NORBEBLE PLACE NAMES AND SETTLEMENT IN PRETORIA

CJ van Vuuren

Nobiele pleksame en vestiging in Pretoria

In hierdie artikel word geneem na die pleknaam en vestiging van Pretoria in die vorige eeu. Die pleknaam is "Nobiele" gebaseer op die pleknaam "Nobiele" wat in die omgewing van Pretoria voorkom. Die pleknaam "Nobiele" kom van die Afrikaans woord "nieblik" wat "gat" of "nabie" beteken. Die naam "Nobiele" verwys na die plek van die "nieblik" wat in die omgewing van Pretoria voorkom. Die pleknaam "Nobiele" is in die 19de eeu bygeheen en is sedertdien nie langer in gebruik nie.

Introduction

The renaming of Pretoria to Tshwane has been the backdrop for much debate in recent times as it has faced the case where place names change elsewhere in South Africa.

The City of Tshwane Metro Municipality appointed an academic task team to do a study on the historical and cultural significance of place names in Pretoria.

"investigate the various views of the residents of Pretoria about changing its name."

The debate was politicised from the outset and has thus become an emotional issue. 6

Early authors who investigated personal and place names linked to the history of the Pretoria region and the name Tshwane, relied on oral records which were available at the time of their research. 7 Oral traditions of Ndebele and Tsawane origin seem to dominate these oral inventories. Some early oral tradition versions share similarities, while others are either divergent or conflicting, which renders a single composite conclusion impossible. Historiography in oral societies such as the Tswana and Ndebele relies on oral genres such as praise poetry, dynastic oral evidence (which is memorised) and even song. And as Vansina 8 reminds us, none of these inventories is intended to record history.

Oral tradition is adapted along the generations of its custodians. These adaptations are manifest in new inventions, innovations and additions to existing forms, and are often transformed in a fashion which could be described as "new wine in old bottles". 9 Innovation in oral tradition is an ongoing process with varying political and socio-economic intentions. The move to change the name from Pretoria to Tshwane is such on example.

In this article the author argues that to change the name Pretoria to Tshwane ignores and precludes recognition of the oral history of the Ndebele community which has a first-people interest in the saga. The author will use the following issues as basis for his argumentation: the founding traditions pertaining to the KwaMabhengu site in Pretoria and the notion of innovation; the fact more attention needs to be devoted to indigenous dating systems in oral tradition and oral history, with specific reference to the Manasa-Ndebele; and the settlement chronology of the Manasa in Pretoria. The bulk of the research material for this article emanates from the author's ongoing interest in Ndebele oral history which dates back to 1978. A number of these sites were archaeological and historical sites were visited in the process and the author was often accompanied by elderly Ndebele spokespeople. Some of them, such as the late G. Mathabo Mabhena, the late M. Mthombeni, Zwelabo Mabhena and the oral poet Joyina Mahlangu, have maintained a profound interest in the settlement history of their communities. The value of their knowledge has enabled both anthropologists and archaeologists 10 to locate, document and date the chronology of the pre-colonial settlement history and corroborate this evidence with earlier written evidence. 11

Musu and Tshwane of Pretoria

The name Tshwane for Pretoria does not exist in any of the Nguni languages; rather iPitoli (Zulu) and iPitori (Ndebele) are used. The name Tshwane for what constitutes the current Pretoria municipal region is not a recent invention, particularly for Tswana speakers within the black community. 12

In terms of South African Ndebele 13 oral tradition, the Ndebele first settled at Embhangeni ("At the reeds") 14 near Randfontein, Gauteng. This site remains unidentifed. The Ndebele entered the region of Pretoria during the early to mid-1600s. This arbitrary date is calculated using a dating system in Ndebele society which is explained later. 15 The first Ndebele settlement was at KwaMabhengu ("Place of the Black Hills"), an area close to the present Hippo Quarries crusher site on the southern slopes of the range found on Doornpoort (300R) and Doornpoort (295R) farms. The author first visited the archaeological site in 1979 with the late Jacob Tshabangu and other spokespersons. Mahlangu was the first bashi. 16

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5 M. S. Serum, "Reminiscences of Pretoria: Report of the city of Tshwane, (City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, Pretoria, 2004), p. vii. For purposes of this article an abbreviated title for this report is used in the text, namely "Reminiscence report.
9 This theme featured at a conference in 1991 which was hosted by the Natal University entitled "Oral tradition and innovation. New wine in old bottles?" Third international conference on Oral Tradition and Innovation, University of Natal, Durban, July 1991.
10 For example N. J. Van Wamelen, "Transvaal Ndebele texts," Ethnological Publications, 1 (Government Printer, Pretoria, 1930); H. C. M. Fourie, AmandNdebele van Fene Mahlangu en hun religieus-sociaal leven (La Riviere & Vroebue, Zwolle, 1921).
11 The research by J. J. Louwrens, "Tshwane: Place of the black cow, and similar Sanbo place names based on cattle colour terminology," South African Journal of Cultural History, 20, 1, June 2006, convincingly shows that only a thorough reinterpretation and synthesis of early written sources will clarify the origin of the place name Tshwane.
12 The South African Ndebele should not be confused with the Ndebele (Matebele) of Zimbabwe who were 19th-century migrants from KwaZulu-Natal.
13 The notion "emerging from the reeds" might have a metaphorical meaning rather than a reference to origin of place. See C. J. van Vuuren, "Die land en betekenis van die Suid-Ndebele," D Phil thesis, University of Pretoria, 1992, p. 110.
14 Speculation on and the application of dating sources such as the length of a generation, period of rule of a chief, and the relationship between dating were investigated by Van Wamelen, Fourie, and Van Vuuren. See J. C. van Vuuren, "Die land en betekenis van die Suid-Ndebele," D Phil thesis, University of Pretoria, 1992, p. 109, 179-184.
15 The Ndebele term dshana for "chief", "ruler", "kingship" (in Afrikaans) is applied in this text.
16 The plural form is amakwane. In the former KwaNdebele homelands the Ndzundza and Manasa...
there, followed by Musi or Msi. On the west of the site is the Ron Accord dam which
bears the name of a farm once owned by General JC Snuts. According to some
Ndebele, their territory stretched as far south in the Magaliesberg range as what is
known as Wonderboom today. Kwaknyamana was also known as Emdwala ("At the
Morula [trees]"), Emnyamendi ("Place of darkness") or KoMus ("Place of Musi").

![Figure 1: KwaMayamana. A view from Voortrekker road. (Photo: I Jacobs)](image)

The division of the Ndebele into various tribal entities is explained by means of
a trickster tale. The tale briefly relates that the ageing and blind Musi called upon his
elder son, Manala, to present the royal regalia to him, among others the umamrhali
(believed to be an oracle). Manala was said to be on a hunting trip. Ndznzuda’s
mother and the younger brother wrapped animal skins around his arms to resemble his
skinned elder brother. Upon touching Ndznzuda’s arms Musi believed him to be
Manala and consequently handed him the symbols of kingship. The returning Manala,
realising that he had been tricked, tried to murder Ndznzuda who fled with a
number of followers. It is speculated that Manala’s son, Ncagu, vowed to take revenge on
behalf of his father. This allegedly triggered the split amongst the sons of Musi who
each formed his own tribal community, such as the Hwaduba and the Kekana
(Northern Ndebele) and others.

N. J. Van Warmelo, "Tswana Ndebele texts", Ethnological Publications, 1 (Government
Printer, Pretoria, 1930), p. 60.

J. A. Mare, Die Ndznzuda (Pretoria, unpublished manuscript, 1991), pp. 73-74.

C. J. van Vuuren, "Historical land and contemporary ritual: the innovation of oral tradition in
understanding Ndznzuda-Ndebele ethnicity", in E.R. Sienieit, A.N. Bell & M. Lewis (eds)
Oral tradition and innovation: New wine in old bottles? (University of Natal Oral
Documentation Centre, Durban, 1991), p. 34.

Mhwdzuba, son of Musi, established an own tribal community, which became known as the
Bashwaduba "Hwaduba people" but in the case of the identity of a tribal community the prefix
"Ba" is normally omitted in favour of the generic term Hwaduba. Compare Ndebele in stead of
AmadNdebele, Motelane in stead of Bas ga Motelane.
the source of the Picaans River (Moretele) on the farm Mooiplaats (357JR). They later migrated to Magogophane "the very site of Pretoria itself, on the banks of the Tshwane or Ashipa River (Van Warmelo's spelling), which is called after MUSI's son and successor TSHWANE". Tshwane himself later migrated to Wonderboompoort (Sefateng za Phitsane) where he died. Tshwane's sons are said to have established various tribal communities such as the Tsutsa (Ndzundza), Manala, Po, Moletlane, Kekana and the Lette, etc. Van Warmelo comments as follows on this version: "It is obvious that this is a fanciful genealogical reconstruction of what actually happened, to account for the existence of the various Ndebele tribes, and is not to be relied upon except as an indication of the relationship of these tribes to each other". The background to this comment is that Van Warmelo had already recorded the Manala version in 1930 and that he was familiar with Fourie's 1921 work on the Ndzundza.

Musi's son, Kekana, allegedly established a section of the Northern Ndebele community. According to their oral tradition, Bulongo is said to have been the founder of the tribe (and not Musi) who occupied the area around Bon Accord at a place called Hlogondwana ("Head of the elephant"), compare Thohoyandou "Head of the elephant" in Venda oral tradition) and the hills to the east of Bon Accord station. According to the Ndzundza and Manala version, this site would be the same as Kwakhnyamana. Even the trickster tale - during which the aged and blind Bulongo (Musi for the Ndzundza) was tricked into presenting the royal regalia to the wrong successor - corresponds with the Ndzundza version. The founder of the Northern Ndebele was Yangalale or Mthombeni. Among the Manala-Ndebele and Ndzundza-Ndebele the names "Mthombeni" and "Kekana" are exchangeable as one and the same surname.

Incidentally, the name Tshwane (for Apies river) reappears in the Kekana oral tradition during the later reign of Lebelo who lived alongside the Kgatla of Motsha on the banks of the Thswane river on the Boschplaat farm (507), now known as Boschplaat (91 JR).

There are several references to the name Tshwane (or Thswane) in Tswana oral traditions, which will not be dealt with in this article. Readers are referred to the article by Louwrens.

Other than in the Hwaduba tribe, the name Tshwane is unknown to the Ndebele of South Africa. The name Tshwane for the Apies River or an ikasi by such a name which was recorded in other oral traditions, does not appear in the Ndzundza oral inventory. One can argue that to substitute the name Tshwane for Pretoria represents only the heritage of the pre-colonial Tswana-speaking community, which includes the small community of Hwaduba. The Ndebele of Pretoria can rightfully claim a first-people representation through their founder Musi. They can also lay claim to an extensive pre-colonial settlement, particularly around eastern Pretoria which will be explained later in this article. The oral history of the Manala-Ndebele is particularly illuminating, considering the involvement of an indigenous dating system on Manala archaeological sites. This dating mechanism does not exist in Tswana oral tradition.

Towards an oral tradition methodology: dating Ndebele settlements

Dating by age classes

The Ndzundza-Ndebele allocate fifteen regimental names (indanga, singular: indanga) in a fixed cycle to males who are initiated every four years. In the case of the Manala-Ndebele, the cycle contains thirteen names (see Table 1 hereunder). This latter cycle repeats itself after approximately fifty-two years. The strict cyclical notion of the Ndebele age grade system shows similarities to the cyclical age-grading in Eastern Africa, in contrast to linear types, generational and parallel age grade types in that area. On the use of age grade systems for dating purposes Hennings states: "(The) analysis of age grade systems may usually proceed on the same principles that are used for evaluating genealogies and kin lists, since age grades or sets represent a non-biological 'generation' of more or less conventional length."

See the discussion on Embittsheni later.

32. Alternative names for the Apies River will be discussed later.
however, positioned the settlement and its layout pattern within a period frame, which would otherwise have been problematic.

**Dating and the memory of ordinary people**

Most Ndebele men and women display a remarkable lateral memory of the regimental names (*indanga*) of patrilineal relatives. What is furthermore salient is that many women know the regimental names of collaterals and those of their own patrilineal male relatives. Ndebele women also closely associate themselves with their own male age contemporaries with whom they grew up, and into whose members they are likely to get married. They therefore know their own “regimental names”, meaning the age category of men with whom they associate.

During the period 1979 and 1980, while investigating the evolution in settlement structures, and while documenting populated homesteads and early 1900s homestead remains, the author discovered that Ndebele spokespersons frequently related and articulated duration of occupation of those sites in terms of the homestead head (*umnikazi*) and male descendants’ regimental names. A Ndebele man aged 70, for instance, normally remembers his own regimental name as well as that of his father, and often his father’s brothers, as well as the *indanga* name of his grandfather. With this knowledge, it becomes possible to date homesteads, settlement chronology and architecture and settlement migration of ordinary Ndebele people not only in the Pretoria region but elsewhere where Ndebele resided, such as in the Middelburg district.

This kind of extrapolation is presented only as a model and a methodology, and one is certainly aware of its limitations. This dating system serves as an ancillary mechanism to the more exact radiocarbon method that is used in archaeology. In this way, the Ndebele system is unique in Southern Africa, considering its cyclical consistency. The importance of such a dating system has notable implications for the scrutiny of the oral testimonies of spokespersons, as well as determining the probable point of origin (although mostly impossible) of the tradition, its authenticity or invention.

The Ndzundza-Ndebele informants who reconstructed events around the Mapoch War of 1883 to Fourie in 1921, and those Manala-Ndebele spokespersons who recollected events pertaining to the early Manala settlement at Wallmannsthal to

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41 H. C. M. Fourie, *Amahlabele van Fene Mahlangu en hun religieu-s-sociaal leven* (La Rivière & Voorhoeve, Zwalie, 1921.)

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Van Warmelo in 1930, would have been survivors of those periods. By 1978 the eldest spokespersons on Ndebele oral history whom the author interviewed were few and had been initiated as early as 1915 (the Duba regiment of the Ndzundza), meaning that they were born in c.1895. Clearly, they were the first generation after the 1883 war, and “heard” anecdotes and stories from their parents. Emerging and invented oral history sources could then be put to test by using this oral dating system. Vansina warns, however, that “there is no such thing as a testimony that is exclusively aimed at recording history.”

The investigation into the pre-colonial settlement sites of the Manala-Ndebele around Pretoria receives new impetus once some form of dating based on the oral tradition of that community can be added to these sites. The dating mechanism as it is explained here, also adds a chronology to the settlement history of this community.

The Pienaars river basin: Manala-Ndebele territory

**The Manala community: the forgotten Ndebele**

The pre-colonial history of the Manala-Ndebele is intrinsically tied into the historical mapping of Pretoria. The Manala did not enjoy the international popularity that the Ndzundza did by virtue of their mural art at the KwaMaiza settlement around the 1950s. This village was established in the present Sinoville neighbourhood in Pretoria, at the turn of the twentieth century before it was transplanted and rebuilt in 1952 at its present location site at Kilpigt (249JR). The Maiza family of this village rose to pictorial prominence as probably the first cultural village in South Africa. The image of the postcard Ndebele was born here, and it catapulted the Ndebele as an artist nation. "Ironically, it was Duggan-Cronin’s now iconic photograph series, some of which was taken at Wallmannsthal (Kohlekekeke) and which also appeared in Van Warmelo’s well-known 1930 publication on the Manala, which gave us the first images of Ndebele mural and bead art. The Manala settlement at the Berlin Mission

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Station was established in 1871. How the Manala arrived there is recorded in oral history only, with the exception of a few scant references to the pre-1871 settlement history in the missionary literature.

The pre-colonial Manala settlements

The author's first investigation into the pre-1871 archaeological sites took place on a number of occasions from 1985 and he was accompanied by experts on Manala oral history such as the late Mjezi H Mabhena, Zwelabo J Mabhena, and the late Johannes Solpara kaPofu Mabhena. In most cases, the farms were not surveyed in detail for archaeological remains. From the outset it emerged that no clear mapping of the territorial boundaries of successive settlements and incumbent amakosi who were associated with these settlement periods was possible. The locations of settlements could only be defined in terms of the present farm names in the colonial period. The Ndebele names for these farms or portions thereof are provided where they are known in oral tradition.

The first composite settlement site was known as Esothaneni (meaning unclear). For a general geographic orientation, Esothaneni is situated on both sides of the current Cullinan-Bapsfontein roads (sections R515 & R25), with one section of the composite site south of the N4 national road between the Donkerhoek and Cullinan off-ramps from the N4 national road. The lane towards the eastern part includes the Osspruit which feeds the Bronkhorstspruit Dam. Esothaneni is said to have included the following farms:48

Kleinon.derhout (519JR). The first capital (umjihade) of the Manala after they had left the Kwahnyamana settlement was believed to be on this farm. Its exact location is unknown.

Rheosterfontein (514JR) known as KoKole (“Place of the wagon”). The name refers to a wagon maker in the region whose identity is unknown to the Manala spokespeople. The origin of the Elands river (Mduthjana) can be found on this farm, in close proximity to the N4-Cullinan intersection. Mduthjana is the diminutive form of the name of a tree species (not identified here) called umdubi.

Rietvlei (513JR) was known as Kwakhyneni: the meaning of which could not be clarified.

Witfontein (521JR) was known as Kwakhaziko: “At the fire places”. The iziko (singular form of /a)maziko) can be any place on the interior or around the homestead where cooking activities take place. According to spokespeople, it appears that the name refers to a large village in the area but this cannot be established with any certainty.

Puntlyf (520JR) is known as Kwamnyame “Dark place” refers to a dark or shady place. A hilltop called Koljandubane is situated on this farm.

Boschkop (543JR) was known as Ematsetseni (“Place of fleas”). Spokespeople explained that a visitor to one of the villages was once plagued by fleas during his visit, hence the etymology of the name. There are two Boschkop farms in the region. This is the one close to Puntlyf.

Roodekopies (546JR), adjacent to Bosch kop above, was also part of Ematsetseni.

Kameel-zija-kraal (547JR) was known as Kwakhungungu (“Place of the drums”). It referred to the drums which were used during the girls' initiation rituals. Next to Kwakhungungu was an area called Kwakhysakeni, the meaning of which is unknown.

Onbekend (398JR) was known as Emahlarini (“Place of the Tiri [regiment]”), a regimental name, which allegedly points to a place where this regiment was once initiated.

Witpoort (551JR) was known as Kwahlhlabla (“Place of branches”). Umhlabla means a “branch of a tree” and spokes-people surmised that the name refers to a shrubbery area.

Knoppiesfontein (549JR) was known as Estiphandeni, meaning “Among the hills”. The area included place names such as Kwadlala or “Where the Ndala family resided”. Ndela is a general Ndebele surname.

Vlakfontein (548JR) was known as Kwadlala, or the “place of the Magida[lithabla] family”.

Boschkop (369JR) (the Bosch kop farm near Pretoria) was known as Kwahumzana (meaning unknown).

There is no direct territorial relationship between European farm names and Manala place names. The Manala names are said to be tribal wards or ildindi. Knowledge of the exactness of these wards has disappeared. Since the existence of land surveyor demarcations Manala farm workers have applied the European names to these pre-colonial demarcations. The present farm Onbekend, for example, roughly

48 In the family (clan) name “Magida lithabla” the second part, lithabla, denotes the izimanazelo name which is used during praise.
constitutes what was known as Ematlanini, hence the present overlapping in both European and Manala place names.

The following Manala amakosi are said to have resided at various stages at the collective farms known as Ezothusaneni. Manala established the first Manala village after the pursuit of Ndzundza. He was succeeded by Neele, after whom the place Kosele was named (location unknown). Sele was followed by Mngathana, Mrhawu and Ncigu. The duration of occupation by the amakosi, according to the regimental dating, could have been at least four decades, between approximately 1677 and 1717.  

These farms now belong to a majority of white owners - some of them for as long as three generations. The urban encroachment in the east of Pretoria will probably soon swallow these areas. Archaeological remains such as stone wailing were visibly disturbed at the time of the author's visits.

The second composite site was known as Embilanesi meaning "Place of the rock rabbits" (Afrikaans "dassies"). The name is self-explanatory considering its boundary along the Bronberg range which includes the Elliot ridge, Glastonbury ridge, Tigerpoortrand, Wintrant and Klipkop. Both the Swawelpoort and Pienaars Rivers originate from this range, and their confluence is on the Mooiplaas farm (367JR). Lynwood road extension runs parallel to this ridge and most of the farms within this demarcation can be accessed from this road. The Manala settlement sites are mostly located in the Pienaars and Swawelpoort drainage system on both sides of what Acocks refers to as Sour Grasveld and Bushveld veld types. Embilanesi is said to have stretched towards the Magaliesberg range, including the present Mamelodi and Pienaarspoort. Some spokespersons claimed that Embilanesi stretches beyond the Bronberg range as far south as the Six Mile Spruit.

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Figure 2: Circular stone wailing on what is believed to be a Manala archaeological site near the Swawelpoort River. (Photo: C J van Vuuren)

Oral sources could not determine the exact location of the royal residence(s).
As in the case of Ezothusaneni, it is not clear whether the present farm boundaries constitute various tribal wards or isitlni. Although some informants alluded to the latter, such a demarcation would appear strained if not invented. The Embilanesi composite settlement constitutes the following farms:

Rietfontein (395JR) also known as Emathakanweni (meaning unclear) close to the present Spitskop and close to the Lynwood road - Bapsfontein road (the R25) intersection.

Tweedracht (516JR) - the Ndebele name could not be remembered.

Tigerpoort (371JR) was known as Kwamgengane ("Place of Mbigenane") who was believed to be a headman. The Tierpoort recreational area is situated on this farm.

Kleinfontein (368JR) included a group of villages known as Esibayeni ("In the cattle kraal"). No Manala spokesperson was able to clarify the etymology and possible location of Esibayeni, which from an ethn-archaeological perspective could be revealing.

Mooiplaas (367JR) was known as KwaThakeso (meaning unknown). Mooiplaas was said to have accommodated large Manala settlements. Many of these sites have now been disturbed by agricultural and housing development. In a praise poem which was recorded by Van Warmelo the name Embilanesi is coupled with ako Mabhena but it is described as a river near Mooiplaas. Spokespeople whom the
author interviewed in the 1980s were not aware of a river with this name. The royal residence was at one stage believed to be on the farm Mooiplaats. During a site visit in 1989, some stone walling was visible amidst dense shrub vegetation. Part of the site was disturbed by agricultural activity.

Donkerboek (3651R) is situated next to Mooiplaats and was known as *Emakopana* (meaning unknown) or probably also as *Qobongo*.

Zwavelpoort (3731R) was also known as *Estibayeni*.

Hatherley (3111R) could have been part *Emakopana*. Van Warmelo\(^{54}\) refers in a praise poem dedicated to Mastaba of Hatherley: *Sefako esaseola phogathi gwamariga amanana, lokhu sesela emaKopana* or: "The hail that came down in the middle of the winter, and came down at emaKopana". The Hatherley archaeological site was excavated in 1996.\(^ {56}\)

Zwartkoppies (3641R) (Manala name unknown) was situated on the present Silver Lakes development, on the eastern side of Hans Strijdom Drive (the M10).

It appears that at least three *amakosi* ruled at Embilameni, namely, Ncagu (see *Ezothamseni* above), Buyunbe and Mabhena (the current royal clan name bears his name). The period of occupation is calculated to be between 1717 and 1747. The name Mabhena and a specific link to the *KwaMnyama* site is the topic of a later discussion. The appearance of place names in praise poetry (*libongo*) is not the rule; they are also not regularly paired with names of rulers or specific incidents.\(^ {57}\)

As far as river names are concerned, Van Warmelo\(^ {58}\) applies the name *Mbitane* to the Apies river. The present Pienaars River was known as *Moretele* (or *Umveli*). There is no evidence of the exact location of the site along the *Mbitane* or *Apies* Rivers. There is no reference in Manala oral tradition to the name *Tshware* for the Apies River.

The third settlement site was known as *KoNonduma* ("Place of the headman", or "A place with a headman"). Adjacent to *Embilameni*, the royal residence at one stage was believed to be on the slopes of Klipkop hill (on Klipkop 396 JR). It appears that the site was considerably smaller than the previous composite sites and it could have co-existed with the two chronologically earlier sites.\(^ {59}\) During 1989, the author was taken to the grave of Sontikwane Mayula on this farm. He was the first *ikosi* of the Makerane-Manala chieftaincy. The oral record is unclear on which *amakosi* resided at *KoNonduma*. It appears that Mdlaba, Pofu, Botlie, Mastaba, Zerhulu and Zidli were associated with this settlement site. The period of settlement at *KoNonduma* marks the advent of the great diaspora of the Manala as a result of the Mzilikazi onslaught (c1827).\(^ {60}\) These events resulted in the permanent division of the Manala into three groups and tribal communities, namely, the Manala of Silamba, Manala of Mgiebe and the Manala of Makerane. This division remains to the present day.\(^ {61}\)

By means of a summary, the Manala pre-colonial territory can be defined as constituting the Pienaars River drainage basin including its main tributary the Swaweloop River. Geographically, this area can be demarcated as follows: the Bronberg range formed its southern boundary, the Pienaarsrivier/Magaliesberg range its northern boundary the Sour Grassveld farms towards Bronkhorstpruit, the eastern boundary and the present Hans Strijdom drive as the western boundary. This demarcation is obviously arbitrary for reasons argued above.

Place names towards the east of the present Pretoria-Tshwane municipal boundary have an unmistakable Ndebele origin. The Ndebele themselves are not aware of other language speakers in the designated area, or other overlapping or concurrent oral traditions which tie non-Ndebele speakers to this land. Ndebele elders whom the author worked with, for example, were always cognisant of neighbouring traditions of a Tsswana-speaking origin towards the west of *KwaMnyama*, but undoubtedly not in the eastern parts of Pretoria. Names of landmarks such as mountain ranges, hills, rivers and springs, provide indicators of the cultural and historical mapping of a region. Each of the rivers, tributaries and mountains in the designated region above is said to have a name in the Ndebele language. Manala spokespeople were always certain that they could compile such an inventory.


\(^{55}\) J. van Warmelo, "Transvaal Ndebele texts" Ethnological Publications, 1 (Government Printer, Pretoria), 1930, pp 76-77.

\(^{56}\) J. A. van Schalkwyk, A. Palmer & C. J. van Vuuren, "Investigation of Late Iron Age sites on the farm Hatherley 3311R, Pretoria district", Research by the National Cultural History Museum, 5, 1996.


his followers were attacked by Manala and his supporters after Ndzundza tricked Manala into handing over the royal regalia at Kwamnyama. A truce followed. The Ndzundza settled in the upper reaches of the Steelpoort river, and the Manala-Ndebele seemed to have returned to the Kwamnyama area or as Van Warmelo has recorded: "amakala obuyela ekhaya", "the Manala returned home." It appears that ikosi Manala’s descendants later (date uncertain) settled in the Pienaars River basin as indicated above.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Manala royals under Ingwenyana Makhosoke Mahbenha launched several initiatives to obtain the ancestral land of Komfikoekeko. The Ndzundza were previously successful in reclaiming a portion of the historical Komfikoekeko or Mabobo’s (Mapocho’s) Caves land. The land at the Berlin Missionary Station of WaMamasthal (Komfikoekeko) was transported in the name of the Silamba Trust. The Manala have held regular Silambas Day commemorations since obtaining that land. The commemoration festivals also serve as a platform for calls to restore the land “east of Pretoria” to their name, which was allegedly expropriated from the Manala.

The former Kwandebele Monuments Council also tasked itself in 1985 to investigate the possible reclamation of the Kwamnyama site for the Ndebele cause. The effort was spurred by several site visits, this time by the Manala royalties, who refurrowed it as home, in opposition as they alleged, to the Ndzundza who decided to “fly from home”. During a site visit in 1986, a member of the Manala royal family claimed that the European origin of the name Bon Accord was a corruption and derivation of the expression “Mabhena’s court” or “bundla kaMabhena” meaning “the royal court of Mabhena”. Mabhena is the name of the royal family of the Manala. In the royal dynasty of the Manala royal house Mabhena 1, the founder of the Manala royal clan name, lived three generations after the Manala left the Kwamnyama settlement. By means of telescoping the royal lineage the founder Mabhena is hereby directly associated with the Kwamnyama site. Deliberate or non-deliberate telescoping of events and the collapse or extension of royal dynasties is not uncommon in oral tradition as both Rasmussen and Henriques remind us: “Most often, the part of the past that is forgotten is the period between time of origin and the recent past.” There is also no reference in Manala oral history sources to the later (c. middle 1800s) European farm name, but only to Kwamnyama.

The slight phonological similarity between the two names is coincidental. The phonological similarity however, also presents a rather ingenious opportunity to the royals to verify the authenticity of the land claim for political and strategic purposes or as Goody argues: “History for the chiefs is essentially dynastic history, manipulated to serve present ends” and also Henriques: “only past events which influence the future will be remembered.” The foregrounding of the Mabhena name can be viewed as an effort to redress past events. The numerically smaller Manala have always maintained that they should be regarded as the senior member in the dual hierarchy among the Southern Ndebele, since Manala was to be the true successor of Musi. The Ndzundza royals have hardly ever reacted to this claim.

The Manala royalties incidentally maintained a closer tie to Kwamnyama and regarded themselves as having occupied the settlement at a time when the Ndzundza left for Kwasmkhulu. Relations between the two royal houses have always been strained and formal particularly during the 1985/6 unrest in Kwandebele. In terms of the political, historical and ritual domain, the Ndebele historical sites at Komfikoekeko and Komfikoekeko are currently of great importance to the two communities. Both Manala and Ndzenza hold annual commemorative rallies at one of the two sites, but have never done so at Kwamnyama. Neither have they campaigned for such a joint or separate event. Ritual performances are held at both Komfikoekeko and Komfikoekeko in order to venerate the buried amakasi. The grave of Musi seems to have little currency and even less so for a united Ndebele identity.

65 Silamba was the first ikosi of the Manala of Mhboongo after the division in the ranks of the Manala in the mid 1800s.
Conclusion

Vansina maintains that “historical consciousness works on only two registers, time of origin and recent times”\(^\text{72}\). The point of origin embeds and casts in stone the temporal dimension for any community claiming to be classified as first people and can be proved in terms of settlement and dynasty. These two notions predate and pre-rank all later forms of invasion such as colonisation, apartheid, and political and military domination.

What is now important in South Africa is the second register which Vansina refers to. In South Africa the present political climate is characterised by restitution and reckoning. Those in favour of changing names of so-called colonial landmarks and icons believe that they need only link the present and recently remembered past to the point of origin. What matters to them is the recent register which became defined by the colonial and apartheid era. The period in between allows for invention and innovation to the extent that it serves present ends, as Goody\(^\text{73}\) stated earlier. The process of innovation, or abuse as some would argue, could be conscious or unconscious. Jean BAZIN appropriately describes the notion of innovation as a “permanent presence of the past in the present, (a) constant transformation of its meaning”.\(^\text{74}\)

The validity of renaming Pretoria as Tshwane will seemingly not be argued in terms of lengthy academic discourses, despite calls for such a debate,\(^\text{75}\) but rather in terms of heated political arguments. In these arguments there need only be cursory reference to mythological and historical figures such as Tshwane or Musi. The emotional side of the change occupies the moral high ground for both the pro-Tshwane lobbyists and the pro-Pretoria protagonists. It is doubtful whether the Ndebele community’s claim for Musi as the first “king” will make inroads on the Tshwane claim. In one of its findings, the Renaming Report states: “As far as the name ‘Tshwane’ is concerned, it is clear that ownership could possibly not belong to a specific African community, but that various African settlements could potentially lay claim to the name”\(^\text{76}\). One stands perplexed at such a statement considering that while a multiplicity of (concurrent) oral traditional versions are recognised, the authors out rightly preferred the name Tshwane, and, in the process, preclude names in the Ndebele oral inventory. The use of the term “settlement” is also unclear, as it clearly alludes to the recognition of the settlement of a certain Tshwane, which remains unidentified; conversely, KwaMnyamana was identified and so were various Manala settlements.

The Manala Ndebele community’s claim will be argued around sites and claims of origin towards the east of greater Pretoria. The Ndebele oral history case here presents itself as unique in South Africa mainly due to academic research. Efforts among other communities to date their oral history along a constant arithmetic grid have yet to come to the fore. Yet, this author’s contention is that historians, oral historians, archaeologists and anthropologists need to peruse and comb every small clue in the sociocultural system of the community where they work, which undoubtedly will enable them to record oral history more accurately.


\(^{75}\) One of the recommendations of the Renaming Committee is “that this report be used as means for stimulating further debate and research around the change of name” Renaming of Pretoria: Report of the city of Tshwane, (City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, Pretoria 2004), p.10.