

Thuledi Makua 1st: His Life, Wives and Children; The Narratives by the Descendants

Thuledi Makua*

University of South Africa, South Africa

*Corresponding Author: Thuledi Makua, University of South Africa, South Africa.

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Abstract

The purpose of this article was to explore Thuledi Makua 1st family not the Makua as a tribe. This article is an oral tradition study and it is based on the narratives by the descendants of Thuledi Makua 1st. Thuledi Makua 1st was the son of Tšhuba Makua. The literature review does not give any previous studies about them. Both biographical and oral narrative approaches were used to conduct the face-to-face interviews with the participants. Their history through oral tradition reported that the Makua in South Africa emigrated from Mozambique. Thuledi Makua 1st was a rainmaker who spent hours in the cave that over looked his homestead. He married seven wives and this article intended to identify these wives and their children.

Keywords: Bokoni; Mmangakane; Mmakodu; Ratšatši; Setageng; Thuledi; Tšhuba

Introduction

Thuledi Makua 1st lived and died in Maphiri in the now Mpumalange Province, South Africa. It is believed that his grandparents and great grandparents migrated from Mozambique and stayed in the Bokoni along the now Mpumalanga escarpment. Bokoni belonged to a tribe called Bakoni and it stretched from Ohrigstad in the north and Carolina in the south [1]. According to archaeological studies [2], Bokoni was first settled by Bakoni in around 16th century. Bakoni were under the leadership of Marangrang, as their chief. Though Marangrang was not Mokoni himself, Bakoni chose him to be their chief based on his strong stature and brevity. By 1830, Bokoni ended to exist due to frequent attacks and defeats under the Bapedi. The Makua arrived at Bokoni circa middle 17th century and stayed with Bakoni and through acculturation; they ended up identifying themselves as Bakoni and adopting Bakoni totem, a crocodile. Amongst the descendants of the Makua immigrants is Chief Tšhuba Makua. Chief Tšhuba Makua had four wives. Thuledi Makua 1st (c.1840) is one of the sons of Chief Tšhuba Makua's (1815 - 1881) second wife. He inherited the chieftaincy from his father [3]. His chieftaincy was at Maphiri, where his seven wives stayed in his stonewalled kraal.

Methodology

The narrative study was conducted in two provinces, Limpopo and Mpumalanga, where the Thuledi Makua 1st descendant were found in larger numbers as compared to the other provinces in the country. Not only his descendants were invited to participate in the study, but also those who have knowledge of him were purposively selected to participate. The face-to-face participation was voluntary and the participants had a right to terminate the participation without any conditions. The biographical narrative approach used enabled the participants to express their lived and narrated experiences about Thuledi Makua 1st. Through oral narratives, the

participants were able to tell their stories without any reference to literature. Most participants narrated that they did not see Thuledi Makua 1st but were told about him by their parents and grandparents. The researcher collected data from the area where Thuledi Makua 1st lived with his seven wives. The researcher observed the pieces of the grinding stones used, rocks and stones used to build the stonewalled kraal. The researcher observed the mountains (Figure 1 and 2) and the river (Figure 9) around the place where he lived. Though the area was grassy with overgrown shrubs, the researcher was able to observe some structures that suggested foundations.

Thuledi Makua 1st stonewalled kraal

He had a circular stonewalled kraal wherein his seven wives' homesteads comprising a circular central enclosure were built. The walls of the kraal were built with locally available stones (Figure 3). The outer layer of the walls was constructed with larger rocks to give the wall the strength. The small stones were used on the inner layer of the walls to fill in the small spaces and they were plastered with mud. On top of the wall, flat slabs were placed on top of one another to give the wall the beauty. Each wife had three or four huts wherein she stayed with her children. The huts were of mud wall and thatched roof (Figure 18 and 19). The mud walls and the floors were polished with cow dung and decorated according to the women's dexterity and desire.

His stonewalled kraal was situated at the foot of the West of Lewalehubedu (Figure 1) and South of Thabantsho (Figure 2) mountains along the North of Molototsi River. The Thabantsho Mountain had a lava cave that was facing directly over his stonewalled kraal (Figure 4). His divination bones and other herbs were not stored in one of his homesteads. He stored them in the lava cave where he spent most of the time relaxing if he was not doing other home activities and not in the fields with the community. At night,

he will sleep in one of his wives' houses on rotational bases. He goes there mostly when it was dark. He would wake up very early in the morning, go to his cave, and make fire. When his other wives wake up, they will find him already at the cave and may not have an idea in which house he slept last night. His seven wives would discuss and agree amongst themselves on who was to prepare food for him that day. His wives used the grinding stones (Figure 5 and 6) to prepare maize meal.

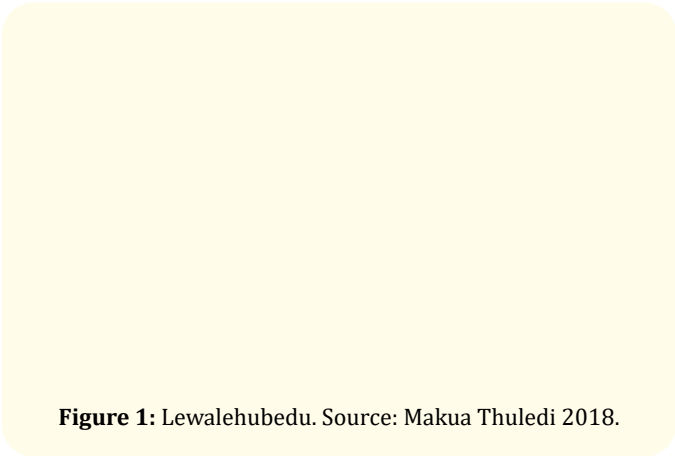


Figure 1: Lewalehubedu. Source: Makua Thuledi 2018.

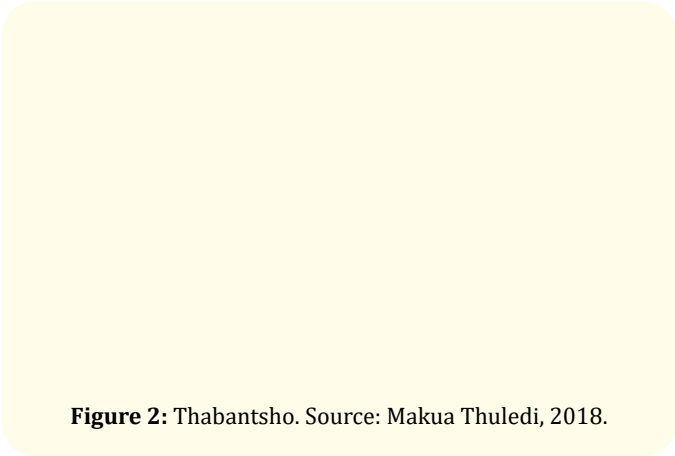


Figure 2: Thabantsho. Source: Makua Thuledi, 2018.

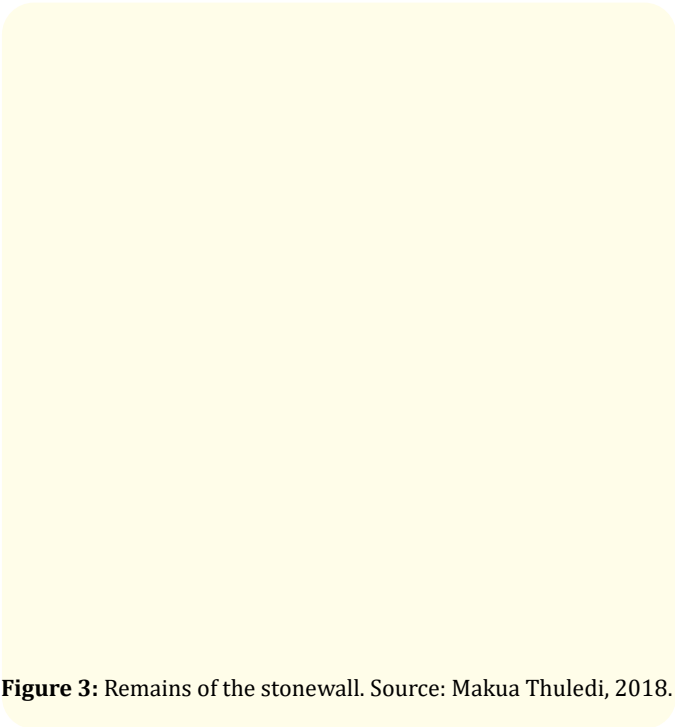


Figure 3: Remains of the stonewall. Source: Makua Thuledi, 2018.

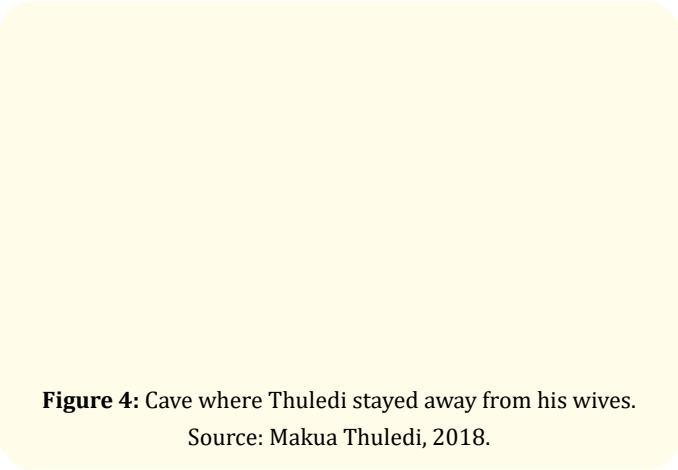


Figure 4: Cave where Thuledi stayed away from his wives.
Source: Makua Thuledi, 2018.

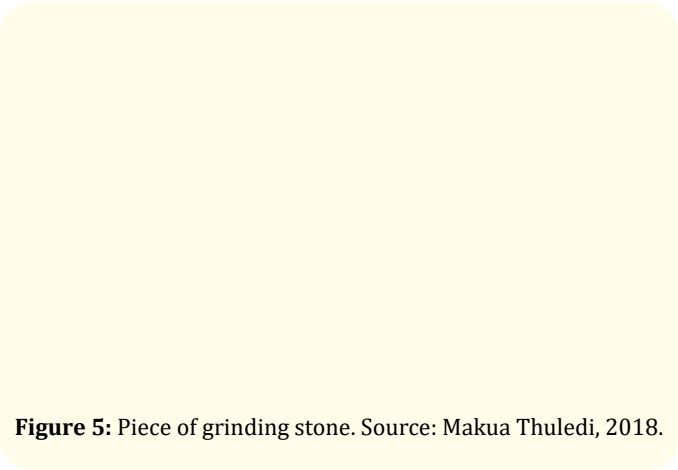


Figure 5: Piece of grinding stone. Source: Makua Thuledi, 2018.

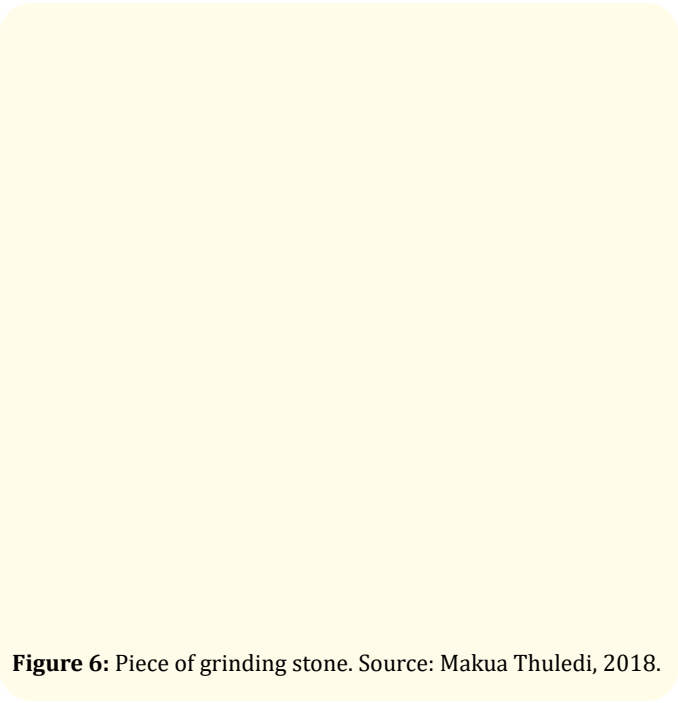


Figure 6: Piece of grinding stone. Source: Makua Thuledi, 2018.

Thuledi Makua 1st life

Thuledi Makua 1st was born c.1840, in Mashishing, in now Mpumalanga province, South Africa to Tšhuba Makua and Mman-gakane Makua [Makeke]. He died on the 10 February 1931 at Maphiri. He was one of the four children, three brothers and a sister. His two brothers were Mokamola and Namanyana and his sister was Moleko Pebetsi Kobo (nee Makua). He is described as a tall light in complexion man.

According to his descendants who lived during his lifetime, Thuledi did not like to sit inside his stonewalled kraal. As a chief, during the summer time he spent most of the time in the fields with the community who were working in the chief’s field. He would wake up early in the morning, climb on the nearby mountain (Figure 7 and 8) and blow an impala horn to remind the community that it is time to come to work. He was known in the area for his ability as a rainmaker. He had a special well or fountain (Figure 9) next to Molototsi river (Figure 10) where he fetched some water for rain preparation. He called this fountain, Lediba. After fetching water from his Lediba, together with his seventh wife, Kwete, would climb on the mountain (Figure 4) to start the preparation.

Thuledi Makua 1st died in 1931 and was buried in his second son’s (Kotsebotse Lepala) cattle kraal at Maphiri.

Figure 7: Thuledi used this mountain to announce a meeting.
Source: Makua Thuledi, 2018.

Figure 8: Mountain where he announced meetings and his stonewalled kraal. Source: Makua Thuledi, 2018.

Figure 9: Molototsi River, south of stonewalled kraal.
Source: Makua Thuledi, 2018.

Figure 10: Fountain where Thuledi fetched water for rainmaking.
Source: Makua Thuledi, 2018.

Thuledi Makua 1st marital life

Thuledi married seven times. He was married to (1st) Ratšatši Makua [Tšhoma], (2nd) Mmakodu Makua [Makeke], (3rd) Maphadišane Makua [Makeke], (4th) Mokgatla Makua [Magolego], (5th) Mampakgolo Makua, (6th) Nkonoto Makua, [Nkadimeng] and (7th) Setšhepi Makua [Makwana].

Thuledi Makua 1st married his first wife, Ratšatši Makua from the Tšhoma family. They had five children: Matšhipane Lenkwetše Mamosadi [Makua], c.1881, the first born and only daughter who got married to Tšhupjamotse Mamosadi; her brothers were Sedi-ane Makua, c.1886; Kotsebotse Lepala Makua 1st c.1890; Mporo- mane Sethakgane Makua, c.1896 and Mokone Makua, c.1902. As Thuledi inherited his chieftaincy from his father, he never ruled with his first wife, Ratšatši [4]. The reasons were that she was tra- ditionally not from the chief family to be the chieftess. For her to be the chieftess, traditionally, her marriage was supposed to be or- ganised by the community or she should have been the daughter of another chief, or she should have been of blood relation to the chief, Thuledi. Ratšatši was neither of the three. This was the rea- son why, after the advice by his elders, Thuledi had to go back into his mother’s family (Makeke) and married his cousin, Mmakodu [5]. This was not taken well by his first wife and children. In the form of protest, Ratšatši and four of her five children moved out of the family kraal where all the seven wives resided [6]. They moved to the place called Setageng. Only his second son, Kotsebotse Lep- ala Makua 1st remained behind with his father [7]. As the elder son amongst his half-brothers from the father’s second wife, his father entrusted most of the kraal activities to him. That enraged his half- brothers especially the eldest from the second wife who felt that his chances of succeeding his father as the chief might be jeopardised.

Many kings or chiefs married their sisters or cousins. More than 80% of the marriages in history are between second cousin and closer. About 35 - 50% of Africans chiefs in sub-Saharan Africa pre- fer cousin marriages [8]. This was to prevent the chieftess being from the lesser dynasty. Thuledi went back into his mother’s family [Makeke] and married his cousin as the second wife [9].

He married second Mmakodu Makua [Makeke]. They had eight children: Gabolekane Makua; Marai Makua; Matlou Makua; Mon-

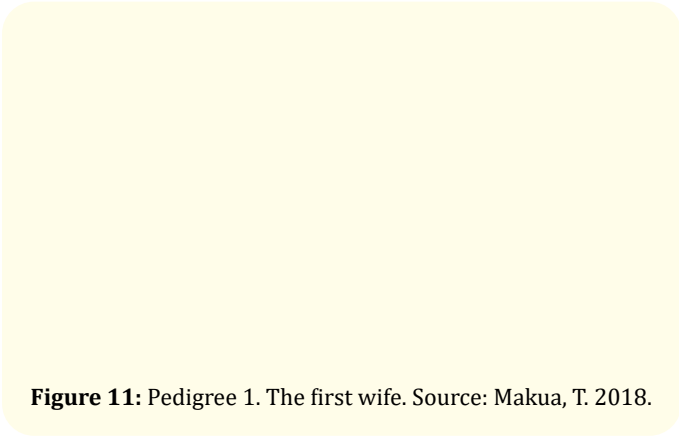


Figure 11: Pedigree 1. The first wife. Source: Makua, T. 2018.

nana Makua; Morona Makua; Ngamo Makua; Makua and Ngwanakhubedu Makua.

Thuledi 1st and his ruling wife and children are demonstrated in the following Pedigree 2 (Figure 12).

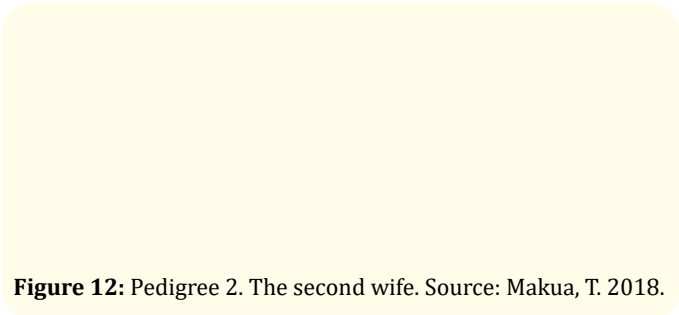


Figure 12: Pedigree 2. The second wife. Source: Makua, T. 2018.

Thuledi Makua 1st married the third, Maphadišane Makua [Makeke]. Marrying wife’s sister is seen as incestuous by other nationals [10]. His third wife was the younger sister to the second wife. This sounds to be a taboo in other nationals but in Makua nation, that was a common practice. They had six children: Mankeketla Makua; Ngwanamabowa Kobo [Makua]; Hubile Leshaba [Makua]; Masekane Mokgalabja Kwedi Makua; Ramphahlela Mokabi Mokgomogane [Makua] and Sebolelo Ledimo [Makua]. The following figure 13, illustrates Thuledi’s family tree with his third wife and the children. There were four daughters and two sons.

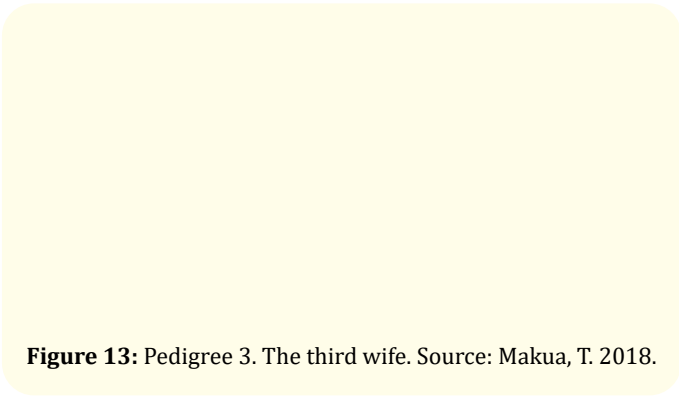


Figure 13: Pedigree 3. The third wife. Source: Makua, T. 2018.

Thuledi Makua 1st married fourth, Mokgatla Makua from the Magolego. They had two children: a daughter, Magebelane Selwane [Makua] and son, Mojeelela Makua. Figure 14 below demonstrates Thuledi and his fourth wife and children.

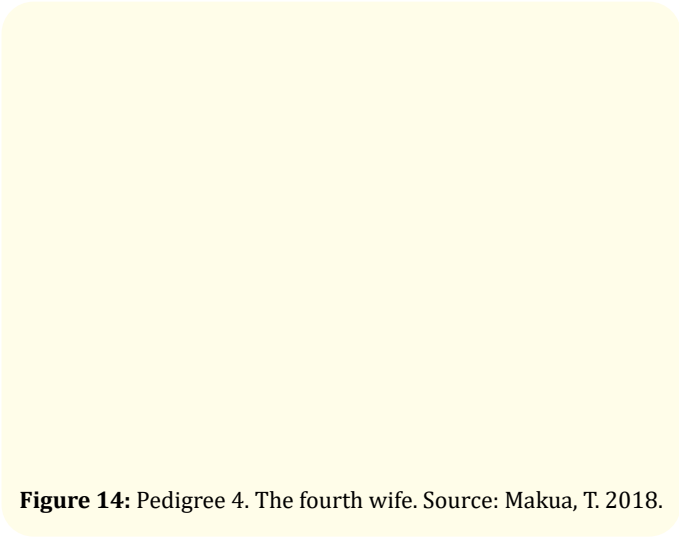


Figure 14: Pedigree 4. The fourth wife. Source: Makua, T. 2018.

Thuledi Makua 1st married the fifth, Mampakgolo Makua. They had five children: Ntšaga Makua; Matlabane Piet Makua; Monemone Makua; Ntshokwana Sethogola Makua and Nkuana Magakwe [Makua]. The sons were two and three daughters.

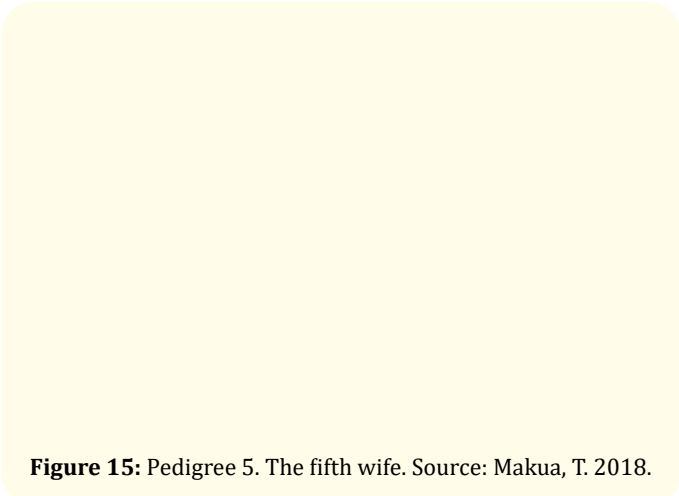


Figure 15: Pedigree 5. The fifth wife. Source: Makua, T. 2018.

Thuledi Makua 1st married sixth wife, Nkonoto Makua from Nkadimeng family and they had two daughters only: Mankgakgathane Ledimo (Makua) and Malethokgo Makua (Makua).

The following figure 16 demonstrates the sixth wife’ pedigree.

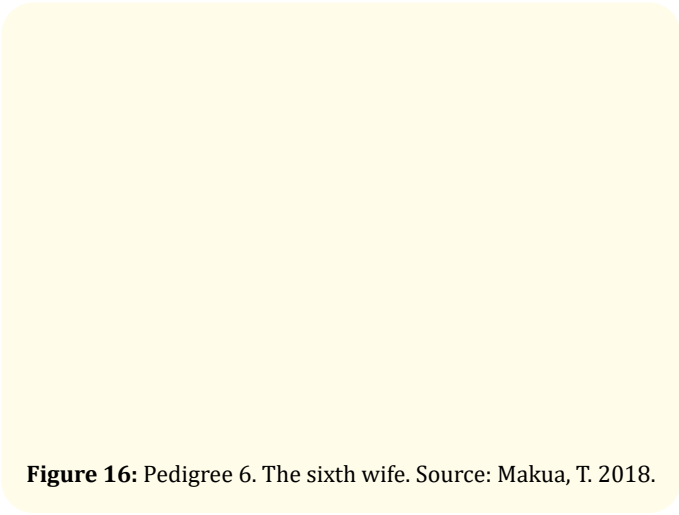


Figure 16: Pedigree 6. The sixth wife. Source: Makua, T. 2018.

The following figure 17: Pedigree 7 illustrates the last wife that Thuledi married, she was from the Makwana family. Thuledi Makua 1st married (7th) Kwete Setšhepi Makua [Makwana] and they had eight children: Morithi Makua; Mokomotwane Makua; Se-jabanana Makua; Mmagomalebati Swaedi (Makua); Mputi Makua; Mantebejane Swaedi (Makua); Mmakathoko Mokabane (Makua) and Nkuana Makua. This family had five sons and three daughters.

Figure 17: Pedigree 7. The seventh wife. Source: Makua, T. 2018.

Figure 18: The mud hut. Source: Makua, Thuledi, 2018

Figure 19: The mud hut. Source: Makua, Thuledi, 2018.

Thuledi Makua 1st children

Thuledi Makua 1st had 36 children. He had 211 grandchildren. He had 697 great grandchildren. He has 1469 great-great grandchildren. He has seven generations after him. From the first wife he had four sons and one daughter (Pedigree 1) and 82 grandchildren. The second wife who was the chieftess had four sons and four daughters (Pedigree 2) and fifteen grandchildren. This was the household where Thuledi Makua 1st successor was to be born. The first-born in this household was the one to be named his successor but he did not cooperate with his father. His name was Makua. According to the tradition, he should have married a close relative as his father did (his father married from his mother’s family). He refused to do so as the result his father passed the chieftaincy baton to his younger brother, Monnana (Pedigree 2). The fighting between the brothers over that decision unsettled the Makua chieftaincy up to today.

The children from the other wives (3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th) did not participate in the chieftaincy feud between the first and second wife children. To safe themselves from the family fights, they moved away from Maphiri to look for safe places far away from their brothers and sisters.

From the third wife he had two sons and four daughters (Pedigree 3) with thirty-nine grandchildren. He had one son and one daughter (Pedigree 4) from the fourth wife and ten grandchildren. His fifth wife had two daughters (Pedigree 5) and fifteen grandchildren. The sixth wife had three sons and two daughters (Pedigree 6) with twenty-eight grandchildren. His last and seventh wife gave birth to five sons and three daughters (Pedigree 7) with twenty-two grandchildren [11].

Thuledi Makua 1st chieftaincy and succession fight

The second wife’s first son was Makua and the second son was Monnana. Makua as the first son was supposed to succeed his father, as the result he was supposed to marry according the prescribed guidelines of Mošate (Chief’s kraal). As part of the succession planning, his father advised him to marry someone to rule with he refused. As a sort of a discipline, his father passed the baton to his younger brother, Monnana. A brothers’ feud was stirred and the two start to fight over their father’s decision. The fight ended when Makua died mysteriously, with the suspicion that he was bewitched by his younger brother, Monnana. Makua’s son was Magolopo. Though Magolopo was aware that his father died fighting over the chieftaincy, he decided to take over the fight. His uncle, Monnana, decided not to fight against him but he silently, without Magolopo being aware, went to Mohlaletse where the office of the chieftaincy was bestowed on him by the Bapedi paramount chief [12]. Mohlaletse is the place where the paramount chief of the Bapedi stayed and it was regarded as the place where the smaller chiefs in the surrounding areas were given recognition and given the powers of chieftaincy. He was given all the chieftaincy accessories such as silver and bronze sceptre, the tiger skin worn by the chiefs during official ceremonies and the documents confirming his position as

the Makua chief. Magolopo continued to fight, declared himself the chief and occupied the Mošate at Maphiri. Monnana decided not to challenge him but remained in possession of all the chieftaincy accessories and after his death they were passed to his son Malenakana and his grant-son, Malefetšane currently. Malenaka, like his father, decided not to challenge Magolopo about the chieftaincy until his death too. Magolopo continued to claim ruling the Makua until his death. He was succeeded by his son, Lekwapa.

Conclusion

Each pedigree shows Thuledi Makua 1st father and mother. A pedigree has been constructed for each wife linked to her children. Thuledi Makua 1st and his seven wives had 36 children; it is therefore difficult to develop a pedigree for each of them. His grand and great grandchildren have not been discussed in this article. Like their father, most of Thuledi’s sons had two or more wives. The important information that this article intended to bring was Thuledi’s marriages and chieftaincy. Some of his children especially from the first and the second wife played visible roles in the family than others from the other wives. The sons’ fighting over the chieftaincy played a significant role in scattering the Makua, weakened, and destroyed the Makua chieftaincy. Today, of the more than twenty five thousand Makua people in South Africa, only less than five per cent recognise Lekwapa as their Makua chief.

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