

Written By: Pekwa Nicholas Mohlala

Edited By: Nkahloleng Eric Mohlala

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History of Ba Ga Mohlala, Mapulana, Batau ba Matlebjame, and Ba Ga Mashegwana

Banareng

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generated a lot of interest. As a result of this post ke hweditše molaetša le kgopelo ya gore this issue ya ga Matibidi e nyaka go hlahlamollwa.

As such, I have made a decision ya gore ke e hlahlamolle go fihla mo ke e tsebago. While at it, I have decided gore ke hlahlamolle le taba ya Ba Ga Mohlala Mapulaneng le go hlahlamolla taba ya Mapulana ka bophara including le Ba Ga Mashegwana/Mashegoana bao bontšhi lehono ba hwetšagalago Schoonoord gammogo le babina tau Ba Matlebjane.

To start with, Ba Ga Mohlala a se Mapulana, ba noba ba falaletje Mapulaneng, mme ba dula le Mapulana. We are only related to Mapulana through intermarriage. The dispersal point of Ba Ga Mohlala who are in Archonhoek, Matibidi, Leboeng, Driekop, and Mandagshoek is Swale in Mandagshoek. In other words, Ba Ga Mohlala bao ba lego Mapulaneng ba tlogile ba le Swale ba ya ba dula le Mapulana kua Mapulaneng (Matibidi, Leboeng, and Archonhoek). The first place e we e itšego ya dula Ba Ga Mohlala kua thoko ya Mapulaneng ke Sellale. Ba re ke Sellale sa Mohlala Morudi, Sellale se lla phuti/Phuthi. Ge Ba eya Swale ba tšwa ba le Phalaborwa, before Phalaborwa ba tšwa ba le Mogodumo/Chueniespoort. Chueniespoort ke mowe Ba Ga Mohlala ka moka ba thommego go shwalalana ba le ntshe ge ba bangwe ba tla felesetša ba tšea tsela ya Phalaborwa, go tloga Phalaborwa ba ya Swale.

According to oral history, the place today called Matibidi was named after a man called Matibidi. Before that the area known today as Matibidi was known as, and was part of Elastfontein.

No body knew or know much about Matibidi and where came from. It is said that he settled at Matibidi long time ago and because o be a ithatela madila, o ile a tuma tikolong ewe mo e lego gore if people wanted to give reference to the area called Matibidi today they will say Ga Matibidi and that is how the place became to be known as Matibidi.

History of Mapulana

Mapulaneng proper stretches from Crodile River in the south to Olifants River in the north, Lebombo Mountains in the east and also includes the whole town of Hazyview, Lepunama (Nelspruit) Sabie, Graskop, Hoedspruit, Barberton, Lydenburg and Dullstroom in the west. The tribe derive their name from their founding leader, Lepulana who later changed his name to Chiloane. Mapulana are descendants of Morolong and their origin can be traced back to Kgalagadi before they settled in Thaba Chueu, in what is today eastern Lesotho and later at Shakwaneng (Carolina) around the yeesr 1500.

Another group of Mapulana who are Mapulana of Matshwe I got their name from their leader Pulane and they are offshoots of Amazizi and they are of Nguni origin. These group of Mapulana joined the other Mapulana of Mohlomi at Thaba Chueu after the death of their leader Tsosane who are Bakwena by origin.

Mapulana settled at the Moholoholo area around 1800 and together with Ba Ga Mohlala successfully defended the area from Swazi armies who they annihilated at the battle of Moholoholo in December 1864.

The origin of the Mapulana and the history of how long they have been living in the greater Mapulaneng area is a topic of hot debate. Research shows that there are three groups of Mapulana, Mapulana of Mohlomi who are Bakwena and the first Mapulana to settle at Thaba Chueu, Mapulana of Matshwe I, of Pulane who are Amazizi and used to live along the Tugela River and later joined the other Mapulana at Thaba Chueu. The Mapulana of Chiloane who are Barolong by origin and left the main Barolong tribe during the reign of Tau. The Mapulana King Malele had two prominent sons, the eldest was Morale aka Chiloane jnr and Mashego. The two were better warriors and well respected by their followers. A bitter quarrel erupted between the two brothers over a young woman who happen to their cousin and the conflict was concealed by the royal family and told the people that the brothers fought over a grain barn(seshego sa mabele) After realising that the people were supporting the elder brother, Mashego left with his followers and settled along some Bakwena in what is present day Swaziland and detached himself from the main Mapulana tribe. Chiloane and Mashego were both recognized as Mapulana kings with Chiloane being the senior. The Mapulana of Chiloane used to live in Phageng (Empakeni) south east of Nelspruit and along the Lepunama River (Nelspruit) while Mapulana of Mashego lived at Motsheteng(Emjindini, Barberton where Masoyi II grandson of Mashego was buried) Mapulana historian

Moses Mashego tells us "They had two kings, Mashego and Chilwane, the rest were subjects and chiefs."

In December 1864, the Mapulana defeated the Swazi's at the battle of Moholoholo under the leadership of three chiefs, Maripe Mashile, Chiloane and Mohlala (who is not Mopulana, but Monareng) with Sekakole Maatjie who was a brave warrior and a magician.

The Baedi under King Sekhukhune refused to help and the Mapulana and Ba G Mohlala defended their stronghold of Moholoholo mountains against a Swazi invasion sent by King Mswati II. The Swazi's were annihilated and the first to meet their death at the top of the mountain was the Swazi king's younger brother Zimase. Boulders were rolled down to ward off the enemy, and numerous attacks on their stronghold were repelled. Skeletons of the Swazi casualties littered the mountain for a long time afterwards. The river below the Mountain was named Motlasedi (Klaserie)

The bravery and cleverness of Sekakole (who was already an old man) at the Battle of Moholoholo. It is said that he wielded guns that he had traded for, and performed many magic spells to best the Swazi soldiers with one notable tale telling of how he turned himself into an anthill to confuse his enemy and escape.

The primary Clanships of Mamulana are Ba GaMashego, Ba Ga Malele, Ba Ga Mogane, Ba Ga Chilwane, Ba Ga Nonyane. Both Mashego and Malele are chiefs in the Bushbuckridge area, Chilwane is the chief in the Acornhoek and Pilgrem's Rest area and Mogane Nonyane, and Mohlala (who is not Mopulana, but Monareng) in the Graskop and Sabie area including Matibidi.

Ba Ga Mashegwana

Ba Ga Mashegwana ge ba itheta bare:

Rena re Mapulana, rebatho ba bo Mashigo le Chiloane. Re mashiladitshilo, ga ele mabele ga re je.

Rena re tšwa Tswako.

Mo go bontšha gabotse gore ba Ba Ga Mashegwana ke Mapulana.

Ke Batau a phaga a Malala a moenyane. Batho ba ba bowago Phageng, ba ba bowago Shakwaneng. Shakwana la kgomo le motho go phalang?

Go phala motho gobane kgomo re lla re e ja (taken from Sereto sa Mapulana).

Mapulana (in general)

Van Wannelo tells us that the Bapai and Maulane occupied present Swaziland, until the times of Shaka, when the Ndwandwe amaNguni found the new amaNguni Swazi Kingdom. Be He writes:

... (ba)Pulan(e) are under some dozen minor chieftains; the (ba)Kutswe under one, and much in with the Tsonga; the (ba)Pai are dispersed and being absorbed into the Swazi of these parts. Linguistically, (ba)Pulan(e) and (ba)Kutswe belong closer together, but traditions show they are not related.

The (ba)Pai, before being subjugated by the Swazi, were living in the Lowveld north of Swaziland. The (ba)Kutswe are (ba)Kwena from the interior plateau in the West. The (ba)Pulana have the tradition that they were the original inhabitants of Northern Swaziland until forced out by the rising Swazi power. In their mountains they have resisted Swazi and Tsonga influences. Of (ba)Pai culture and their distinctive language (kiPai) very little is left?

Of the eastern baSotho peoples, the baKutswe interests us the most, being the only one of the three peoples who inhabited the interior plateau to the east of the amaNdzundza. The baPulane inhabited the area now known as Pilgrimsrest and Bushbuckridge.

The baPai were originally from the uThukela River district, in modern KwaZulu-Natal. By the first half of the 19th century, their territory stretched from emPakeni in the north to the umLumati river in the south, and they were under the leadership of Lesisi, the son of Hereke with the Tonga as their near neighbors. From here they went to live at the confluence of the umLambongwane (Cape) and the liihaka (South Cape) Rivers. The Swazi people in due course subjugated them. The baPai fled from the Swazi and became the amaNdzundza's near neighbors when they were allowed by Sekwati, the baPedi royal, to settle in Sekukuneland on the western bank of the Steelpoort river, at the foot of the Leolu mountains. The baPai returned to their country along the Sabie River one year before the eclipse of the amaNdzundza Empire in 1882. The oldest known location of the baPulane was Motshiteng, the exact position of which is not known. From there they migrated via the Krokodilspoort, district Nelspruit to settle at Sakwaneng, a hill north east of Pretoriuskop. It is believed that they did not practice agriculture here, since the food supplies naturally found on the land were plentiful. It was here that the Swazi conquered them. The baKutswe are referred to as the baKwetra ba-meeetsi a magolo ('the baKwena of the great waters'), denoting their place of origin, at the great water of Sedibeng, in the West. They migrated east to the northern parts of modern Swaziland, in the district of Pigg's Peak. After pressure from the Swazi, they moved north, to the north-east of present Nelspruit, near the river called Kutswe, from where they got their name. They were a very influential people along the valley of the Sabie River.

Ba Ga Mohlala in Mapulaneng

It is said that Ba Ga Mohlala group that settled at Pilgrims Rest were a small tribe who originally came from Lekuduma further North and settled in the Pilgrims Rest bellow the Berg, till they were defeated and killed by Mapulana, the remnant fled for protection to the Bapedi in Sekhukhuneland. Mapulana of Pilgrims Rest area, in turn, thought they fell under Bapedi long ago, have gradually separated again and only slightly acknowledge Bapedi who still claim them as their subjects .

From Mogodumo one group of Ba Ga Mohlala ended settling in Acornhoek and another group in Schoonoord. Before they went to Mogodumo they were staying at Botlokwa/Molemole (The present day Ga Ramokgopa before it was called Ga Ramokgopa to be exact)

The group that ended at Acornhoek was led by Leswifi, mme bona ba fihletše Motaganeng. There at Motsganeng, a conflict developed moo ka morago ba ilego ba tšwa diripa. They divided and formed the following surnames Lusifi (not to be confused because there are two groups of Ba Ga Lesufi and the other group with predominantly reside in Sekhukhuneland is not related to Mohlala) Phokane, Mabilo, Monareng, Letswalo, Mahlo/Sekororo and Mutlane (whose great grandfather is brother to Mohlala Morudi), and Shorome.

From there some ended up in Mohlaletsi, Leboeng, Matibidi, Leolo, Tzaneen, Penge, and Tubate (Driekop).

Ba Madibaneng separated from other ba Ga Mohlala at Motshane valley in Penge e le ge ba tloga ba le Matibidi. From Penge others went by the way of Malokela until Motloulela, Ba Ga Mohlala in Madibaneng went to Tubatse (Driekop) and from there they went to their present location in Madibaneng.

It is said that Lesufi is the one who subjugated Marangrang Mokoena (the famous warrior and later king of Bakoni) who is originally Mopulana mme a mofa mosadi, mme mosadi ewe a belega Mahloko, Matenche/Matentšhe, and Mphela.

When Sekwati took refuge in Zimbabwe/Bokgalaka after or during the wars of Mzilikazi, Marangrang was the one who ruled the whole of Bopedi. He was defeated by Ba Ga Mphahlele and Sekwati at Ga Mphahlele when Sekwati settled at Pshiring/Phiring after came back from Zimbabwe/Bokgalaka. It is

that defeat of Marangrang that helped Sekwati and Marota to consolidate power and reclaim the land of Bopedi from Bakoni.

Batau Ba Matlebjane

After they had separated from the Swazi of Ngwane around the year 1600, Batau were led by Ngwato as their chief. They had already mixed with other groups such as the Sotho of chief Chiloane and it was the period when they changed their totem name to vulture (nong). Ngwato was succeeded by his son Matlebjane and during his reign, Matlebjane migrated with the tribe to Eastern Mpumalanga next to Lydenburg. When they arrived there, they found Batswako tribe that was an offshoot of the Mapulana whose totem was lion (tau) (Ramaila, c 1938: 11).

After staying in the eastern part of Mpumalanga for some years and living next to Batswako tribe, they also regarded themselves as Batswako. It is said that the tribe decided to change their totem again to lion (tau) after a group of Batau men managed to kill a lion that they thought was a Phaga (wild cat). From that day, they changed their totem to lion (tau), which the tribe still respects (revere) today. Batau and Batswako were living adjacent to one another when war broke out between the two tribes. In the end, Batswako were defeated and most of their herds were taken away from them and a few of the captives remained with Batau. A conflict later arose from within Batau, the problem started when one kgomo of the royal centre, namely Bakgaditsi, refused to accept the captives amongst them. The Bakgaditsi regarded the captives as people that would cause death amongst Batau. During the war, a few of Bakgaditsi were killed and most of them fled the area and continued to regard a vulture as their totem (Ramaila, c 1938:12).

Through dialectic influences, the language of the tribe was also affected as they continued mixing with the other groups, in particular, the Sotho (Mashego and Chiloane tribes), but their leadership was never affected. Batau continued their migration from Lydenburg under chief Matlebjane and settled along the Crocodile River (Mokwena River). The Crocodile River originates in the mountains around Belfast and it flows towards the Komati River. The tribe stayed there for many years and was ruled by two successive chiefs. Batau became a very strong tribe around the Crocodile River (Mokwena River) and gained the respect of the neighbouring tribes. Chief Mokwena was born around the Crocodile River, and later had a son, Matlebjane II. After the death of Mokwena, his son Matlebjane II took over the reigns, while the tribe was still settled along the Crocodile River. Matlebjane II led the tribe in the vicinity of the Crocodile River until he was murdered by his own children (Ramaila, c 1938: 14). It is after the murder of Matlebjane II that Batau tribe moved to Sekhukhuneland.

Mapulana Surnames

I have listed the surnames of Mapulana and the translations or the meaning of the surnames. Their praise poems, where I was able to get them, is included with the surnames. Some of the surnames have common roots for example; Mashego, Chiloane, Mashile and Matšia have a common ancestry. A marriage amongst these surnames is prohibited. This is a complicated thing to unravel suffice to say, whilst others used their praise poem, others used the name of their mother and the others used the name of their father as their surname.

Chiloane also spelt Chilwane/Tshilwane(grinding stone)

Dibakwane/Dibakoane (those who quarrel)

Ke Dibakwane wa matlhatse a khumo a tshwane a mmelegi

Ke motho wa tshema a lala kgotla

E bonwa ke motsoga pele

Motlaletsatsi a sa e boneng

Kua segodi seitsha maeba go sela

Kua phashaphasha a mmata

Kua mabele matsoga ntlong

Tshuri, tlhaka di se gona

Dilebo/Dilebe (the looks)

Kgwedi (moon)

Lebyane

Letswele (Breast)

Malele (spyro gyra)

Mashile (The grinders)

Re ba Mashile a Segodi sa Malekane

Mokibane wa monesa morale

Ngwana wa lepulana pula ga a tshabe

Ke matshaba tladi serutha ka mosela

Ntheng ya thaba magale a serorobele

Re Matshilwane a shibe

A shila naka la moshidi

Ka moso a shila tlhogo tsa batho

Rena ba maswika maramaga

Ekego mae a tshilwane

Mashego/Mashigo (they of the night/Mother of a night)

Re Batau ba Phaageng a Malala a moenyane

Wa Mahlogo a sekwebe sa mmu ya Ngwalane

Re ba Malala segwete se mela ntsweng

Seroba thoka tsa bashimanyana

Re na ba Mashego a Sefeefee sa Mpuu wa Ngwalane

A variation of the above is:

Mashego wa malala sekgwete

Sekgwete wa mela ntsoeng

Serobo thoka tsa badisha

Madishanyana le maditla

Maditla ke marwala tshwele marwala

Tshwela motshagata

Re boya Shakwaneng

Shakwaneng ga kgomo go phalang

Go phala motho ba sa djyin

Kgomo ma lela teng

Moloko keo tsibela kae?

O iye le beng ba kgale

Ba geshu ba ga Mashego.

Other groupings of Mashego who are an offshoot of Matšie say

"Ke Mashego 'a thogane ya Matšie,

Seoka moeba,

Segodi sa malekane,

Batau ba sa tshabego,

Baja tau ba shiya moboko".

Matšie/Matšia (They of the locust/mother of locusts)

Re ba Matšie a poosha diboko le Chiloane

Re batho ba Shakwaneng

Shako la motho le kgomo go phalang?

go phala motho go ba kgomo re lla re djya

Makhubedu (the red ones/mother of reds)

Malumane/Malomane (He who bites)

Mawele (those who fall)

Malope

Marule

Mogane (those who refuse)

*BagaMogane assimilated into Mapulana in the 1800's. Their forefather, Ngobeni, came with the White gold miners who came to Pilgrim's Rest. Ngobeni was a Shangaan. Amongst Mapulana he was called Kobeng as they could not pronounce his name. His nickname was Mogane. Because of his privileged position as a translator, and with the help of his masters he assumed chieftancy of a group of bagaMashigo which was under Kaishang. Their praise poem Mogane o edja togolo ya Mashego attest to this peculiar arrangement. The poem means that bagaMogane eat a type of mielie porridge which belonged to Mashego.

Ke Mogane a edja togolo a Mashego a Malale

Wa segwete semela ntsweng

Se se apegago ke badia le badithla

Mogakane (those who confuse)

Mogamedi

Morema/Moreme (a chopper/cutter)

Nonyane/Nonyana (bird)

Ke Nonyana wa Sheibe a Matlabishe

Wa lebalela la mmala wa phaga ya Moenyane

Nonyana e kgolo Serufse maila go shupiwa

Ke ba batho ba Sekurukuru se tsebeng

Sedibe (pool/lake)

Phosa/Maphosa

Segage

Mapaela

Mphokane/Phokane

Makutu

Mokwena

Kwena ya madiba a magolo

Shakwane (they of the reeds)

Segodi

Selekane

Selekane (Mokone who become assimilated into Mapulana)

Ke Selekane wa sefala tlhaga a Maubane

Ke Mokone wa go befa mmele, tlhaka la nko la ologa

Ke mokokona pola ka pedi, e nngwe a shieyela bana

Phoku

Sehlabelo

Tsatsi/Tjatji (sun)

Thibela (stoppers)

Theledi (slippery)

Thekospan>(Price)

Theko wa mankobole

Mokoni wa mokokona phola ka pedi

Yengwe ke ya beya peu

Le ya Shatleng mokokotlelo mohobo ele mokokotlelo

Re batho ba maila hlako ya moriri

Re batho ba Mankobole

This list of Mapulana surnames was taken from:

<http://mapulana.blogspot.co.za/2007/11/war-againts-swatis-and-mapulana.html?m=1>

NB = In this article or document, you will come across citings like (Ramaila, c 1938.12), etc.

Do not worry about that just ignore it. It was put there for fellow researchers and authors, they are the ones who will understand it. What it actually means, is that it is the name of a writer or author who wrote those words, year in which that particular book or document was published, followed by book or document page.

The full details if the books and documents by those authors will appear on the next edition of my book of The History of Ba Ga Mohlala in Schoonoord. But fellow researchers and authors can, with that limited information given her, be able to trace those books and documents.

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