built a large village, which was accordingly divided into wards. The village was further zoned into the arable, pastoral, hunting and gathering areas. The space was large enough on the slopes as compared to the top, which was reserved for the annual rainmaking ritual, which was performed in seclusion by the chief and his trusted rainmaking doctors (*baroka ba pula*). In contrast, the Balete settled on a relatively high but flat land at the foot of Makoloboto hill. They similarly built a large village with distinctive wards and designated arable, pastoral and hunting and gathering areas on account of space, their needs and traditions. Just like Kanye (Ntsweng) hill in Kanye and Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill in Molepolole, Magopane hill in Ramotswa was a source of iron ore for the manufacture of durable iron-bladed tools and weapons. On the other hand, the Batlokwa avoided sandy and clay dominated areas and settled on a rather high but firm, sandy loam area in order to built permanent houses with firm foundations. The land in Moshaweng (Tlokweng) gently sloped to the Notwane River, which was a source of water. Like the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela and Balete, the Batlokwa avoided river flooding by settling on a rather relatively high ground. Although the Batlokwa's communal land was extremely limited, it however, favoured the practice of fulltime, subsistence mixed farming, part-time hunting and gathering. As already indicated, the Notwane River was the main source of water for the settlers and their livestock in Mochudi, Ramotswa and Tlokweng.

The main objective of the study was to establish from a wide range of sources, and to demonstrate through these case studies that there were indeed other credible and valid socio-economic reasons or factors, in addition to warfare, which influenced the subsequent settlement nexus of each ethnic group, in present day south east Botswana in the 19th century. The study had unearthed evidence to validate the hypothesis. The factors were diverse and they included topography, prestige, the magico-religious beliefs, the proximity of watercourses, the reliable and adequate water supplies, the wide distribution of fertile soils and sustainable pastures, the abundance of iron ore, wild animals and veld products, the threats of periodic flash floods and river flooding,

and the availability and accessibility of the building materials such as timber, thatching grasses, stones, clay and soil oxides of various colours. These factors were consciously and / or unconsciously neglected or omitted in the past studies by some scholars as demonstrated in the literature review. This study had demonstrated through historical evidence that warfare was not the main and / or only factor that influenced the nature and choice of the settlement sites and patterns of the Bakwena, Bangwaketse, Bahurutshe boo-Manyana, Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela, Balete and Batlokwa in present day south east Botswana, particularly after the *Mfecane* and the Boer-Bakwena war of 1852. The settlement nexus of the Bakwena, Bangwaketse and Bahurutshe boo-Manyana on hilltops (Molepolole, Kanye and Boswelakgosi hills respectively), the Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela on the slopes of Phuthadikobo hill, the Balete and Batlokwa on relatively high but gentle sloping land on the banks of the Notwane River, was a success. This is because the various groups established large and permanent agro-towns or villages that functioned as tribal capitals. The tribal chiefs and headmen, in consultation with their tribesmen and through the village *kgotla*, determined the settlement patterns on their communally held land.³³⁰ The main *kgotla* was one of the most sacred and prominent emblems of heritage because it was where the rituals, trials, sentences, punishment and other court dramas took place.³³¹ *Dikgotla* were, therefore, recognised as legitimate, potentially important and broadly representative forums for making policies on the village land use and management as well as offering the best available institutional basis for sound communal development.³³² The agro-towns were, therefore, modelled on a centralised concept of government. They were also organised into clusters of circular hamlets and territorially-based clusters of people with both kin and non-kin affiliation to the chiefs. Beyond the periphery of the agro-towns were the zones of arable, pastoral, hunting and gathering areas. The topography, the availability of water for the Tswana and their livestock, the fertile soils and good

³³⁰ Malcom J. Odell Jr, "The Evolution of a Planning and Development Strategy for Communal Areas in Botswana," in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, p 328.

³³¹ Sandy Grant, "The national heritage that is the *kgotla*," in Mmegi, Vol 22, No 49, 01 April 2005, p A2.

³³² Steve Lawry, "The Matsheng Land Use Plan: A Case Study in Settlement and Agricultural Development Planning in Kgalagadi District," in Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape, Gaborone, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd in collaboration with Botswana Society, 1980, pp 348, 350, 351.

pastures, and the accessibility to building materials mainly dictated where new villages were built on hilltops and on the banks of rivers in the valleys. The secondary economic allurements included the abundance of wild animals, veld products and iron ore, as well as the magico-religious convictions (beliefs) especially among the Bakwena, Bangwaketse and Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela. Nevertheless, a myriad of the above factors suited and reflected the fulltime agro-pastoral and part-time hunting and gathering life styles of all the case studies in present day south east Botswana in the nineteenth century. All the ethnic groups are still occupying their spheres of influence as unique socio-economic and political entities. That suggests that all the case studies were and are still comfortable with their chosen settlement sites and situations. A lot of planning was applied in respect of the establishment of the six villages. The major differences in the size of the villages reflected the differences in the power of the respective chiefs. The various Tswana groups made specialised adaptations to their respective environments hence the different settlement patterns. A healthy competition existed between the villages especially in the decoration of the walls of the houses and *malwapa*. The south east region was peaceful because the various chiefs were not warlike in nature. They were mature and endowed with desirable leadership qualities and skills. To crown it all, they had vision and as such they collectively recognised the need to sincerely co-exist with one another in addition to respecting the well defined territorial boundaries and tribal towns, hunting and gathering areas.

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIVE MAPS

Map 1 which shows the districts, reserves, City of Gaborone and the villages to which reference is made in the text, was adapted from Grant, S. and Elinah, Decorated Homes in Botswana, Mochudi, Phuthadikobo Museum, 1995.

Map 2 which shows the Bantu migrations from West-Central Africa to Southern Africa to which reference is made in the text, was adapted from Parker, G. and Pfukani, P., History of Southern Africa, London, Unwin Hyman, 1975.

Map 3 which shows the movement of the Sotho-Tswana into Southern Africa and their areas of settlement to which reference is made in the text, was adapted from Parker, G. and Pfukani, P., History of Southern Africa, London, Unwin Hyman, 1975.

Map 4 which shows the places of origin and some major stopovers of the Batswana in the Republic of South Africa and south east Botswana to which reference is made in the text, was designed by the Department of Surveys and Mapping, Gaborone, Botswana, 2007.

The Botswana maps numbered 5 which show the historic migrations into and distribution of the ethnic groups in south east Bechuanaland [Botswana] to which reference is made in the text, were adapted from Botswana National Atlas e-Book, Department of Surveys and Mapping, Gaborone, Botswana, 2000.

Map 6 that shows the position of the Republic of Botswana (and its neighbours) in Southern Africa to which reference is made in the text, was adapted from Investors’ Guide to Botswana, Ministry of Finance, Gaborone, Imprint Botswana, 2005.

Map 7 that shows Botswana's boundaries with her neighbours in Southern Africa to which reference is made in the text, was adapted from Davis, N.E., A History of Southern Africa, England, Longman, 1978.

The Botswana maps numbered 8 that show the distribution of rainfall, main rock groups, soils and vegetation to which reference is made in the text, were adapted from Secondary School Atlas, Cape Town, Longman, 1997.

Map 9 which shows the strategic position of Molepolole (Ntsweng) hill vis-à-vis Dithubaruba hill, Tshwaanyane river, Kobokwe cave, Borakalalo valley and other significant hills in the history of the Bakwena to which reference is made in the text, was designed by the Department of Surveys and Mapping, Gaborone, Botswana, 2005.

Map 10 which shows the strategic position of Kanye (Ntsweng) hill vis-à-vis Pharing gorge, seasonal rivers, main kgotla, Tsopeng, Kgwakgwe hill and old red clay oxide mine to which reference is made in the text, was designed by the Department of Surveys and Mapping, Gaborone, Botswana, 2005.

Map 11 which shows the strategic position of Boswelakgosi hill vis-à-vis Dimawe hill, Kolobeng river, Monneng valley and the main kgotla to which reference is made in the text, was designed by the Department of Surveys and Mapping, Gaborone, Botswana, 2005.

Map 12 which shows the strategic position of Phuthadikobo hill vis-à-vis Notwane River, main kgotla, Mosanta, Makatlela hill and Manamakgote hill to which reference is made in the text, was designed by the Department of Surveys and Mapping, Gaborone, Botswana, 2005.

Map 13 which shows the strategic position of Makoloboto hill vis-à-vis Notwane and Taung rivers, Magopane hill, and Ramotswa valley to which reference is made in the text, was designed by the Department of Surveys and Mapping, Gaborone, Botswana, 2005

Map 14 which shows the strategic position of the main kgotla vis-à-vis the proximity of the Notwane and Maratadiba rivers, cattle posts and fields in Moshaweng valley to which reference is made in the text, was designed by the Department of Surveys and Mapping, Gaborone, Botswana, 2005

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LIST OF INFORMANTS

MOLEPOLOLE

Batshwentse Mosarwa, 1927, Headman of Arbitration, 8 June 2005.

Keineetse Sebele, 1938, Businessman, 3 November 2005.

Mmabuta Mhalapitsa, 1954, Senior General Duty Assistant, 14 November 2005.

Letsweletse Ramatlakapela, 1979, General Duty Assistant, 14 November 2005.

Kawina Power Kawina, 1977, Curator, 14 November 2005.

M.L. Chitanda, K.R.D.A.T. Coordinator, 22 June 2006.

KANYE

Modientsho Mathiba, 1932, Headman of Arbitration, 7 June 2005.

Mokue Malau, 1916, Reverend, 7 June 2005.

Baatshodi K. J. Dibeela, 1939, Housewife, 30 June 2006.

Nametsegang Kebuseofe, 1969, Administration Officer, 16 October 2005.

Molefe Lemme, 1975, Grounds man, 16 October 2005.

Punnie Modisane, 1974, Museum Officer, 16 October 2005.

Makirika Sebati, 1920, Headman of Arbitration, 16 October 2005.

Ramolelwane Pelotsame, 1925, Deputy Headman of Arbitration, 16 October 2005.

Kesolofetse Pule, 1946, Housewife, 16 October 2005.

Obiditse Tafhi, 1914, Pensioner, 16 October 2005.

Mmasetshabane Nyere, 1941, Housewife, 16 October 2005.

MANYANA

Mareko Abel Mosielele, 1924, Headman, 4 November 2005.

Joseph Motlhaikana Mangope, 1929, Headman of Arbitration, 4 November 2005.

Simon Letlole, 1947, Headman of Arbitration, 4 November 2005.

Senye Mokokwe, 1936, Headman of Arbitration, 4 November 2005.

Nyolo Mangope, 1927, Headman of Arbitration, 8 June 2005.

Lekgotla Molefe, 1934, Headman of Arbitration, 8 June 2005.

Daphne Molefe, 1982, Resident, 4 November 2005.

Kegomoditswe Modise, 1980, Resident, 4 November 2005.

Sinah Marumo, 1979, Field Assistant, 19 October 2005.

Obiditse Mokokwe, 1972, Tour Guide, 19 October 2005.

MOCHUDI

Monono Rammala, 1951, Headman of Arbitration, 2 October 2005.

Ramono Mongale, Headman of Arbitration, 2 October 2005.

R. Pheto, Headman of Arbitration, 2 October 2005.

Ngakale Kgetlwe, 1927, Headman of Arbitration, 13 June 2005.

Montshiwa S. K. Mabodisa, Headman of Arbitration, 13 June 2005.

Modisaotsile Seratswe, 1971, Sergeant, Mochudi Police Station, 23 May 2006.

Robert K. Masibi, 1955, Station Commander, Mochudi Police Station, 23 May 2006.

RAMOTSWA

Lebanka Matshitse, 1932, Farmer, 24 August 2005.

Montle Matshitse, 1942, Reed flute expert, 24 August 2005.

Tonnore Basime, 1929, Housewife, 4 June 2005.

Keikaneng Mokgosi, 1932, Senior Chief Representative, 4 June 2005.

Daniel Molefe, 1977, Z.C.C. Congregant, 26 October 2005.

Sebetlela Porogo, 1949, Z.C.C. Congregant, 26 October 2005.

Shima Marope, 1957, Barber, 26 October 2005.

Mosa Moreetsi, 1986, Resident, 24 May 2006.

OTSE

Moreti Tshephe, 1936, Headman, 26 October 2005.

TLOKWENG

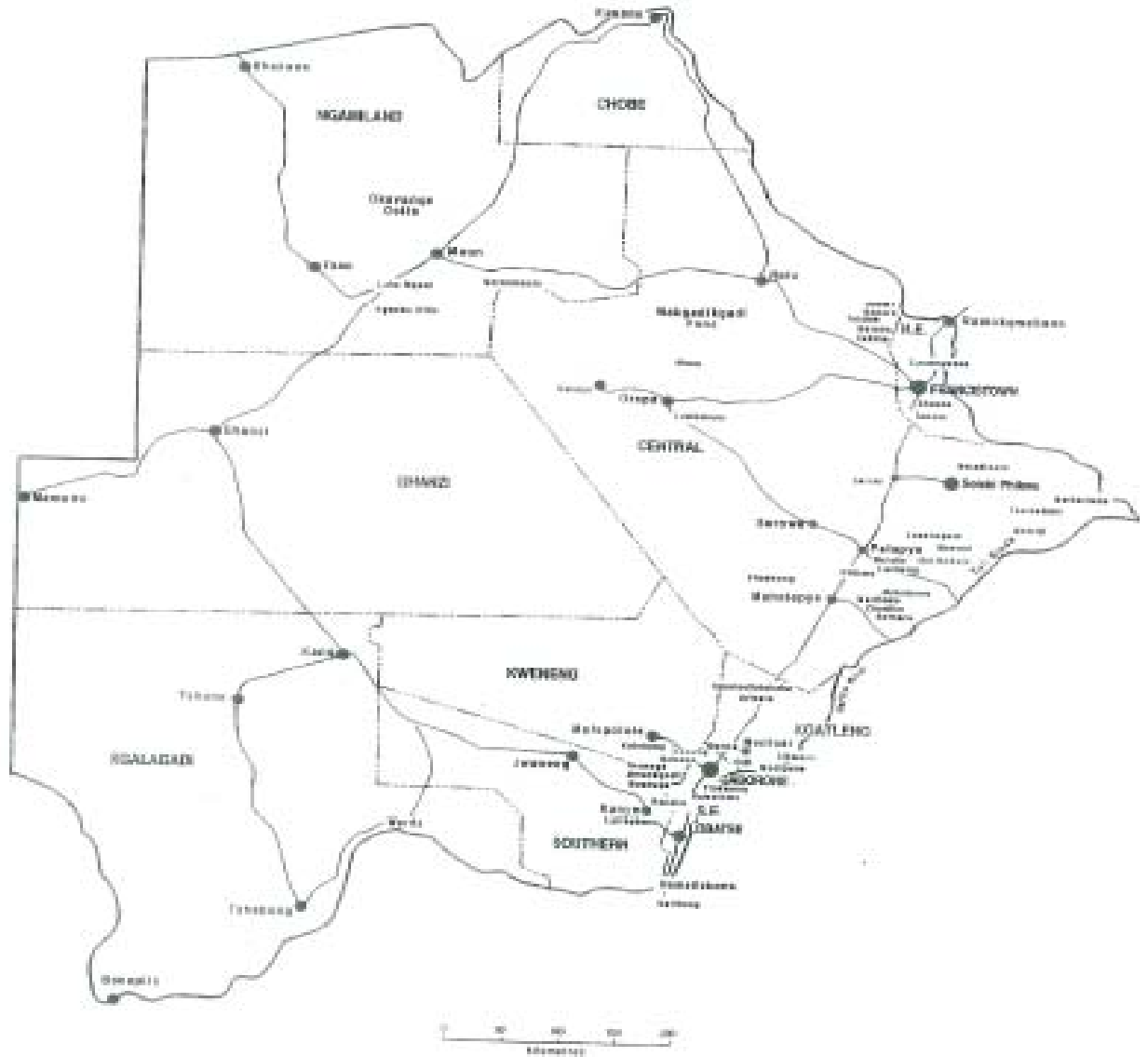
Kgosintwa Gaborone, 1937, Headman of Arbitration, 9 June 2005.

Norman Kwate Matsetse, 1933, Headman of Arbitration, 9 June 2005.

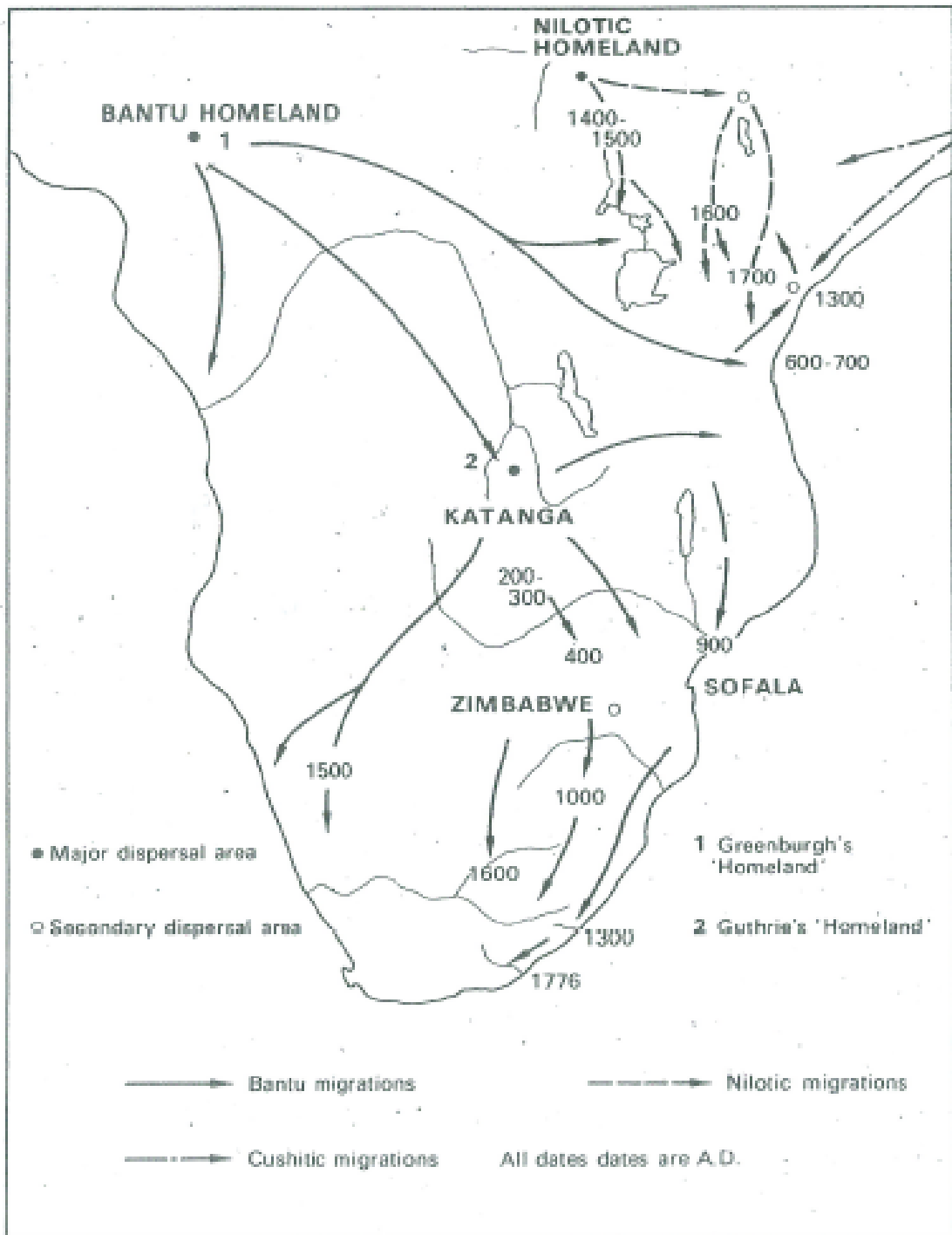
Elijah Wetshoemang Bogatsu, 1926, Headman of Arbitration, 9 June 2005.

Mackenzie Kelapile Rapoo, 1941, Headman of Arbitration, 9 June 2005.

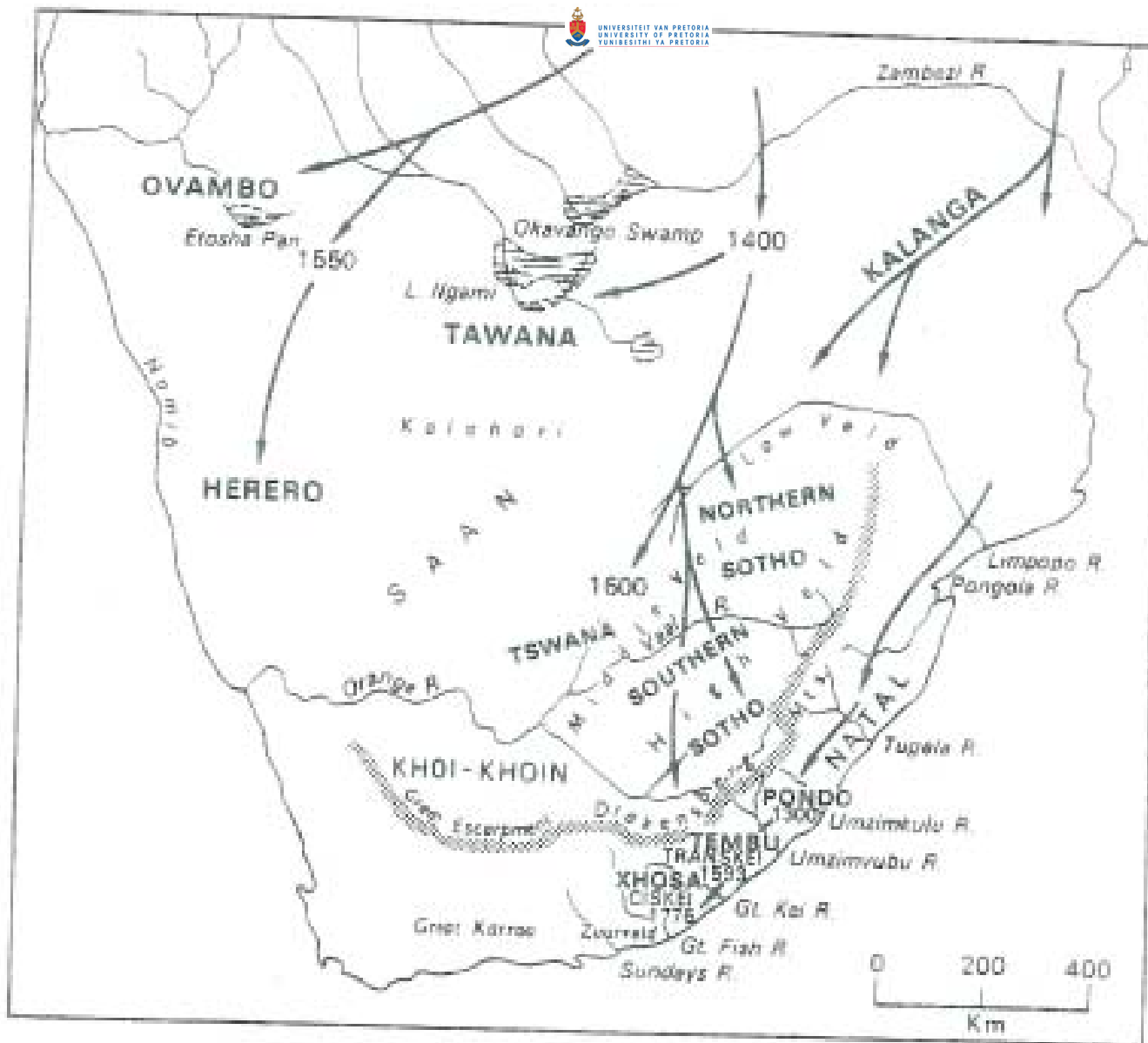
Mashiakgomo Ramabe Gaborone, 1830, Headman of Arbitration, 1 June 2006.



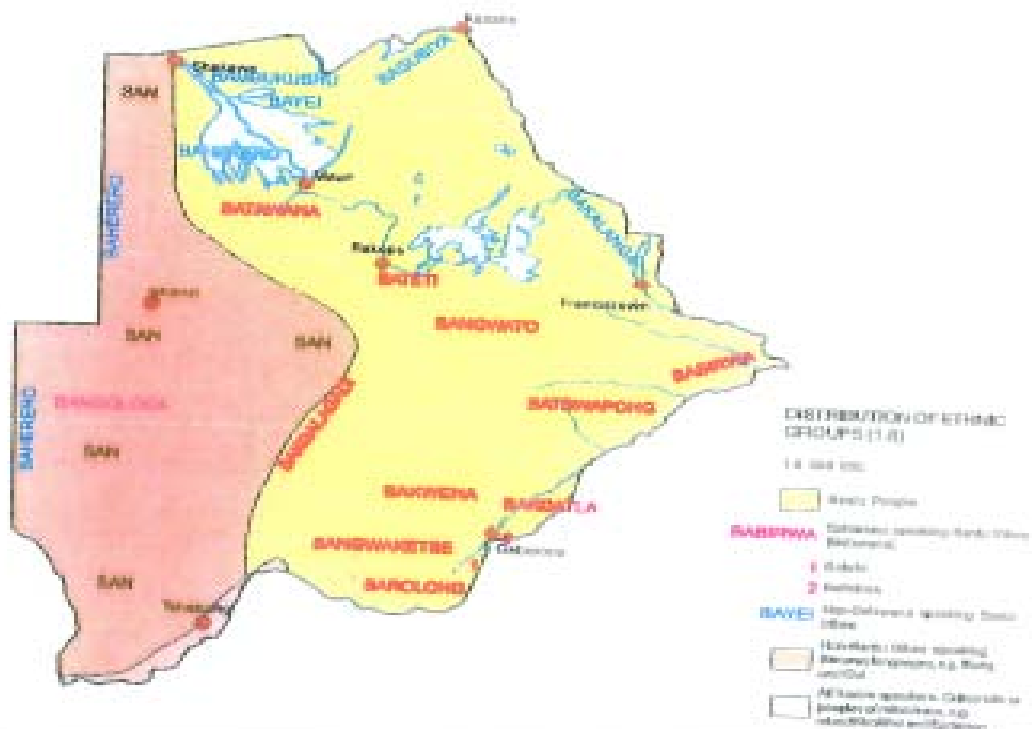
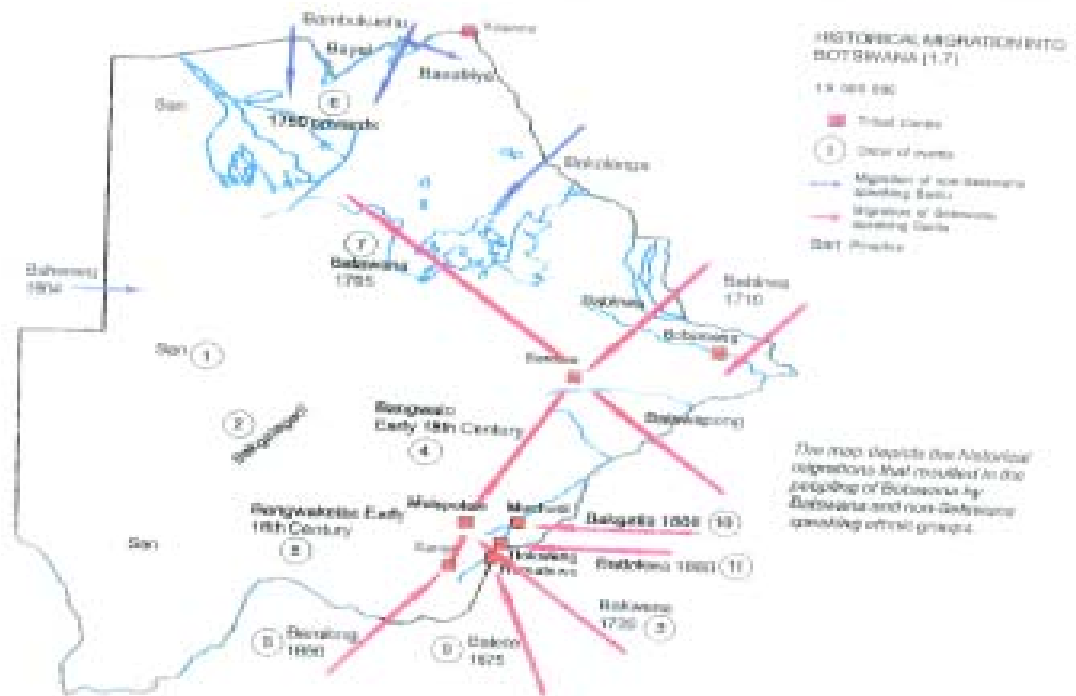
Map 1 shows the positions of the districts, reserves, City of Gaborone, Molepolole, Kanye, Maryana, Mitchell, Ramotswa and Tlokweng villages.



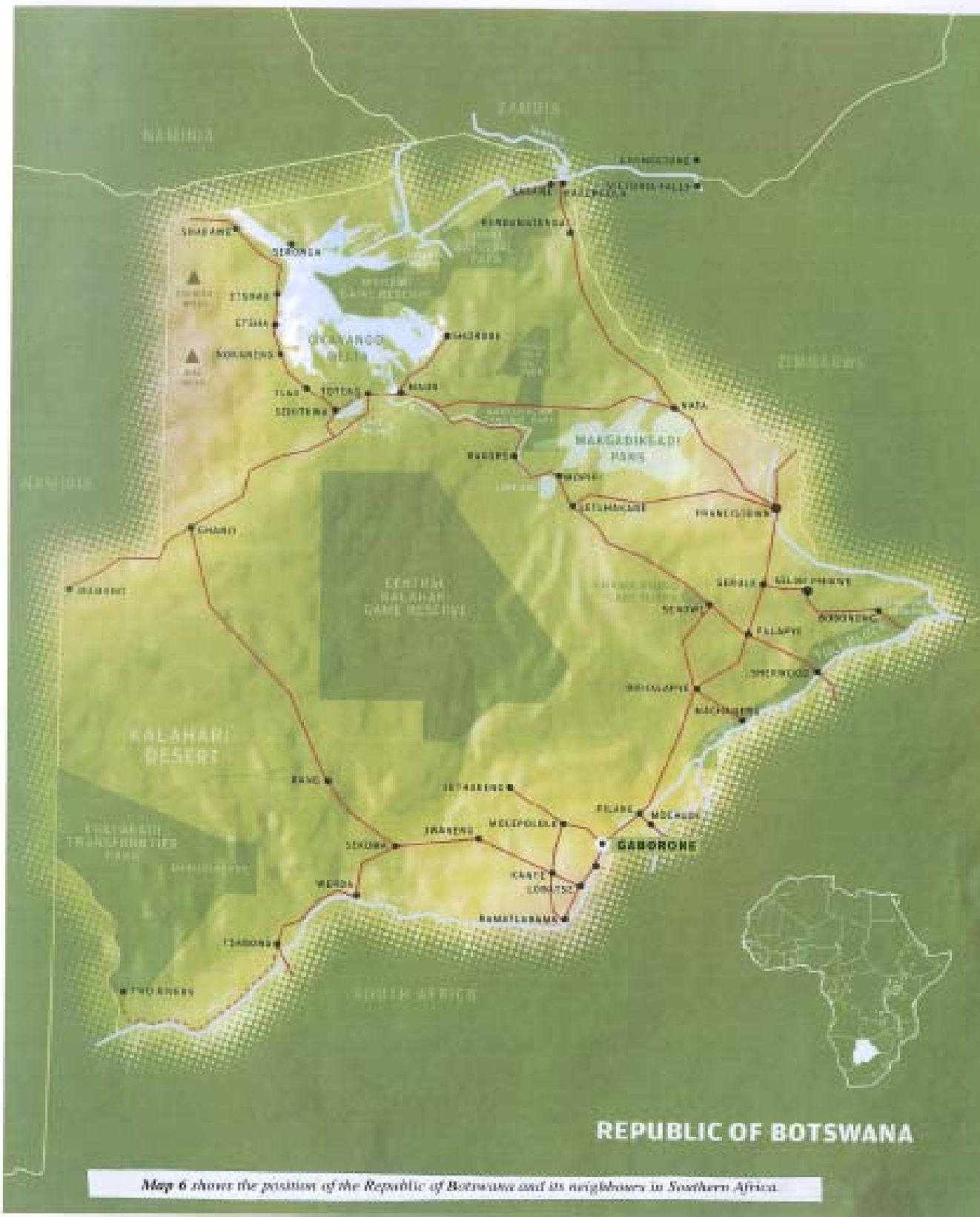
Map 2 shows the Bantu migrations from West-Central Africa to Southern Africa between 200 B.C.-A.D. 1800.

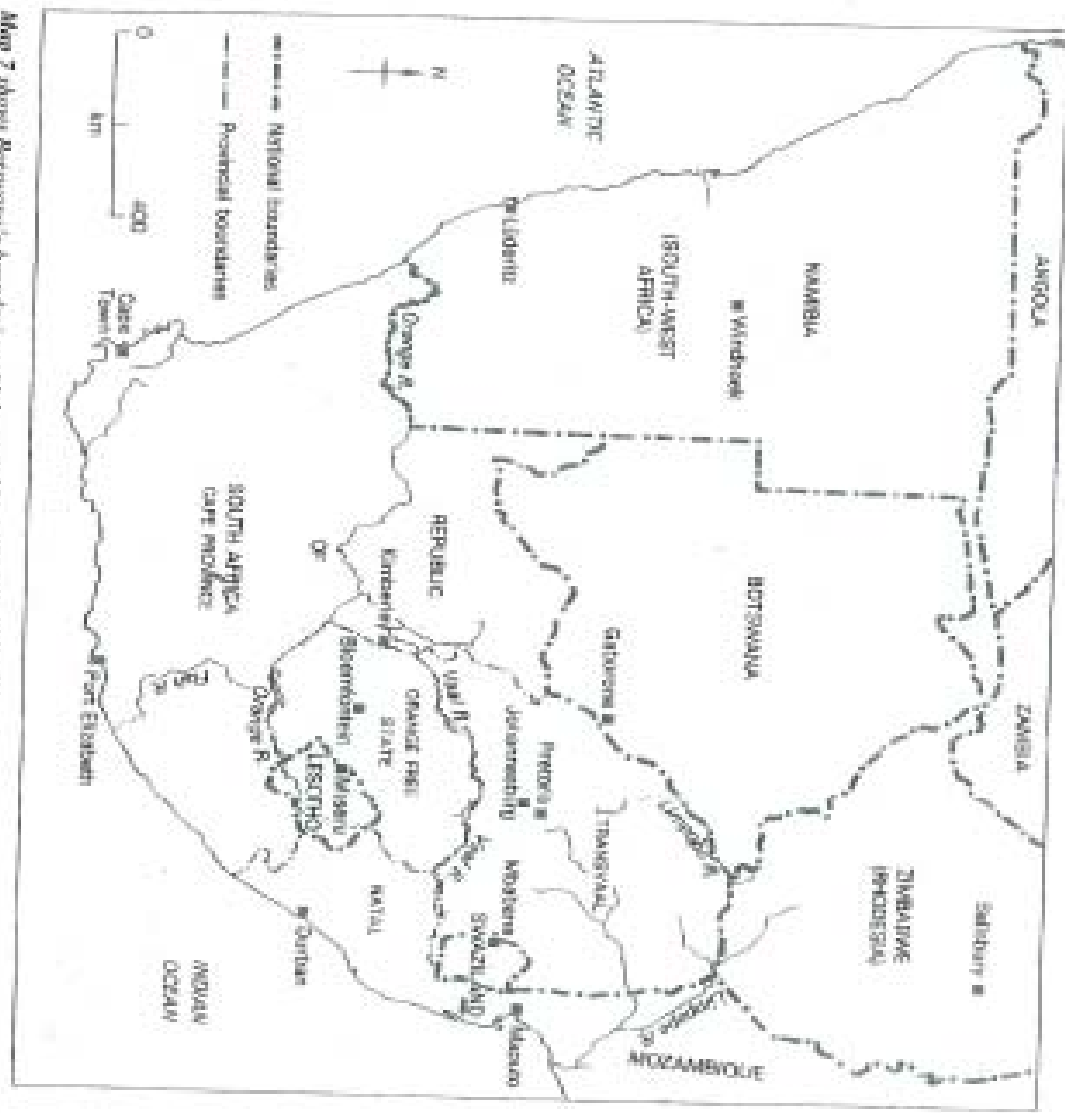


Map 3 shows the movement of the Sotho-Tswana into Southern Africa and their area of settlement.



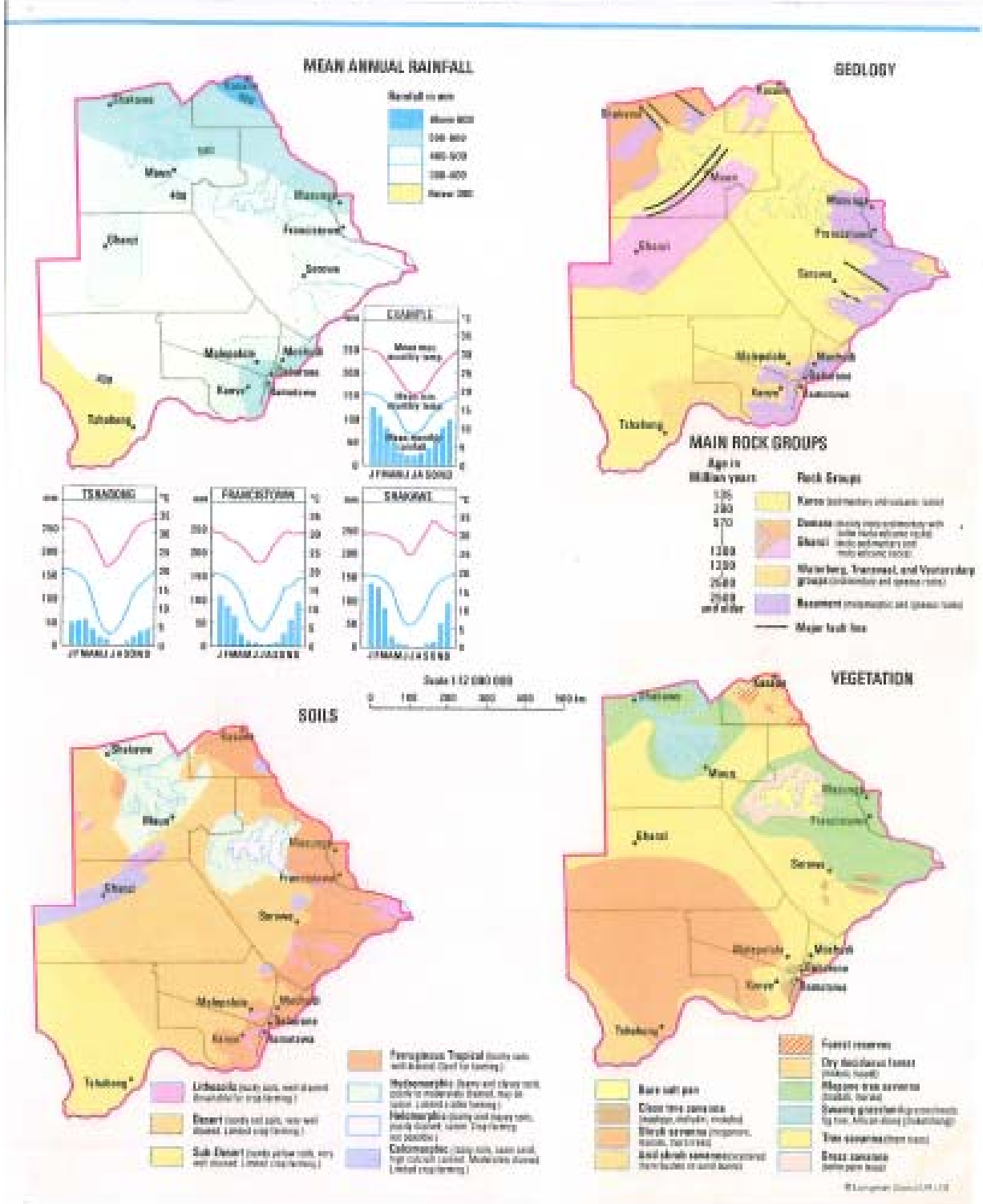
Maps 5 show the historic migrations into and distribution of the Tswana in south-east Bechuanaland (Botswana) in the 19th century.

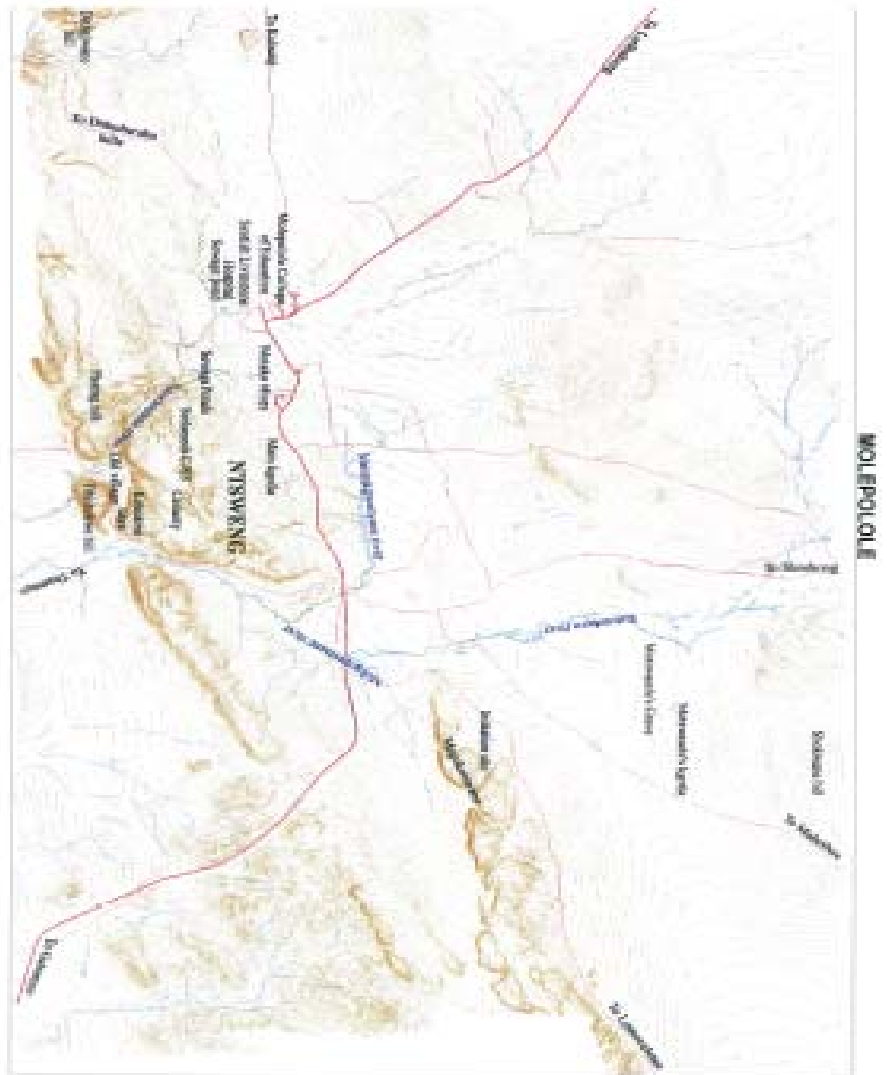




Map 7 shows Botswana's boundaries with her neighbours in Southern Africa.

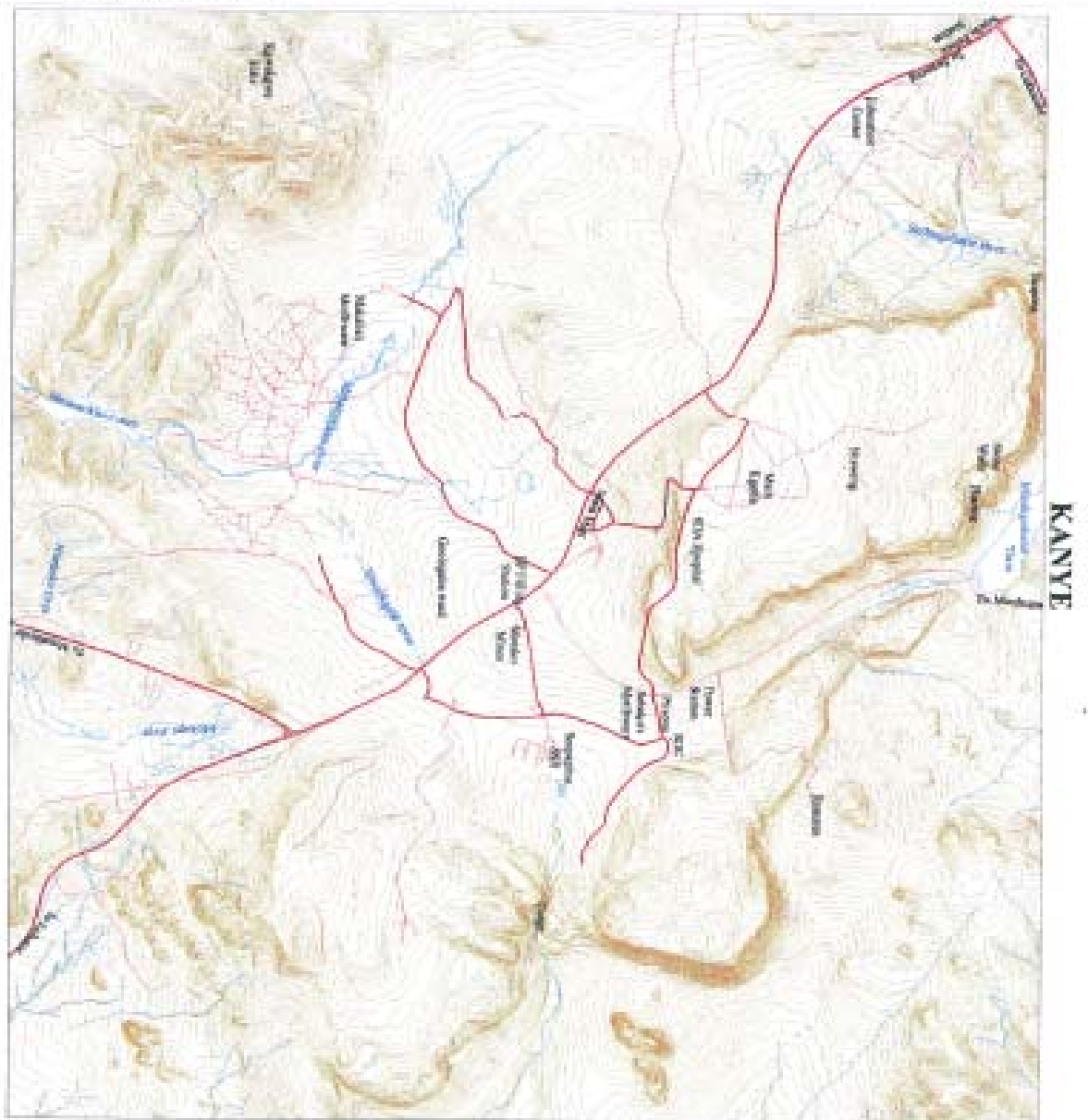
Maps 8 show the distribution of rainfall, main rock groups, soils and vegetation in south east Botswana.





Map 9 shows the geographical position of Molepolole (Molepolole Hill, Dintshwene Hill, Tshwene River, Molepolole Hill and Molepolole Hill) in Molepolole.

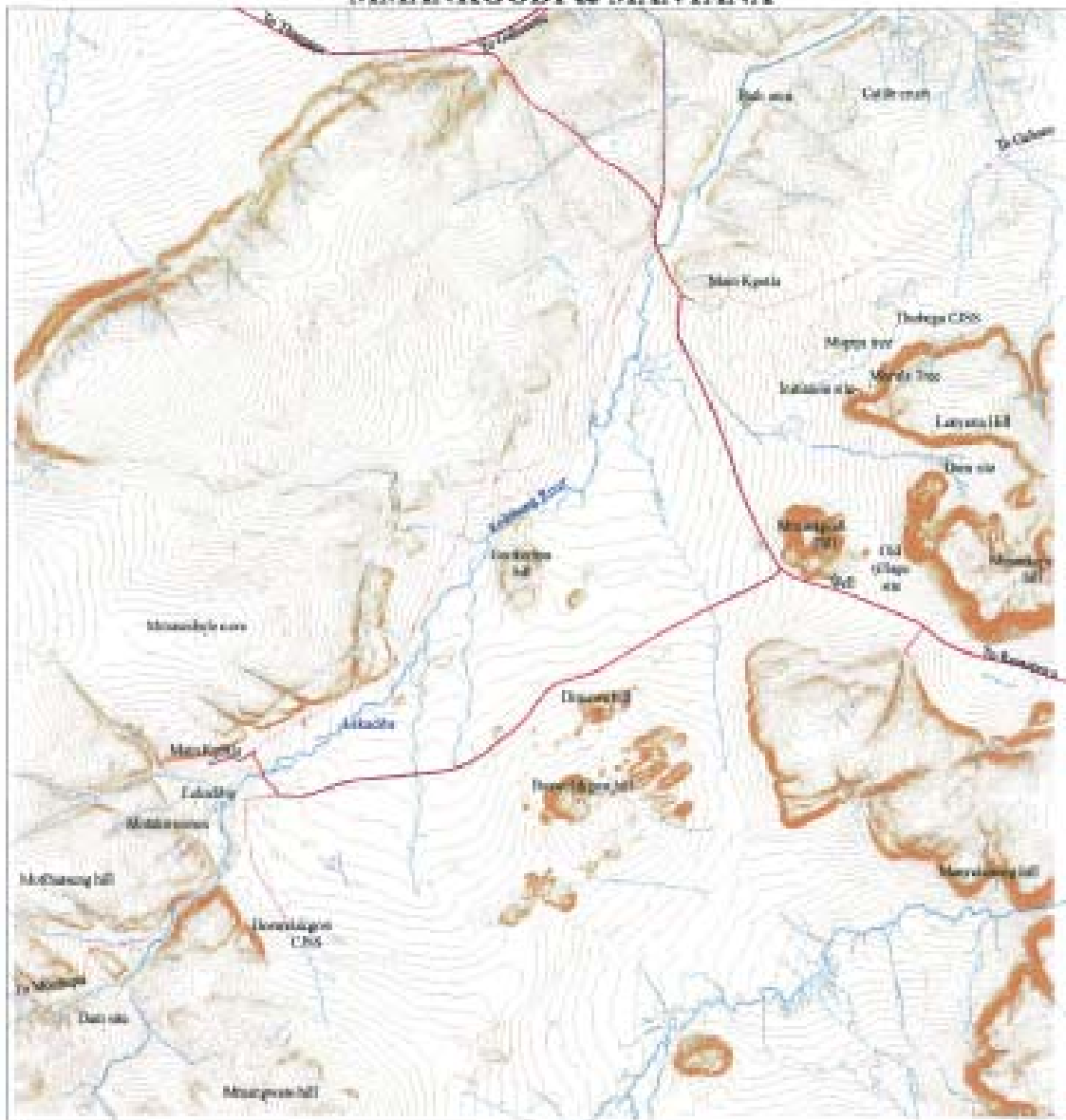
Map 10 shows the geographical position of Kanya (Hlaweng) hill, main kloof, Pharing gorge and other seasonal rivers in Kanya.



LEGEND

Location	•
Watercourse/Dam	—
Main road	—
Secondary road	—
Track	—
Contour	—

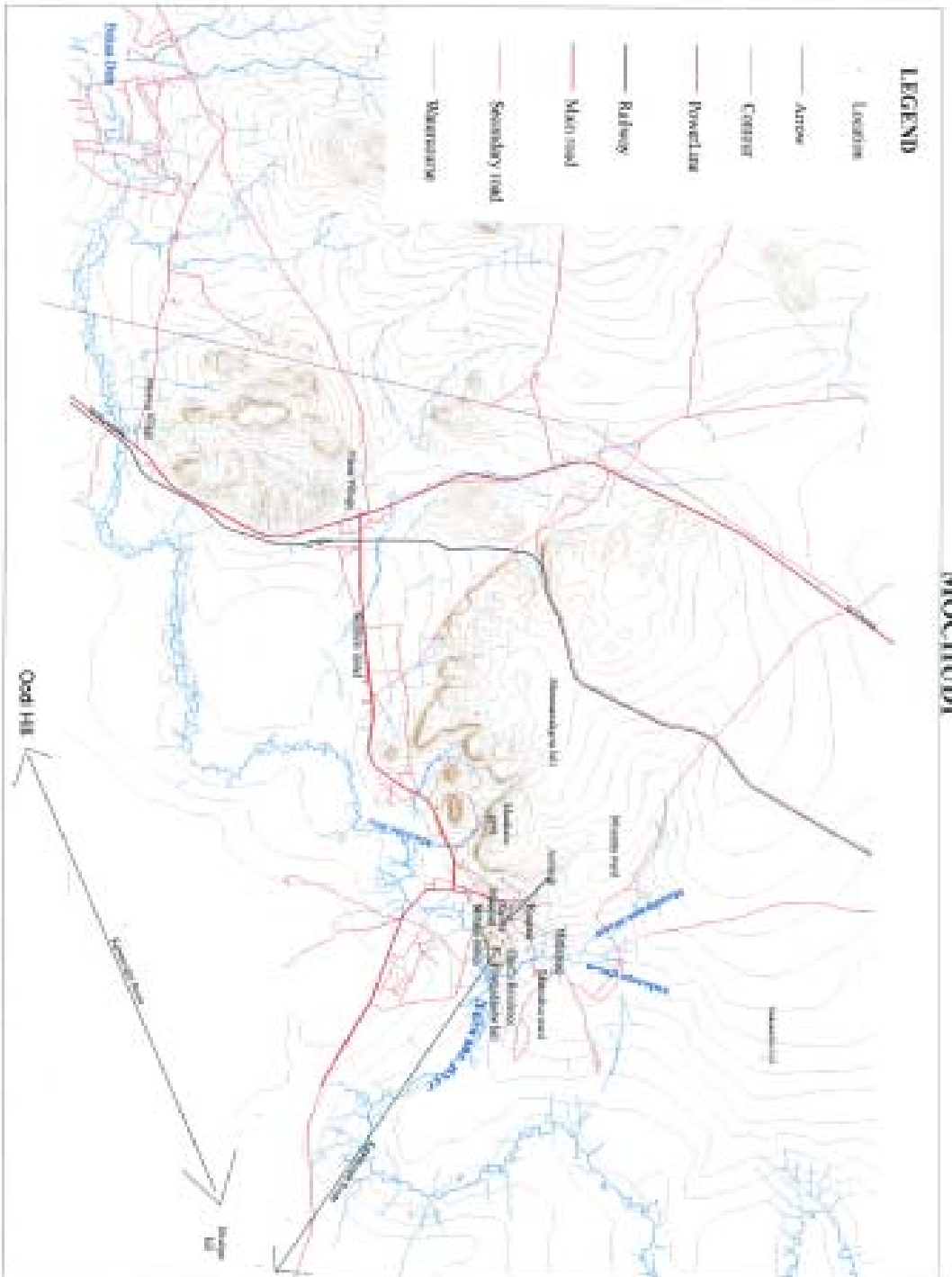
MMANKGODI & MANYANA



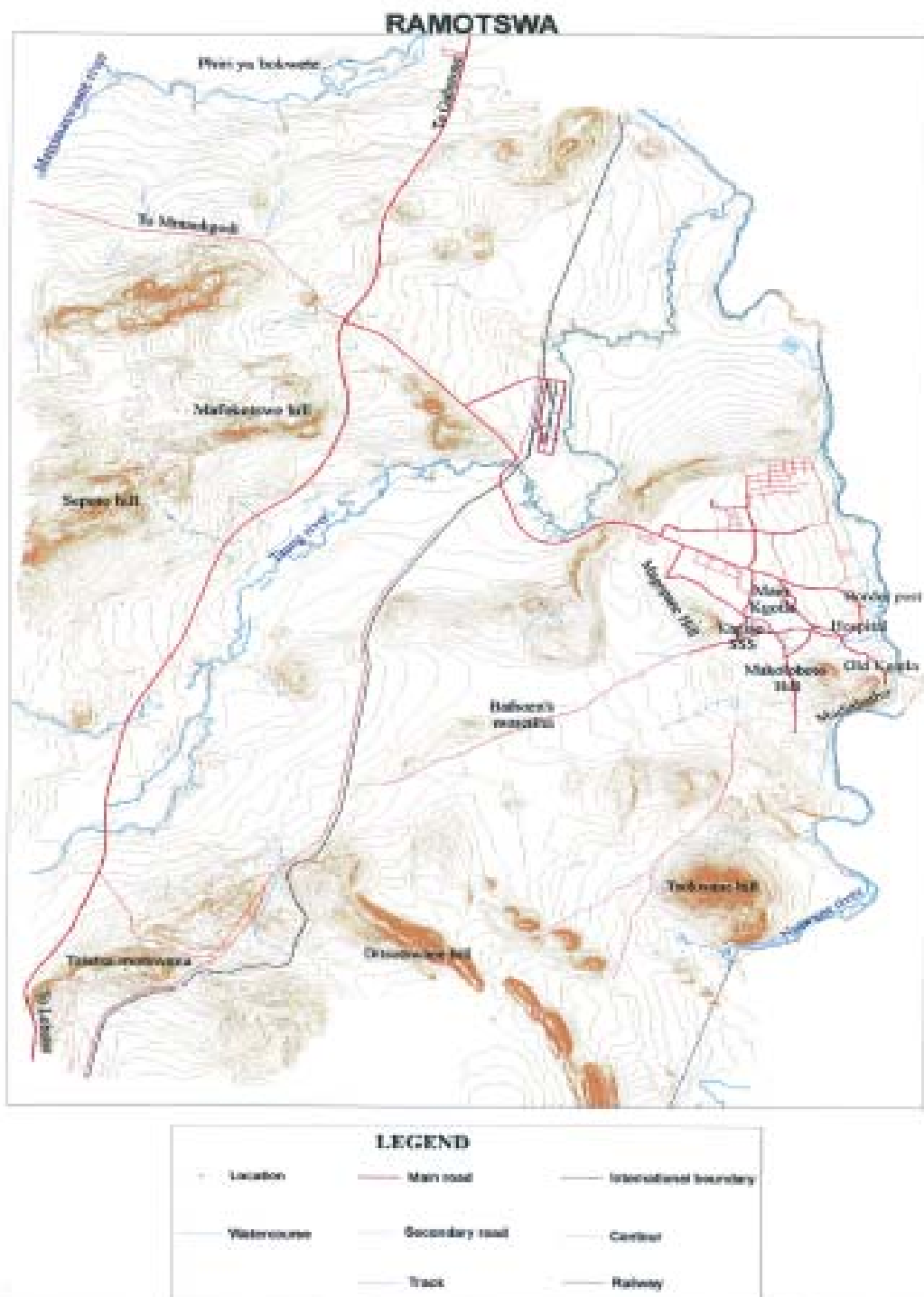
LEGEND		
• Location	— Main road	— Watercourse/Dam
	— Secondary road	— Contour
	— Track	

Map 11 shows the geographical position of Borelotokegail hill, Dinowe hill, Mankodi valley, main Agoria, Mankodi cave and Kalabeng River in Manyana.

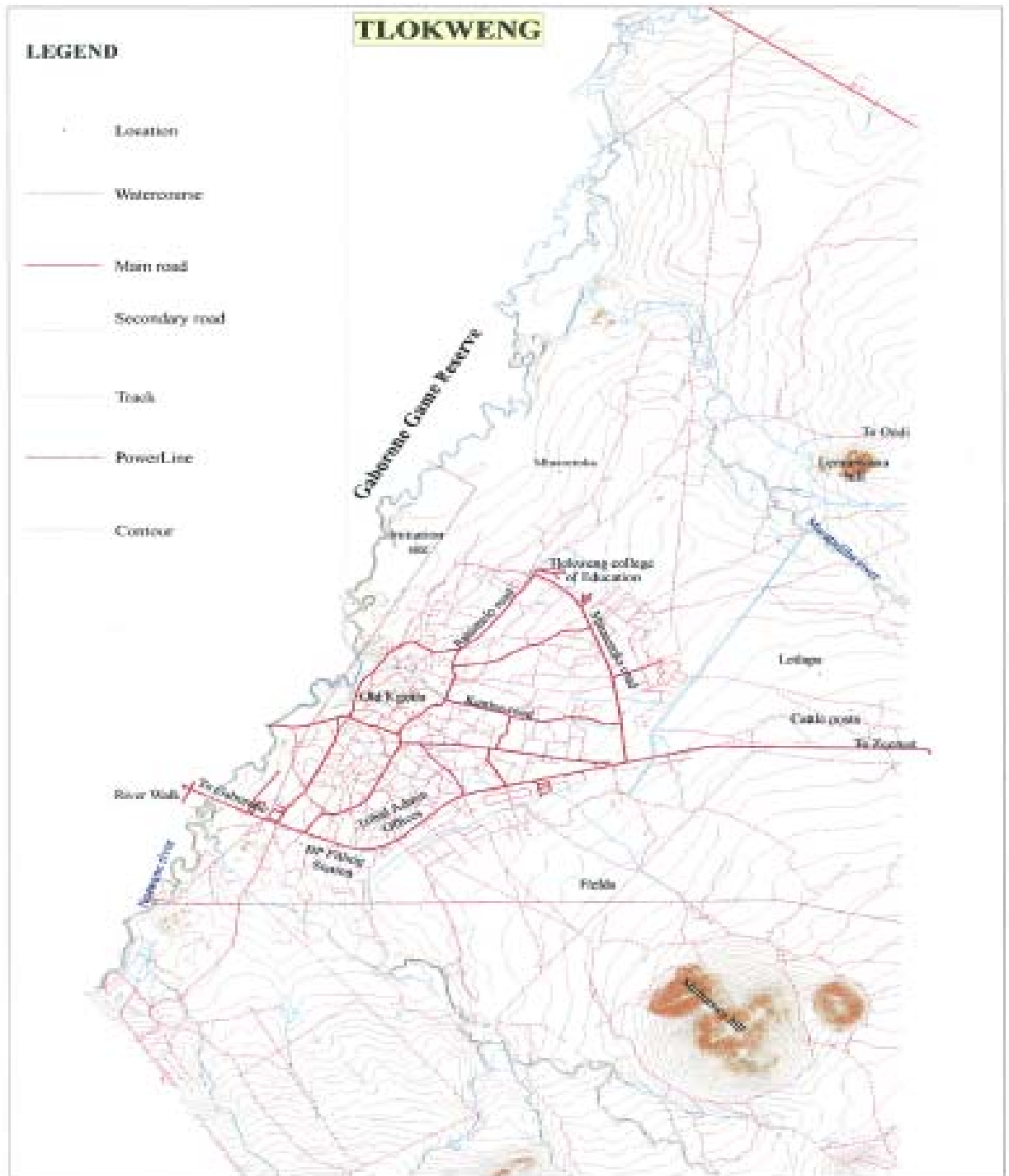
MOCHUDI



Map 12 shows the geographical position of Phakaditso Hill, Mmamagwe Hill, main Gyalu Mountain, Mochokwela Hill, Mochube cone and Mmasele River in Mochudi.



Map 13 shows the geographical position of Mafokosane Hill, Magoqane Hill, main kgotla, Ntwane and Tsweng rivers in Ramotswa valley.



Map 14 shows the geographical position of the main kgotla, cattle post, fields, Maseru and Moswadike rivers in Moshweng valley.

SUMMARY

Title: The settlement nexus of the southern Tswana on hilltops and valleys in present day south east Botswana in the 19th century.

By: Kangangwani Knight Scotch

Supervisors: Dr. J.E.H. Grobler and Prof. A.S. Mlambo

Department: Historical and Heritage Studies

Degree: Magister Artium (History)

In previous studies about the histories of the Tswana in general and those in present day south east Botswana in particular in the 19th century, some scholars either consciously or unconsciously made overstatements about the politics of war to the detriment of other crucial socio-economic factors. The settlement nexus of the Tswana especially on particular hills in present day south east Botswana has been mainly attributed to security measures against warfare which apparently appeared to be a perpetual phenomenon. Very little was said about the equally important socio-economic aspects. That was because the settlement patterns and situations of the Tswana were not a priority in the previous studies hence understatements about their socio-economic outlooks, development and adaptations.

This study seeks to juxtapose, in a balanced manner, both the political and socio-economic realities in the 19th century. It has been established that whereas warfare played a crucial role in the settlement nexus of some Tswana groups on particular hills during the *Mfecane* and after the Boer-Bakwena war of 1852, there were other concurrent pulling factors. These included topography, prestige, adequate water supplies, the proximity of watercourses, the wide distribution of fertile soils and sustainable pastures, the abundance of iron ore deposits, wild animals and veld products, the availability and accessibility of building materials, the threats of periodic flash floods and river flooding, the diverse population densities and the magico-religious beliefs. The Tswana were fulltime, subsistence mixed farmers and part-time hunters and gatherers and as such they were, to a large extent, preoccupied with arable, pastoral, hunting and gathering activities that sustained their standard of living. To that endeavour, the Tswana had effectively occupied their chosen sites on particular hills

and valleys up to today. The settlement nexus of the Tswana was well organised. The chiefs made major decisions about the need to migrate to those areas of settlement. The subsequent settlement patterns of the Tswana epitomised their socio-economic needs, cultural heritage, indigenous knowledge and vision, and administrative forms.