

Translation by Joyce Lee Kunz "Joy" Peck  
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## The Tlokwa and Birwa of North Transvaal

UNIE VAN SUID-AFRIKA DEPARTEMENT VAN NATURELLESAKE  
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### DIE TLOKWA EN BIRWA VAN NOORD TRANSVAAL by N.J. van Warmelo

Pretoria, 1953  
DIE STAATSDRUKKER, PRETORIA  
G.P.-S.2226--1953-4---8000.

To view the scan of the very large, unsearchable, untranslated original book, click:

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@ = alias
∞ = married
Seantlo = levirate
sigodzi = tribal area
induna = chief
indvuna = chieftain
tindvuna = chieftains
Capital Letters = Captains
Age-group Names = parenthesized

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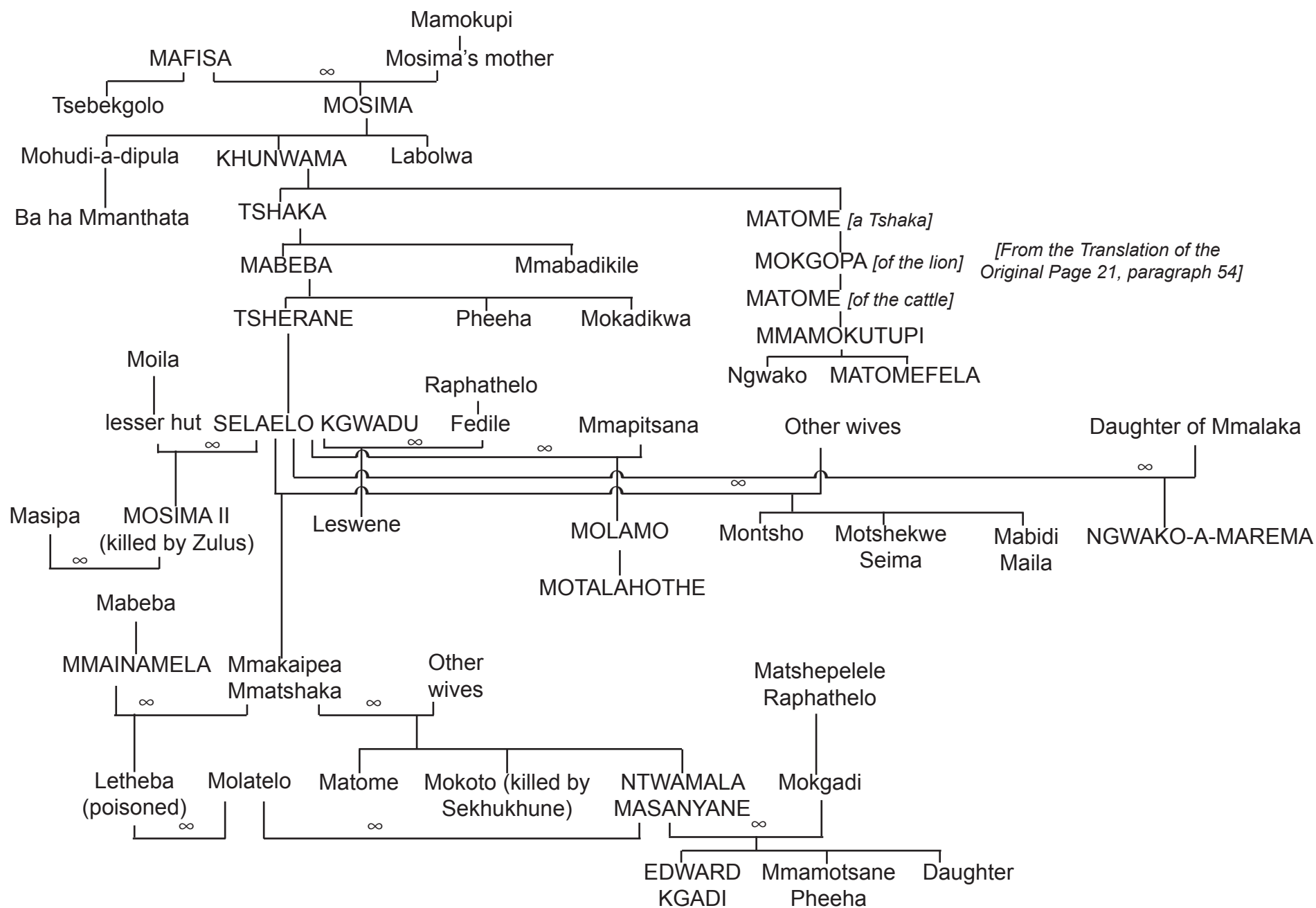
## 1. The Batlokwa of Pietersburg

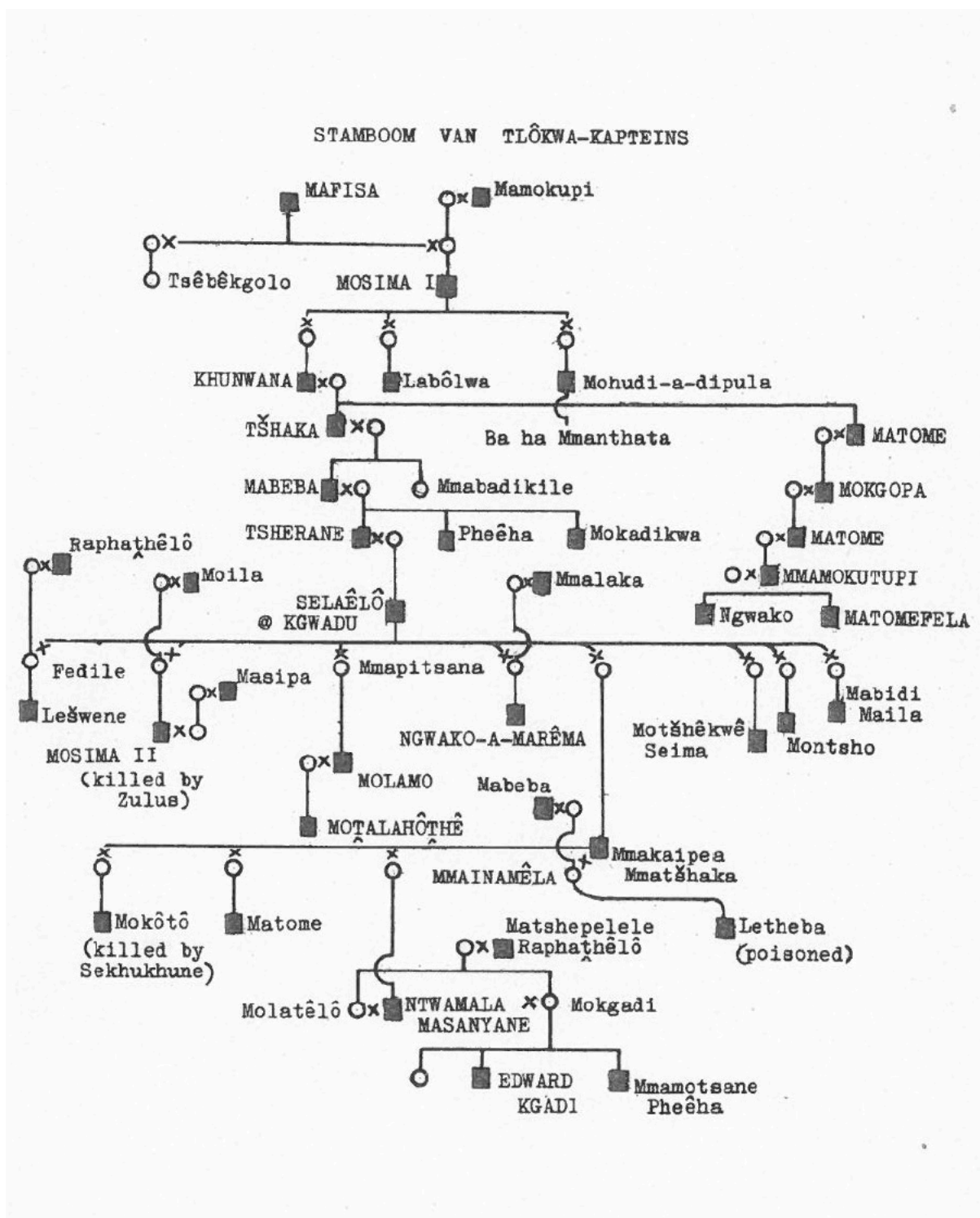
1 The Batlokwa of the Pietersburg district belongs to the Northern Sotho. Today they have two reserves, Ramokgopa and Matok (corruption of Batokwa), which they inhabit as two independent tribes. However, there are also Batlokwa who today culturally and linguistically fall under the Tswana and Southern Sotho, but the nature of the relationship with them is no longer known.

2 The following text may serve as a contribution to their history. It was written in 1890, many years before anyone thought of doing research, and by a member of the tribe who seems to have had an interest, and was also in a favorable position to hear traditions from people who were then already old and therefore knew things much better. How much has now been forgotten, I saw when in March 1937, I obtained a genealogy of the chiefs from both chiefs of the oldest people. It was but deficient, compared to what can be built up from one text.

3 On this occasion the captain Mmatshaka came forward with a copy of the original manuscript. It was written in the old spelling of the Berlin Mission, and not without mistakes in names of persons and places which I had first to correct with experts in history. Furthermore, it was not written in the language of the tribe (Sekokwa), but in the Sotho that the missionaries imported as standard at the time, ie. A kind of Sotho from Sekukuniland imbued with a number of words and forms that only occur in Pietersburg. Charles Machaba of Uitkyk translated this text for me into the Setokwa that is in use today. However, things may still be found here and there that are not genuine Setokwa, because the language mixing and influence has already progressed so far that, when the question arises, even illiterate persons sometimes think twice about whether something is really the correct dialectic form or not.

4 Certain information that I myself obtained from the Batlokwa, or that comes from the literature and from official documents, is mentioned here and there. The story is better understood if the accompanying genealogy is kept in mind.





1        This book contains the story of the Batokwa who have the tiger as their totem, their chiefs, the kingship among them, their rise and end. The author of this book is a man called Jacob Ngwako Mphasa. His origins were among the Batokwa and his family was that of Mmanthata. He was born in the year 1855. The reason why he is called Mphasa is that Mphasa married his mother as a young girl; she had two children. But then Mphasa died, and she became the wife of a man from the Mmanthata family. His name was Matome a Tshika, and he was the father of Jacob Ngwako.

2        Before I go on, let me say that I am writing this booklet in the year 1890. And in it I want to show everyone what God does in the heart of man, so that he must believe that there is a God, even if he still has not heard the Gospel. Through despair for fear of death, and despair when one does not know where to flee. God does great miracles to man.

3        So it was with me, Jacob, when I was a boy. I became very worried every time I heard about someone's death. Especially the thought troubled me: now that he is dead, where did he go? Thinking about this a lot finally made me sick, but I didn't tell anyone the cause.

4        However, my mother almost guessed my secret. She said, "How does it seem to me that you are troubled by thoughts, my child?" The words angered me and I replied, isn't she suffering? From that time I began to listen carefully to what the old men were saying. It seemed to me that I would hear the truth from them. I have not forgotten anything I ever heard from an old man.

5        The circumcision: because I saw that the old men attached great value to the circumcision rites, I did not forget any of the formulas and songs sung in the tribal school, after I learned them at my initiation. But I came back from the tribal school disappointed, and only consoled myself with the fact that I had now been initiated, and had become a man. Nevertheless, I was still just as disturbed every time death was mentioned.

6        But one day I was with my elder brother Ramoomedi Mphasa, when he began to sing in a way that sounded to me like mourning. I ask him; "What are you doing?" He replied, "I do like the white people when they pray to God with a song." From then on I really liked the white people. When I heard that they pray to God, I also found their color, their customs and their way of building beautiful.

7        So my whole thought became that this race of whites would perhaps be capable of telling a person the truth about death. But the behavior of the white people repulsed me, when I saw their cruelty towards the black man and their ruthlessness towards him. I myself saw how our fathers and mothers were beaten. Those things drove the affection from my heart. However, my idea, that the true God is with those people, did not depart from my heart.

8        Then dreams began to haunt me at night when I went to sleep, but before I fell asleep it was as if I saw wonderful things. I see something that looks like what the white people call "sunflower". This sight pleased me greatly because I had not seen it with my eyes. I always saw it when I went into my cabin, especially just crawling into my blankets. This face left me when I was almost a young man. Now I will say something about my dreams.

9 The first one was this. In those days we worked for a white man named Hermanus Potgieter. There were two graves of children of his. In a certain night when I was sleeping, I saw in a dream that a person rose from the graves in the height by an ability to fly. When he was between heaven and earth, he stopped and looked at me, and also told me that name that I will not forget. I'll tell the people tomorrow when I'm awake.

10 That dream was a great miracle for me, and caused two things, namely fear and joy. Because after that I always, when talking about death, consoled myself with that dream I had. Namely, it was not just a dream, but really a man who came from heaven. So I finally came to the conviction that those who are in heaven are with the departed.

11 The second dream was this: Once in the summer it rained at noon while we were tending the goats, so we had to take the goats home. When the rain was over and it was still dripping a little, I went to stand outside the kgoro on a stone, and saw shapes that looked like people. They were large and looked like they were carrying shields.

12 The totem of the Batokwa, which is now the tiger, was formerly the aardvark. It came like this. When they moved away from Tokwene 1) as young men and women, a tiger once ate some of their goats at night, while they were sleeping. The next morning they followed, found and killed him, raising the cry of victory: "Tiers!" With that, they began to drop the aardvark as a totem and in its place the tiger as a totem.

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1) Tokwene or Tlokweng, ie, along the Tlokwe (Mooi River). According to tradition, it was where the railway bridge now crosses the river at Potchefstroom. On their journeys on foot to the Kimberley diamond fields, some of the old Batlokwa saw many walls and brought back stories of them.



13 At that time Mafisa was the captain, and although others doubt it, we only believe what we hear from the old men. They say that the first captain was Mafisa. The praise songs of Tokwaland also show this, because it says: "(the land) of what is hot, even though cold" ie. the tribe is hot with contention and struggle even if there is peace with neighboring tribes, in other words, the Batokwa is constantly involved in wars and difficulties.

14 Captain Mafisa's wife had no son, only one daughter, named Tsebekgolo. This head woman, the mother of Tsebekgolo, had a maid in her household to serve her. We do not know her name, we only know that she was of the Mokupi family [Perhaps erroneous in the manuscript for Mokutupi.] After the death of the head woman, the mother of Tsebe, the old man Mafisa was cared for by this maid of his wife. He also made her his wife.

15 She is the original mother of the royal line of the Batokwa whose totem is the tiger. She gave Mafisa a son, and he called his daughter Tsebe and said, "Go to the hut and name the child Mosima Mr-something-in-the-heart, what is in someone's heart he alone knows." So Tsebe went and gave the child that name at the behest of her father. The reason for the name was that only Mafisa knew who made her pregnant.

16 After the death of the captain Mafisa, his son Mosima succeeded him. He had a son with a woman who was not the main woman. His name was Mohudi-a-dipula. From him the lineage of Mmanthata. The captain Mosima also had a son by his main wife, and the son's name was Khunwana. In his time, the Batokwa fled to Rhodesia. The reason for this is not known.

17 When they came back again, one of them, Labolwa (at Kruger in Bantu Studies 11.2.897 he is called Thabola) son of Mosima, stayed behind. Khunwana was the father of Tshaka and Matome-a-Tshaka (the teke says "the mother of M. but this is incongruous and contrary to the other information.) Matome became the progenitor of the branch of Ramokgopa. Tshaka the elder brother of Matome was the father of Mabeba and his sister Mmabadikile. Mabeba was the father of Tsherane and his younger brothers Pheeha and Mokadikwa. Pheeha was killed by an elephant.

18 At that time the "Batokwa was under the rule of the Batsweta (Venda). Tsherane was wounded in a fight and died at home. His son, Selaelo, became famous for killing a Kgwadu (Rhinoceros) when he was young. Because he was still a child, his uncle Mokadikwa acted as regent.

19 When Selaelo was of age, Mokadikwa transferred the captaincy to him without making any trouble. It was Selaelo who raised the Tokwa people. He was brave-fierce and made the tribe feared, though it was but a small one.

20 It was Kgwadu who freed the Batokwa from the dominance of the Batsweta (Venda). When he was captain, the tribe of Moletsi came to fight him but he defeated them and captured and killed their captain. From then on there was deep hatred between the Batokwa and the tribe of Moletsi. The name of that captain of Moletsi was Mosibudi, his boyhood name was Kwekwerere. The hatred between the Batokwa and the Moletsi tribe was further increased by the poet of praise songs who said:

21 "Kgwadu of Botokwa, Quiver-mouth  
Kgwadu, open your mouth so that one can look in.  
That we can see the mouth that swallowed  
Moloto (from Moletsi) and Poopedi the Ndebele.  
That woman, mother of Mosibudi from Moloto,  
Tied me with a belt to tie firewood  
with and when she tightened the belt she said:  
This useless Kgwadu, where to with him?  
If I have cattle, he comes and takes them.  
Even the abbaavel (captain) of the people he took down.  
Sotho mother who does evil with intent.  
Even in Venda and Moletsi he brings mischief."

22 On another occasion, Captain Kgwadu, out of pure pleasure in war, traveled with his armed men through a part of Moletsiland. When he came back, he decided to go through Moletsiland so that the Moletsi people could realize that he was too strong for them. That day, however, he finds that all the men of Moletsi have been called together and are waiting for him. Kgwadu and his men clashed with them but this time the Batokwa could not stand; they fled, and so the Moletsi people captured Kgwadu and finished it off with particular cruelty.

23 It is said that when the young men caught Kgwadu, the men and women came together, and that they poked his nostrils with awls so that no man or woman would miss a drop of the drained blood.

24 They tortured him even further, and cut many pieces of flesh from his body and collected them (for medicine). The truth of this matter is not known, but so goes the story. It is certain that if you ask Moletsimense, "When you killed Kgwadu, where did you bury him?" the question will be taken as a defiance and you may get into trouble with them. In any case, the glory of the Tokwa kingdom was at an end.

25 Kgwadu was succeeded by his son Mosima the second, who was not from the great hut. He was born before his brothers. His mother was of the Moilas. So Mosima then ruled together with his father's main wife Fedile, from the Raphathelo family.

26 She [Fedile] later had a son named Leswene, but later he died. Mosima had a quarrel with Fedile, and she fled to Moletlane (Sebitiela), so that Mosima ruled alone. It is not known how many years he ruled.

27 Later the Zulus came, defeated Mosima and captured him. His wife Ngwa-Masipa came down from their stronghold on Mphakane head, and went to her husband. They then captured her as well, Mosima sees the corpses of his people, but not that of his servant Ramaru Modibana.

28 He said to the Zulus, "I don't see the body of my servant," and urged them, "Go around and call, maybe he is still alive. "They ask, "What's his name?" and he tells them, "Ramaru". A Zulu walks around shouting, "Ramaru, Ramaru, you are called," Ramaru then answered. The Zulu said to him, "Your captain is calling you."

29 Mosima consulted with him whether they should kill the leader of the Zulus, but Ramaru disapproved and told him not to do it, but in the night Mosima stabbed the leader of the Zulus with an ash hawk, and then he raised the alarm, they sprang up and seized Mosima, and led him and his wife away. When they were far away, in Maune (with the Ndebele), they killed him and his wife, where is not known.

30 Then the chief woman Fedile returned from Moletane and ruled the Batokwa again for quite a long time. When she saw that she was getting old, she appointed Molamo, one of the sons of her husband Kgwadu, as captain. However, when he assumed power, two of his brothers, Ngwako and Montsho, began to cause trouble.

31 They did not recognize Molamo, but sided with a man who was very brave in war, a certain Motshekwe Seima. When Captain Kgwadu was still alive he already said, "Motshekwe will later make the people fight against each other. However, the man who will finally be able to fix the country is Mabidi Maila," Those two, Ngwako and Montsho, were also sons of Kgwadu. Realizing that they could not kill Molamo, they sought support from the Moletsi tribe.

32 One of Molamo's men was a certain Sebataolo, a cruel and ferocious fellow. Ngwako and Montsho decided to kill him in his hut and chose fearless young men for it. One of them was:

He who throws himself into battle,  
The captain who fights on his knees,  
Matome son of Kgotha of the Ramphenyanas,  
Ramokgolwane, you are a front loader who pulls loose when  
you walk with the children.  
Overhanging eyebrow of the land of Ngwako of the ash jays.

33 These heroes therefore trapped Sebataolo in his hut. He asks, "Who are you?" They answered, "It is us," and when he came out one of the warriors stabbed him between nose and mouth, thus forcing him back into his hut. Another stabs him in the arm. But the war-experienced Sebataolo breaks open the hut at the back and crawls out. Kgotha Ramphenyana stabbed him in the buttock with an ash jay with hooks again, but despite his wounds, Sebataolo escaped with his life.

34 An alarm was raised, the Batokwa rushed to help but discovered that the men of Ngwako and Montsho, led by Seima, had taken away some of their wives and children. In the main village there were young men, two sons of the captain Kgwadu as well as their elder brother Molamo.

35 Seima fled to Ramokgopa. When they arrived because of the alarm, Seima came out of his hiding place and stood with them. One of them was killed outside the village by Seima, he held him there and beat him to death with his cane while he said to the people who rushed to help, "So you are hunting this generation? Where will you see them today? Mount Selaelo (=Kgwadu) takes its revenge." The people of Ramokgopa showed him Mosima and said, "Here is another one. We have him, you're not going to get them all done".

36 Then the men of the Batokwa surrounded Ngwako and Montsho with their followers on the Mabjanene heads for a few days. When Ngwako and Montsho saw that they would succumb to hunger and thirst, they sent a man in the night to ask the people of Moletsi to come and help them with a force.

37 When that division of Moletsi arrived, they found that side of the mountain occupied by the brave of the Makgathas, and though outnumbered, they immediately rushed against the Moletsis, firing each other with names of praise. The names of these heroes I will try to list here.

38 The first was Madipheke of the Makgamathas. The second was Lehorobela Melapone. These two, with others, stopped the enemy and killed many of them. They also got hold of the man who captured Kgwadu at the time when he was killed by the Moletsi people. Only at Kgothe did they stop the pursuit. Among Ngwako's men there was one of the Buyse who had a rifle with which he inflicted many losses on the Batokwa.

39 When Ngwako and other men saw that the Makgamathas had driven out the Moletsi people, they consulted and decided, "Can we then be stopped here by Ramokgopa one people alone? That would be the day when one lost!" This is how they encourage each other, At the Ramokgopaa there were many brave men, but the most famous was he who praises the poets like this:

40 Mathiri of the Mmamokhwibedus of Tshaka  
 Mathiri who eats human flesh  
 Beef, he ate that in the winter  
 Rhino from the rooibos of Mohorwane 1)  
 He drinks water at Mmakhoto 1) in the mountains  
 Thin man like a blade of grass Mathiri, who eats cattle 2 )  
 Thin man of the Lehahas. 3)

Notes 1) a place in Botokwa.

2) i.e. robbery

3) a personal name, however, it also means meat without fat or tendons.

41 The reason why I mention this man for his courage is that Ngwako's men on the mountain said to the Buys, "If you can shoot dead that man blowing the horn there, we will go down and attack them without fear." Then the Buys aimed at him with his gun and shot him dead. They then rushed down the mountain and clashed with Ramokgopa's people at the foot and chased them away, and the Buys also came and shot them with their gun, but when they far as Molemole's head came [on the east side], the Ramokgo Pass turned and chased Ngwako's people back to the Mabjanene mountain, and again trapped them there. (From there they escaped to Moletsi.)

42      Sebataolo then went away from Mabjanene to Motalahothe, another of the great ones among the Batokwa. He lived at Mount Mphakane, where he had a large estate and many people. [Molamo was already dead by now, how is not known. Some say he died in the battles at Mabjanene, others that he ruled until his death, and was then succeeded by Motalahothe.] Motalahothe became captain. When Ngwako saw that he would not succeed in depriving him of the captaincy, he called in the help of the Boers and they then killed Motalahothe at Mphakane.

43      But Sebataolo remained alive. Then Ngwako returned to become captain of the Batokwa. Sebataolo submitted to Ngwako and humbled himself. Ngwako was happy to see his enemy bow before him, but Sebataolo did not think so, in his heart was cruelty and the intention to kill Ngwako a Marema. That is why Sebataolo talks nicely to Ngwako, and the latter has become kind to him.

44      Sebataolo then said to Ngwako, "Captain, take us to the Boers to let them know that today we are your people, because you have conquered us." Ngwako agrees, and so do his people. Then Sebataolo went to Ramokgopa and said to them, "Brothers, help me tomorrow." I will bring Ngwako, then you must already be in shelter at the Mononono [Cross River]. There I will attack Ngwako with my ash jay. He may not rule us, he who brutally massacred my brothers." So the men of Ramokgopa sat down by the river before it was day.

45      At sunrise Ngwako arrived with his entourage. Sebataolo had with him two men who knew of his secret, viz. Mmakgetsi and Phaswana. When they passed through the river [at the ford of the Cross River which is now called Letsiboho la Ngwako a Marema] Ngwako laid down his ash jays on the side where bulls wanted to rest and then went back to the river unarmed. There he finds Sebataolo drinking water with his ash jays on the ground next to him.



46 Ngwako asked him, "Why don't you first put down your ash jays on the other side and then come and drink water?" Sebataolo replied, "Captain, I'm doing this so I don't have to come back again and to clear things out." When Ngwako knelt and drank, Sebataolo pulled out an ash jay from under his blanket, attacked Ngwako and stabbed him. Ngwako said, "Am I being killed by you, Matome?"

47 Sebataolo praises himself and says

I am the Mankwe killer 1)  
He got them from Kgapu 2)  
And killed them  
He finished the kgoro of his uncle.  
Notes 1) the Mankwe is a regiment.  
2) Kgapu, a place on the farm near the reserve.

48 Phaswana then chopped off his tendons with an axe. The men of Ramokgopa came out of the reeds by the river and helped Sebataolo, they finished off Ngwako's men. Ngwako himself falls to the ground. Sebataolo pointed at him with his finger and asked, "Where is the kingship you hoped for when you exterminated my brothers, you vassal?" Sebataolo gathered the belongings of the chief and offered them to Kgwadu's son Mosima, but he would not take them. Sebataolo then made all the Batokwa flee to Sekukuniland out of fear of the Boers because Ngwako was their protegee. He himself also died there.

49 However, the captain Mosima leaves the tribe at Sekwati and returns to Botokwa. The people remained under the late Molamo's chief wife Mmainamela. She should actually have become the wife of Mosima, but because he left, she was taken by Mmakaipea, who was a son of Kgwadu, just like Mosima and the chief Molamo. Mmakaipea had a son Letheba with this wife of captain Molamo, daughter of Mabeba, and all the Batokwa were very happy and said "Today a captain was born."

50 At Letheba's birth there were already three older brothers in the family. The one who came after Letheba in rank was Mokoto, after him came Matome, and after him Ntwamala Masanyane.

51 Mokoto, in seeking sovereignty, killed Letheba with a sword. This happened after the return from Sekukuniland. When the Batokwa found out, they were so angry that they wanted to kill Mokoto. He then fled to Matala.

52 When the Batokwa saw that they were too weak to kill him at Matala, they went to Sekhukhune to ask him to speak to Matala and have him extradited. So Mokoto was also killed by Sekhukhune. At the time, Matome (Jonathan Rampo) was at Wallmannsthal near Pretoria to go to school. Therefore, Masanyane stayed with his father's older wife [Mmainamela], the mother of Letheba.

53 When she [Mmainamela], the chief wife and mother of Letheba, died, Masanyane took Letheba's widow Molatelo, daughter of captain Raphathelo. However, she remained childless. When the tribe saw this, they again went to Captain Raphathelo for another woman (as Seantlo) to take her place, and they found Mokgadi, a niece of the chief woman Molatelo. Her father was Matshepelele Raphathelo. This Mokgadi is the captain of the Batokwa, she has two sons and a daughter; the boy who will become captain is Edward Kgadi Mmatshaka.

54 The offspring of Matome a Tshaka: Matome was the father of Mokgopa of the lion. It is he who refused to be under Mabeba and did not want to give Labolwa the cattle when they were still in Rhodesia. Mokgopa had a son by a subordinate woman, and gave him the name of his father Matome. It is he after whom the people of Ramokgopa are called when they are called "the people of Matome of the cattle," because they say that from the time he got his mind, he loved cattle very much. He lived on milk, and therefore they called him "Matome of the cattle".

55 This man was like a prophet or soothsayer, he did not tolerate things that were wrong. If the people of the capital robbed cattle and wanted to give him one of them, he did not want to let the animal stand in the same pen with his cattle, because he thought that then his cattle would also be taken one day.

56 This Matome of the cattle is the progenitor of Ramokgopa's line. The Lord also blessed him in his offspring because he had both sons and daughters. His sons were the following:

1. Mmamokutupi
2. Mahaleme
3. Paledi
4. Mmampapata
5. Mmatheba
5. Morathi
7. Masilo

57 The eldest of all the sons of Matome of the cattle was Mmamokutupi.

58 Cases of Matome's gift to predict things are still remembered: As a gray earth, he gave his son Mmamokutupi a bead and said: "You see, I give you a bead, but you will not give it to your son no, it will be torn from your neck by people who will kill you; for you are warlike." And indeed this son of his was killed by the Vendaughter

59 The second case was that he said to one of the Modibas, named Sefefeta, "You will not die early. You will prosper and grow so old that they will finally smear your back with manure," [where he was yellowed, a sign of how old] and so it happened, he had a happy life.

60 The third case was that he said to Motshekwe Seima, "You, because you abandoned my grandson Kgwadu through disobedience at Moletsi, therefore you will first become blind and then die." Indeed Seima became blind before his death. The last thing he predicted, viz. that there would be peace is now truth.

61 That someone of his generation would become king and rule the tribe and that during his reign there would be peace, became true today. Thus Matome of the cattle's son Mmamokutupi lived in peace with his brothers. They liked him and respected him.

62 He was the father of Ngwako, but he died young. After him he had a son Matomefela [Ramokgopa himself]. After the death of Mmamokutupi, his brothers lived in peace with the creature and took good care of him (Matomefela). He grew up under his uncles and became a sensible man. He got on well with his uncles, and when the capital's people quarreled, he protected the people and averted mischief.

63 The regiments or age groups, as far as they are still remembered by my oldest informants, and in the order they indicate, are the following:

- 1 Dithaha.
- 2 Mankwe (leader or front goat: Morwakgwadu).
- 3 Marema.
- 4 Madingwana (Tshateke).
- 5 Matadi (Mokoto).
- 6 Maratwa (Mokwedi).
- 7 Maoho (Makwete).
- 8 Maruta (?).
- 9 Maphaswa (Mafsika).
- 10 Dithaha (?).
- 11 Mankwe (?).
- 12 Madingwana (Captain Edward).
- 13 Matadi (?).

## 2. The Babirwa of Tauyatswala

1     District:       **Potgietersrust, Transvaal.**

2     Numbers and distribution :

About fifteen years ago, when the tribe was still settled on the Mohalakwena, just under 100 taxpayers were registered in the name of chief Tauyatswala. These were all Babirwa. Today only about 20 taxpayers still reside on European-owned farms on and around Canton 1241, their former headquarters, whilst the bulk of the tribe (58 taxpayers and their families, according to the chief), are settled on the Trust farms Bainskloof 557 (2125 morgen), Vleypan 662 (1450 morgen) and Grootvley 863 (2034 morgen), which form a block near Steilloop on the Mohalakwena river, and total 5,609 morgen in extent. In addition to these Babirwa, the Department has settled on this land (according to the chief) 30 taxpayers from Matlala's (Bakoni tribe, Pietersburg) and 16 from Moletsi's tribe, also of Pietersburg, making a total of 104 taxpayers. In 1945 there were 88 men with one wife each to whom gardens had been allotted, 9 with two wives each, and 10 unmarried. To 21 widows gardens had also been given. Finally there were 238 children (126 male, 112 female), and the total population, excluding some aged persons (not classified as either taxpayer, wife or garden-allottee and therefore unrecorded), appears to be 233 male and 239 female, total 472 souls. This figure seems in correct proportion to the number (104) of taxpayers and may be taken as fairly correct. This of course includes the non-Birwa element which has not yet been absorbed in any way, and which forms about 45% of the whole, a very considerable proportion which, in view of the somewhat differing characters of the elements, may still produce friction.

3     Name of tribe: Babirwa (sing: Mmirwa).

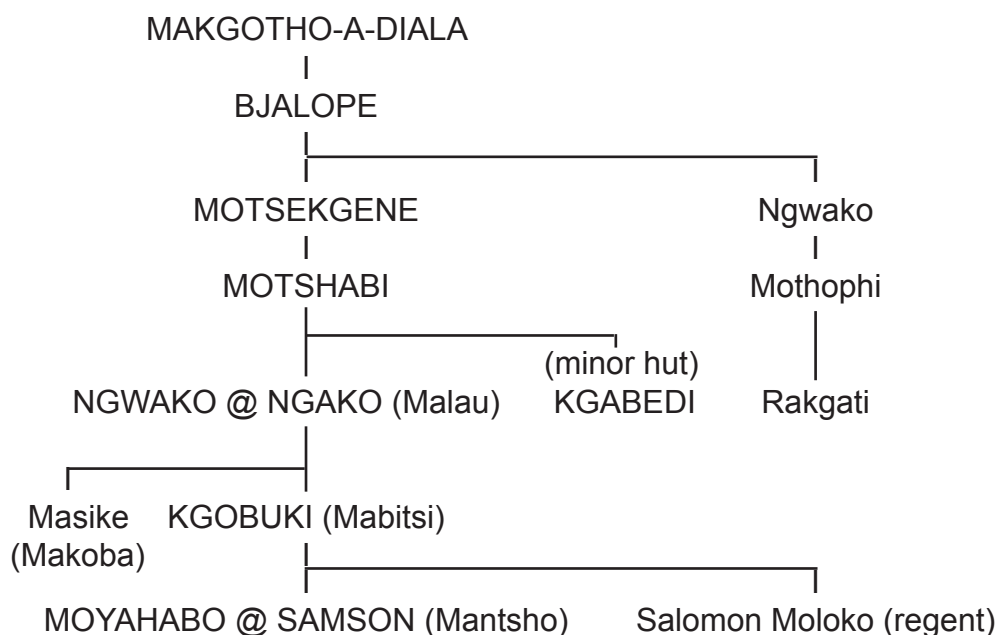
4     Totem: They bina (have as totem) nare "buffalo" and ils (avoid) leeba "pigeon".

5 Language: the north-western form of Northern or Transvaal Sotho, characterised by dentals for laterals, s for (as kgosi for kgo i) in many instances, thus approximating to northern Tswana, and on the whole the same as the speech of the Bahananwa and neighbouring people. But the language of the Babirwa originally was very different. Some indication of what it was like will be found on p. 99-100 of No. 8 of this series ("The copper miners of Musina"). I am not aware that it is still spoken anywhere in the Transvaal. To what extent Sebirwa, even in a modified form, is used in the Protectorate and Southern Rhodesia I am unable to say.

6 Chief : SAMSON MOYAHABO TAUYATSWALA, born 1901, became chief in 1926, given civil jurisdiction on 16/1/46.

7 Skeleton genealogy of chiefs:

In 1939 I obtained a genealogy from the oldest living member of the tribe, Rakgati Moetapele, and published it on p. 98 of "The copper miners of Musina" (No. 8 of this series). Together with other information gained more recently the genealogy appears to me to run about like this:



### History

8 As will be seen from the text below, the Babirwa originally came from the Letswalo country between Mmamabolo's and Tzaneen. The oldest informants still alive, Nakedi Mohwasa and Mokgethi Rakgati (Rakgati Moetapele whom I consulted at Canton in 1939 having died in the meantime), described their migrations as follows:

9 Coming from the south-east, they first settled in (1) Botokwa (where the Tlokwa now live in two locations north of Pietersburg), thence they moved to (2) what is now Hananwa country, though the actual site they occupied is uncertain ) because they lived there only a little while before moving on to (3) Tolwe on Klimaf 1220, west of the Mohalakwena. After that they moved to (4) Bolopela on Karrieboschdrift 1057 and then to (5) the Ngwala hills on Mietjesfontein 114. At Ngwala they were ruled by MOTSHABI. Now they moved again to (6) Ha Selomo, probably on Dantzig 1074, on the south side of the Blauwberg. Here their chief was NGAKO and part of the tribe broke off and became the Ba ha Mote-pa, see Section 21.

10 They now went back to (7) the Ngwala hills under NGAKO, who died here, being succeeded by KGABEDI, a son of MOTSHABI in a minor hut. KGABEDI led the tribe to (8) the Bosetha, a river on Inveraan 1073 and in his time they moved on to (9) Setswe, a little hill on the east bank of the Bosetha and probably still on Inveraan, and thence to (10) Moumong, a pan on Dantzig 1074, and thence to (11) Sefoto or Tshihodwe, the mountain on Nooitgedacht 1225, though the country which really became the headquarters of the tribe is the adjoining farm Canton 1241. Here they lived undisturbed except for some encounters with the Boers. A little episode that occurred during the war against Mmaleboho (Maleboch) is related in the text. I have also an account of how, according to the Babirwa, a farmer cut himself off a large slice of the farm on which they were living. I cannot publish this narrative for various reasons.

11 The texts which follow below were written by Christoph Mohwasa, son of Naked! Mohwasa, one of the oldest informants, and a teacher. He wrote part of the text (which is a collation from several efforts spread over years, plus fragments written down by myself), for Rev. W. Trott or Leipzig on the Blauwberg. Trott was the first man to enquire into Birwa traditions and make notes about the people, just as he was the first to devote any time to the study of the makeup and history of the numerous small groups that inhabit these parts, the first thoroughly to record local place-names (an important and fascinating study) and the first, in fact, to attempt any anthropological enquiry here at all. Unfortunately he was so engrossed in the task for which he had come to this country that he left no work that formed a rounded whole. But I feel I cannot allow the opportunity to pass of paying this tribute to him here. Mohwasa also wrote about his people for the Department. He used the Sotho taught in the schools. This was changed by me into the Birwa as spoken today, in consultation with the chief and the best of his councillors, who also of course had to help a great deal to elucidate what Mohwasa had written down in a brief and often obscure way.

12 The Babirwa were a big tribe in the early days. They bina (have as totem) the buffalo and avoid eating the pigeon. They praise themselves thus:

“Babirwa or Mother-provide-for- me who hoard the dried melon 1)  
They will not let a goat eat of dried melon”

13 Long ago, before the Ndebele [of Mzilikazi] had begun to trouble the tribes of this country, the Babirwa people lived in a country called Nareng [whereabouts unknown] in the direction of Sekukuniland, in a country adjoining that of Mmamabolo and Modjadji [obviously therefore in or near the Letswelo country above Tzaneen, as the Ba Letswalo are Banarene.]

14 The Babirwa separated into two groups. One remained, the other left. The latter were under a chief named Mahothodiala. They trekked westward and settled in what is Tlokwa country today [locations of Ramokgopa and Mmatshaka, Pietersburg district.] There they made gardens and it is said that Mahothodiala taught us agriculture.

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1) a staple food of the Babirwa in this arid country,  
see illustration.



15      Dissension in the tribe and trouble with other tribes made the Babirwa move still further westward. And again they divided. The larger portion went to the Mmangwato country [under Makhura, they are still there] and the smaller went towards the Ngwala hills not far from the Limpopo, [actually on Mietjesfontein 114, close to the Mohalekwena. They wanted to settle there, but found other tribes already in occupation, namely the people of Masala and those of Rapanyane. Bitter strife began, they fought, and the Babirwa won. The enemy fled across the Limpopo, The dwellings were left empty, and the Birwa women cooked their porridge on the deserted kraal sites of those who had fled.

16      After the reign of several chiefs there, the tribe set out again to seek a new home, and settled in the Tolwe hills [on Klimaf 1220.] At that time they had a great chief named Bjalope, a very clever man. He tried to extend his rule all over the wide country south of the Limpopo. He sent his headmen in different directions amongst the other tribes, to occupy points everywhere and seize the country. Some sections of the tribe moved westward and settled there. Others moved east, others again towards the Hananwa country, towards the Tlokwa, and even towards the Venda in the Zoutpansberg. All these headmen were allowed to hold their own circumcision lodges, but had to bring important matters to their supreme chief for decision. In this way the tribe grew powerful and controlled a huge area.

17 It happened subsequently that a new chief had to be appointed, but this man refused to be crowned with the insignia of chieftainship, because according to the rites customary on this occasion he had to meet the spirits of his ancestors. This scared him very much. So he was unable to fulfil the requirements and ran away. But they followed him and brought him back. However, the one thing he had to do, namely to meet the departed chiefs of the tribe face to face, was too much for him. He was afraid of the spirits, because they manifest themselves in the shape of snakes. So they gave him the name of "Fearful" and said: "He feared to take the chieftainship." It is through this cowardice of his that the tribe began to weaken and decline. They said: "Our ancestor spirits have abandoned us." The chief's lack of courage deprived him of the strength to maintain his chieftainship.

18 His vassals began to despise him and refused to acknowledge his authority. In the end they left him and chose stronger chiefs of other tribes nearby, and became their adherents.

19 Others made themselves independent. In this way the strength of the tribe declined very much, and only a fragment remained, namely the tribe of Tauyatswala.

20 Those who broke off at that time were especially Kobe:

"Kobe, the breeder of buffalos,  
Who apportions areas and departs "  
and Maela, son of Molaba.  
He is: "Maela the big forest  
We cast stones into it and a bird flies out  
It a duiker comes out, we raise a shout  
The big one raises a shout  
Mr Club with a knob bed head  
When gone to the herding  
They afterwards sought for it  
Asking: what will we cook the bran with  
The bran for our children  
He doesn't know how to live in a country  
He lives in the open, unsheltered  
In the tracks of the wagons  
Maela is a yellow ostrich  
Tauyatswala is an ostrich cock."

The meaning of the foregoing is only partly clear, and no one knows to what the allusions are. The old men who still remember this poetry evade questions about obscure passages by saying: It is poetry."

21 The small tribe that had been left in this way again broke up into two sections through a quarrel about the chieftainship, for the great house had only a daughter. Some said this girl should succeed and would bear them a male child, and so they separated. Those who sided with this girl, named Motepa, became the Ba ha Motepa.

22 The others were under the chief Ngako [often also called Ngwako].

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1) they are now on Gemarkte 1012, south of the Blauwberg, under Tsale (Charlie) alias Mabule, who acknowledges the overlordship of Mmaleboho. They have purchased this farm, and began paying for it in 1922. Prior to that they were on Innes 1057 near Kibi's Location, by some called Lemethabe and by others Ha Matshira.

About the marriages and offspring of chiefs up to this point nothing besides what has been mentioned appears to be still remembered. Of Ngako's wives and issue the following was told me:

NGAKO's wives and issue:

1 Mma-Mpolo or Mma-Moribula, daughter of ? of the Ba Tshula, who are Birwa commoners. She was a seantlo or substitute wife for one who died and has been forgotten. Issue:

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| a Masika   | m  |
| b Mokgadi  | f married Moremi, a commoner tribesman               |
| c KGOBUKI  | m  |
| d Mmathodi | f married Tabo Moeta, a rangwane of the royal family |

2 Mma-Mpote daughter of Tutsa, a commoner Mmirwa

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| a Mpote    | f married Mohwasa, a rangwane of the informant Nakedi Mohwasa |
| b Motsatsi | f married Moeta, a rangwane of the royal family               |

23 At this time the Ndebele came again to raid cattle, but the people of Tauyatswalwa managed to get away. Their chief Ngako was killed by a buffalo one day when hunting and was succeeded by Kgabedi, "The wise son of Ngwako The wise one who plants a cloud on the hill He plants it on the rocks and overlooks them He overlooks the Ditatswi 1) hills of the Malobas"

24 He was succeeded by Kgobuki The following details were obtained regarding his wives and issue:  
KGOBUKI's wives (in order of marriage) and issue:

1 Mma-Moloko @ Mma-Sekhwiri daughter of Tshula, a commoner Mmirwa

- |                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| a Moloko @ Sekhwiri @ Salomon | m  |
| b Matome                      | m  |
| c Matinya                     | m  |
| d Tabo                        | m  |
| e Morongwa                    | f married Matome Makhut a, a motoholo of the royal family, i.e. one whose family had married daughters of royalty before |
| f Molele                      | f still unmarried  |

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1) These small hills called Ditatswi or Ditatsu are south of the Blauwberg on Wilhanshohe 1031. The Ba ha Maloba live there.

2 Mme-Moyahabo daughter of Matsoma, son of Matinyane (which means "small or young Matome") a son of MOTSHABI. This woman thus had a paternal grandfather in common with her husband.

a MOYAHABO @ SAMSON m

b Matome m

c Pheaha m

3 Mma-Molatelo daughter of Maela, the head of this section of the Babirwa on the Thoona at Tooverfontein.

a Molatelo f married Ngako, son of Tabo Moeta, a motoholo of the royal family and his wife Mmathodi, daughter No. 1 daughter of chief NGAKO. A case of true cross-cousin marriage.

b Matome m

c Pheaha m

d Mosibudi f married Ngako as seantlo or substitute wife for her elder sister Molatelo who died without issue. No cattle were given for her though he should have given three or four beasts.

e Moraka m

f Botshilo f married Morebula Morula, a member of the Dikolobe who are members of the tribe.

25 Kgobuki died in 1907. He left a son named Moyahabo Tauyatswala. He went to school at Mmakgodu [Kalkbank] and was baptised by the missionary Jonas and given the name of Samson. During his whole minority he was acted for by Sekhwiri, of the second house of the chief. Moyahabo succeeded in 1926. They praise him thus:

"Gatherer of the tribes,  
Gatherer who discourages strife,  
He assembles the crowds  
To return to their ancient homes, saying:  
If only our country had people,  
I would collect them and build for them."

26 Today Tauyatswala's tribe are a changed people. They are different in their customs and life. They have abandoned circumcision and heathen dances, and many other evil practices of the past. They have built a church and have a school of their own.

#### Settlement on Bainskloof

27 The foregoing was written whilst the tribe was still settled on the crown farm Canton 1241. Finally they had to move and were offered land by the Trust at Steilloop, on the Mohalakwena. They accepted this offer and in August 1942 were transported thither, and settled on the block of farms named in section 2. As they now fell under Trust control, a dwelling area was demarcated as well as arable land. All the people had to build their dwellings in a settlement which now consists of a single row of huts and lapas over half a mile long, a remarkable sight. There is as yet no school or church building worthy of the name.

28 The only supply of water nearby is a pump, for the Mohalakwena (quite dry in 1945, though holes are dug in its bed) is some miles distant. Syphilis and eye diseases are rife and flies swarm everywhere. Five blind persons get state assistance. The nearest clinic is at Steilloop, four miles away. The Babirwa, coming as they do from Canton and an area which has only relatively recently been included within the orbit of European civilisation, are of course inured to the trying conditions or the hot and arid North-west and not spoilt as far as medical services or an adequate or balanced diet are concerned. They are very short of protective foods and their description of what a woman and her children require as a minimum diet to exist can hardly be beaten by the most frugal natives anywhere. As regards their tolerance of heat, they told me one of their chief complaints against their new home at Steilloop was that it was 'too cold.' By this they meant that they could not plant quite as late as they used to do at Canton. By ordinary standards Steilloop is of course anything but cool.

29 The three farms Bainskloof etc, (Section 2) aggregate 5,609 morgen or 18.7 square miles. On this area there were, in November 1945, 792 cattle units (508 cattle, 220 donkeys, 319 small stock), which makes 7 morgen per cattle unit. The population density of 472 souls on 18.7 sq. miles makes 25.5 souls per sq. mile. Men with one wife have been given 5 morgen each of garden land, and those with two wives half as much again. Widows with establishments and dependants of their own also get 5 morgen. Thus about 610 morgen or 11 per cent of the total land available has been given out for cultivation.

30 The Birwa are unaccustomed to planting maize. They favour sorghums of the three varieties which they call lenthata (tall), kata (short), and modipa, besides lebelebele (*Pennisetum*) which is also eaten. I was told that a few men reaped 20 bags of grain (not in the drought year of 1945 of course), others 10 and others 5 bags. The true Birwa method of storing grain is in difala, large and small bins of mud and dung, They have now forgotten how to make these and bury their grain in disihu (grainbaskets) only.

31 It is still the universal custom to give cattle for wives, usually six head plus eight to ten goats. Goats may be substituted for part of the cattle at the rate of ten goats for a cow, or sheep at six.

#### An incident during the Maleboch war

32 In the year 1894, during the war against Mmaleboho, some of the latter's Birwa subjects, men of Kololo and Raphukhula (sons of chief Kgobuki Tauyatswala living at Wanamaudi Slaaphoek) and one Kgantshi, son of Boditsi, brought their cattle over to this side of the Mohalakwena one early afternoon.

33 At that time Kgobuki was the Birwa chief, and he and his uncle Kgabedi took charge of Kololo's and Raphukhula's cattle. Thus was proven the saying:

“Giving birth killed the locust” meaning  
that one's own offspring may cause one's undoing.

34 Just then a commando of Boers arrived from the direction of Rhodesia, and with them two sons of Mapena (of the Maunatala branch of the Birwa), namely Markus Matakala and Pampiri Mantswi. The Boers asked: "What people are you?" and they replied: "We are Babirwa." The Boers said: "You are Bahananwa of Mmaleboho and you are lying;" and they asked the sons of Mapena: "Is this true?". They told them: "Yes, it is true, they are Babirwa." So the Boers did not question them further. The chief gave them a big black ox, named Matoro, praised thus:

"Matoro, don't blow on the war flute,  
You will be cursed by the folk of Mathadisa's."1)

The Boers thanked him and said: "Goodbye; enjoy yourselves with your beer."

35 The day when the Boers came to fetch the cattle of Raphukhula's and Kololo's, the cows were being milked in the evening. The Boers had noticed the tracks and followed them and asked the chief: "Whose cattle kraal is that?" The chief said: "Those cattle belong to fugitives." The Boers ran thither at full speed and found some other men there, sons of Tauyatswala, and said: "These are also runaways from Mmaleboho's". The chief told them that these were his sons. They merely told him: "Give us some young men to drive the cattle." The chief gave them young men and so they went off.

36 As the cattle were going up along the Mohalakwena and reached the little hill called Serala where they spent the night, they called Kgantshi and told him: "Tell us the truth now; did all those cattle belong to the Babirwa?" He told them: "Yes." The Boers said: "We want the truth without delay. If you can't speak the truth, we will castrate you," and they produced a knife and began to whet it saying: "Hold him, let him be castrated." The black one could not bear to look on the knife and said: "I will speak." Thus was fulfilled the proverb:

"The mischief is done by one's relatives."

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1) The Ba ha Mathadisa are Batalaota settled at Taupye.



**Sources**

63 The informants Nakedi Mohwasa and Mokgethi Rakgati were mentioned in Section 8. Tsale @ Marope-a-Pele also helped. The text was written by Chr. Mohwasa and changed by me in consultation with the chief and others, see Section 11. Some scattered items originated in notes made by W. Trott, see Section 11. The only previous literature I am aware of is my short note at pp. 99-100 in vol. 8 of this series, where reference is also made to some other matter. To see the Babirwa in their proper light it will be necessary to visit the other branches in the Protectorate and Southern Rhodesia, where they live in a secluded and somewhat inaccessible area. This circumstance alone holds out some promise to future investigators.

### 3. The Batau of Selwane

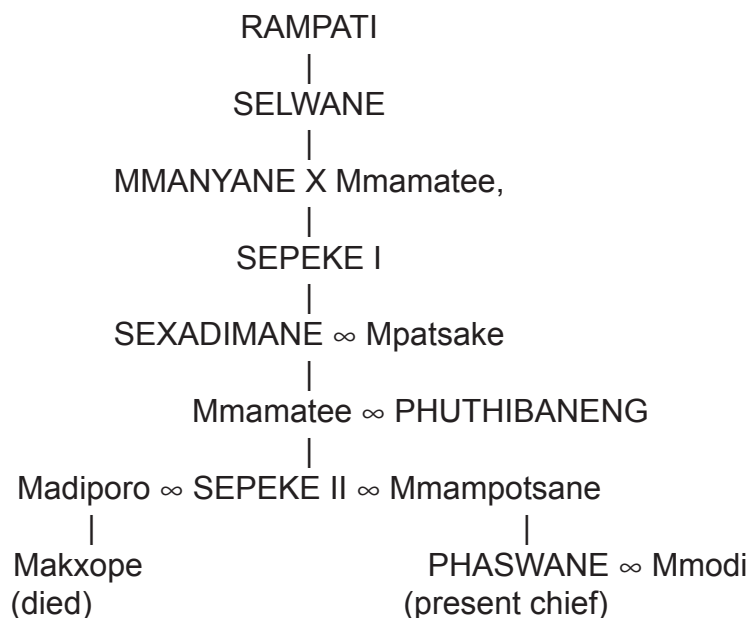
1 **District:** Potgietersrust and Pietersburg, Transvaal.

4 **Totem:** tau (lion).

5 **Language:** The Tau or Koni form of Sotho as spoken in Sekukuniland. The younger generation, through association with the Ndebele and Sotho-ised Ndebele of Sebitiela's Location, tend to speak as the latter do.

6 **Chief:** PHASWANE SELWANE, who succeeded in 1904.

7 **Skeleton genealogy of chiefs:**



#### History:

8 These people are the senior branch of the Batau, whose totem is the lion (tau) and who are today represented by the sections of Mpanama, Manganeng, Phahla, Moxa wa and Masemola in the districts of Nebo and Sekukuniland. All these tribes have the tradition that originally they were Swazis, but today they are Sotho in language and culture.

9 The first chief of the Selwane section whose name is still remembered was RAMPATI. He was succeeded by SELWANE. About neither of these is anything further known.

10 The third chief MMANYANE lived, like his predecessors, at Mopung, just west of the present office at Schoonoord. Upon his death he was succeeded by his son SEPEKE, his heir in the great hut of Mmamatee. The tribe was still settled at Mopung when SEXADIMANE took over the chieftainship from his father SEPEKE during the latter's lifetime. He was, however, killed in battle by the Pedi of Malekutu at a place called Lebopong, on Goedverwacht 230, west of xa Masemola.

11 The next chief was PHUTHIBANENG, son of SEXADIMANE and his chief wife Mpatsake, She was a daughter of Thlomeledi, a son of the family of Matlala of Kotole.

12 After PHUTHIBANENG's death at Mopung he was succeeded by his son SEPEKE II, son of the great wife Mmamatee, who was a daughter of Maboe, chief of the Masemola tribe.

13 The tribe was still resident at Mopung when they were attacked by SEKHUKHUNE I, the son of SEKWATI, for having espoused the cause of Mampuru. They crossed the Olifants River and settled at Maxadirane, a place in the present Sebitiela Location and a little north-west of the village of the present chief PHASWANE. SEPEKE I died here shortly after the rinderpest (1897).

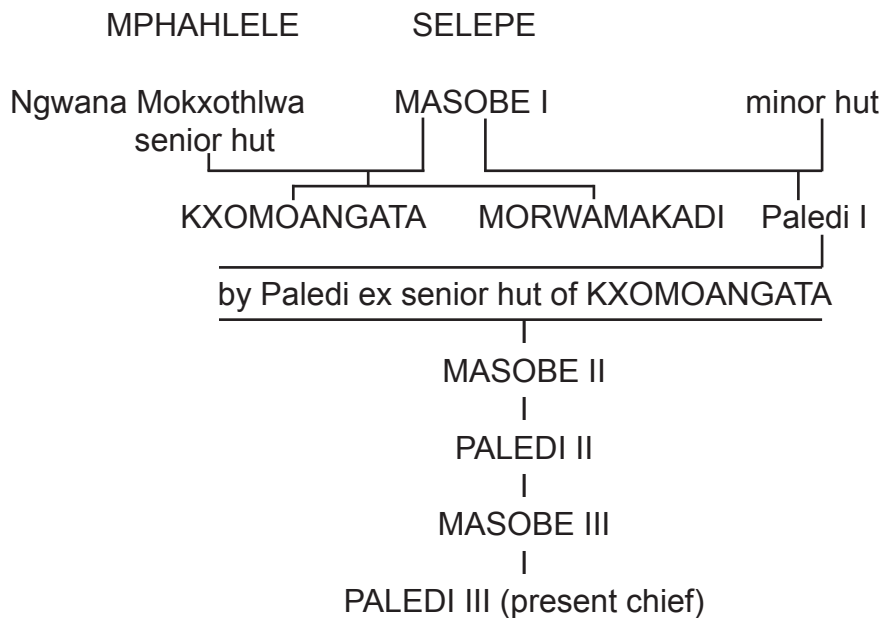
14 The chief wife of SEPEKE was Madiporo, a daughter of SEKWATI. Both she and her only son Makxope died in the year of the rinderpest and so, since there was no heir to the chieftainship, SEPEKE's halfbrother

#### 4. The Bakgaga of Mothapo

- 1     **District:** Pietersburg, Transvaal.
- 2     **Numbers and distribution:** The chief himself estimated in 1943 that he had about a thousand followers, without being able to say exactly how he arrived at this figure. The tax records of Pietersburg show 138 taxpayers on Laatstehoop 363, 16 on Dikvrouw 396 and 22 on Majebaskraal 145, total 176, which indicates a total population of about 800. The farms in question lie some twenty miles almost due East of Pietersburg, next to Molepo's Location.
- 3     **Names of tribe:** Bakoni or Bakgaga. Their honorific is Mokoni.
- 4     **Totem:** They bina (have as totem) phuthi, the duiker.
- 5     **Language:** The form of Sotho spoken east of Pietersburg by the people or Molepo: Mothiba, Thswene; it is very much the same as the dialect or Mphahlele's, their nearest kin.
- 6     **Chief:** PALEDI MOTHAPO, born around the year 1890.

**Skeleton genealogy of chiefs:**

7 Their royal genealogy is given as follows:



Capitals denote chiefs who ruled. Paledi I was not a chief.

**History and genealogy of chiefs:**

8 SELEPE was born in Bokxaxa, the ancestral home of the Bakxaxa (now Maake's Location, Tzaneen district), at the time when these people were still settled there. Owing to fever and scarcity they moved away under the leadership of their chief MPHAHLELE, and lived for a while on the Tubatse (Steelpoort River) at some place no longer remembered. They soon decided to move again, but were prevented by the Tubatse being in flood.

9 At a place called Meetse-Mathata, where they were encamped waiting for the river to subside, they were astounded to see some of their own people appearing on the other side. They had been exploring a cavern on this side of the river, and upon emerging found it had led them underneath the riverbed to the other side. A headman named Lexodi and some of the people crossed by way of this tunnel, the bulk of the tribe and the cattle following when the river could be forded. Then they also crossed the Lepelle (Olifant) and settled in what is now Mphahlele's Location. The chief put his younger brother SELEPE in charge of the area nearest Moletlane (Sebitiela Location).

10 At a hunt the latter's people made away with a lad of SELEPE's family, at least he could not be found. SELEPE reported to the chief MPHAHLELE and sought permission to take revenge. The chief refused permission because he was not convinced about the facts. Some time later SELEPE's men got hold of a young man from Sebitiela's walking about armed and tied him to a tree and killed him. SELEPE informed his elder brother that he had taken revenge in this manner, but the latter replied that this act might provoke war with Sebitiela's tribe and asked him to leave.

11 So SELEPE crossed the northward mountains with a large section of the tribe and settled at Maposo, near his present descendant's village but on Laatstehoop 363. There he eventually died and his son MASOBE I who succeeded him died there likewise. The latter was succeeded by KXOMOANGATA, eldest son of his principal wife NgwanaMokxothlwa. He had not been chief long when the Marota (Pedi) of chief MASILE crossed the mountains. They demanded levies from the tribes of Mafefe, Molepo and Mothapo, to participate in an attack upon the Ledwaba Ndebele under chief'tainness MMATHSIPI then living at Maune (outside Pietersburg, west of the spruit and the old aerodrome, south of the town).

12 This attack was a signal failure. MMATHSIPI defeated the combined forces of the attackers with great slaughter, and amongst the casualties were SETLAKALANE, the Molepo chieftain, all the Marota commanders, and also KXOMOANGATA, chief of the Mothapo tribe. His younger full brother, MORWAMAKADI, escaped with his life, however, and now took charge of the tribe. So many of the men had been killed that it was decided that "bulls" were required to ensure a regeneration, and so the whole tribe, what was left of it, moved back to Mphahlele's country, to their nearest kin.

13 There they remained for a considerable time. A successor to the chief KXOMOANGATA, who had left no issue, was born from a levirate arrangement with Paledi I, a half-brother of the late chief. The issue so raised was MASOBE II, who was born at Mphahlele's. Still under the leadership of MORWAMAKADI they returned to Maposo, to their old headquarters on Laatstehoop. Here MORWAMAKADI died and was succeeded by MASOBE II, who was in turn succeeded by his son PALEDI II.

14 This chief made a raid on Dikxale's people and succeeded in driving off their cattle, but Molepo's men had seen them go and lay in wait for them, hoping to take advantage of their fatigue after a strenuous raid. They ambushed them on Dikvrouw 396, in the gate of the creek (sefateng sa Kwenane) on this farm and drove off the stolen cattle, killing some of the Mothapo men in the ensuing fight, and also the chief PALEDI II himself. Hence they praise the latter as follows:

15     "Paledi, leader of the people,  
Who leaves behind the floor-beater;  
Fighter of the Makwa regiment, of Moxaladi  
The Motlopane creek cannot be forded,  
But Paledi crosses it with one leg."

16     This fight took place quite a time prior to SEKHUKHUNE's defeat in 1879. The next chief was PALEDI's heir MASOBE III, who lived to an abnormal age.

17     Some years before the rinderpest (1897) the Republican government promised to allocate locations to the tribes in this area, and the headquarters of Mothapo's tribe were shifted to Thabana-khwibitswana, a little further to the south on the same farm Laatstehoop 363. But no location was ever given to this tribe. In 1914 the chief's village was moved to Mmathlaka, still on the same farm, where they remained until 1940. By 1925 the chief MASOBE III was so old that his heir PALEDI III had to take over. In 1927 the old man died. PALEDI III still rules the tribe today.

18     He has under him only Sotho people; besides the royal family there are the Kxaxa people of Mokxothlwa, the Ba xa Maruma (Nareng), Kadiaka (Thlalerwa), Makxathlela (Koni), Sexowa (Koni) and some others.

19     After the Trust had acquired the major portion of the adjoining farm Majebaskraal 145, the chief moved his headquarters thither.



### Mephatho or circumcision regiments

20 For the purposes of dating and as a matter of interest, it is useful to have the sequence of age-groups in this tribe as they are remembered today.

Year	Mphatho	Roto (leader)
	Matladi 1)	?
	Mathlwana 2)	Morwamasobe, a son of MASOBE
	Mapulana 3)	MASOBE III, son of PALEDI II
	Marema	Phsiriyaotsea, son of Maalamise
	Madingwana	Kelle, son of PALEDI II
	Makoba	Moxala, son of Maalamisa
1892?	Makeleka 4)	Lefsika, son of Phsiriyaotsea
1898	Mabitsi	Makxongwana, son of MASOBE
1904	Marema	PALEDI III, the present chief
1912	Mangana	Morwamakadi, son of MASOBE
1918	Mathamaxa	Marakeng, son of MASOBE
1925	Maxohu	Ramokoni, son of MASOBE
1932	Matlakana	Mathabatha, son of the present chief PALEDI
1941	Mathlwana	Masobe, son of the present chief PALEDI

### Sources

21 The foregoing was obtained from the chief himself and about ten of his old men on Majebaskraal 145 in April 1943. I am not aware of any literature about these people.

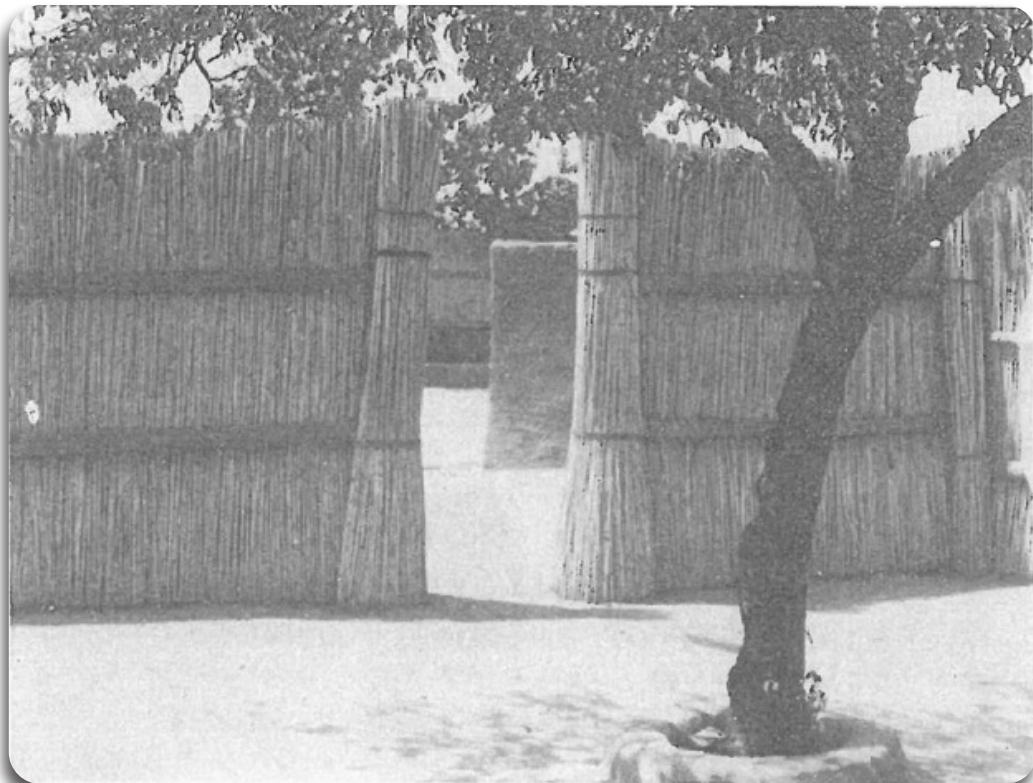
- 
- 1) initiated in same year and same place with the Mannko of Mphahlele's
  - 2) initiated at Mphahlele's
  - 3) initiated at Mmalebati in Molepo's Location
  - 4) one of the oldest informants present belonged to this group.

### 5. The Bakoni of Maserumule

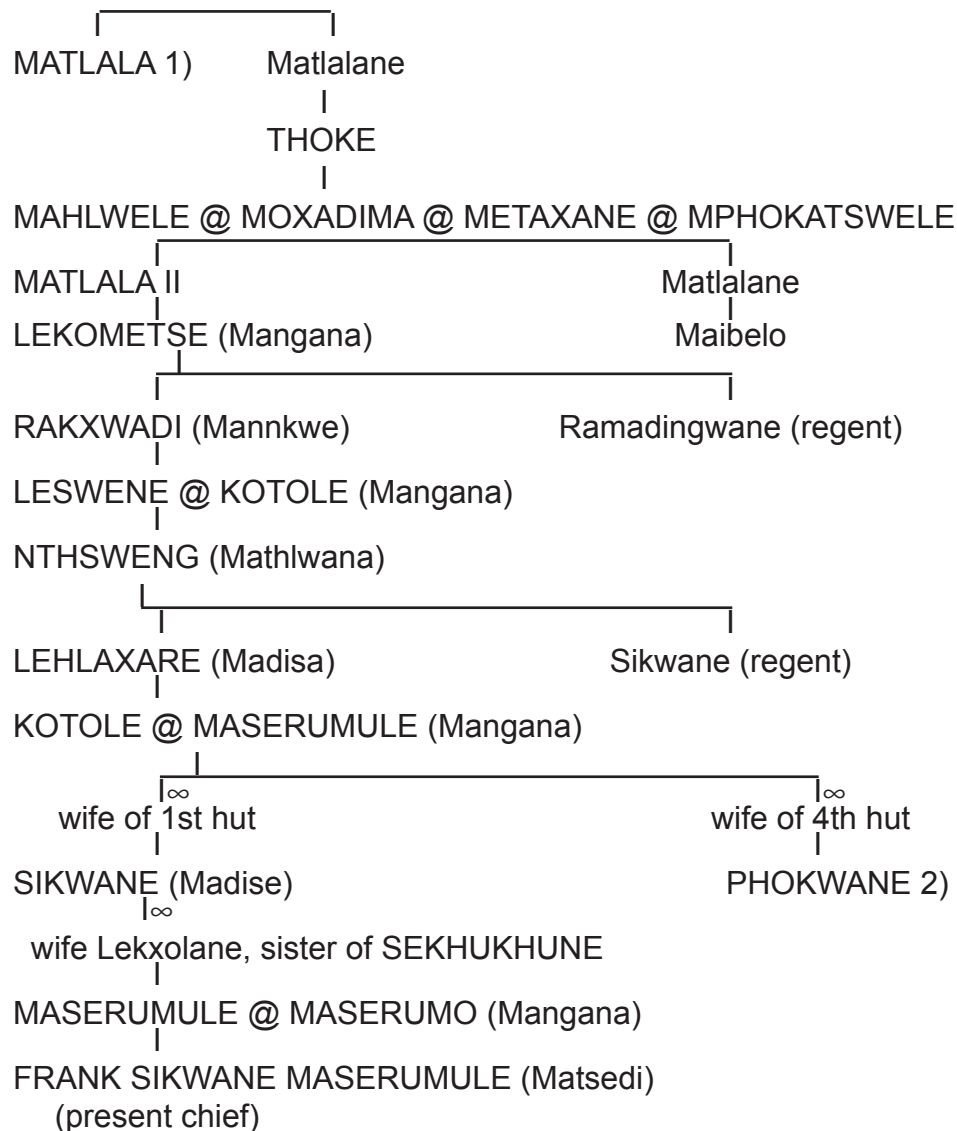
- 1     **District:** Sekukuniland and Nebo districts, Transvaal.
- 2     **Numbers and distribution:** The bulk of the tribe lives on Dui-zendannex 239 in Geluks Location, Sekukuniland. A number of Pedi, mostly Kxoloko's people, have been granted gardens in this area, but do not live there, just as members of MASERUMULE's tribe have gardens outside their area. There are about 740 Koni taxpayers registered under MASERUMULE in Geluks Location. He also has about 130 taxpaying followers in Nebo district, where the tribe has acquired some land, namely Boschpoort 417, a half-portion of Vergelegen 365, and a fairly large portion of Goedgedacht 419. Other followers of his on European-owned farms are in Premier Mine and Hamanskraal districts, mostly on Wolvekraal, Kleinklipput, Vlaklaagte (portion of which has been bought), Kuilsrivier, Slagboom, Waalkraal, Vaalfontein, Nooitgedacht. A sister of the chief is married at Masung's on Toitskraal in Hamanskraal district.
- 3     **Name of tribe:** Bakoni.
- 4     **Totem:** the small bird hlaxahlaxane.
- 5     **Language:** a form of the Transvaal Sotho of these parts, varying in some respects from the speech of the true Bapedi and Barwa, but the same as the dialect of Phokwane's in Nebo district, their nearest kin.
- 6     **Chief:** FRANK SIKWANE MASERUMULE, born about 1896.



Chief Frank Maserumule and councilors.



Maserumule's Courtyard

7 **Skeleton genealogy of chiefs :**

Capital letters denote men who ruled. The regiments or age-groups are given in parenthesis. In an old genealogy of uncertain origin, but probably obtained for the Locations Commission, I note that Matlatlabole is mentioned as the first chief to be remembered and as the father of: 1) Matlala 2) Monyela-Sedibe and 3) Raile. According to my informants Monyela-sedibe is merely a praise-name of the kxoro of the Ba xa Sethebe, whilst the names Matlatlabole and Raile were not recognised at all.

- 
- 1) founder of house of Matlala, Pietersburg.  
 2) founder of house of PHOKWANE, Nebo district

**History and genealogy of chiefs:**

8 According to tradition this tribe of Bakoni originally came from the direction of Bokxaxa, near Thabina in the Lowveld south of Tzaneen, and after crossing the mountains reached the plateau of Pietersburg where they settled at what is today Matlala's Location, some thirty miles west of the town.

9 Their chief at that time was MATLALA. His younger brother Matlalane had a son named THOKE. Matlalane was already dead when a sister of THOKE was married by a son of MATLALA. Afterwards this man wanted to marry another sister of THOKE, but the latter refused. The disappointed suitor tried force, and at a dancing party even struck her. The old chief MATLALA foresaw strife and ordered a tribal hunt, to hunt the wildebeest, but forbade THOKE and his men from going. When the rest of the tribe were away on this hunt, the old man told THOKE to take this opportunity of fleeing. So they quickly packed and went. This is how they came to separate from the parent Matlala tribe.

10 They first settled at Moxodumo, the high mountain overlooking Chunespoort on the west side. Then they left and settled at Sepitsi, a hill on Badfontein 733, near the present Olifants River bridge on the road to Nebo. Then they moved to Lebopong, on Goedverwacht 230, just west of the present Magale's Location, better known as Xa Masemola. However, at that time the Tau tribes which now occupy much land around here had not yet arrived. Here THOKE died, and so also his successors in office down to and including LEKOMETSE. When the lastnamed died, his son RAKXWADI was still a boy and was acted for by his father's cousin Maibelo, a son of Matlalane, who was a younger brother of MATLALA II. On the face of it, it seems likely that there is some confusion with the first couple of similarly named brothers, but the informants are quite sure there is none. Before the lad RAKXWADI could be circumcised, the tribe had to leave their home where they had now lived for about four generations.

11 The reason of their departure was an important event in the history of Sekukuniland, namely the advent of the people they called Mapono (naked men, i.e. Zulus) whose descendants are now the Tau tribes of this area, notably those of Phahla, Mphanama, Masemola, Marisane, Manganeng and Nthsabeleng. For fear of these newcomers, the tribe now moved away under the regent Meibelo, and settled at Tswai, an area on Klipspruit 161 at the confluence of the Puleng and the Mmakxatle spruits and close to the Lepelle or Olifant, some miles north of the Hereford bridge. Here they circumcised RAKXWADI and soon afterwards made him the chief.

12 The Kopa tribe had hitherto been in occupation of this area, but, seeing the numbers of the intruders, moved away from their headquarters at Moxanyake to Sethutlwe (Krokodilsdrift 244) across the Olifant.

13 As the Koni soon discovered that they had too little arable land at Tswai, they also moved across the Olifant and settled at Nyane, a little hill and area on the farm Kleinklipput 596. They lived here long enough to circumcise ten age groups, and RAKXWADI grew old and died there.

14 RAKXWADI's wives and issue are remembered as follows:

- 1 Mmakwane daughter of a chief of the Ndebele tribe of Sebitiela  
 a Mosebi m (ancestor of Rakxwadi, one old informant present)  
 b Rakxapyane m  
 c Ramannku m

?2 Mmamokxokolosi daughter of Photo, chief of the Batladi who are Mapono of Mphanama.

- a LESWENE m

As this wife had no other children, a deputy wife was married for her, viz:

?3 ? a younger sister of the foregoing

- a Ramadingwane m (considered a son of preceding hut)

?4 ?

- a Mpipi m

15 RAKXWADI became so old that his son LESWENE acted for him, but finally he predeceased his father.

LESWENE's wife and issue:

?1 Morathsane daughter of Maibelo, a distant member of the royal clan.

- a NTHSWENG m  
 b Mahlare m

16 When RAKXWADI eventually also died, the chieftainship passed to Ramadingwane, a younger half-brother of the deceased LESWENE but legally a full brother owing to his mother's status, see above. Ramadingwane however merely acted as regent for his nephew NTHSWENG.



17 A great famine now occurred and under the regent Ramadingwane the tribe left Nyane (Kleinklipput 596) and returned to their ancient home Lebopong, west of Magale Location. Here Ramadingwane yielded the chieftainship to the proper heir NTHSWENG who was now of age.

18 Friction arose with the neighbouring Tau tribe of Masemola (now in Magale's Location) and the Koni fled across the Olifant to Moletlane (Sebitiela's), but only temporarily. Whilst they were there, the Pedi chief THULARE came to raid the Moletlane people, but hoodwinked them by pretending that he was on his way to the Zoutpansberg. He demanded a levy of men from them to accompany him. Then he told the Koni people to come over to him, because after all they were merely refugees, and when he had thus separated them from the Moletlane people, he fell upon the latter and massacred them.

19 Realising they could stay there no longer, the Koni now moved South again to the little spruit Bonwatau, on the farm Duizendannex 239, now in Geluk Location, just east of where the chief FRANK is now living. Here NTHSWENG died.



## 20 NTHSWENG's wives (in order of marriage) and issue:

## 1 Mphohu daughter of Mmamakoko, a member of the royal family

- a LEHLAXARE m
- b ikwane m
- c Mmapudi f married Mokolo, a local commoner
- d Mmakxope f married Mokxohlwe, a local commoner

## 2 Sekepe daughter of ? of Moletlane

- a Mphaphatane m

## 3 Moeng daughter of ? of the Tisane branch of the Koni

- a Mmaxofe f married Mohwapele of the kxoro of Matemotse, then he died and she ran away and married Ramphelane, chief of Manganeng b Mohlomeng f married Tseke, a commoner of Masemola
- c Mmamatsene f married the chief of the Masemola tribe

## 4 Sethele daughter of Seala's of the Tisane branch of the Koni

- a Sekabate m

## 5 Mmamokxapane daughter of Moxodi of the Masemola tribe

- a Moxotwane m
- b Phahu f married Ramasehle's, a family of commoners
- c Manaswe m

## 6 Mmatsopyane daughter of Modixe, a local commoner

- a Moriti m

## 7 ? from Sebitiela's

- a Phokwane m

## 8 ?

- a Lethsedi m

## 9 ?

- a Matekane @ Lefeku m
- b Mocketwane m

## 10 ?

- a Thabakxolo m

LEHLAXARE's wife and issue:

b KOTOLE @ MASERUMULE m  
c Lehwelere m

23 After the death of THULARE, his son SEKWATI came to them from Boswaneng whither he had first fled from the Zulus of Mzilikazi, and built himself a stronghold at Phiring. Then the Boers came and attacked KOTOLE and SEKWATI, but without much success, so that they withdrew. Not long after, the Mapono (Zulus? Swazis?) came and also attacked them, but were beaten off. It became clear to SEKWATI that Phiring was not secure enough, and he suggested to KOTOLE that they should together move elsewhere to a safer place. But though he realised the danger, KOTOLE refused to go with him and when SEKWATI crossed over the Leolo and fortified himself at Mosexo, he and his people moved away and built themselves a stronghold at Phatametsane, on the farm now known as Masleroems-oude-stad 556. There he died.

## 24 KOTOLE's wives (in order of marriage) and issue:

## 1 Mathung daughter of MATLEBYANE, chief of the Masemola tribe

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| a Xosetseng | f married MATUMULE, chief of the Marisana tribe |
| b SIKWANE   | m   |

## 2 Mmamphela daughter of ? of Xa Masemola. No issue

## 3 Kxohu daughter of ? of Xa Masemola, and younger sister of No. 2

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| a Mante     | f married Bokxobelo of the royal Pedi family at Mohlaletse |
| b Makxadile | f married Mpaballe a commoner of Xa Masemola               |
| c Mphebatho | f died unmarried   |

## 4 Mmakubu daughter of Phokwane, son 7a of NTHSWEIG.

He thus married a paternal ortho-cousin.

- |            |                             |
|------------|-----------------------------|
| a PROKWANE | m founder of Phokwane tribe |
| b Lesalabe | m                           |
| c Mphiti   | m                           |

## 5 Dippiisane daughter of Mmankopo, a member of the royal family

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| a Mmaphaxe | f married Lexwapane, head of the Masifane kxoro |
| b Morope   | m   |
| c Mosexo   | m   |

## 6 Mosala daughter of Kau, head of a kxoro at Xa Masemola

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| a Morutse | m                                       |
| b Thomu   | m                                       |
| c Nanyane | f married Mabuse, head of a royal kxoro |

## 7 Mmabale daughter of Ramorathsane, a local commoner

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| a Mmatsipane |  |
|--------------|--|

## 8 Mphohu daughter of Mothsabo, head of a royal kxoro

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| a Rakxapyane   | m |
| b Thsweumarema | m |
| c Makoko       | m |

9 Leraxo daughter of Lekxalake, head of a commoner kxora

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| a Motlakadibe | f married at Moletlane                                 |
| b Kaseikele   | f married at Manganeng                                 |
| c Mabudi      | f married Mmankana, of the royal family, i.e. a cousin |
| d Molelekeng  | f married Mpududu, of the royal family                 |
| e Sexeru      | m  |

10 ? daughter of Mokxohlwa, a local commoner

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| a Mei          | m  |
| b Phatudi      | m  |
| c Mmalepityana | f married Morwanthswabudu, of the royal family |

11 Hlakotse daughter of a local commoner

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| a Lotlwane | m |
| b Lola     | m |
| c Lenake   | m |

12 ? daughter of Masweswe, a local commoner

- |                    |                                     |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a Thopeng @ Sakong | m                                   |
| b Mmakxwale        | f married Mothibe, a local commoner |
| c Matsose          | m                                   |
| d Makababa         | f not married                       |

13 Lekopane daughter of ? of the Tisana Koni

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| a Mmalekxopo | f married Sopeng, a commoner of the Kopa tribe  |
| b Mmamasile  | m   |
| c Letlekae   | f married Mothupi, a member of the royal family |

14 Mapato daughter of a member of the Maibelo kxoro of the royal family. She was married as seantlo for Maxabaneng, a daughter of one Morutse, of the royal family, because the latter had no children.

- |                 |                                     |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| a Mathathanyane | m                                   |
| b Serisane      | f married Hlakudi, a local commoner |

15 Sejeng daughter of Malekopo, a local commoner

- a Motlanala f married Tibaneng, head of a local kxoro
- b Dibolelo f married Mabobotsane, head of a local kxoro
- c Maphomane m
- d Phakxane f married Modixe, a local commoner

16 Mmamooko daughter of Mmadiete, a petty headman of Mphana

- a Selepe m
- b Mphaaneng f married Maoto, a member of the royal family
- c Komeng m
- d Seisane f married Senyane of Mphana, of her mother's family
- e Senyane m

17 Matipe daughter of Hlolo, a local commoner

- a Moseitse f married Moxohlwane, a local commoner
- b Phaphele f married Modupi, a member of the royal family
- c Mapule f died unmarried
- d Lephayamotho f married Kollo, a member of the royal family

18 ? daughter of Ntimu, a local commoner

- a Makomane m

19 Mathumane daughter of Sekidiele, a tribesman

- a Mesi m
- b Monaki f married Mmamannye, a member the royal family

20 Mpheketse daughter of Thsolane, a local commoner

- a Sekepeng m
- b Mmamphisane f married SESOTHWANE, chief of the Tisane Koni
- c Lolwanyane f married Mamene, a member of the royal family

21 Mathojana daughter of Manthsole, a commoner of the Kopa tribe

- a Mmadibatane f married Mmui, a Pedi commoner
- b Fenyane m
- c Kota m

25 For a considerable time prior to KOTOLE's death, his son SIKWANE acted for him on account of his age, but finally the latter predeceased him.

## 26 SIKWANE's wives (in order of marriage) and issue:

## 1 Lekxolane daughter of SEKWATI and his wife Mmakwetle

- a Moxwape f married MORWAMOTHSE, father of the late SEKHUKHUNE
- b Makwetle f married RAMATHSEDI, chief of the Bantwane
- c MASERUMULE @ MASERUMO m
- d Motodi m (who died 22/2/42)

## 2 Mmatseke daughter of Ramphelane, chief of Manganeng

- a Xosetseng f married Phaswane, chief of Manganeng
- b Moriti m

## 3 Mathsixo daughter of Nyakai Maibelo (royal kxoro)

- a Mantimo f married Manamane, chief of Moxaswa
- b Maremele m
- c Kxwelele f married Maxathoko of the Moxaswa royal family

## 4 Mmaphale daughter of Nkwane, a member of the royal family

- a Nkwane m
- b Makhupe f married Mokhine, a local commoner

## 5 Selallo daughter of Rahlaxare, chief of Marulaneng.

These are a section of Koni now under Kxoloko.

- a Mathselane f married Motampane, of the royal family
- b Rahlaxare m

## 6 Ngwana-Mofepi daughter of Sekidiele Ramotse, a local commoner

- a Sekabati m
- b Mmalesolo f married Kotwane, of the royal family

7 Mmapato daughter of Ntimo, a local commoner

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| a Makono       | m  |
| b Mmamporoboro | f married Phaswe, a local commoner   |
| c Phise        | f married Tuufela, a local commoner  |
| d Mmakutupu    | f married Phaswe, the husband of her elder sister b) Mmamporoboro after the latter's death |
| e Mathibele    | f married Mokwape, a local commoner  |

8 Mmaphalong daughter of Ramothsabo, head of a kxoro of the royal family

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| a Mmakxotsane   | m, an old informant present                      |
| b Mmankopo      | m  |
| c Mmakxadile    | f married Marei, son of chief of the Tisana Koni |
| d Ngwana-Senana | f married Mabitse, head of a local kxoro         |

9 Kokolwane daughter of Mmadimpane, a local commoner

- |             |                                    |
|-------------|------------------------------------|
| a Mothokwa  | f married Sekoto, a local commoner |
| b Sesobele  | m                                  |
| c Monyewane | m                                  |
| d Nang      | m                                  |

10 Ofilweng, a ngwetsi, i.e. half-sister of wife no. 9

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| a Lebelwane  | m   |
| b Mmatawane  | f married Mmesi, a member of the royal family                   |
| c Mmamoxwasa | f married Moteyane, of the royal family                         |
| d Mmatseke   | f married at Xa Rantho beyond Phokwane.<br>These are also Koni. |

27 Since SIKWANE, the heir apparent, was already dead when the old KOTOLE died SIKWANE's widow Lekxolane, a daughter of SEKWATI and therefore a sister of SEKHUKHUNE, took up the reins of government because her son was still an uncircumcised lad. However, PHOKWANE, a half-brother of SIKWANE, had designs on the chieftainship and was causing trouble, when SEKHUKHUNE intervened and bade him betake himself off, so he broke off from the tribe with the kxoro of the Ba xa Masifane, and settled down not far distant as an independent chief.

28 Then the Boers, under President Burgers (Porokoro) came and attacked the Pedi. Lekxolane declared that she as a woman would not fight, and was prepared to maintain neutrality. So the commandos passed on and attacked SEKHUKHUNE, but without success. Burgers went home, leaving a small force to harass the enemy. PHOKWANE turned against SEKHUKHUNE and helped the Boers. The Boers demanded to see Lekxolane's son and heir-apparent MASERUMULE but the tribe was afraid they would kill him and would not consent, and this aroused the Boers' suspicions. PHOKWANE, being desirous of compromising Lekxolane, sent men in during the night to scatter maize all along the paths leading from Lekxolane's area Phatametsane up into the mountains where SEKHUKHUNE was, and then sent to tell the Boers that Lekxolane was preparing to flee to her brother. When this report was received at Fort Weeber, the Boers sent out scouts who noticed the maize on the paths and they forthwith believed the story. The matter was also reported to SEKHUKHUNE, who revenged the treachery against his sisier by sending the Swazis of Msuthu against PHOKWANE. The Swazis attacked PHOKWANE's place and killed many people, but PHOKWANE himself escaped. This attack convinced the Boers of the truth of the story against Lekxolane.

29 Soon after this there came the redcoats, i.e. British troops. Captain Clarke attacked Lekxolane at Phatametsane and broke up the tribe, most or the members being indentured to farmers, though afterwards these people secretly made off and in course of time returned to their homes, but finding Lekxolane and her family no longer there, they joined PHOKWANE. This accounts for the tremendous increase in size of PHOKWANE's section, which had hitherto been small.



30 Lekxolane and a portion of the tribe had fled to the Leolo mountains, where SEKHUKHUNE faced the British attack, which however at first was unsuccessful. At the time of the flight, MASERUMULE was still an uncircumcised boy, and he was just on the point of being sent to the circumcision lodge when these events occurred. The war caused the rites to be postponed. Finally, after SEKHUKHUNE's defeat, they let Lekxolane know that he had been taken, and that she must cease fighting. So she surrendered also.

31 During the period of hostilities she had been living at Mathsereng, on top of the Leolo, but now that peace was restored she wished to return to Phatametsane on Masleroems-oude-stad 556. The Boers, however, would not allow this, declaring that PHOKWANE would have MASERUMULE killed because he was a rival. So MASERUMULE's section went back to their old site at Bonwatau on Duizendannex 239, on the suggestion of an English official whom the natives know as George (Roy?) and there they circumcised MASERUMULE and made him chief. He ruled here until his death in 1936, though long before that he had been incapacitated by age and the present chief, FRANK MASERUMULE did all the work for him.

32 MASERUMULE's wives (in order of marriage) and issue:

1 Mathung daughter of MATUMULE @ OTIMILE, chief of Marisane

a Xosetseng	f married RAHLAXARE, chief of Marulaneng
b Malataboetso	f died unmarried
C Lehlaxare	m

2 Makwetle daughter of Kxaxodi, a rangwane (uncle) of SEKHUKHUNE

a Lekxolane	f married Lehwelere Masung, chief in Pretoria district
b Mmesi	m
c Dinkwanyane	m
d Molepane	f married as seantlo for her elder sister no. a
e Motswaledi	m

3 Lesaka @ Tekanang daughter of SEKHUKHUNE, halfbrother of her husband's mother. She was the tima-mello, i.e. tribal wife.

a Moxwape	f married MOHLAMME, present chief of the Bantwane
b FRANK SIKWANE	m present chief
c Lexadimane	m
d Mahlare	m
e Mahlaxaume	m
f Nkopodi	m

## 4 Ngwana-Mosidi daughter of Maxosi, head of a kxoro

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| a Tlaleng     | f married Mabobotsane, of the royal family  |
| b Morutse     | m   |
| c Matlakadibe | f married as seantlo for her elder sister No. a   |
| d Mexomile    | f married Ditabane son of Maupe, a member of the royal family, and present as informant |
| e Mmalehlotlo | f married Hendrik MASUNG on Toitskraal in Hamanskraal district as his tribal wife       |

## 5 Phadi daughter of MOLEKE, chief of the Tisana Koni

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| a Raxapyana  | m |
| b Mohlahledi | m |

## 6 Sekhokhobe daughter of Rakxapyana, son 8a of KOTOLE. She thus married her paternal ortho-cousin.

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| a Ntereke (Hendrik) | m |
| b Makxubye          | m |

## 7 Mmamahlako daughter of Morope, of the royal family

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| a Mmaxo-Leboxe | f married Rakxapyane present chief of Moxaswa |
|----------------|---|

8 Mmamoxodiri daughter of Monokeng, of the royal family.  
Both children died young.

## 9 Mahlaolwa daughter of Makxomatau, of Mohlaletse

- |            |                   |
|------------|-------------------|
| a Morope   | m                 |
| b Mmapitse | f still unmarried |
| c Maxaile  | f “               |
| d Tilana   | f “               |

## 10 Tsitlo daughter of Maribeng, of the royal family

- |          |                                      |
|----------|--------------------------------------|
| a Kxone  | f married Xwasi, of the royal family |
| b Mammpu | f married Tau, of the royal family   |

## 11 Mamphye daughter of Majane, of the royal family

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| a Sakong | m |
| b Majane | m |

## 12 Mmatsebe daughter of Mmaditau of the Maroteng, the Pedi royal clan

- |             |                   |
|-------------|-------------------|
| a Phaswe    | m                 |
| b Setopyana | f still unmarried |

33 After MASERUMULE's death in 1936, his son FRANK became chief (as far as the natives were concerned), though he had actually been acting as such for a long time previously. For various reasons not very plain today, the position of this tribe and its chief was not recognised for what it was, except possibly by the officials on the spot. So it came about that for many years these Koni lived their life apart as a separate tribe, not concerned with either SEKHUKHUNE or KXOLOKO and not interfered with by them, and having all their cases settled by their own chief though he had been granted no jurisdiction whatever. By the natives of these parts the chief of MASERUMULE's tribe has always been considered very much of a chief, not least also because of Lekxolan's having been a sister of SEKHUKHUNE, and few if any, were aware that he was not (in official parlance) "recognised" by the government. It is to be feared that few natives understand what recognition means and I know for a fact that those who heard that FRANK was going to be recognised were astounded that it should be necessary to do so at so late a date, when the man and his father before him had been living without a break in a corner or Geluks Location for well over half a century. However that may be, in 1941 the Native Commissioner, Sekukuniland, Mr. F.W. Joubert, impressed by the merits of FRANK as a chief, and the anomaly of his not being granted judicial powers, made representations and after an investigation the government accorded FRANK MASERUMULE recognition as from August 1943.

34 **Circumcision regiments:** Those that are remembered are named in the order given below. The places where they were held and their leaders, i.e. the lad of highest rank amongst the initiates, are also apparently remembered throughout as matters of importance.

<u>Moroto</u>	<u>where held</u>	<u>year</u>	<u>leader</u>
Mannkwe	Nyaane		RAKXWADI
Mangana	Nyaane		Kole 1)
Maxasa	Nyaane		Ledimo 2)
Madisa	Nyaane		Mosebi 2)
Mangana	Nyaane		LESWENE 2)
Makwa	Nyaane		Mpipi 2)
Madingwana	Nyaane		Motswaledi 2)
Mathlwana	Nyaane		NTHSWENG 3)
Matuku	Nyaane		Morutse
Mangana	Nyaane		Mahlare
Madingwana	Lebopong		Pitsakxola
Madisa	Lebopong		LEHLAXARE
Maxasa	Lebopong		Moxotwane
Metsedi	Lebopong		Sikwane
Maswene	Bonwatau		Thsanthe
Mabyana	Bonwatau		Sekabate
Mathamaxa 4)	Bonwatau 4)		Mphaphatane
Mathamaxa 4)	Xa Kopa 4)		Kxomomarexa
Mangana	Lebopong		KOTOLE
Makwa	Lebopong		Lehwelere
Madingwana	Lebopong		? 5)
Madise	Lebopong		SIKWANE
Maxasa	Phatametsane		Lesalabe
Matuku	Phatametsane		Morope
Mathlwana	Phetametsane		Lehwelere
Mankwe 6)	Phatametsane 6)		Marutle
Mangana	Bonwatau		MASERUMULE
Maxasa	Bonwatau		Motodi 7)
Maswene	Bonwatau		Maremele
Mathamaxa	Bonwatau	1903	Ramotse
Matsedi	Bonwatau	1908	SIKWANE FRANK
Matlakana	Bonwatau	1914	Lexadimane
Mathlwana	Bonwatau	1919	Mahlari
Madisa	Bonwatau	1924	Mahlaxaume
Makxola	Bonwatau	1928	Nkopodi
Makwa	Bonwatau	1938	Nkwane

---

1) younger brother of RAKXWADI. 2) son of RAKXWADI. 3) son of LESWENE. 4) this moroto was held in two different places in the same year. 5) this man, whose name is not remembered was killed in war, and a certain Kotsefxolo lived to be considered leader of this age-group. 6) by this time the tribe of PHOKWANE had broken off. 7) son of SIKWANE, died 22/2/42.

35 Sources: The above information was obtained from the chief and some old men selected by him as being the most reliable informants, at his village at Bonwatau in Geluks Location in February 1942. I have not attempted to correlate the above purely native version of what happened with accounts and references in literature such as Hunt's "Account of the Bapedi" in Bantu Studies V,5, 1931; Aylward's "The Transvaal of today" London 1878, and republican official documents.

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