

MMA Hlubi Oral History Project: summary index

Name of the location & date: Ha Belo (Butha - Buthe)

Name of the Interviewer: Missing

Name of the interviewee: Maqutu Phelo

Name of interlocutor 1: Missing (Ndebele Man from Ha Belo)

Name of interlocutor 2: Missing (Ndebele man from Ha Belo)

Name of Summary index prepared by: Mojalefa Koloko

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Question1: Interviewer: Dear Grandpa. I hope you are doing well. I have a very simple request for you. When asking you to introduce yourself, please start off by giving me your full names and then we will carry on like that. What is your name grandpa?

Summary1:My name is Phelo and my surname is Maqutu. My place of birth is Ha Belo in the district of Butha-Buthe.

Question 2: Interviewer What is your clan name? Summary 2: My clan is Lephoto (I am Lephoto: Then he goes on to recite his clan in Xhosa language.) Mna ndigunyauza Ufako, uhlamba ngobende, indabukoyam ke eyo, kanti ndiletjale ndithi ke ndikutjale mhlimpenya, Ndikutjale ka Poo, umhlanomvete. Question 3: Interviewer: Okay Grandpa, according to your knowledge, where do Ndebele people come from? Summary 3: According to my knowledge the Lesotho based Ndebele people also known as “Mahlapho” originate from Natal. In the beginning we were Zulu people who originated from “Emashishini” which is currently known as Pietermaritzburg in modern day South Africa. As I will tell you briefly, due to ongoing wars in those times our grandparents had to leave Emashishini after being attacked by the Boers and Amangwane of Matiwane and relocated to Kwampezekazi which is situated in the place currently known as Mpumalanga. It was from this place called Kwampezekazi that we then relocated to Lesotho.

Question 4: Interviewer: Please take me through your history so that I may understand, first of all the factors that led to you leaving kwampezekazi and secondly where you first settled when relocating to Lesotho. Summary 4: Okay thank you. In order for us to have a broad understanding of this history, perhaps it is appropriate for me to first start off by narrating the history of Chief Moshoeshoe for context. During Moshoeshoe’s reign, multitudes of tribes fled from war-torn areas due to lifaqane and were welcomed warmly by Chief Moshoeshoe. Majority of those people who sought refuge in Moshoeshoe’s territory were coming from Natal and running away from a chief called Shaka. Now we are being told that Chief Moshoeshoe was someone who disliked war, not that he was afraid of it but that he disliked it because he knew the disadvantages of war. Therefore, Shaka instructed his men to accompany Moshoeshoe all the way back to Lesotho and protected him against attacks.

There was one chief known as Matiwane who constantly attacked Moshoeshoe. However, upon seeing men who wore Shaka’s military gear accompanying Moshoeshoe, Matiwane got

afraid as he suspected that Shaka could be near. From there onwards he stopped attacking Moshoeshoe and it was relatively peaceful between them. Then Moshoeshoe approached Mlambo with an invitation to come and settle with him in his territory as a way of thanking him for his cooperation and for the critical role that he played in peace negotiations that resulted with stability in his area. However, Mlambo declined Moshoeshoe's invitation due to old age but instead nominated his son to go along with Moshoeshoe to go and live with him instead. I have to explain at this juncture that, it was Moshoeshoe's plan to give part of his territory to Mlambo from Phuthiatsana all the way to Khalong la Lithunya (Translated: Gun's Pass) because in those days, there was no money, all they had was territory which was then used as a form of payment. To prove that there was a good relationship between Mlambo and Moshoeshoe, Moshoeshoe ended up naming his son "Molapo" after Mlambo. However, Mlambo's son, known as Mohlakala who was meant to go settle in the territory from Phuthiatsana all the way to Khalong la Lithunya was delayed as he was busy handling some affairs in Kwampezekazi until Moshoeshoe gave that territory to his son Molapo thinking that he was no longer coming. Mohlakala eventually arrived this side in the years between 1870 and 1879 and ended up settling in a place known as Nkodo, somewhere near Fouriesburg because the territory was still large and wide in those days as you can understand.

However, it so happened that soon thereafter, the British made the Mokokare river the boundary between Lesotho and the modern day South Africa, therefore, Mohlakala ended up having to leave Nkodo and crossing over to the modern day Lesotho with newly established boundaries. Thus, he ended up settling in a place known as Masaleng. Upon his arrival in Masaleng, he met with a Chief known as Joel. However, let me emphasize that upon Mohlakala's arrival, he was welcomed by Molapo, Moshoeshoe's son who had been given the territory where Mohlakala's father Mlambo was supposed to be. Molapo had three sons who were, Josefa, Joel and Jonathan. Josefa and Jonathan shared the same Mother while Joel came from another wife. Josefa was the eldest while Jonathan was the Youngest. Joel was somewhere in the middle in terms of age. Unfortunately, Josefa had a mental problem and could not be installed as the chief which made Joel hopeful that he might be the one chosen to take over chieftancy as he was older than Jonathan. However, Molapo ended up choosing Jonathan as the chief which created animosity between the two of them.

Upon realizing this problem, Molapo ended up separating his two sons by placing Jonathan at Fobane in Leribe and placed Joel at Fothane. That mountain over there is Fothane. I think he placed him that side because Joel crossed over to Qalo and made friends with Mohlakala who had settled at Masaleng. Apparently Qalo was the meeting point for Makhopho of Mohlakala and the Makhoakhoa because, Makhoakhoa were already there at that point. Qalo was called as such because there was no settlement as it was the first meeting point between Makhopho and Makhoakhoa. Mohlakala and Joel ended up becoming friends and forming a military group known as "Likila" in Sesotho mainly made up of Bahlapo which was aimed at fighting Joele's brother Jonathan. In Ndebele language, a "knobkerrie" which is known as "Koto" in Sesotho is known as "Isagila". Therefore, Joele named this military group "Lisagila" which ended up being popularly known as "Likila" because his rationale was that these are knobkerries that are used to attack his brother Jonathan. However, some people claim that the name "Likila" comes from a tree which was known as "Sekila" of which no one can ever point where the tree was located just because they wanted to run away from the

fact that the name “Likila” was coined from a Ndebele as this would suggest that Likila are Ndebele people._

Question 5: Interviewer: Thank you Grandpa, I understand that so far you have narrated the history as you know it. But do you know about yourself in particular as to where you come from? Summary 5: Yes I do know. There is a place called “Embizana” in the Eastern Cape where all my relatives come from according to my knowledge, coming from all different villages. However, in particular, my people come from a place called “Ha Jane”. However, how we came here is that, my grandfather (The father of my father) was a very educated man who worked in many places as a teacher. He taught in several places such as Botswana in search for better jobs, until he ended up landing in Lesotho, first settling at Matsieng then got a teaching job at Emmanuel Mission. My grandfather ended up changing his career from teaching to working at the Post Office at Hlotse after his last born son who is my father got him a job at the Post.

As part of his duties, my father would regularly fetch posts on horse-back from Fouriesburg and one day on his way back from Fouriesburg, he came across Ndebele people in Butha-Buthe as he heard them speak Ndebele. It was shortly after this discovery that he ended up deciding long with my grandfather to settle permanently at Butha Buthe since the people there spoke their language. This is how we came to Lesotho. Question 6: Interviewer: Help me understand something. From what I know, this village is known as Ha Belo Matebeleng. Could you please narrate the history of how this place got to be called Ha Belo and not Ha Zulu. Summary 6: As you heard in the beginning, Moshoeshoe had initially given Ndebele people (Bahlapho) under Mlambo, this territory from Phuthiatsana all the way to Khalong la Lithunya.

However, since Joel was constantly attacking his brother Jonathan through his military group called Likila, Bahlapho ended up being chased out of Leribe and settling in Butha-Buthe and the boundary was established between Butha Buthe and Leribe through the river called Lipelana. The Bahlapho were ruled by Mohlakala who gave birth to a son called Belo and this place was named after him. To fast forward, Mohlakala ended up passing away and so did his son Belo who had given birth to a son known as Chona. Chona died at a very young age after he had recently been installed as the chief and his wife ‘Mamazibuko refused to remarry and claimed that she would raise her children on her own. Anyway, ‘Mamazibuko ended up ruling the area of Ha Belo for a long time from my childhood until I was a fully grown man. As a result, this place is also known as Ha-‘Mamazibuko.

Question 7: Interviewer:

The place we are currently at is the Royal Family right?

Summary 7: Yes this is indeed the royal place.

Question 8: Interviewer: Could you please inform me as to whether there are certain things that still exist that have been past from previous generations until now?

Summary 8: I would like to invite my fellow Ndebele men to assist me in answering this question especially if they agree with the information I have been sharing thus far. Ndebele Respondent: We have a pottery in the house which we are told was used to fetch alcohol in

this place. We also have Ts'iloana which was made up of stones used to grind and prepare the Meal. Summary 9: Oh here is another thing. There is also this rondavel which was used by Mamazibuko to host esteemed visitors. There is also that Kraal down there which was used to bury chiefs. If I am not mistaken, Chief Chona was also buried down there. Interlocutor: According to your knowledge which Ndebele clans exist here in Ha Belo and what are their customs and traditions? Summary 10: Let me say there are many clans but let me say those at the top of my mind: We have Bahlapho, Machenene, Mgemezulu, Maseko, Ndobela, Nzimande, Qindi, Ngonzo, Chabalala, Madonsela,mgumeni, Msimanga, Mlangeni, Sibeko, Phungwaco and so on and so forth, I would have to get the official list. Question 9: Interviewer: What about customs and traditions because times have changed now. Summary 11: Yes times have changed and we still have the culture of initiating girls which is called "Ukukoqa" which is also slowly disappearing. As for men, they seem to have been captured into the Sotho type of Initiation. One other thing which we were famous for was farming, although we no longer practice it as aggressively as we used to because we used to farm with cattle but lately they are being stolen in large numbers. Question 8: Interviewer 10: I would like to ask you a question which I know for sure was supposed to be asked women? Could you please tell me how Ndebele's children "Khoetsa" was made. (A special traditional necklace usually wrapped around a child's neck to protect them against evil spirits). Summary 12: Our children's Khoetsa was made up of tortoise's foot, it was cut, dried up, mixed with traditional medicine and would be tied around the child's neck for protection. Interlocutor: In other cases, the Tortoise's skin would be used for the same purpose._