

# **A Survey of Sacred Sites and the construction of sacredness of space in the Free State**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of the Free State. The work is original except where indicated by special reference in the text and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other degree. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author and in no way represent a secondary source. The dissertation has not been presented to any other University for examination in the Republic of South Africa.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

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First, working on the PhD has been a wonderful and often overwhelming experience. On the other hand, doing the PhD has been a daunting task that required my undivided attention. Completing my PhD is probably the highlight of my life since my ordination as a clergy in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa.

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## SUMMARY

The research presented in this thesis focuses on the nature and extent of sacred sites in the Eastern Free State, namely Mautse, Motouleng, Modderpoort and Oetsi. An explorative survey was required because of the lack of evidence of the locations as well as their cultural and spiritual bearing. To achieve this objective, a working model with descriptive categories has been devised and employed in such a way as to allow comparisons between the sites. Apart from the inventory, an attempt has also been made towards a conceptual analysis of the modes of sacred ascriptions to the sites by user communities.

The opening chapter of the thesis addresses the general background of sacred sites. In the general background a distinction is drawn between sites that have assumed status of being historical commemorative sites or group heritage sites, e.g. The National Women's Monument in Bloemfontein and localised sacred sites in the Eastern Free State that are deemed as living heritage with active community and individual involvement.

The thesis reflects the Heritage Resource Act of 1999 as a mechanism that defines living heritage with respect to cultural practices and indigenous knowledge entrenched in user communities.

The context of the sacred sites in question has an influence on the history of the Caledon Valley in which the four sites are situated. The thesis shows that the Caledon Valley was riddled with tribal contestations between the Basotho and Boers because it was a fertile region.

The methodology employed in this study is ethnographic and this relates to field research at the sites, it is descriptive, explorative and analytic. Furthermore, the thesis addresses the literature review with respect to the views of scholarly input in the subject of sacrality.

The second chapter addresses the general outline of the descriptive categories of the thesis; they range from the geography/topography of the sites to the external dynamics of the sites and the conceptions of sacrality as perceived by the user communities.

Pictures of the physical localities at the four sites are reflected in the chapter, which exposes the memo-history of the tribes of Mohokare as well as oral transmissions of the history of the

sites. The status and significance of the sites are dealt with as cultural and religious expressions of the user communities. The thesis shows that the significance of the sites is anchored on the authority of the ancestors.

Various ritual dynamics of the sites are reflected in the thesis, the evidence of “ritual making” at the localities is primordial but the study shows popular support for ritual performances by cultural and religious practitioners.

The third chapter deals with data analysis and interpretation of the information obtained from informants in the fieldwork interviews. These interviews are extensively captured in the Addendum of the thesis. The presentation of data is aligned to the field interviews carried out at the sites with the research informants/participants. The thesis shows that obtaining information about a locality requires language proficiency of the site and respect for the informant who gives the data. The data obtained from fieldwork shows an entwinement of cultural practices with religious work at the sites from the apostolic faith movement, other independent Christian groups and indigenous belief systems.

Chapter four focuses on the comparative nature of the sites in accordance with the working model presented in chapter two. The thesis in this chapter addresses similarities and dissimilarities of the topography, the comparison of the sites’ impressions, site internal localities similarities/dissimilarities, the history, memo-history and legends of the sites are compared.

It also focuses on the ascription of sacrality to the sites, which is generated through the Ancestors who in their spiritual authority assign a spot and or place to perform a ritual. The thesis addresses the aspect of sacrality as the core dimension that describes the sacred work of the sacred locations.

The fifth chapter is a response to the research questions posed in chapter one, these questions addresses the nature of sacred sites and the determination of sacrality to the sites. The thesis further addresses the distinctive features of the sites in the Mohokare region and the similarities between commemorative sites like the National Women’s Monument in Bloemfontein and the sites under investigation in the study.

The site image transformation of the sites relates particularly to Mautse and Motouleng and is important to the user communities. This aspect relates specifically to the on-going erection of buildings/dwellings on the grounds of the above-mentioned sites.

The thesis further focuses on the complex theories of sacrality offered by distinguished scholars namely, Eliade, Smith, Turner and Sheldrake. The theoretical conclusions maintain that sacrality should be valued in relation to the context of the sites and that the complex nature of ascription of sacrality should be honoured. Furthermore, a critical analysis of the scholarly views on the determination sacrality is engaged in this chapter.

The outcomes of the research process in this study have signalled a need to engage all stakeholders at the sites, local government and heritage agencies to design protective regimes and rehabilitation programmes for the healthy outlook of the sites. Finally, the tribes that claim exclusive rights to the sites and the physical localities must be further engaged to determine legitimate ownership of the sites. The spiritual ownership and the physical ownership must be probed further.

## OPSOMMING

Die navorsing wat in hierdie tesis bespreek word, fokus op die aard en omvang van sakrale terreine in die Oos-Vrystaat, naamlik Mautse, Motouleng, Modderpoort en Oetsi. 'n Ondersoekende opname was nodig as gevolg van die gebrek aan bewys van die plekke asook hulle kulturele en spirituele strekking. Om hierdie doel te bereik is 'n model met deskriptiewe kategorieë ontwerp en op sodanige wyse aangewend om vergelykings tussen die terreine moontlik te maak. Afgesien van die opname is 'n poging ook aangewend om 'n konseptuele analise van die modusse van sakrale toeskrywings aan die terreine deur gebruiker-gemeenskappe te onderneem.

Die openingshoofstuk van die tesis gee 'n algemene agtergrond van sakrale terreine. In die algemene agtergrond is 'n onderskeid getref tussen terreine wat die status van historiese gedenkterreine of groep-erfenisterreine verkry het, byvoorbeeld die Nasionale Vrouemonument in Bloemfontein en gelokaliseerde sakrale terreine in die Oos-Vrystaat wat as lewende erfenis beskou word, met 'n aktiewe individuele en gemeenskapsbetrokkenheid.

Die tesis besin oor die Wet op Nasionale Erfenishulpbronne van 1999 as 'n meganisme wat lewende erfenis definieer wat betref kulturele praktyke en inheemse kennis wat in gebruiker-gemeenskappe vasgelê is.

Die konteks van die sakrale terreine onder bespreking het 'n invloed op die geskiedenis van die Caledonvallei waarin die vier terreine geleë is. Die tesis toon aan dat die Caledonvallei deurspek was van groepsgekke tussen die Basotho en die Boere omdat dit 'n vrugbare streek is.

Die metodologie wat in hierdie studie gevolg is, is etnografies van aard en hou verband met veldnavorsing by die terreine. Dit is deskriptief, ondersoekend en analities.

In die tweede hoofstuk word 'n algemene omskrywing van die deskriptiewe kategorieë van die tesis bespreek. Hierdie wissel van die geografie/topografie van die terreine tot die eksterne dinamika van die terreine en die konsepte van sakraliteit, soos deur die gebruiker-gemeenskap beskou.

Afbeeldings van die fisiese omgewing van die vier terreine word in die hoofstuk weergegee, wat egter die memo-geskiedenis van die stamme van Mohokare sowel as orale oordrag van die

geskiedenis van die terreine blootlê. Die status en betekenis van die terreine word ondersoek as kulturele en religieuse uitdrukkings van die gebruiker-gemeenskappe. Die tesis toon aan dat die betekenis van die terreine geanker is in die gesag van die voorvaders.

Verskeie rituele tipes dinamika van die terreine word in die tesis weergegee. Die bewys van “ritueel-maak” by die onderskeie liggings is primordiaal, maar die studie toon gewilde steun vir rituele handelinge deur kulturele en religieuse praktisyns.

Die derde hoofstuk behels ’n data-analise en interpretasie van die inligting wat van informante in die veldwerk-onderhoude ingesamel is. Hierdie onderhoude word omvattend saamgevat in die Addendum van die tesis. Die aanbieding van data is belyn met die veldonderhoude wat by die terreine met die navorsingsinformante/deelnemers gevoer is. Die tesis toon aan dat taalvaardigheid insake die terrein en respek vir die informante wat die data verskaf nodig is om inligting in te samel. Die data wat vanuit die veldwerk bekom is, toon ’n vervlegting van kulturele praktyke met religieuse werk by die terreine van die apostoliese geloofsending en ander onafhanklike Christengroepe.

Hoofstuk vier fokus op die vergelykende aard van die terreine in ooreenstemming met die werksmodel wat in hoofstuk twee uiteengesit is. Die tesis spreek in hierdie hoofstuk ooreenkomste en verskille van topografie, die vergelyking van die indrukke van die terreine, ooreenkomste en verskille tussen terrein-interne plekke, die geskiedenis, memo-geskiedenis aan, en legendes van die terreine word vergelyk.

Hoofstuk vier fokus verder op die toeskrywing van sakraliteit aan die terreine, gegenereer deur die voorvaders wat in hulle spirituele gesag ’n plek kan aanwys waar ’n ritueel kan plaasvind. Die tesis ondersoek die aspek van sakraliteit as die kerndimensie wat die sakrale werk van die sakrale terreine beskryf.

Die vyfde hoofstuk is ’n respons op die navorsingsvrae wat in hoofstuk tien gestel is. Hierdie vrae spreek die aard van sakrale terreine en die vasstelling van sakraliteit tot die terreine aan. Die tesis spreek verder die kenmerkende eienskappe van die terreine in Mohokare-streek asook die ooreenkomste tussen gedenkterreine soos die Nasionale Vrouemonument in Bloemfontein en die terreine wat in hierdie studie ondersoek word.



Die transformasie van die beeld van die terreine het veral betrekking op Mautse en Motouleng en is belangrik vir die gebruiker-gemeenskappe. Hierdie aspek het spesifiek betrekking op die voortgaande oprigting van geboue/woonplekke op die grond van bogenoemde terreine.

Die tesis fokus verder op die komplekse teorieë van sakraliteit van vooraanstaande navorsers, naamlik na Eliade, Smith, Turner en Sheldrake. Die teoretiese gevolgtrekkings handhaaf die standpunt dat sakraliteit gewaardeer behoort te word in verhouding tot die konteks van die terreine en dat die komplekse aard van toeskrywing van sakraliteit vereer behoort te word.

Die uitkomst van die navorsingsproses in hierdie studie het 'n behoefte daaraan geïdentifiseer dat alle belanghebbende van die terreine, die plaaslike regering en erfenis-agentskappe te betrek ten einde beskermende regimes en rehabilitasieprogramme vir die gesonde uitgangspunt van die terreine te ontwerp. Ten slotte moet die stamme wat aanspraak maak op eksklusiewe regte insake die terreine en die fisiese liggings verder betrek word om wettige eienaarskap van die terreine te bepaal. Die geestelike en die fisiese eienaarskap van die terreine moet ook verder ondersoek word.

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## CHAPTER 1:

# BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH APPROACH TO THE SACRED SITES

Sacred natural sites are localities in mountains, valleys and fields that are spiritually significant for communities and individuals. In this regard, sacred natural sites usually come into being at localities with significant inscribed formation or attached memory. These may include mountains, lakes, waterfalls, caves, forests and springs, as well as part of the ocean. They may be considered sacred stations or sacred spots that have spiritual significance for people and user communities. For many local communities and groups of people, sacred natural sites are areas where nature connects with the greater universe, and where collective or individual recollections come together in meaningful ways. According to *Sacred Natural Sites, Guidelines for Protected Area Managers* (2008:5),

Sacred natural sites can be the abode of deities, nature spirits and ancestors, or are associated with hermits, prophets, saints and visionary spiritual leaders. They can be feared or they can be benign. They can be areas for ceremony and contemplation, prayer and meditation.”

The diversity of the South African landscape and its diverse populations has contributed to the plethora of sacred sites found in all provinces of the country. These sacred sites are as numerous as beliefs and cultures found in the different ethnic groups of South Africa. The diverse sacred sites imply that sacred localities are imbued with different cultural and spiritual backgrounds, which obviously give rise to different perceptions of sacrality.

There are a number of sites, sacred to the Venda people in the Province of Limpopo, the best known being Lake Fundudzi. This lake is considered so sacred that people from outside Venda are seldom permitted to go there. The Venda people are of the view that Lake Fundudzi is the dwelling place of the ancestors and that this is the home of the white crocodile living under the water.

In KwaZulu-Natal, the revered Zulu sacred sites are found in the hills and valleys of Emakhosini near Ulundi, among them the homestead of Shaka’s grandfather, which is called a place of unity and strength.

The Shembe people have other localities of sacred importance. Then there are also a number of spring and rivers of immense sacred power to indigenous healers. The same holds true for all provinces.

South Africa possesses what spiritualists believe are ‘energy centres’. The best-known one, according to them, is Table Mountain in Cape Town. The other centres are the three rondavels in Mpumalanga and Magaliesburg in the North-West Province. Many rock art sites were left behind by the San people of Southern Africa. There are many in the Karoo and in various mountain ranges, places where their sacred communion with the spirit world took place.

The majority of the sites alluded to above are not “proclaimed” sacred by national heritage protocols, but exist in close relationship with user communities and are imbued with what may be called a living heritage of different cultural and spiritual manifestations. Numerous such living sacred sites are located in the Free State, particularly in the region of Mokokare/ Caledon. For the purposes of this study, the sacred sites located in the Eastern Free State, namely Mautse Sacred Valley between Rosendal and Ficksburg, Motouleng sacred cave next to Clarens, Modderpoort next to Ladybrand and Oetsi cave in Monontsha, Qwaqwa, may be considered living heritage sites in terms of the definition above.

There are a number of possible definitions of living heritage, but they show that both tangible and intangible heritage is socially constructed. In this regard, heritage is transmitted by usage and observation through individuals, families and society, and orality plays an important role. According to *The National Heritage Resource Act (NHRA) of South Africa, Act no.25 of 1999*, heritage is legacy of resources of cultural significance that should be handed down to future generations. It may include oral traditions and customs, places to which oral traditions are attached or that are associated with living heritage, historical settlements, landscapes and natural features of cultural significance, archaeological and paleontological sites, graves and burial grounds, including ancestral graves of royal and of traditional leaders; graves and memorial sites of victims of conflict, and sites relating to the history of slavery in South Africa.

*The National Heritage Resource Act* illustrates the broad themes that define living heritage. In this regard, living heritage could be further defined as a collection of cultural practices, skills and indigenous knowledge communicated from generation to generation. The question of heritage is broadly conceptualised, because there are material heritage products as well as intangible non-material aspects of heritage. These aspects of heritage are often not documented,

and in real life, practices, ideas, memory, symbols and various knowledge systems are still visible at living heritage sites.

The layered conceptualisations of the above-mentioned sites accentuate the complex nature of living heritage that is ascribed to a particular ethnic group or population within a specific geographical area. For instance, intangible living heritage in respect of sacred sites resonates with knowledge that cannot be found in any public source of evidence. The sacred natural sites in question represent memory and cultural attachments of indigenous communities; in some areas, communities have been formed at the sites. Consequently, the conceptualisation of living heritage becomes community based at the sites; a sacred site like Modderpoort assumes a community living heritage because of its connection to the Anglican Church priory. (See later discussion)

According to Cawood (2010:30), “It is a practising community that has created and or practiced an intangible cultural form. The survival of intangible heritage is subject to the continuing practice and transmission of that form of heritage and it should be safeguarded in such a way that the rights of practicing communities and the intangible values remain intact”.

Furthermore, sacred sites in the Eastern Free State are characterised by their topographical setting, which inhabits different “sacred locations”. In this regard, sacred locations represent varying customary and ritual practices. Some are faith based and others are purely indigenous culture by nature. The mountainous terrain where the sites are situated is a cultural pathway to mystical discoveries brought about by the functions of the sacred locations. In particular, special meanings are attached to the locations and the locations with them.

Sacred sites cannot be simplified or reduced to one meaning or representation, but reflect the different historical and current experiences of particular communities and ethnic groupings. Religious and cultural attachments to the attachments to the sites determine sacrality at the sites and the numerous forms of ritual practice are pivotal in this respect.

## **1.1 Importance of sacred objects**

The sacred natural sites of the Eastern Free State contain sacred objects that are important to the indigenous communities and pilgrims. The preservation of these objects is extremely important, because there are elements that are keen on profaning the sites by pillaging the objects. In this regard, there are also increasing threats resulting from weak protection and the

cumulative effect of pillaging, because of lack of proper management of the sites. The *CAFF DOCUMENTS* of Northern Russia (2004:4) define sacred objects as,

immovable items and the works of art, sculpture, and applied art associated with these, objects of science, technology and other items of material culture, having come about as a result of a historical event, possessing value from the perspective of history, archaeology, architecture, urban planning, art, science and technology, aesthetics, ethnology or anthropology, social culture, and being a witness of an epoch of civilization and an original source of information about the origin and development of culture.

The sacred objects found at the sacred sites of the Eastern Free State can be listed as follows: medicinal clay, medicinal plants, waterfalls, altars, shrines, rock art and springs. However, protective regimes to ensure preservation of these objects at the sites are not forthcoming. The pressing problem of lack of preservation could be ascribed to a lack of management of the sites.

According to Gulliford (2000:7),

One aspect of tribal preservation involves safeguarding physical landmarks and living traditions, and across the United States, sacred and special rocks with ancient carved petroglyphs or pictographs have been protected (although vandalism at Indian sites persists).

At Mautse and Motouleng, there are physical inscriptions on the rocks of the sites; however, some are fading because of the lack of preservation as a protection measure. Gulliford (2000:7) states, "Another aspect involves returning artefacts and information taken by white scholars decades ago." (2000:7) In this regard, many accounts of Indian rituals and countless artefacts and objects have been collected and stored in museums, universities and archives.

This protective process, as expressed in India, promotes safety for the sacred objects and the community becomes more conscious about the importance of these locations and objects. The sacred objects are safeguarded by regulation, which includes institutions of learning promoting the preservation of sacred objects or heritage objects.

In India, anthropologists and archaeologists are involved in the preservation of the sacred objects (as well as cultural) and to safeguard them for local communities and posterity. This

policy is called ‘reverse anthropology and reserve archaeology. According to Gulliford (2000:7),

Instead of taking from tribes, archaeologists and anthropologists are giving back. For example, sound recordings of Indian chants and dances once housed in the library of Congress’s American Forklife Center have been returned to tribes, along with field notes from the original collectors.

This noble process becomes a learning experience for the children of India and for people who want to study heritage and do research on this subject. The Indian children can learn about the belief systems of their tribe and listen to songs sung by their forebears.

In India, this culturally embedded knowledge is sacred and not meant to be shared with people who are not from India. Tribal preservation also requires exchanging information with non-natives and noting locations, takings photographs, creating maps, setting up museum displays and talking to elders (Gulliford 2000:9).

Preservation of sacred sites in India is paramount and it is legally binding. It is a community-driven initiative that enhances structural institutional commitment. The laws pertaining to preservation of sacred objects are covered by a myriad of policies, e.g. the *Antiquities Act* (1906); the *National Historic Preservation Act* (NHPA, 1966); the *American Indian Religious Freedom Act* (AIRFA, 1978); and the *Archaeological Resources Protection Act* (ARPA, 1979, and amended in 1989), etc.

The sacred natural sites of the Eastern Free State and the related sacred objects found there, lack protective measures with regard to policy arrangement. One may already witness that materials from the sites find their ways to healer markets. There is also the eminent danger that the knowledge, songs, and practices at the sites may in the end become lost for generations to come. This is the strength of the laws in India regarding the safeguarding of the sacred objects, music and artefacts. Gulliford (2000:13) declares, “Of all the cultural resources issues affecting Indian tribes today, none is more complicated than the return and reburial of human remains.” In this regard, there is legislation in India that is confined to the reburial of bones on ancestral lands. This is considered a sacred act in terms of the policies of the Indian native laws.

In conclusion, I suggest that South Africa’s heritage agencies may engage the government to institute laws that may address the preservation of sacred objects in South Africa’s sacred

natural sites, and communities of the sites, residing within the sites and those pilgrimaging to the sites should be canvassed to support the idea of creating protective measures for the sites, especially the sacred objects at the sites. Universities, in concert with the government and heritage agencies, can become critical stakeholders in accelerating the formation of preservation arrangements at the sites.

## 1.2 Geographical and historical context of the sites

The geographical context of the sacred natural sites being researched is the Eastern Free State. These sacred natural sites are situated in a valley called the Caledon or Mohokare in Sesotho. The geography of the Caledon Valley stretches from Maseru in Lesotho to Bethulie in the Southern Free State. Furthermore, the Caledon or Mohokare Valley originates in the Drakensburg Mountains of Lesotho. The Caledon Valley/River from Maseru in Lesotho to Bethulie in the Southern Free State is about 200 kilometres long.

The history of the Caledon Valley is riddled with land contestation between the Basotho and the Boers in the then Orange Free State, because the valley was exceptionally fertile and farming could be undertaken without irrigation. In this regard, contestation for land through military means was started by Shaka. According to Sparks (1992:95), “He turned the Zulus into the most aggressive military power Black Africa has ever seen and ravaged the subcontinent.” One would assume with precision that the Mohokare region was a hotly contested valley between the Basotho and the Boers.

Terreblanche (2005:221) states,

The *mfecane* or *difaqane* (meaning ‘smash in total war’, or ‘hammering’) also played an important role in the Great Trek, both directly and indirectly. Both the *mfecane* and the Great Trek caused large-scale movements of people in the 1820s and 1830s that transformed the eastern and northern parts of the South Africa.

The events of *mfecane* coincided with power struggles vivid between the Boers and the Africans in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Terreblanche further states (2005:221),

The *mfecane* erupted high up on the east coast at exactly the same time when the British settlers arrived in the Eastern Cape. This involved the Zulus under



Dingiswayo and Shaka consolidating their empire by unleashing a genocidal attack on African tribes (mainly South Sotho's) west of the Drakensberg.

As has been said above that, *Difaqane* skirmishes started with Shaka's territorial invasions during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and its consequences for settled ethnic groupings in the region and the displacement of others by refugees as well as people fleeing before attacks from the Natal area. These also caused conflict and strife among the Basotho people of a scale not known before. According to Sparks (1992:95) "Splintered groups scrambled out of the coastal plain over the jagged jaws of the Drakensburg – the mountains of the dragons running down the eastern escarpment – onto the Highveld and the flat plains of the Transvaal, where in their frenzied desperation they put yet other clans to flight, causing waves of disruptions to radiate outward across the interior as far north as Lake Tanganyika and to the Kalahari Desert in the west.

A careful reading of the circumstances that led to the disintegration of the societies was the quest for military power and conquest displayed by Shaka. According to Sparks, ancient chiefdoms disintegrated and disappeared; new ones came into existence, and they vanished too. It was a time of devastation and death that the Tswana and Sotho clans of the Highveld called *Difaqane*, or forced migration (1992:97)

Historically, according to Coplan (2003:978) "The period 1840-1870 was one of almost constant conflict between Basotho and Boers, with other Bantu, Griqua and even the San doing their part to keep the pot boiling, and the British getting their fingers burnt while clumsily trying to put out the fires on their colonial borders".

This historical conflict was aimed at subjugating the indigenous people of the Mohokare Valley by the Boers in order to acquire this fertile land through devious means. The transition from the colonial contestation for land to the Boers entering into the contestation for the sites is situated on farming lands because of its fertile status.

According to Nel on 'Frontier Dynamics and Ownership' (2014:139),

The sacred sites of the Eastern Free State (Mantsopa, Motouleng and Mautse) as well as other sites in the region were historically part of the fertile Caledon River frontier between the Free State Boer Republic and the Basotho peoples under Moshoeshoe1.

Even though the Caledon Valley was the subject of fierce land contestation, the culture of the Basotho people was not supplanted and language of the Basotho people remained intact. The context of the sites is a confluence of African religion with Christianity and indigenous African cultures. In this regard, the Christian influence in the Caledon area is significant particularly with reference to King Moshoeshoe I and French missionary Casalis. According to Hodgson (2010), in 1833, Moshoeshoe invited members of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society, of which Casalis was a member to become established within his kingdom. The main reason for the invitation was for Moshoeshoe to seek some measure of protection against his enemies in a war-torn Caledon Valley and as intermediators with colonial officials.

In this regard, Dr Eddy Maloka, in his Honours dissertation from the University of Cape Town (1988:24) states, “Moshoeshoe invited the missionaries for religious purposes; however, it appears that Moshoeshoe was principally concerned with the defence of his state.” It is clear that the state of Moshoeshoe included the Caledon Valley, which became the battlefield in the Difaqane Wars between the Zulus, Basotho and other ethnic groups.

According to Hodgson (2010:215),

These missionaries could not avoid political involvement, since border conflict with the Boers continued to escalate over the next thirty years, and land disputes were settled by a succession of British officials at the Cape according to ever-changing political alignments and government policies.

In other words, Moshoeshoe may have trusted the missionaries to invoke their Christian influence in the Caledon area, which manifestly was a nightmare for proper governance. However, political and other issues besides Christian influence like land contestation, which was a compelling factor for the missionaries to advise Moshoeshoe on how to deal with.

The battle for the fertile area of the Caledon could not be abated between the Boers and the Basotho; hence, Nel states (2014:139),

The result was that Basotho tribes were alienated from their ancestral land as well as from the spiritual sites strongly associated with ancient religious kinship. The artificial border did not stop the Basotho people from viewing the area as part of their ancestral land even up to the present day cross-border conflicts, mainly of an economic nature, still prevails.

What precipitated the loss of the fertile Caledon Valley were the Difaqane Wars, which disintegrated the Basotho nation and scattered them through the Eastern Free State, particularly to the mountain areas with caves for safe hiding. Hodgson (2010) states,

The anguish of the Sotho, already suffering from the scorched earth policy instituted by the Free State, was exacerbated by the loss of two thirds of their best arable land in the peace treaty that followed, and Moshoeshoe now sought to come under British rule. Initially this was refused, but continuing conflict finally led to annexation by the British in 1868.

The border specifications with the Orange Free State were ultimately fixed along the Caledon River. As in the present-day Lesotho, the Boers took the conquered Caledon Valley to the west and this became known as the “conquered territory”. The sacred natural sites of the Eastern Free State, Motouleng, Mantsopa, Mautse and Oetsi, became part of the conquered areas that historically were part of the Caledon Valley.

The Caledon Wars caused a perpetual sense of a contested political region between various tribes. A further consequence of the war was that the Basotho people considered the Caledon as a cultural landscape that belonged to them, whether they stayed in Lesotho or South Africa. The fact of the matter is that the language, culture and spiritual beliefs are still shared by the people on both sides of the current political border. Therefore, it is not surprising that the sacred sites in the Caledon Region are regarded as such by the people of both Lesotho and South Africa. This assertion is corroborated by the seamless spiritual and cultural practices of people with different geographical political affiliations.

### **1.3 History of dialogue between Christianity and African indigenous religions**

The tension between western Christian values and African indigenous value systems spurned countless years of an attempt to seek a solution to this religious impasse, which came from two streams of belief systems. Christianity, from its earliest history, has maintained a critical, negative opinion of other religious traditions that are not of Western orientation. According to Gort (2008:748), “As early as the period of Cyprian of Carthage (258), he maintained vehemently that there was no salvation outside the Christian Church.” In this regard, what Cyprian meant was that African indigenous religions did not possess the message of salvation in all its forms.

According to Mercado (2004; 2005:99),

To some anthropologists, ‘untutored’ Africans cannot know God as the idea of God is philosophical. To the missionaries in the early day’s Africans were not fully human; they prohibited polygamy, initiation rites, ancestor worship and other indigenous practices.

The above statements about the African being untutored about God fuelled tension between how God was understood by Africans and how Europeans understood God, the conceptions of God in terms of continental conceptualisations was a contextual matter that used its religious instruments in its relationship to God.

Gort further states (2008:748), “African belief systems were perceived as expressions of heaven, unbelief and evil superstition and the world outside the church comes to be seen as the kingdom of darkness.” Hodgson calls this tension ‘Spiritualities in conflict’ (2010:211):

This account is part of a wider study and revolves around the tension between a lived Christianity and a received Christianity between a this-worldly salvation and otherworldly salvation, between a people’s hagiography and the hagiography of an English religious community, the society of the Sacred Mission.

Hodgson writes from a perspective that deals with belief systems of the Mantsopa followers, including Mantsopa herself before she became a Christian. Prior to the missionaries coming to Modderpoort, Mantsopa’s followers and adherents have invaded the places related to Mantsopa – the cave chapel, her grave and the spring near her old home – with sacred meanings rooted in their African past. According to Hodgson (2010:211),

From the 1950s onwards, a growing confidence among black people in trying to integrate their Christian faith with African consciousness and express such an incarnated spirituality corporately in order to meet their immediate needs, led to the development of an informal Mantsopa pilgrimage movement.

The above assertion illustrates that the Mantsopa followers had a religion that was contextual and appealed to the needs of their spirituality; however, with the new religion in Modderpoort

there was great concern about the survival of their indigenous traditional religion. Hodgson, further states (2011:211),

However, such an African initiated popular religion, both within and without the Anglican Church, was bound to conflict with the English missionaries' concern to maintain the integrity and authority of Anglican doctrine and practice in the name of St Augustine.

These events clearly led to a tension between what the missionaries were advocating and what the Mantsopa followers believed. Furthermore, this led to overt competition for the legitimate ownership and interpretation of a shared set of sacred symbols which, in turn, were imbued with quite different patterns of meaning by the religious aggregations involved (Hodgson 2011:211).

The South African situation of that time experienced this religious conflict, which had implications far beyond the gospel and culture debate. The religious proclamation transmitted by the missionaries bordered on controlling Africans to come to their holy places and to regulate the forms of worship to be observed on mission property, to instil in them all forms of Western worship. In the process, denigrate African religious tradition practised before the missionaries came. According to Hodgson (2011:211),

On the other hand, the pilgrims were searching for spiritual liberation and a sense of belonging in the midst of intense of alienation, oppression and suffering. Their primary need was to be linked to the ultimately real whose characteristics would necessarily be determined by their socio-cultural and political experience.

The tactics of the missionaries at Modderpoort were to evangelise Africans whose ancestors could not offer salvation and healing in their interpretation. However, the followers of Mantsopa resolved to associate themselves perpetually with the cultic practices of Mantsopa. These offered them direct access to and control of spiritual power, as they sought a healing that embraced their entire lives.

According to Hodgson (2011:211),

For many, this was integral to their ongoing struggle for political liberation, a strategy for survival that incorporated the realization of an African spirituality beyond white control. Symbolic power was intimately connected with political power.

In this regard, Mantsopa followers saw African spirituality as a vehicle for their total liberation from missionary religion, which did not interact with what they legitimately believed in. This imposition of European religion on African soil created a chasm between indigenous African religion and Christianity. Therefore, spiritualities in conflict were precipitated by the import of a western spirituality that sought to destroy African religion and its symbolic power.

There had been an attempt to sensitise some form of religious dialogue and ultimately to encourage religious tolerance among religious practitioners. When Africa was evangelised Western religious practitioners resolved to supplant all forms of indigenous religion in order to market and promote Christianity effectively. This strategy of the missionaries was infused by a need for political, socio-economic and religious control of the indigenous people.

According to Gort (2008:748),

Although for the next 1500 years or more what Christians thought of other religious traditions was governed by the above perception, there existed those few who challenged the prevailing thought and advocated a more accommodating model of encounter with other religions. Following is a list of the Roman Catholic Bishops who were preaching for religious tolerance and accommodation of indigenous African religion:

- Pope Gregory the great (c.540-604)
- Raymond Lull (c.1235-1315)
- Bartholomew de las Casas (1474-1566)
- Matteo Ricci (1552-1610)
- Robert de Nobili (1577-1656).

These Catholic bishops were of the view that all the religions of the world came into being because of one God; therefore, not a single religion could supersede the dictates of God in terms of the equality of religions in the world. This outcry was never heeded by the missionaries who were posted to Africa to plant the gospel and convert Africans from their savage belief systems. However, Mantsopa and King Moshoeshoe I, who were stern believers in indigenous

African spiritualities, eventually had to convert to Christianity without foregoing their religion of birth. The dynamics of two different religions taking centre stage in the powerful figures of the Basotho people meant that the area would eventually become Christian.

From 1868 onwards, according to Hodgson, Mantsopa became a transitional figure (2011:217), while continuing to function according to past traditions. She also sought to incorporate the spiritual power of the incoming culture, but on the Basotho's own terms. For her, the Modimo of Sotho belief was supplemented by an intercessory divinity, the 'He, Him' of her prophecy, who became identified with the God of the missionaries. Also, rather than using the customary divining bones, she was inspired by visions (Thompson 1975:207).

The strength of the Christian religion was assuming control of the religious lives of the Basotho people to a degree that the people had to adhere in principle to indigenous belief systems and the new faith from the Western world. Furthermore, Hodgson (2011:217) states,

Joseph Orpen, sometime adviser to Moshoeshoe, notes that in 1862 Mantsopa augmented her considerable authority by claiming 'to have been to heaven to see God'. She and a blind boy called Katsi now professed to preach the 'God of the missionaries', except that, whereas the missionaries received inspiration second-hand from a book, they were directly inspired and could identify the missionaries mistakes.

The above assertion clearly indicates that there was an effort to ease the tension between Christianity and indigenous traditional beliefs at Mantsopa when it was still part of Lesotho, but the missionaries would not concede that African religion was a religion from God it was therefore important for Mantsopa and her followers to encounter a taste of a syncretic religion in order not to forfeit the religion of the ancestors.

According to Hodgson (2011:218), "Over the years Moshoeshoe had warmed to certain tenets of the Christian faith, but his power and authority were legitimated by Sotho customs, such as polygamy, and he could not risk alienating his ancestor's goodwill." Moshoeshoe had interrogated the significance of the Christian faith for himself and his subjects who paid allegiance to Sotho customs. Even though the Christian faith made inroads into the Basotho land, the tension was still present because the new faith was to assume the powers of the ancestors. Beyond 1833, many missionaries came to Africa to spread the gospel and in 1862, the Catholic Church posted its missionaries to Lesotho to establish mission stations. However,

there were competing claims of rival church traditions, which gave Moshoeshoe an excuse to postpone his conversion to Christianity. He was in fact preparing for his baptism when he died in 1870 (Sanders 1975:270ff; Thompson 1975:318-323).

It is evident from the foregoing assertions of the tensions that prevailed between Christianity and indigenous traditional beliefs, and that the coming of the Colonists and the missionaries into Africa set a tone for religious and political change. However, indigenous people had to pay a costly price for becoming Christians. Sacred objects found at the sites formed a greater part of the indigenous people's spirituality; the western mind-set could not understand how Africans can find value in these objects. The western people viewed sacredness from what they believed was objectively correct in terms of their negative interpretation of indigenous belief systems.

It is important to admit to the historical and current real-life tensions between Christianity and indigenous belief systems. However, this tension is not the only reality of the religious communities of the Caledon region where important sacred sites are located. As we will see later in the discussion of the sites, there exists a remarkable tolerance between Christian groups, mainly from the independent Christian Churches, and indigenous local believers. One also witnesses at different sites an almost seamless collectivity of spiritual expressions.

The roots of this conflation are manifold. One reason may be that Christianity has infiltrated indigenous belief systems over the years, to such a degree that control of influence has been impossible. It might also be because of resistance from attached cultural believers to "insert" the spiritual essence they have come to appreciate in their local religions. Our research will show that at the sacred sites one is confronted with a religious expression that can hardly be called syncretism. It may even go beyond what scholars would define as forms hybridity. Often the seamlessness between indigenous and Christian expressions is so pregnant without reflection of possible contradictions that one is inclined to view this form of religious and spiritual expression as pure ambivalence. It is only then an intellectual and academic reflection to seek distinctive historical or formal similarities or dissimilarities. A form of ambivalent spiritual expression is taking shape at these sites. The hybrid approach to understand the belief systems of the sites hinges on an entwinement of religion and culture or spiritualities that defines the traditional work of the sites. The nature of this hybridity could also be experienced in the spiritual expressions that defines what people believe in.



## 1.4 Outline of the survey

The study of the sacred sites of the Eastern Free State includes a survey/inventory of four sites, namely Mautse, a valley located between Ficksburg and Rosendal; Motouleng, a cave next to Clarens; Modderpoort an Anglican Church priory next to Ladybrand and Oetsi cave located in a village called Monontsha, southwest of Qwaqwa.

The words “survey” and “inventory” had been used interchangeably at the outset of the study because of the complex nature of the sites under investigation. A research attempt has been made to construct a survey/inventory record of the sites under investigation, because no adequate inventory record exists as a point of reference to write about them. The survey/inventory of the sites would attempt to understand the views of the Basotho and other people regarding the sacred sites in the Mohokare Valley, as well as how this influenced their culture in the aftermath of the conquest of their land. In this regard, the sagas surrounding the sites, which relate to the memo-history, transformation of myths and the understanding of the sacred geography of the sites, will receive attention. The significance of the leadership of the sites is pivotal and how this evolves with context.

The study will show images of the sites and their related sacred locations and images of natural features, mountains and clays sites will be discussed in detail. The cross-references about the sites in the survey will provide important comparative information, which would assist in a further contemplation of the nature of sacrality at the sites.

**Part One** sketches the background of the sites as well as their geographical and historical context. This part of the background has an impact on how the conceptualisation of the sites is understood in the eyes of indigenous people. Aligned to this understanding is the conquered territory of the Basotho people, where the sacred sites are located. The survey in this respect would attempt to understand each sites influence in the geography and the historical overview of the Caledon Valley. A detailed qualitative method of the study, as well as the literature review that relates to scholarly contributions about sacrality and its implication for construction of sacredness of place and space will be incorporated.

**Part Two** of the survey will give a detailed description of the sites that will be explored, as well as a clear picture of the topography. The various sites contain within them sacred locations or physical localities, which point clearly at an enhanced and significant cultural activity. The sacred sites under investigation will shed light on the operation and nature of functions at each

site. In this regard, a framework that represents the dimensions of the sites will be seen in cross-reference between the natures of the sites.

**Part Three** the central feature of the survey is premised on data analysis and interpretation of the information obtained at the sites. Outcomes of data collected will be analysed and communicated to the research participants responsible for assisting in obtaining the information. Language usage and translation at the sites is central to the outcomes of the data collected and information provided by the research participants is central to the analysis of the survey; it affects the nature of data interpretation.

**Part Four** of the survey will address the kind of deductions to be made comparatively about the sites, their generic features, their peculiar emphasis and diverse constructions of sacred place and space.

**Part Five** will deal with the conclusion of the study as well as a summary of the results of the study. The theoretical claims of scholars will be analysed critically and a re-assessment in light of the researcher's findings will be made.

## **1.5 Problem statement**

The sacred sites in the Eastern Free State are located on privately owned land and Mantsopa's cave is located on church owned land. However, the sites have become enormously significant for both the user communities and national living heritage agencies. The scanty records containing information about the sites cannot be accessed easily and their underrepresentation by traditional authority and heritage agencies poses a major problem.

Lack of documentary information regarding the geographical existence of sacred sites and the geographical dispersal of the sites throughout the Free State is evident enough to conclude that a lack of emic perspectives obtained from the user communities and inhabitants of the sites. Written records are scanty and reflect only partial ideas under rubrics less concerned with site descriptions.

The need to explore and record the sites is further enhanced by encroaching threats to the sites from internal as well as external dynamics. The fact that these issues are under no official management and control deepens the vulnerability of the sites to exploit. The preservation of

sacred sites is the key to ensuring their cultural survival and their continued access for ritual activity.

With regard to the above problem, collecting baseline data about sacred sites remains a methodological and logistical challenge. Sacred sites have a variety of definitions, which are not easy to assemble into one definition of the sites; this is because the meaning of sites and their associated rituals differ from one area to another.

Nevertheless, it is clear that identifying specific criteria and approaches for collection, documentation and management remains of paramount importance. The most pressing question is what methods should be used to determine sacrality at the sites. The user communities as stakeholders in the survey have an important role to play in determining the religious and cultural nature of the sites. It is equally important to view the user community at the sites as informants who can offer help with regard to determining the sacrality of sites.

The researcher is quite mindful of the fact that sacred sites play an important role in the lives of indigenous people and those of pilgrims visiting the sites for religious and cultural purposes, as well as reasons pertaining to tourism. The sites remain poorly understood by people who do not ascribe to indigenous spirituality and culture. In this regard, indigenous people continue to follow the examples of their ancestors and exercise customary religious ceremonies.

The sites reflect broader sacred and social landscape and play a fundamental role in the indigenous way of life for many people. In this regard, the relevance of sacred sites as an important cultural factor imbuing local landscapes has meaning and value for local adherents. Particularly in South Africa, a renewed engagement with heritage is required because of the skewed colonial tradition. In this regard, the existence and increasing popularity of sacred sites present themselves for investigation as examples of living heritage as well as sites with undocumented records. There is general lack of information about the sites and there is a need not only to document the sites, but also to provide basic descriptions of the sites.

The problems identified for this study are therefore the following:

- There is no systematic record detailing the geographical location of a specific site;
- Local adherents believe that they are entitled to the ownership of the sites;
- Indigenous belief systems can only be confined to the domain of the sites and cannot be extrapolated generally to communities outside of the sites;

- The legacy of the skewed authority of colonialism has submerged the significance of the sites;
- The management of the sites lacks the required appropriate protection regimes;
- There are complications in accessing the collective nature and communal ownership of indigenous heritage in relation to the sites;
- Views of collective ownership of the sites by ancestors from a spiritual point of view against the ownership of the sites on privately owned land;

In summary, the main concerns are the lack of record and description of sacred sites in the Free State and the specific nature and significance of these sites. This reconnaissance dimension of the problem involves the localities of the sites and the geographical nature as well as investigating their historical and oral histories about the sites, and meanings attached to the different sites, different communities and individuals.

## 1.6 Research question

What sacred natural sites as well as the way the local adherents understand their sacrality exist in the Eastern Free State and what common features exist in them?

### Sub-questions

- Will the inventory into sacred natural sites of the Eastern Free State help in mapping out the locations of the sites?
- Where the sacred natural sites operate independently on privately owned land, does the local adherents abide by the laws of the ancestors or the laws of the landowners?
- What methods would be employed to trace the geographical existence of sacred sites in the Eastern Free State?
- How will the survey into the sacred sites ensure that the local adherents are recognized as stakeholders because they understand better the religious and cultural significance of the sites?

According to Wimmer and Dominick (1991:34), “A research question or hypothesis requires investigation from many different perspectives before any significance can be attributed to the results of any one study. Research methods and designs must be altered to eliminate design-specific results, that is, results that are based on, hence specific to, the design used”.

Research questions are central to the complexities of the fieldwork process. These questions channel the nature and outcomes of the study; they are fundamental in explicating the hypothesis and the envisaged objective of the survey/inventory.

## 1.7 Aims

The primary aim of the survey is to locate the sacred natural sites of the Eastern Free State and understand their setting in the context. Mautse is a valley of cultural and religious pilgrimage with a plethora of sacred stations describing its cultural and religious work. Motouleng Cave is also a cultural and religious site of pilgrimage. It is a gigantic cave specialising in fertility rituals; however, it is small compared to Mautse. Saint Augustine Priory at Modderpoort is a site with a variety of descriptions. It is also a site of religious and cultural pilgrimage; it also practises Christianity and indigenous religious traditions. Oetsi is a gigantic cave with strong ethnic connections; however, it lacks the marked religious traditions experienced at the other three sites.

Furthermore the aim of this survey is to gauge the extent to which the core meaning of indigenous belief systems are exercised at various sacred locations by the cultural and spiritual leadership of the sites, as well as the participation of the local adherents. The aims would further want to establish the significance of the names given to the sacred locations and their relations to land owners as well as ancestors who are perceived by the local adherents to be the owners of the sites.

The general intention of this research is to show the important role indigenous culture still plays in the lives of the African people and other ethnic groupings. Furthermore, this study aims to provide sufficient, reliable data about the sites, which may be useful to heritage authorities, scholars of religion and anthropologists, informing a broader society that may be ignorant on indigenous belief systems and to publicise the material obtained during the research process about the sacred natural sites of the Eastern Free State. Therefore, the aims are as follows in a summarised form:

- To understand sacred natural sites of the Eastern Free State in relation to their geographical setting;
- To have a proper record of some of the more popularly known sacred natural sites of the Eastern Free State;

- To create awareness for the broader society about the existence and nature of the sites and their significance;
- To ensure reliable data are generated about the existence and nature of the sacred sites;
- To compare the nature and functions of the sacred natural sites in the Eastern Free State;

## 1.8 Methodology

*Ethnography* is an extremely broad area with a large variety of practitioners and methods. However, the most common ethnographic approach is participant observation as part of field research. The ethnographer becomes immersed in the culture as an active participant and records extensive field notes.

The above quotation makes it clear that field research is essentially an ethnographic attribute. In fact, for many anthropologists fieldwork is synonymous with ethnography. According to Wolcott (1995:20), “fieldwork is a form of inquiry that requires a researcher to be immersed personally in the ongoing social activities of some individual or group carrying out research”. In this regard, fieldwork research requires the researcher to familiarise himself with the spatial dimensions of the research setting, its dynamics and belief systems. In fieldwork, the dynamics often change and the ethnographer must adapt to the setting that is inclusive of not only the user communities or local adherents.

The research community or host community in a setting like the areas researched is affected directly by an ethnographic survey of which the approach is to unveil socio-cultural patterns and sacred meanings as conceptualised by the local adherents or host communities. A fundamental distinction between ethnography as a method of doing field research and other social as well as behavioural scientific methods of investigation is that ethnographers in field research endeavour to unearth what the local adherents do at the sites, as well as why they assign sacred meanings to cultural work and beliefs at the sites.

With regard to this understanding of the main function of ethnography for doing fieldwork, the local adherents and those visiting the sites may form a premise for building local theories that can be tested, linked to empirical literature and be adopted for use elsewhere. Ethnography is not like other sciences; it depends on the researcher as the primary tool for data collection. It is therefore imperative to understand an ethnographer as a researcher who pays special attention to cultural matters of bias as well as to the accuracy of data.

The term fieldwork refers to a 'doing' stage of the research, in essence to signify that the researcher has left his/her study or office in order to undertake fieldwork at a practical level in order to obtain the required results of the investigation. Field research with regard to sacred natural sites compels the researcher to have knowledge about the sites, because the nature of their setting requires the researcher to engage with individual sites with the understanding that there are peculiar laws governing the sacred sites. In this respect, fieldwork provided the researcher with the opportunity to come to terms with all aspects of a cultural system of the host community who cannot be addressed through a laboratory, lecture room or a survey research alone. According to Whitehead (2005:5), "Spending long periods of time in the field is considered the crucial aspect of the classical ethnographer's ability to comprehensively describe components of a cultural system as accurately and with as little bias as possible." The ethnographer holds the conviction that the only possible way of gaining the host communities view of his or her own world is to spend more time in that world.

According to Whitehead (2005:5),

I introduce the concept of emic validity, and suggest that a primary reason for fieldwork in ethnography is to achieve the emic validity that ethnography promises. I define emic validity simply as understanding the study host(s) from their own system of meanings. I argue that this can be achieved only by being in the host community and coming to a thorough understanding of the daily lives of the study hosts.

As Malinowski pointed out more than 80 years ago, the goal of ethnography is "to grasp the native's point of view, to realize his vision of the world" (1922:25). Moreover, as suggested by Guba and Lincoln (1997:198), the various hypotheses, theories, and interpretive frameworks brought by outside investigators "may have little or no meaning within the emic view of studied individuals, groups, societies, or cultures".

'Emic Validity' could be obtained during fieldwork through a daily recording of field notes because this is important to the ethnographic process so that critical data captured shall not be forgotten. According to Whitehead (2005:7), "This process of recording field notes facilitates the iterative process in ethnography, as questions emerge from the findings that are then viewed as important, and can help in the formulation of new or supplemental questions that furthers the assurance of emically valid products."

According to Dowling and Brown (2010:11), “The empirical field is the general area of practice, or activity or experience about which you intend to make claims. Empirically, your research must involve the selection and elaboration of a region of this field as a localised empirical setting. This setting will contain the specific site of your empirical work.”

The assertion above means that field research is the design, planning and management of empirical investigation in real life settings. The work is conducted in alien context such as caves, lakes and mountains for this research. In this regard, the field researcher creates the conditions under which credible and valid research can be done. The alien context where research is carried out must meet research specifications of the field researcher in the design of the investigation; the researcher will or find a convenient and conducive climate for ease of access to space and place in the researcher endeavour.

As a researcher in the field, particularly at the sacred natural sites of the Eastern Free State, I visited the sites on numerous occasions between the periods (2008-2013). In the actual engagement with the sites, I travelled on foot to the sacred stations in March and September 2008; further travelling to the sites on my own where in January, April, September, November and December 2009. In May and October 2009, a group of trainee researchers visited sites with Prof Philip Nel, Prof Wouter Van Beek, Prof Paul Post and Dr Stephanie Cawood. The actual fieldwork was conducted by means of interviews with the local adherents or host communities and other informants who were visiting the sites for cultural and religious reasons. The sacred natural sites had people who permitted the field interviews to be undertaken at the physical localities.

## **1.9 Ethics of field research**

Ethical conduct in fieldwork research is of primary importance for both the researcher and the host community. Integrity in this respect is pivotal, because it opens up a reciprocal relationship between all the stakeholders in the research process. The integrity of the researcher relates directly to the ethical conduct of the researcher. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:519), “The ethics of the researcher also involves the integrity with which the research methodologies and techniques are accomplished. There should be discipline in which manner the ‘tools’ of science are handled.”



In this regard, the honesty of the research process should be fundamental and transparent in the atmosphere where such research is undertaken. The sacred natural sites where research is undertaken become domains in which the informants who give information are research participants who must be treated with utmost sensitivity. Babbie and Mouton further state (2001:519), “Knowledge finds uses in a society and it is ‘consumed’ by a knowledge industry broader than the scientific community.”

The research process at the sacred natural sites was undertaken strictly in conjunction with the agreement of the host community, internal site leaders and pilgrims. These groups of people were research stakeholders who agreed to be interviewed by the researcher after the objective of the interview and its envisaged outcomes had been explained to them.

The practical steps followed in this regard were to explain to the informants the objective of my visit to the site and to ask permission to talk to them about the site and its main cultural and religious work. In some compounds at the sites, permission must be given by a senior traditional healer for information to be shed about a respective sacred station. In this regard, certain acts of reverence and respect for the place where the interview would take place are fundamental, for example, the researcher would be asked to take his or her shoes off before entering the traditional healer’s compound.

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:520),

It is generally accepted that participants should not be forced into participation. It should be based on free will. This also applies to the completion of questionnaires. This principle may, in extreme cases, lead to incomplete data, but enforcing participation would not assist the gauging of reliable data.

This would generally make the research process quite challenging, because it is the prerogative of the informant to assist in giving information. Permission had to be sought to visit the sacred natural sites before the interviews could be conducted, and in some areas of the sites, the informants wanted clarity about the intended purpose of the research. The informants wanted to know how they were going to benefit from this research and that when they are imparting critical information about the sites will they names be published, this part of concern is premised on the doctrine anonymity, that protects the informants from being targeted for giving out information.

### 1.9.1 Informed consent

Informed consent is a requirement in ethical research or field research. This procedure is a measure that guards against invasive procedures in field research that may threaten the well-being of the site. In this regard, Wax (1995:27) states,

As a requirement of ethical research, informed consent was intended to ensure that the subject was placed in a situation where, freely and independently, she could decide whether or how to participate. It was also intended to serve as a legal mechanism for ensuring a proper balance of power between subject and investigator.

The requirement for 'informed consent' in ethical conduct protects the informant from being at the receiving end of demeaning or damaging information that would be detrimental to the reputation of the informant. Babbie and Mouton further state (2001:520),

A serious problem occurs when indigenous cultures and religions are not treated with respect. An anthropologist or other social scientists may take photos of people whilst performing a ritual. They then have no problem in publishing that photo without considering what kind of harm it may bring to the person.

Many times in the research process consent might be given by the informant that photos may be taken and information be recorded. Trustworthiness of the research process is dependent on both the researcher and the informant, in this regard the agreements reached between the researcher and the informants must not be defied.

Ethical conduct at the sites requires of the researcher to respect each participant as a person capable of making an informed decision regarding participation in the research process. Furthermore, the researcher must ensure that participants have received full disclosure of the nature of the study, the risks, benefits and alternatives, with an extended opportunity to ask questions.

A principle of justice in ethical considerations is of paramount importance. It requires equality in the distribution of benefits among the population likely to benefit from the research. It is further important to note that the communities at the sites are extremely relevant to the subject of culture as expressed in the sacred natural sites and the research process; furthermore, they

are historical communities in terms related to the subject matter; they create norms for the subject matter.

The historical consciousness held by members of the community gives credence to the information they provide. It is equally important that a research community be given assurance as to the protection of information they give.

In conclusion, the researchers' project was part of a larger project led by Professor Philip Nel and Dr Stephanie Cawood at the sacred natural sites of the Eastern Free State. The project leaders obtained permission from the landowners to conduct field research at the sites and further consultations were made with community leaders who reside next to the sacred sites, while the research cohort at the sacred sites had joint discussions with the NHC, SAHRA and farmers.

### **1.10 Data collection methods**

Data in the field research can be collected by a variety of methods. In field research, a formal collection process is a prerequisite, because it ensures that the data gathered are both defined and accurate in order to establish findings and outcomes peculiar to the context of data collection. In this regard, documenting fieldwork information is imperative. Therefore, collection processes should be accurate and the detail of the information captured must be reliable. Capturing fieldwork information should be validated by an honest retrieving of responses from the respondents, with a view to construct a future record of the sites.

The fieldwork record becomes a historical record for the future, according to Mouton (2004:104) "As a historical record for yourself and other possible researchers." If research has already been undertaken with regard to sacred natural sites in the Eastern Free State, then the current research conducted becomes secondary data collection. There is no archival information about the sacred natural sites in the Eastern Free State, or there are scanty records about fieldwork research undertaken. However, it is essential that the elements that make up the field inventory are meticulously documented and recorded. At the sites, the researcher kept a diary and a record recording book to capture information that was provided by the informants.

The diary and the recording book ensure some form of quality assurance regarding data collection methods at the sites. Quality assurance means taking note of the significance of data capturing in fieldwork. According to Mouton (2004:107) "By keeping a record of the main

decisions and events during the fieldwork process, you construct a historical record of the whole process to which you can return later if necessary.”

Quality assurance would eventually ensure that information captured could be cited in future by researchers and students aspiring to undertake field research in future particularly with reference to sacred natural sites. Following are the salient points that influence recording of data in field research:

- Dates when access was gained to the field
- Dates when the actual field interviews were conducted
- Keeping a record of the stakeholders in the fieldwork research process
- Documenting the general issues pertaining to the upkeep of the sites

Fieldwork documentation is strongly aligned to research methods that emphasise systematic capturing of data in an effort not to lose quality of the process. It is important to understand that the research designs in doing fieldwork are represented a plethora of methods to promote quality assurance. The following requirements are prerequisites for doing research:

- In qualitative research, researchers tend to keep field notes as they participate in the fieldwork often in natural field settings.
- Process, include copies of the questionnaire, response rates, etc.
- Historians working in archives would normally keep a detailed record of the precise location of the data sources, missing documents or parts of documents.
- Issues relating to the historical sources, etc.
- The data collected was obtained through field interviews of the local adherents, traditional site leaders and traditional healers.
- Data were also collected by means of a digital audio voice recorder, camera, field notebook and diaries, in an effort to enhance ethical considerations connected to the interviewing process.
- GPS reading of the landscape of the sites and reading of the radius between the sites is of critical importance for understanding the proximity of the sites in the Mohokare region.

### **1.10.1 Fieldwork research**

Fieldwork research at Mautse, Motouleng and Modderpoort was conducted over a period of five years (2008-2013). During the course of research, the landscape of the sites and the dynamics of these sites changed, largely due to the accessible nature of the sites. Validating the outcomes is also largely dependent on the nature of the landscape, which varies from time to time. Because of the changing dynamics of the sites and the different people giving information about sacred locations, the researcher had to apply a mixed method approach to obtain the different levels of data acquisitions. In this regard, if data were given about a particular sacred location, the researcher would test the validity of this data with a different research community.

The theory of triangulation plays a central role in information gathering for different stakeholders in field research. According to Mouton (1991:91), “Researchers ought to accept as a general principle that the inclusion of multiple sources of data collection in a research project is likely to increase the reliability of the observations”. In this regard, information gathering at the sites posed the challenge of arriving at a specific conclusion so that the information obtained cannot be complemented or opposed. At times, the information will change to satisfy the traditional healer or faith healer in charge of a sacred location, therefore, it was important for the research team to be sensitive to the different functions of the traditional healer and faith healer, in an effort not to interpret them as belonging to a similar indigenous tradition.

### **1.10.2 Validity**

Data collection in fieldwork research requires some form of measuring instrument; in this regard, the researcher used a digital voice audio recorder and digital camera to capture or record information provided by the research community. Using this kind of information collection has certain advantages, because such an exercise represents a highly reliable method of gathering data.

The principles of validity in fieldwork research are fundamental cornerstones that are accepted as empirical proof by fieldwork researchers. These principles assure the capturing of data to be as reliable as possible and there can be no self-reliance on the part of the field researcher to obtain data without the aid of measuring instruments. Furthermore, these measuring

instruments are significant for research outcomes and the principles of trustworthiness in qualitative research are supported by the theories of validity and reliability.

These theories can be considered from an epistemological foundation of the field research in question; therefore, field research outcomes must be evaluated on sound principles of validity. Therefore, validity in field research refers to the accuracy of the inventory of the sacred natural sites of the Eastern Free State and the sacred sites content that sheds light on the context of the study. In this regard, the researcher is close to the research community. Furthermore, the researcher, researches what the traditional healers do at the sites. In that case, the nature of the research becomes subjective, which means that the researcher will want to understand what the traditional healers do and how they account for their lives. Also, the most valid method of research will enable the researcher to listen to the narratives of the traditional healers, the stories of day-to-day activities of the sites.

However, the researcher cannot iron out the contradictions and opposition as well as the conflicting views of the traditional healers about the nature of their function. The fact that the sites are a 'living heritage' implies that one has to deal with changes of site narratives. The narratives of each site appear not to be seamless in every respect of their nature.

According to Willis (2007:216), "Internal validity is to ask whether the study is replicable" if another researcher does the study again, will he or she obtain the same results as the original researcher? An important aspect of internal validity is the reliability of the data collected. In this regard, validity may refer to the question as to whether an effect has been demonstrated in one research setting and whether in a different setting the same results could be replicated.

According to Cook and Campbell (1979:37), "Validity checks how well the content of the research are related to the variables studied, it seeks to answer whether the research questions are representative of the variables researched, is a demonstration that the items of a test are drawn from the domain being measured." In other words, the statements, conclusions or inferences we desire to draw from the results of empirical research that can be subject to validation.

With regard to the above assertion, the important function of validity in field research is to measure the phenomenon called sacred sites and the construction of sacredness at the sites. A potential difficulty in achieving validity in field research could stem from a research bias, emerging from selective collection and recording of data, or from interpretation based on

personal perspective. However a credible method of data collection could only be achieved by means of the measuring instruments alluded to above.

The concepts of validity are based on the assumption that the researcher is looking for ways and successive laws that pave the way for generalisable and replicable research. Replicability is a requirement if generalisation is one's goal in undertaking good research. On the other hand, to replicate results in the constantly changing context of the sites is largely impossible. In the context of the sites researched, replicability cannot be an absolute requirement.

### **1.11 SANPAD and RCI**

The South Africa Netherlands Research Programme on Alternatives in Development (SANPAD) is spearheaded by these two countries in research collaboration to advance a programme earmarked at previously disadvantaged communities in an effort to empower them through scientific and social research. This research programme is financed by the Netherlands Ministry of Finance.

The SANPAD research workshops were facilitated by South African researchers and Dutch researchers who dispensed high quality research input and teaching from a multifaceted approach to a variety of methodologies. Aligned to this research collaboration is the annual programme called 'Research Capacity Initiative' (RCI) earmarked for emerging researchers.

The RCI programme took approximately seven weeks of contact learning in social science research methodologies offered at doctoral level, the RCI programme was conducted in 2008 and 2009. I studied and participated in the RCI workshops in Durban, Cape Town and Johannesburg. The project number was 07/12; the project leaders were Prof PJ Nel from South Africa and Prof WEA van Beek and Prof P Post from Netherlands. The project title was 'The Construction of Sacredness of Place and Space in the Eastern Free State'.

The workshops, transport of students and other related expenses were funded by SANPAD to the value of approximately R200 000 per year. I was honoured by SANPAD to be a recipient of this prestigious scholarship in South Africa.

I completed the following modules in the Research Capacity Initiative Programme:

- Survey of theories

- Identifying a good research question
- Survey of Qualitative Methods
- Evaluating research designs and research proposal writing
- Dealing with data
- Mentoring and Dissemination
- Composing and defending the research proposal

The best renowned research methodologists available in South Africa and Netherlands dealt with each of the themes in the most astute way. This has paved the way for me to continue with my doctoral programme anchored by the Research Capacity Initiative Programme.

### **1.12 Value and importance of the research**

The study on sacred natural sites of the Eastern Free State is an inventory research, which attempts to understand the significance of the sites for host communities or local adherents in the context of the sites. These sacred sites are very important to the user communities still attached to the indigenous beliefs in the work of the sacred sites. These communities have not divorced their cultural and spiritual beliefs in the sites, which represent their identity and belief systems.

The study will add value to the importance of the sites in relation to other communities outside the belief systems of African people in order to capture and interact with this belief system of knowledge-based understanding. This study will assist in promoting knowledge about the sacred sites and the role they could play in educating South Africans about African spiritual beliefs.

With regard to the assertion above, the study will add value to different agencies that embrace heritage systems' in the country. This understanding will help unravel the significance of culture and indigenous spiritualities' related to the revered work of the sacred sites. Furthermore, the cultural and religious contexts within the ambit of the study will entrench the knowledge system in operation for a comprehensive understanding of the sites and their meaning and purpose in our communities.



This inventory is an explorative study, because the sacred natural sites in question are relatively new to intensive research interrogation. The elements of this research would include the different racial groups of Mohokare, the user communities or local adherents and the property owners on whose sites are located.

The value of this research would further offer relevant insight into the diversity about sacred natural sites with their related sacred locations, which is home to the sacred properties of the sites, the springs, clay and altars are among the properties affording research value to the study. The researcher is of the view that the sacred sites as a phenomenon for research could be structured qualitatively to enhance the significance of field research.

There has not been sufficient scientific assessment for sacred spots like ‘Nkokomohi’ where sacred medicinal clay is located on the Western side of Mautse Valley. A high volume of clay is harvested in this area by traditional healers for purposes of healing; however, I was made to believe there are bacteria in the clay that would cure a number of ailments in our communities. A rigorous scientific testing of the medicinal clay is needed. In this regard, it is of primary importance to understand medicinal clay as an important subject to indigenous healing and its value for indigenous belief systems is paramount.

The assertion above impacts on the nature of indigenous knowledge studies and promotes the value of indigenous traditional beliefs; therefore, it is imperative to understand that sacred natural sites are positioned within a canon of indigenous knowledge studies, which may advance an empirical interpretation to research into sacred sites.

According to Sillitoe, Dixon and Barr (2005:15),

It is possible that indigenous knowledge will advance scientific understanding of environmental processes. Not only is the need to build on people’s perceptions and practices and not do violence to them, increasingly acknowledged, but also the heretical idea is gaining currency that these people may have something to teach us about their environment and its sustainable exploitation.

Indigenous knowledge is important for generating cultural as well as religious insights for purposes of empirical advancements in science. What is stressed by the authors is that indigenous belief systems could be of scientific value to this research, precisely for the fact that

sacred natural sites incorporate physical localities, which may give objective meaning to research outcomes. However, it is true that the sacred sites are by their nature indigenous and confined to the cultures of the Basotho people, advancing scientific enquiry into this setting is important for the development of the context but not the transformation of the cultures of the Basotho people.

There is no evidence that during the undertaken research, scientific measures became key instruments in understanding the culture of the sites, the hypothetical nature of the scientific notion emerges because of various pilgrimages to the sites including touristic adventures that may see something more dynamic beyond the everyday cultural or religious activities of the sites. Furthermore, this research would show that it is significant in terms of promoting indigenous knowledge for scientific exploration.

Scientific exploration is premised on a knowledge-based enquiry regardless of the nature of discipline, in this regard, research into sacred natural sites of the Eastern Free State advocates for indigenous knowledge to be at par with other knowledge traditions enjoying empirical recognition at institutions of learning. A commitment to research into sacred natural sites may infuse a sense of the significance of education from a belief system believed to be detached from scientific enquiry. In other words, this could amplify indigenous knowledge research and make it not only valid, but also expose its relevance for education and research. According to Sillitoe, Dixon and Barr (2005:15),

A commitment to indigenous knowledge research presupposes a regard for others' knowledge traditions, that these are not only valid but also that they may contain valuable intelligence unknown to us, and at the very least represent a point of view that we need sympathetically to accommodate.

The indigenous properties of the sites testify to the traditional and cultural aspects of indigenous belief systems' inherent in the beliefs of the local adherents or user communities. In this regard, indigenous knowledge would play a leading role in ensuring that the properties of the sacred natural sites are seen as possessing important knowledge for generations to come. Indigenous knowledge as a research tool might advance a research interest into the sacred properties of the sites.

Various researchers have undertaken research at the sites, particularly at Mautse sacred valley, where there is a phenomenal site of medicinal clay. In this regard, Osman and Cawood took

clay particles to be tested at a microbiology laboratory at the University of the Free State in 2009 and 2012. When the results came out it showed there were bacteria in the clay. Tests are continuing to establish the medicinal nature of the clay from a scientific point of view. This further shows that the sites are a fertile ground to conduct research and promote knowledge from a context that is indigenous by its very nature.

The importance of this research is premised on the interface between indigenous knowledge and scientific enquiry, of which the sites have been a role player. This assertion could be strengthened by the fact that the scientific world did not take cognisance of the cultural events at the sites, nor did cultural ignorance play a major role in defining what was legitimate in terms of scientific knowledge. This promoted a bias towards understanding indigenous belief systems. According to Sillitoe, Dixon and Barr (2005:15),

The lack of respect shown by some scientists for others' knowledge traditions, especially in the past, on the assumptions that technological superiority implies answers to all difficulties, has been a considerable developmental barrier, leading not only to misperceptions of problems and inappropriate research, but offensive interference in others' lives, denying them a voice.

The sacred natural sites under the aegis of indigenous knowledge may have a connection with technology and this could pave the way for effective communication at the sites. Efforts have been made in this regard to use modern technology when interviewing the research community and permission has been granted by the traditional leadership of the sites to use technology. The implications for this development are that interviews could be managed through advanced methods so as not to lose the quality of the interview.

Finally, this study would show that the historical context of Mohokare is vital for understanding the contribution of the Kingdom of Lesotho towards sacrality in a landscape that was contested over a number of decades by the legitimate inhabitants of the Mohokare Valley against colonial encroachment into the fertile valley. The sacred sites contextualised in the Mohokare Valley have contributed immensely to the cultural history of the Basotho people. They have attracted international communities to view its splendour and experience the poignancy of sacredness emerging from the sites.

The researcher observes that the rich repositories of indigenous culture in the Mohokare Valley, specifically the sacred natural sites, are a source of in-depth knowledge for the country.

However, because of their level of spiritual and cultural importance, indigenous culture can give a new meaning to cultural consciousness among different people, both for the user communities and communities who only visit the sites. The numerous sacred locations at the sites are significant for their diverse functionality at the sites, because cultural and religious practices are experienced at different levels and for different reasons by communities and tribes espousing them.

Research into sacred sites would expose the diverse responses and opinions of people about indigenous lifestyles, as well as how these lifestyles would influence an informed position of opinion making in the body of knowledge in the country. Conducting research into sacred natural sites would envisage a restoration of heritage projects undermined by colonialism and apartheid. In this regard, the responsibility to bring to fore the sacrality of the sites is the responsibility of the present generation of scholars who are geared towards placing the study about sacred natural sites on the pedestal of relevant scholarship.

This survey or inventory study into the sacred natural sites of the Eastern Free State, would expose the hidden treasures of African spiritualities' and the way in which they are embroidered by the customs and cultures expressing the identity of particular race groups in our country South Africa. These expressions are vivid at the locations of the sites where names express the religious or cultural work of the station. The cave of all nations at the Mautse Valley gives an expression of diversity beyond the historical identity of the context of this site and the value of this important witness to our diverse character may mean that the cultural practices of the sacred natural sites of the Eastern Free State may not be bound to a single ethnic group.

### **1.13 Literature review**

An attempt to review pertinent scholarly or academic literature on the subject of sacred sites and the related concepts attached to sacredness of space and place is a phenomenal task, as the quantity of material is immense. The purpose of this section is confined to sources influential in addressing the question of sacrality with its relative subjects exposed in the research question. The scholarly experts write from their positions and vantage points. The first aspect deals with the concept of 'sacred space' and its corollary ideologies. These sources have interest in ritual studies, sacred space, sacred, landscape, sacrality, and locality. And it is of

critical importance to grasp the expertise ushered by the scholars for the exposition of the study about sacrality.

## **Sacred Space**

According to Post, Nel and Van Beek (2014:3),

Space and sacred place/space have thus been widely represented in recent decades in what we could call the thematic canon of the broad range of culture studies, ritual and religious studies, and social sciences, especially anthropology. An important impulse here is that heritage, pilgrimage, and tourism have at present become current thematic fields in which sacred places are constantly present.

Indigenous knowledge studies could become a thematic field for further exposition of the concept of sacred space like anthropology. Therefore, emerging from the themes reflected above, sacred space is first a defined place, a space distinguished from other spaces. The rituals that people either practice at a place or direct toward it, mark its sacredness and differentiate it from other defined spaces. To understand the character of such places, Jonathan Z. Smith has suggested a helpful metaphor of sacred space as a “focusing lens”.

A sacred place focuses attention on the forms, objects, and actions in it and reveals them as bearers of religious meaning. The symbols describe the fundamental constituents of reality as a religious community perceives them, defines life in accordance with that view, and provides a means of access between the human world and divine realities.

Sacred spaces may therefore be varied in nature depending on ascriptions to them by people or in terms of what is performed at them. Some sacred spaces may have long histories, in particular within historical religious traditions such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism. Others may be quite new and may even have ephemeral status as a sacred site. Commonly, sacred sites are associated with organised religious practice and the status is sanctioned by official protocols. Sacred sites located in the natural environment at mountains, rivers, trees, fountains, caves, etc., usually acquire their status and importance from informal spiritual connectivity to cultural and spiritual practices of formal as well as informal and local groups of people.

## **The Sacred**

According to Post, Nel and Van Beek (2014:4) “Using a wide range of literature (Knott 2005:87-93, 215-228; Evans 2003; Heelas & Woodhead 2005), a ‘taxonomy of the sacred domain’ can be sketched. It should be noted that this can only be indicated, not defined as a sort of alternative typology for the general concept of ‘religion’.

The adjective ‘sacred’ has wide connotations to its application, ranging from a variety of sacral literature. Evans (2003) asserts, “The sacral can be denoted in a very general sense as ‘things set apart.’ Post, Nel and Van Beek (2014:4) assert, “This concept can then be expanded to a matrix containing four types: the ‘personal sacred’ and ‘civil sacred’ (both connected with the natural dimension), and the ‘religious sacred’ and ‘spiritual sacred’ (both involving the supernatural).”

The definitions above explicate a wide semantic spectrum of the adjective ‘sacred’ in terms of its nature. In other words, the sacred has a natural attachment to its function as well as a supernatural function, and it cannot only be restricted to a particular dimension or function. The four types, personal, civil, religious and spiritual, denote the wide category the adjective carries in its application. It caters for both spiritual and civil. Post, Nel and Van Beek (2014:40) conclude by saying,

These two categories (religion and the sacred) were separated at the beginning of the Modernity project, but the sacred does not disappear while religion deinstitutionalizes. Thus, institutional religion cannot do without spirituality, but spirituality can flourish without religion bound to tradition.

The definition of ‘sacred’ is traditionally connected to reverence due to sanctity and is generally the state of being ‘holy’ perceived by religious individuals as associated with divinity or sacred considered worthy of spiritual respect or devotion; or inspiring awe or reverence among believers.

According to Wikipedia (2000), “From an anthropological perspective, the religious view of the sacred is an emic perspective on a culture’s collection of thoughts and practices that function as a basis for the community’s social structure.” In principle, this view is in principle in line with the Durkheim view of the sacred as a function of social cohesion.

The broad context in which the word 'sacred' reverberates illustrates that in culture, religion, social sciences and anthropology there is a strong emphasis on the sacred, which may accrue in different contexts.

## **Landscape**

There are two main meanings for the word 'landscape'. It can refer to the visible features of an area of land, or to an example of the genre of painting, that depicts such an area of land. Landscape, in both senses, includes the physical elements of landforms such as mountains, hills, waterfalls, rivers, lakes, and indigenous vegetation. On the other hand, landscape may refer to a cluster of concepts within a particular field, for example, one may refer to the economic landscape of South Africa, implying all aspects that form and influence the RSA economy. In the same manner, it may refer to a configuration of concepts within a social structure, for example the "landscape" of child bearing among the Zulu people.

According to Forman and Godron (1986),

Landscape ecology by definition deals with the ecology of landscapes. So what are landscapes? Surprisingly, there are many different interpretations of the term 'landscape'. The disparity in definitions makes it difficult to communicate clearly, and even more difficult to establish consistent management policies.

In this regard, landscape invariably includes an area of land containing in a mosaic form patches of landscape elements. Forman and Godron (1986) define landscape as "a heterogeneous land area composed of a cluster of interacting ecosystems that is repeated in similar form throughout."

Turner *et al.* (2002) define landscape as "an area that is spatially heterogeneous in at least one factor of interest. The landscape concept differs from the traditional ecosystem concept in focusing on groups of ecosystems and the interactions among them-the focus is on spatial heterogeneity and its impact on process."

However, landscapes generally occupy some spatial space, as is the case with in the sacred natural sites of the Eastern Free State. Therefore the perspective to define landscape in relation to the sacred natural sites in question, would assume a spiritual perspective, cultural perspective and a religious perspective. A landscape is not necessarily defined by its size; rather, it is

defined by a spatially understood area relevant to the object under consideration. Sacred sites, in consequence, form part of larger landscapes of history, culture and religion, but as a part of a social-political environment as well, as encountered in this research.

### **Sacrality**

This concept denotes how the participants in the field view sacred environments objects, persons and performances. This assumption also filters down to the fact that society and religious collectivities constantly create sacred things out of ordinary things. According to Paden (2000:9), “Sacrality is *a priory* not for the interpreter, but for the participants, who configure their world and behaviours as responses to sacred objects.”

With regard to the above assertion, sacrality draws its level of application from human beings who have the capacity to change profane objects to sacred objects. Even in natural settings like sacred sites there are objects made sacred by local adherents. Eliade says (1959:12),

The sacred tree, the sacred stone are not adored as stone or tree; they are worshipped precisely because they are *hierophanies*, because they show something that is no longer stone or tree but the sacred, the *ganz andere*.

Sacrality, according to Eliade, is hierophantic and is realised in the field where objects are transformed for cultural and religious usage by the local adherents and the wider user community. According to Smith, the locality or space provides a lens to view the site or objects within the sacred site. According to Grimes, the performance renders a site sacred and its sacrality is not an inscribed natural aspect of the place.

### **Locality/Place**

This concept explains the place where rituals and healing are performed; it is a constant referral to where a performance for rituality is exercised. The concept could also be understood to be a position, place, situation, location, spot and a site. The concept is synonymous with other doing words cited above describing action in the fieldwork. Other terms used for ‘locality’ is ‘physical place’ in fieldwork. On the other hand, place and locality may also have symbolic meaning in the sense that people attach various ideas and affections to place and locality. Often place and locality is culture before it is nature, as Lefebvre would see it. The way we look at a specific mountain, for example, is part of an experiential structure. In the first instance, a piece



of land may be viewed as cultural belonging and therefore its symbolic value may precede its physical significance.

## **Eliade**

The works of Eliade in the disciplines of comparative religions, anthropology and sacred space and place had been used (1954; 1958; 1959; 1961; 1976). Eliade's prolific pen produced his theory that hierophanies form the basis of all religion. His immense contributions to religious studies shows that myths and rituals do not simply commemorate hierophanies, but at least in the mind of 'religious man', actually allow participation in them. For the purposes of drawing from his contribution in the field of sacrality of space, Eliade has utilised the theory of hierophany as a religious tool to explicate the importance of sacred objects for the religious man.

According to Eliade (1959:11), "Man becomes aware of the sacred because it manifests itself, shows itself, as something wholly different from the profane. To designate the act of manifestation of the sacred, we have proposed the term hierophany."

Eliade's position on the sacred gives an exposition that hierophanies are by their very nature manifestations of sacred realities. An ordinary stone at the sacred natural sites, regarding Eliade's theory, could be viewed as sacred, characterising the whole component of a hierophany. It is for this reason that the sites in question are occupied by various objects that are seen to be sacred. The compounds, the caves, the churches and shrines, and the altars are a hierophantic classification in the view of Eliade.

Furthermore, hierophanies are a determining factor of sacrality and based on this reasoning, there could be no substitute for an element of sacrality other than a hierophantic emphasis of sacrality based on the objects found in the sites, such as stones, trees, shrines and mud altars. According to Eliade, "there is no solution of continuity." In other words, hierophanies determine sacrality of 'place and space'. Nothing else makes this determination.

Eliade further claims (1959:12) "The sacred tree, the sacred stone are not adored as stone or tree; they are worshipped precisely because they are hierophanies, because they show something that is no longer stone or tree but the sacred, the *ganz andere*." In this regard, the sacred in view of the hierophany participates in the sacralising process; however, the sacred stone remains the stone, except for its hierophantic status.

Although Eliade (1959:12) stresses the antithetical position of the profaned setting, he claims,

A sacred stone remains a stone apparently or more precisely, from the profane point of view, nothing distinguishes it from all other stones. But for those to whom a stone reveals itself as sacred, its immediate reality is transmuted into a supernatural reality.

The position above advocated by Eliade seems to qualify everything exceptionally religious. Furthermore, primitive religious people would experience that all nature is capable of revealing itself as cosmic sacrality. “The cosmos in its entirety can become a hierophany.” (1959:12)

There is a dual polarity of sacred and profane, which Eliade propounds within the aegis of sacrality as an expression between real and unreal or pseudo-real. This duality relates to religious man whose quest is to be part of the reality that brings sacred power experienced in the hierophanies ranging from stones to the cosmos.

According to Eliade, the religious person in the first instance, is the one who is saturated with the sacralised world; he is capable of distinguishing between what is sacred and not. However, Eliade draws attention to the desacralised world in which non-religious man lives. It is for this reason that Eliade’s proposition of the polarity sacred-profane takes the centre stage to examine the man in the sacred and the profaned world or in a sacralised or desacralised world.

In this regard, Eliade (1959:13) says,

It should be said at once that the completely profane world, the wholly desacralized cosmos, is a recent discovery in the history of the human spirit. It does not devolve upon us to show by what historical processes and as the result of what changes in spiritual attitudes and behavior modern man has desacralized his world and assumed a profane existence.

The theory of Eliade regarding the sacred and the profane in a context of communities attached to the sacred sites speaks to their belief systems that allow them to conceptualise the cosmos as a sacred place, where objects found in the sites assume a sacral character; therefore, promoting a cosmology akin to indigenous traditional religion.

The theory of Eliade in view of religious man experiencing a sacred world with its related sacred objects is antithetical to what Eliade calls ‘the non-religious man’ or the modern

community, which is responsible for the profanity of the world. At the sacred natural sites of the Eastern Free State both the hosting communities and the visitors are jointly responsible for the profanity that prevails on the grounds of the sites. The grounds of the sites are littered with dirt, and the compounds and caves are not well looked after. The host community is aware of the poor state of the sites in respect of keeping the grounds clean and attractive.

Therefore, the difference between the religious man and the non-religious man has profound shortcomings in terms of the application of the sacred and the profane. It would well be that the religious community, in the context of the sites researched in the Eastern Free State, carries more responsibility for the desacralisation of the sites.

According to Eliade (1959:14),

The abyss that divides the two modalities of experience-sacred and profane, will be apparent when we come to describe sacred space and the ritual building of the human habitation, or the varieties of the religious experience of time, or the relations of religious man to nature and the world of tools, or the consecration of human life itself, the sacrality with which man's vital functions (food, sex, work, and so on) can be charged.

Finally, Eliade's theory on modern and non-religious man as well as archaic societies calls to mind a distinction between two men of the primitive society and a man of the modern society who is inclined towards autonomous thinking about the religious issues and the primitive man is inclined towards religious as the arbiter for advancing sacrality.

Eliade's contribution to the discipline of comparative religions has been immensely influenced by the work of Durkheim (1915), Mus (1935), Van Der Leeuw (1938) and Kramrisch (1946) and further developed ideas of sacred space and sacred time that remain widespread and influential. This assertion has convincingly been expounded by Martin Palmer for his Doctor of literature and Philosophy degree (2012).

## **Smith**

For a background in the theory and concept of the sacred, as well emplacement of ritual, the works of Smith (1978; 1987; 1992; 1993) were helpful. Smith critically evaluated the theories of space and time as advanced by Eliade. For Smith, the theory of sacrality is centred on the

emplacement of ritual. Furthermore, rituals are practices that function to sacralise space by calling attention to difference, and this is Smith's position of the determination of sacrality. Smith (1987:109) states, "Ritual is above all an assertion of difference." In this regard, his theory of sacrality as influenced by ritual is process of marking interest and the role of place as a fundamental component of ritual, place directs attention.

Smith's theory of sacrality is determined by place or a ritual performance on a particular spot in the site produces sacrality. In this regard, Smith opposes Eliade, who has advocated that objects like stones at the sites are hierophanies that determine the sacrality of the area. In other words, sacrality by hierophantic objects is a religious phenomenon experienced by the primitive societies but contradicted by the modern man in a modern society. Martin Palmer (2012:5) states, "Smith also criticized the methodology of Eliade and dealt with the problem of comparing data from wildly diverse cultures." Smith vehemently opposes Eliade about his ascription of sacrality via religion. He accords 'place' as a vehicle for ritual performance. In other words, his proposition is that no religious act can simply become sacred before the enactment of a ritual act. Smith argues that religions like Christianity are portable; they can be transported through the mind to another place where sacrality can be determined through a ritual act.

Van Beek (2014:43) states,

For Smith ritual is a way to give special attention, so in this vein a shrine is a place to give special attention, both to the place and to the rituals of the space. And that attention is given in an embodied fashion, visibly, audibly, highlighting the invisible presences with full appeal on the senses.

The assertion by Van Beek carries weight in respect of the place where ritual is performed. Special attention is accorded the place where ritual performance is carried out; the place is set aside as a sacred station for ritual enactment. Sacrality is above all, a category of emplacement (1987:104).

According to Smith (1992:104-5),

'Sacrality' is conferred by virtue of ritual and that sacred cannot therefore be a substantial category. It is, however, maintained here that the manner in which

different discourses refer to localities as 'sacred' is perceived to be imbued with qualities different from normal living spaces and may be seen as 'set apart'

Nel's position, in this regard, is that the context of the sacred natural sites in the Eastern Free State characterises hierophanies that interact with the spaces of the sites every day. Furthermore Nel says, in terms of Jonathan Smith's (1992: 103-104) view, one may construe sacred places not only as places that direct attention to the material and immaterial associations of the site, but also to establish perceptions of fundamental difference from the ordinary living environment. This is a recurring mode in the work of Smith, where sacrality through ritual acts may fundamentally emphasise the production of space for ritual making, paving the way for sacrality.

According to Chidester (2012:8),

The sacred is not a stable lexicon with universal correlations; it is produced through intensive, ongoing, and extraordinary attention, through processes of interpretation, attending to minute detail, which is always over determined in their proliferation of meanings.

Cultural identity plays a leading role in producing space alongside the physical of the site and the spot where the ritual will take place. The appropriation of the sacred is attributed to a physical locality that has ancestral mandate through ritual to produce sacrality.

According to Nel (2014:137),

The integration of important spaces into senses of cultural and spiritual identity and vice versa, to reinvent spaces as reflections of community and self-determination, integration and identity, leaves little doubt that 'sacral' spaces have been thrust forward on the scene as centres of belonging in multiple ways."

This assertion by Nel may leave a gap between himself and Smith. Smith may visualise belongingness or emplacement as a subject of identifying with the ritual at that time, and in practical terms, identifying with sacred spaces for the purposes of belonging. This first requires an act of ritualisation mandated by the ancestors in terms of the researched sacred sites.

In conclusion, Smith's theory of the sacred is significantly an act of ritual enactment through emplacement. In other words, sacred space is not absolute and given, but its sacrality is created

through a ritual, which is, to say, marked by difference. There is a marked difference in determining sacrality between Eliade and Smith. Eliade stresses hierophantic objects as tantamount to archaic religious man viewing the cosmos as sacred. Smith dismisses Eliade's notion of the sacred as quasi-analytical nonsense, and inverts a formulation, sacred space is not absolute and given, but is made sacred by ritual.

## **Grimes**

Ronald Grimes is a noted ritual theorist whom in his own authority has widened the field of ritual. His publications in the field of ritual are invaluable (1975; 1982; 1992; 1999; 2000; 2011; 2013) these publications were very helpful for ritual enactment and ritual performance with regard to the determination of sacrality. The work of Grimes in the field of ritual has prompted him to critique the work of Jonathan Smith with regard to 'theory of ritual' by pointing out his monumental influence in religious studies.

According to Grimes (1999:261), "The theory is essentially spatial, rendering place determinative of sacrality and emphasising the incongruity between the ritualised and non-ritualised domains."

In this regard, Grimes asserts that Smith gives primacy to space in ritual theory, place becomes the tool by which ritual performance is enacted, however for Grimes ritual is a kind of action that happens in any place regardless of setting "And that such places vary in their importance to the rites they ground." (1999:261).

The primacy of space for ritual enactment by Smith gave rise to the critical assessment advanced by Grimes that his perimeters' for ritual theory were premised on 'emplacement' that constituted ritual, disregarding the theory of action in ritual enactment. To understand Grimes clearly his conviction in view of rituals (1999:261) he states, "Both Smith and I theorise about ritual, but he privilege space, and I do not. If I privilege anything, it is action. Accordingly, my aim is to engage in a critical reading of Smith's spatial theory of ritual from the point of view of a more action-oriented theory.

Grimes book, 'Beginnings in Ritual Studies' he states, (2013:63) "Space which is empty, uniform, and abstract, is given shape and life so it may become a ritual place such as a burial ground, dancing ground, or cathedral. All of these are curiously vacant, even haunting, when the actions of ritual are not occurring in them."

This assertion by Grimes has the characteristics of transforming the empty space into a place of action where ritual enactment can take place; the place is not defined, is not demarcated and is not fenced for performing ritual. Ritual action will take place without specific prescriptions. In this regard, action makes the actual work of ritual to predetermine the outcome of sacrality in an action setting.

In *Nascent Ritual* (1982:500) Grimes states, “Ritualizing transpires as animated persons enact formative gestures in the face of receptivity during crucial times in founded places.” This quotation shows persons in action infused with a sense of performing a ritual at an opportune time in a place found at that time. This position substantiates Grimes’ ritual action in determining sacrality and construction of sacredness of place not a situationalist perspective but from an action-oriented perspective in the theory of ritual enactment.

The theory of ritual assumes a myriad of interpretive dimensions specifically to the inventory of the sites of pilgrimage in the Eastern Free State. Both the perspectives of Smith and Grimes ritual performance are prevailing at the sites. The spatialized theory of ritual advanced by Smith is particularly visible at the Motouleng cave and Mautse Valley. The people coming to perform a ritual in a majority of cases at the sites repeatedly select the same spot for the performance of a ritual.

Smiths’ theory of ritual space has been attacked by Grimes for being inconsistent in his two books ‘Bare facts’ (1987) and ‘To Take Place’ (1992). Grimes claims, “By the end of Bare Facts, he has shifted from speaking of sacred place as the focusing lens to speaking of ritual as the focusing lenses.” Grimes supports his critique of Smith by asserting (1999:264),

‘In Bare Facts’ Smith is clearing away an established theory of ritual space and tentatively proposing the germ of a new one, in ‘To Take Place’, spatial metaphors assume a pronounced theoretical ascendancy. Smith makes statements that sound as if they could support an action theory of ritual, for example, ‘Ritual, is first and foremost, a mode of paying attention.

According to Grimes (1999:266) “In my view, we know which places are sacred and which are not by observing what is enacted or not enacted in them. Sacrality becomes evident in how people act. To be sure, ritualists cannot escape place, they act somewhere, not everywhere, but this fact alone does not imply that space is the constitutive ritual component.”

The theoretical views expressed by Grimes in respect of ritual action places sacrality not in a specific place but could be realised where performance of ritual is enacted. The choice of physical space is not a yardstick by which sacrality is determined. However, for Smith in 'To Take Place' he says (1987:104), "A ritual object or action becomes sacred by having attention focused on it in a highly marked way. From such a point of view, nothing is inherently sacred or profane. These are not substantive categories, but rather situational ones. Sacrality is, above all, a category of emplacement."

In conclusion, Grimes summarises the different positions they hold between himself with Smith about the theory of ritual (1999:269):

### **Smith**

- The 'where' (placed, location) of ritual is more definitive than it's 'what' or 'how', for the same reason that system is more determinative than performance.

### **Grimes**

- Space is no more determinative than any other component of ritual, for instance, actions, objects and times. In interpreting a rite, one should attend to the relations among components, not assume that one is definitive.

### **Turner**

Turner's theories are based on what is called "the liminal aspect of pilgrimage." This theory expounded in a chapter on 'Liminality and Communitas' (2002). Turner sees pilgrimage as involving a journey from original habitation to the sacred centre away from the centres of the population. The theories to be established in this study shows that pilgrimage is related to Liminality and Communitas.

In this afore regard, it is of extreme importance to understand Turner's theory in the light of pilgrims visiting the sacred sites of the Eastern Free State, particularly the physical localities and shrines alike, carrying with them the bonds of the home community to the pilgrimage centre. According to Nthoi (2006:70), "Turner associates pilgrimage with communitas experience (which is anti-structural) the pilgrimage journey is a rite of reversal."

Turner's model of pilgrimage focuses on religion in its universal form and he contrasts it with the ritual festival of a local community, which is parochial, inward looking and extremely



exclusive. According to Nthoi (2006:75), “For Turner, the pilgrimage is journey from an exclusive domain to an inclusive one, and from particularism, to universalism and egalitarianism.”

In anthropology, liminality is the quality of ambiguity or disorientation that occurs in the middle stages of ritual. When participants no longer hold their pre-ritual status, but have not yet begun the transition to the status, they will hold when the ritual is complete.

In other words, during a liminal stage of ritual, participants stand at a ritual spot between their previous way of structuring their identity, time or community, and a new way established by the performed ritual. Liminality and *communitas* are central to Turner’s work; in summary, they refer to pilgrimaging from one’s place to a ritual place where status in community standing does not become a norm. For instance, when a pilgrimage is undertaken, members of the upper and lower classes might mix and converse as equals, while in normal life they would rarely converse at all, or their conversations might be limited to giving or receiving orders. Through such collapsing of classes and status in the new community, a full-scale “*communitas*” of equal beings is realised.

The composition of the Mohokare communities and other communities outside this area pilgrimaging to the sites is not based on their social standing in the outside society. It is solely based on a community under the powers of ancestors, equality before the traditional leadership of the sites and the ancestors is the norm.

According to Nthoi (2006:137),

Turner’s sacred place is a fair distance away from major population and ecclesiastic centres. This peripheral location of major shrines juxtaposes the sacred shrine with secular structured life in society. The sacred center, which is the source of sacred *communitas*, is removed from the structured home communities with their emphasis on social differentiation. The journey from the home community to the sacred center is voluntary, transformative and anti-structural. As one enters the ritual landscape, he is greeted by a number of ritual symbols that increase in intensity as one nears the sanctuary. The sacred center is associated with a hierophany; a manifestation of the pilgrimage deity, which is believed to permanently reside within the sacred enclave.

Nthoi's assertion about Turner's theory of pilgrimage is constructed around the community making the place sacred. For example, community congregated at a church gives a sacred meaning to the context. At the church social differentiation or status do not affect sacrality, but the community gathering ascribes sacrality to the place.

Scholarly debate on Turner's theory on liminoid and *communitas* revolves around the practicalities of the theory and its determination of sacred space and sacrality. One cannot however, not disregard traces of Turner's theory within the sense of the sacred sites and pilgrimaging to the sites. Spiritual leaders and Traditional leaders would accompany their initiates to the sites for training for different lengths of time, which are usually understood as phases of transitions or within the liminoid. The hardships of these periods signal the structures bereft of the usual *communitas* of a structured society.

### **Sheldrake**

Sheldrake's theory emphasises space and place as the main themes that are capable of unfolding stories of myth, ritual and naming. According to Sheldrake (2001:6), "The social significance of places finds expression in music, art and architecture. Philosophers and others who reflect on place have moved away from the notion that empty space is the fundamental, natural reality and that place is a secondary, albeit necessary, social construction that gives meaning to what is otherwise a *tabula rasa*."

For Sheldrake, space is an abstract analytical concept. It is scientifically verified, contrasting this scientific notion of space is 'place' which is always tangible and within reach, it is physical and relational. In this regard, a number of existential philosophers held a conviction that place is prior to space and others disagreed with this notion.

According to Sheldrake (2001:7), "We come to know in terms of the particular knowledge of specific places before we know space as a whole or in the abstract. Spaces receive their being from locations and not from place."

The notions of space and place in Sheldrake's position create a multi-pronged approach to conceptualising their function in terms of harmonising them for a comprehensive application to sacrality at the sites. In a critical reading of space and place from Sheldrake's point of view, one realises that place is the house of being. "To say that mortals are is to say that in dwelling they persist through spaces by virtue of their stay among things and locations." (2001:1)

Before place 'can take place' space must assume a central role in the community, because place depends on relationships and close associations and the community have nostalgic memories about the place. A myriad of factors make a place to be a place, one of them being the socio-cultural and religious connections people have with place. In this regard, 'place and belonging' are essential elements in belongingness and placelessness. These notions find their meaning at Upper Madiboko, which addresses identity belonging. Belonging as a social norm involves both a connection to specific places and our existence within networks of stable relationships. Space and place in their cultural, social and religious roles cannot be detached from the real experiences of the host community, spaces and place even though Sheldrake views them in a different scope of function, they are central to the life of the sacred natural sites of the Eastern Free State.

According to Sheldrake (2001:1), "The concept of place refers not simply to geographical location but to a dialectical relationship between environment and human narrative. Place is space that has the capacity to be remembered and to evoke what is more precious."

In this above regard, the place where ancestral work is done at the sites would always evoke special memories of the nature of ritual work and healing rites executed. For Sheldrake, geography of place is secondary in terms of performance of ritual; what is important to him is the place, with the people performing the ritual or healing.

In conclusion, Sheldrake's complex notion of sacred has wider nuances that affect the field outcome, although this theory of Sheldrake does not afford the extensive detail that is forthcoming in terms of determining sacrality in place or space.

## **Lefebvre**

Lefebvre's monumental publication, *Production of Space* was originally written in French (1974) and translated into English (1991). Lefebvre's contention in the 'Production of Space' is that space is a social product or a complex social construction, based on value, and the social production of meanings) which affects spatial practices and perceptions. (1991:26).

Lefebvre contends that there are different modes of production of space (i.e. spatialisation) from natural space (absolute space) to more complex spatialities whose significance is socially produced (special space) (1991:28). Furthermore, Lefebvre analyses each historical mode as

three-part dialectic between everyday practices and perceptions, representations or theories of space and the spatial imaginary of the time. (1991:29).

According to Lefebvre (1991:60), “ Social space is a social product, the space thus produced also serves as a tool of thought and of action, in addition to being a means of production it is also a means of control and hence of domination, of power.”

Lefebvre’s contention on social space is influenced by the notion that geometry was originally a subject that dealt with space; it appears in this regard that this geometrical notion of space is countered by Lefebvre, who argues for a produced social space. Lefebvre (1991:1) states,

The word ‘space’ had a strictly geometrical meaning the idea it evoked was simply that of an empty area. In scholarly use, it was generally accompanied by some such epithet as ‘Euclidean’, ‘isotropic’, or ‘infinite’, and the general feeling was that the concept of space was ultimately a mathematical one. To speak of ‘social space’, therefore, would have sounded strange.

The concept of space regarding Lefebvre, views space as an invaluable tool that produces something in the space, space cannot be empty as propounded by geometry. It looks as if, mathematicians appropriated space and time and made them part of their domain, yet they did so in a rather paradoxical way. It is known that mathematicians invented curved spaces in geometry, spaces of configuration, etc. In other words, geometry could not pre-empt social space or physical space to be at par with mathematical realities. Physical or social reality was not obvious, and indeed a deep rift had developed between these two realms.

Lefebvre, by deviating from mathematical concepts on space, (1991) enumerates three spaces: 1) Perceived Space, 2) Conceived Space, and 3) Lived Space. These spaces, according to Lefebvre, could be differentiated according to certain ranks in society. Perceived space is related to everyday social life; its discourse is found in the communities occupying space. Conceived space is related to town planners and perhaps architects of roads and property. Lived space is related to occupation of space by human beings and this defines the social stratification of the production of space. The person who is human normally dwells in the lived space. Lived space, according to Lefebvre, transcends the perceived and the conceived spaces.

Furthermore, Lefebvre (1991:33) discusses a conceptual triad of spaces in support of his work on production of space, how this triad of space is not antithetical to the three spaces above:

- Spatial practice, which embraces production, reproduction and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristics of each social formation. Spatial practice ensures continuity and some degree of cohesion. In terms of social space, and of each member of a given society's relationship to that space, this cohesion implies a guaranteed level of competence and a specific level of performance.
- Representations of space, which are tied to the relations of production and to the 'order' which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to frontal relations.
- Representational spaces, embodying complex symbolism, some-times coded, sometimes not, linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life, as also to art (which may come eventually to be defined less as a code of space than as a code of representational space)

The study of the Eastern Free State's sacred natural sites is concerned with the construction of sacredness of space at the researched areas. The three sites at Mautse, Motouleng and Modderpoort are lived spaces of pilgrimage. However, to some degree perceived space resonates with the choice of space for one to perform cultural and ritual work at the sites. Conceived space could be attached to people coming to sites on instruction of a vision or a dream and the person will begin to construct a compound or structure akin to the one seen in the vision or dream.

Finally Lefebvre (1991:33) states,

Thus space may be said to embrace a multitude of intersections, each with its assigned location. As for representations of the relations of production, which subsume power relations, these too occur in space: space contains them in the form of buildings, monuments and works of art."

The reality of social space incorporates social actions, the actions of people as a collective that live and work, who suffer and who act, who die. This understanding of the realities of social space does not negate the significance of the spaces of the sacred natural sites of the Eastern Free State. The sites are a representation of the social places inhabited by communities both the host and the visiting. I will return to the theoretical aspects in Chapter 5 to analyse them critically.



## CHAPTER 2: WORKING MODEL AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF SITES

### 2.1 General outline

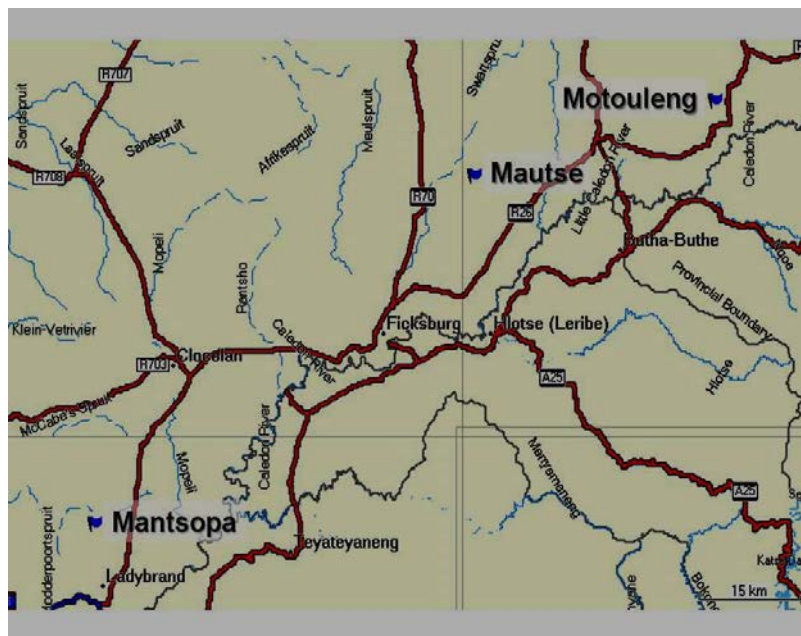
The working model for the descriptions of the sites under investigation in this study revolves around topics or themes that impact on the nature of the sites and their descriptive character. The working model itself is largely influenced by contextual religious and cultural indicators prevalent in the sites internal and their external environment. The working model is applied to the sites in an effort to afford the reader an understanding of the meaning of the sites for user communities and other significant stakeholders in a systematic way. The working model followed in this chapter provides a roadmap for the physical and immaterial dimensions of the sacred natural sites of the Eastern Free State. The data presented here will be strengthened by qualitative information in the next chapters. The indigenous cultural lenses through which the sites are visualised attract a framework or working model to explore social relationships that are forged by the internal localities of the respective sites.

The themes or headings that describe the working model point to a general characteristic of indigenous sacred sites in the Eastern Free State because their topographical and geographical scenery represents an almost similar impression and picture. Therefore the working model will act as a *modus operandi* in explicating the themes, headings or topics that will characterise the sites in the Eastern Free State, namely Mautse, Motouleng, Modderpoort and Oetsi. The working model consists of the following topics or headings:

- Geographical and/or topographical description of the site.
- First impressions of the site/first observations (through the eyes of a first visitor)
- Site-internal dimensions and localities.
- Site-internal locality description.
- Factual history, legend, myth, memo-history about the site.
- Status, legitimacy, importance and significance.
- Authorities, people, user-communities, individuals, pilgrims – a important leaders' profiles.

- Performance/rituals – what people are doing there and why?
- External dynamics – political dynamics and ownership of the sites.
- Conceptions of sacrality – ideas of people about sacrality, a general reference.

A detailed data presentation of the cardinal aspects of the above-mentioned topics will be covered in the next chapter in order to give a fuller picture of what is discussed in this chapter. The relationship between the details in the chapters is of critical importance for a comprehensive approach to the chapters.



*Figure 1: Map of the Mohakare Valley<sup>1</sup>*

The geographical map above of the towns where the sacred sites are located run across the Caledon River called Mohokare in the Sesotho language. The map clearly shows the towns surrounding the sites from Ladybrand to Butha-Buthe in Lesotho. The towns of Lesotho reflected on the map are Teyateyaneng, Leribe and Butha-Buthe. The Eastern Free State towns reflected on the map are Ladybrand, Ficksburg and Clocolan.

The map clearly indicates that the location of the sites is contextualised between two countries, specifically because the Caledon River runs between towns on the map. It is therefore important for the reader to understand that the Caledon is strategically positioned between Lesotho and

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<sup>1</sup>Cawood 2010:8



South Africa. The map clearly shows that this river cuts across Butha-Buthe in the north of Lesotho, continues to run next to Motouleng and Mautse in the Eastern Free State, and further through Ficksburg to Ladybrand, next to Maseru in Lesotho.

## **2.2 Topographical description of the Mautse Site**

The topography of the Mautse site is characterised by a mountainous terrain denoting land contours that inhabit a plethora of indigenous enclaves. A topographical map in this regard will show the actual contours of the sites significant physical localities; see below at the end of the descriptive nature of the topography.

The map depicts the arrangement of the physical localities within the total site of Mautse in terms of spatial location on both sides of a small river in the valley. It is clear from this arrangement that the localities are depicted by red dots and the blue line is the actual pathway from one locality to another.

The Mautse sacred site has other names like “Badimong sacred valley” and “Nkokomohi”, which in fact refers only to the clay site outside the inner valley. Mautse is the name of a township that is located about 15 km from the site in the direction of the town of Ficksburg. Nkokomohi is the name of a clay location, the oldest sacred location in the site. These names have a special meaning for the user communities; they signify the core values of what the site represents in the lives of the people. Badimong sacred valley means “the sacred domain of the Ancestors” (*Badimo*=Ancestors). The belief systems in this regard are that this sacred site is under the leadership and ownership of ancestors.

On a practical level, reaching the site is not easy, because a person has to travel for quite a distance from the main road between Ficksburg and Rosendal on a dirt road that leads to privately owned dwellings of people working on the farm. One of the farm workers is tasked with the duty to charge a fee of R20 for those people who wish to enter the sacred valley and a receipt is issued that is only valid for a single day. The distance between Ficksburg and Rosendal is approximately 30 km.

The entrance to the site is marked by a huge brick wall and gate. Directly in front of the entrance of the site is an altar constructed with stones and mud. It has been erected for the purpose of visitors and pilgrims to request access to the site from the Ancestors. This is done through a

ritual act of burning a candle, sprinkling of snuff, praying and placing coins on top of the altar. Once this ritual is completed, the visitors may enter the site.

Immediately upon entering the site, there is another altar erected and the visitors or pilgrims must converge next to it and repeat the same ritual that was performed at the first altar. Immediately to the right of the entrance is also a shack where pilgrims may leave their belongings. It also serves as a station where self-appointed site guides assemble.

Approximately 20 meters from the entrance of the valley, there is a ditch where the pathways to sacred stations of the valley begin. These pathways are situated on both sides of the stream that runs from the tip of the Eastern side of the valley to Nkokomohi to the northwest of the valley. The entrance to the valley is situated on the western side, which is about 1 kilometre from Nkokomohi locality. The pathways are particularly significant for pilgrims and visitors who visit the sacred stations of the valley, may use one of the pathways to the sacred stations often at times with a tour guide.

The physical localities or sacred locations at Mautse commences from the mud altars to the far end of the south-eastern side of the site. The distance from the western side of the valley to the eastern side of valley is 7 kilometres. The locations are identified by a number of signs; the locations that are indigenous church oriented are represented by flags of blue, green, yellow, white and red colours. The majority of these churches are located on the immediate southwest of the site; they are streamlined on this side of the sacred valley.

The majority of indigenous traditional healers (sangomas) are located to the northeast of the site. These locations are identified by the clothes the traditional healers wear. Some of the clothes are made out of goatskin, a red cloth with knitted black images of a lion, tiger or elephant, a traditional trademark garment denoting that the person is a zangoma. Some of the indigenous spiritual leader's shelters are very small; others are significant compounds.

The site is well endowed with indigenous plants, springs and waterfalls. A river runs from the eastern side of the site. The river demarcates the locations that are faith based from those that are purely represented by traditional healers. The demarcation could have been a matter of choice between the two streams of indigenous Africa culture; the locations within the site cater for the needs of all the people who visit the site for help and healing.

The Mautse sacred site has approximately 52 rough structures, thatched buildings and mud houses and on either side of the valley. Flags of various independent churches are hoisted high to indicate the significance of the location of the church where it operates from; the colours of the flags are different but extremely important for the pilgrims and believers, to be knowledgeable about the services of the site. However, new buildings are always mushrooming at Mautse, indicating the significance of the spiritual and cultural services it accords. There are also mushrooming dwellings of traditional healers and faith healers who may have consciously transformed the site into a village.

In this regard, Ingold (2000:181) states,

In a statement that epitomises the building perspective, Amos Rapoport writes that ‘the organization of space cognitively precedes its material expression, settings and built environments are thought before they are built’. In the case of villagers, the environment is already built.

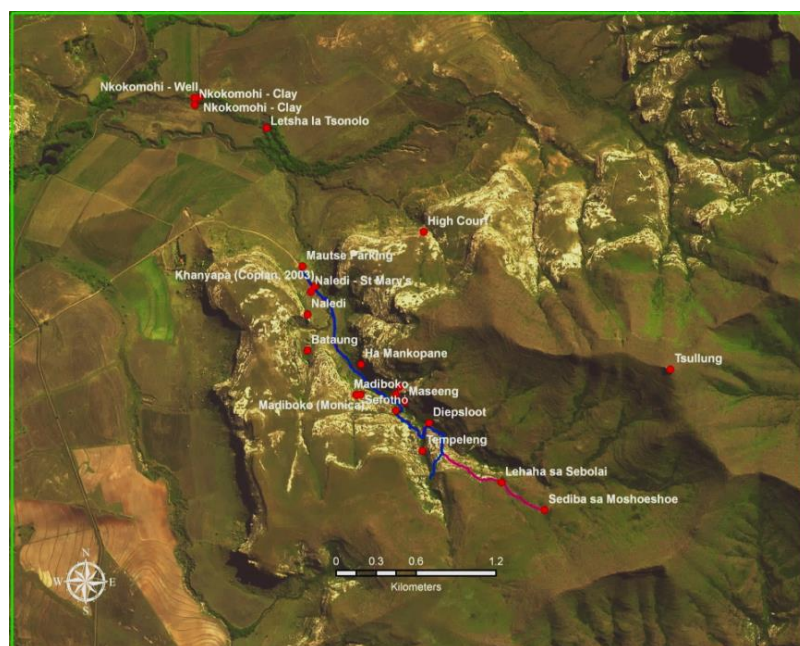


Figure 2: Satellite image of Badimong Valley and Nkokomohi<sup>2</sup>

## 2.3 Topographical description of the Motouleng Site

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<sup>2</sup>Cawood 2009:34

The Motouleng site lies between trees, river and a mountain. Its topographical scenery is embroidered by cattle farming on the left side of the entrance from the Clarence turn-off into the gravel road that begins the journey to the actual site. The gravel road is often fixed for the influx of visitors travelling on this gravel road. The distance from Clarence to the beginning of the dirt road that leads to the site is 10 km and the distance from the main road to the site is 5 km.

The gravel road leads to the wall signposting the Motouleng Heritage Site. At this wall, an entrance fee is paid for entry to the sacred cave. Through the gate at the Motouleng wall, a bumpy dirt road goes past fields, a kraal of dry stone masonry and a small river. The site is located on three landowners' farms. This multiple farm occupation of the site does not depict any prohibitions to freedom of movement. According to Cawood (2010:95), "Although the entry is on private land, pilgrims to the site come and go with relative freedom."

This cave is also known as Salpeterkrans or "fertility cave". It is quite a complex cave incorporating significant physical localities. According to Nel (2011:7), "Motouleng is an enormous sandstone overhang cave, measuring  $\pm 120 \times 60$  metres at its widest point." Before pilgrims enter the cave, they have to cross the river, which is not easy to cross. A large rock is placed in the middle of the stream. A large trunk of a tree is also placed in the middle of the river for people to cross into the cave. This river is an important sacred location *en route* to the cave. There is a rock fall in the middle of the cave, which creates a concealed section of the cave. In this regard, this cave is walled off with flat stones, leaving only an opening close to the fertility location. Directly behind the entrance is an altar where all visitors are obliged to light a candle as acknowledgement of the presence of the Ancestors.

The two sections are distinctly different in the same cave demarcated by a sign at the centre of the cave that clearly shows where the first section ends and the other section starts. The entrance to the section of Sam Radebe is always locked and it is only opened when Radebe receives visitors to this part of the cave.

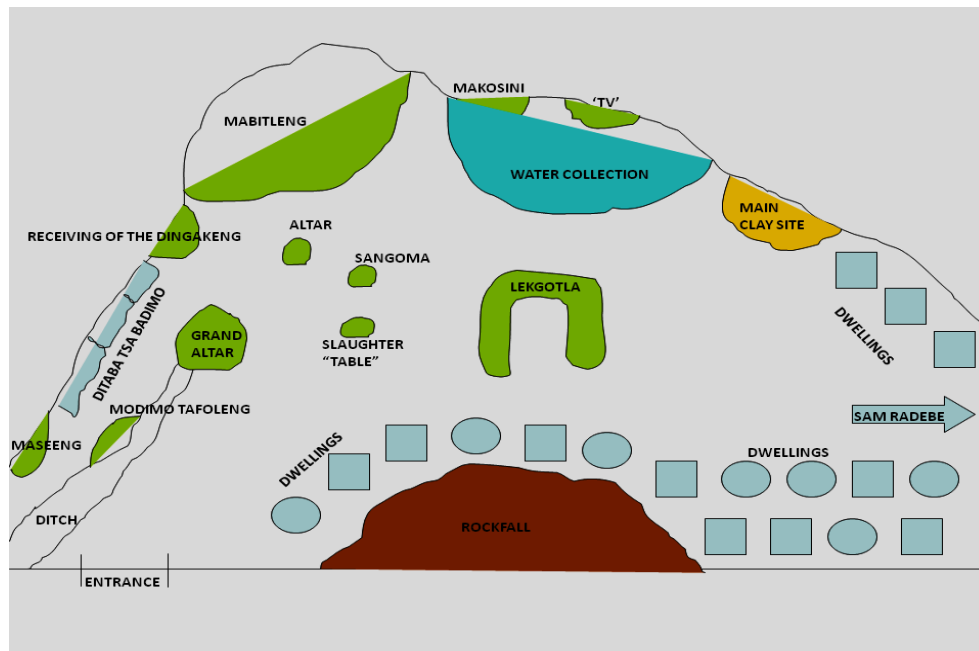


Figure 3: Inner configuration of physical localities at Motouleng<sup>3</sup>

The map above represents a ground plan of the physical localities or sacred locations of the Motouleng sacred cave. The localities highlighted in green are mainly the locations where the traditional healer Joseph Tjama (Ditaba Tsa Badimo) operates. The other section of the cave, which is operated by Sam Radebe, is represented by dwellings highlighted in a light blue colour. Furthermore, the dwellings, open structures and thatched ones in front of the rock fall and the left of the rock fall are mainly for users of the first section of the cave. The blue on the ground plan to the right of the rock fall indicates Sam's dominion.

The physical localities in the "Ditaba Tsa Badimo" section of the cave represent how rituals are carried out from one physical locality to another. In this regard, the fertility locality carries out rituals that are confined specifically to solve bareness of female persons. The fertility locality is referred to as "Maseeng" on the satellite image, which is reflected on the left base of the image. Sam Radebe sets time aside to perform rituals in his section of the cave. He says these rituals are directed by the ancestors who placed him in that part of the cave. Sam Radebe's dwellings are reflected with blue colour on the satellite image.

<sup>3</sup> Cawood 2009:25

## **2.4 Topographical description of the Modderpoort Site**

The Modderpoort sacred site is situated about 20 km from the town of Ladybrand in the Eastern Free State. A fee of about R25 is charged to enter the sacred site. This site is different from the Mautse and Motouleng sites, in the sense that it is managed by the Anglican Church. This site is revered for its close connection to the great prophetess Mantsopa, who originally came from the Kingdom of Lesotho, but other sources claim that she was born in the Free State. However, her prophetic work cannot be limited to Modderpoort only; it extends beyond this area to Lesotho and the greater part of the country. Mantsopa stayed in a cave next to the spring named after her.

The physical localities or sacred locations at Modderpoort have become revered shrines for the simple reason that they are associated with Mantsopa, for this reason, pilgrimages are undertaken to the shrines for cultural and religious reasons. The physical localities at Modderpoort are the Cave Church, the Mantsopa gravesite, Mantsopa spring, the Anglican Church and the cemetery.

The broader Modderpoort site incorporates the Khoisan paintings and next to the cave where these paintings are found, is an archaeological site that has stone stools or tools inside the cave. Closer inspection of the entire site shows that behind Modderpoort's unobtrusive façade lies an exceptional unique hierophany that goes beyond the rock art encountered there to encompass significant physical localities describing the degree of sacrality in the site.



*Figure 4: Aerial view of the physical localities of Mantsopa<sup>4</sup>*

The Modderpoort physical localities on the ground plan above represent the presence of Mantsopa in the area. Most of the localities are named after her. Even those that are not named after her are characterised in the memory of her work. The map depicts an institutionalised sacred site with structural additions to its particular landscape.

## **2.5 Topographical description of Oetsi Cave**

The Oetsi cave is a cavern visualised in a shoe-like shape. Its dimension is about 107 metres long and approximately 121 metres wide. The pathway to the site culminates in rock-filled cave situated deep in a mountain.

The cave is located in Qwaqwa at a village called Monontsha. This village is about 15 km from the main city of Phuthaditjaba. This cave is named after Chief Oetsi of the Makhlokoe in Qwaqwa. Before one undertakes a journey of about an hour to the cave, the visitor must pay a R20 as an entrance fee. A modern office is built at the entrance where a tour guide will be provided to explain the historical as well as legendary history of the site.

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<sup>4</sup>Cawood 2010:22



The pathway leading to the summit of the cave is uphill and cumbersome, and it is covered with indigenous trees and small waterfalls. A small bridge made out of rocky stones is erected along the pathway. Apparently inside the cave are piles of rocks, which are explained to be the graves of the Ancestors of the Makholokoe tribe. The cave has no site-internal localities that would allude to the presence of sacred locations and their cultural and religious significance for the Basotho people in Qwaqwa.



*Figure 5: Interior of the Oetsi Cave<sup>5</sup>*

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<sup>5</sup>Moephuli 2012:1





Figure 6: Pathway to the Oetsi Cave<sup>6</sup>

## 2.6 Impressionistic description of the Mautse Site

The Mautse sacred site has objects that give the impression that the visitor is entering a holy space. Apart from the walled demarcation of the site, the symbolism of the altars and pathways signal an “entry” into a space demarcated as “set apart” from the rest of the environment. It holds also true for the way towards the clay-site outside the walled area. Firstly, before entering the gate, there is an altar where visitors gather and observe a particular ritual of entrance. Then there is the second altar next to the gate inside the valley where visitors are expected to thank the ancestors for allowing them inside the cave. On the right-hand side of the gate, there is a waiting room from where visitors are fetched by the traditional healer assigned to him/her by the Ancestors.

There is pathway leading to the different localities of the site. The visitor will pass a locality called Naledi=Venus (star) *en route* to a locality called Madiboko (tribal names) and at Madiboko there are small shelters of traditional healers visible. Near the summit of the valley on the right-hand side, the visitor will go past a place called Sefotho (indigenous “steam”). From this locality, the visitor may come to a locality called Tempeleng (temple). The pathway

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<sup>6</sup>Moephuli 2012:2

will lead the visitor further into the mystical aura of a locality called Maseeng (fertility location), where there are other localities like Yunivesithi (university), Diepsloot and the Moshoeshoe Spring, which the visitor will see when going through the valley.

Along the way, the visitor or pilgrim will see caves and compounds with people living in them. Chicken, goats and sheep can be seen moving around the valley and rock rabbits are a common sight at the valley.

The foremost impression about this site is that it is a mountain village with many people staying there. Some people are visitors, others are pilgrims and others are patients who seek healing. Over weekends, many people visit the site for consultation with traditional healers and faith healers. Then indigenous songs reverberate throughout the site signalling praise and worship in the site. The singing is accompanied by dancing and the sound of singers and visitors.

During holy days like Easter, Christmas and Pentecost throngs of people visit the site to celebrate these events in a religious and cultural way. Often these people harvest clay, medicinal herbs and spring water for reasons pertaining to the well-being of their lives. Visitors and pilgrims from afar as Botswana, KwaZulu-Natal, Lesotho and Swaziland visit the cave and some people are tourists at the sites.

The mountain village has been turned into a village settlement by people their physical addresses are written on the entrances of their caves and who stay there permanently, because there is graffiti on the walls of the caves. The village has a plethora of site internal localities situated within it and the topography of the site related to a common context of the Mohokare Valley where the other sites are also located on mountains.

The most significant thing about this site is that one can view its height from three kilometre way. The dominance of shape of the site suggests that heights are sacred and what is contained in the valley is sacred.

Through the eye of the first-time visitor to the site, the impression that one gains, is that this sacred site was established for cultural enrichment and ensuring cultural survival, as well as that African religion can be exercised effectively in the seclusion of the mountain. The mountain is an ancestral land for various tribes and nations, and no specific tribe can claim complete ownership of the mountain.

Through the eye of the first-time visitor, you will see African people making offerings to their Ancestors in order to appease them. The sacrifices are performed by slaughtering an animal that has been chosen by the ancestors. In other words, the central role of the animal world at the site characterises a broader interpretation of sacrality. The sacred mountain, coupled with ancestral veneration and animal presence at the site, explains the cosmology of the indigenous communities inhabiting the site. In this regard, every weekend various people come to the site, to both sacrifice and fortify their bond with ancestors, a common scene at the site.

Consequently, the first impression indicates a cultural home away from home and a religious domain for indigenous communities who believe in the sustained nature of their cultures. However, sacrificing away from home is not the norm for invoking ancestral spirits in the sacrificial ritual.

The life at the valley is quite simple. The people staying there are people with ordinary backgrounds, mostly from poor backgrounds. Some traditional healers at the sites have completed ten to twenty years of permanent stay in the caves. They have adapted to the conditions of staying at a mountain with complete obedience to their Ancestors who have chosen the mountain life for them. The weather temperatures at the valley are unpredictable because rain falls unexpectedly and inclement weather may occur without prediction.

In this regard, visiting the site for the first time would give the impression that this is another world with different people living in it because of the kind of clothes they wear. The majority of the sites inhabitants do not wear shoes; this is a sign of reverence for the ancestors and the kind of vocation they have been called to revere. A visitor to a particular traditional healer or faith healer will similarly take off his/her shoes before engaging with the healer, which is a sign of reverence and respect. An Old Testament tradition of taking off one's shoes when approaching holy ground is recounted by the traditional healers (Exodus 3:5). The site has a strong religious influence, which is entwined with an ethos that is embedded in indigenous culture.

Currently the Mautse sacred site experiences an increase in the number of shelters and the transformation of older temporary shelters into more permanent buildings and compounds. The transformation of the shelters is visible at Maseeng and compounds close to the entrance of the valley often change. Seeing the site for the first time would give the impression that the shelters and the compounds are of a permanent nature. On the contrary, this is not the case, because

during the second and third visits there were vast changes to the site. This would also become a threat to the sacrality of the valley.

In conclusion, the impression obtained about this site is that it is both a physical and a spiritual world and where these two worlds converge it produces a synergy of the day-to-day activities at the site. The ancestors are perceived to have taken part in creating the world order, hence indigenous cosmologies emphasise the significant role the ancestors played in constructing the spiritual world order. The various denominations found in the valley are seen as part of the spiritual world order created by the ancestors.

## **2.7 Impressionistic description of the Motouleng Site**

The snake path leading to the Motouleng Site is long. It begins at a parking place just inside the farm. The winding path leading to the cave would take about 30 to 35 minutes. Upon reaching the site, there is the small Caledon River that has to be crossed to reach the cave. Crossing this river is often dangerous because of the flow of the dangerous stream. Two big rocks are placed in the river for people to cross to the other side of the cave.

Soon after crossing the river, a visitor will encounter a huge cave with compounds of various people inside the cave. There are markings of candle wax and prayer rituals, which remind the visitor that the cave is holy.

The cave is quite gigantic; it is a cultural and religious home to traditional healers. From the base of the cave next to the river to the middle part of the cave, there are compounds of various traditional healers, some belonging to trainee healers and others to qualified traditional healers. Change is also a common sight here, where new structures are erected and open stone structures are plastered and thatched.

The cave displays several localities of reverence for indigenous communities and visitors alike. There are important cultural properties in the site, which are viewed as highly sacred by the community of the site. Cultural and religious activities such as chanting and prayer mingle with the domestic cooking of food and joint community meals.

The dominance and feeling induced by the cave is that of a mystic and sacred setting, characterised by space symbolism and the sacred objects aligned to the site. Furthermore, the presence of spiritual leaders and pilgrims merged in cultural and a spiritual action resembles

space of holy ground. The impressive “grand altar” confronting the visitor symbolises a spiritual presence and is acknowledged through lighting of candles and prayer.

The one dynamic character of the site is that it exhibits an indigenous protocol, which is followed to the letter by people who wish to visit the cave. This protocol entails who should and should not enter the site. Female persons were initially not allowed to visit the cave; only under special circumstances, a female person of good repute and sacred standing would enter the cave on the instruction of the traditional leadership at the site. Nowadays female presence is a common sight.

Women are called to become traditional healers by the Ancestors; therefore, cultural laws pertaining to entering the site are no longer based on gender policy. In this regard, Ancestors may assign their candidate traditional healer to go to Motouleng in order to receive training, regardless of gender preference.

Finally, the site exudes a sense of serenity. Once inside the cave, the pilgrim or visitor experiences a rare attachment to the poignant spirituality of the site. From the entrance at the gate to the actual site itself, the experience is phenomenally awesome. The reverence for ancestral spirits is held in high esteem and a deep respect for God is always upheld. From the fertility station to the clay station, God and the Ancestors are central to the life of these physical localities, nothing can undermine the authority of God and Ancestors in dictating ritual and healing functions at the site. The numinous element of the authority of God and the ancestors at this cave is clearly seen in the strong religious and spiritual worlds carried out by user communities without any hindrance.

Inside the cave, the visitor will be exposed to ordinary living activities of cooking and eating, washing, preparation for ritual, ritual performances, singing movement of people and the free roaming of chicken and goats.

## **2.8 Impressionistic description of the Modderpoort Site**

The picturesque setting of the site from the outside displays a number of sandstone-crafted buildings, among them a church, dormitories and a workshop centre. At the back of the church precinct lies the old cave church (Rose Chapel). Further down is the gravesite of the missionary clergy who served the Saint Augustine priory and that of the revered prophetess Anna Mantsopa Makhetha.

The graffiti and drawings on the rock walls of the cave clearly show that the San community was fond of leaving their art on the rocks. The San people could have been the indigenous people who first resided at Modderpoort. The impression this site gives is that it represents two types of religious worlds; the first being that its immediate building characterises mainline Christianity, and the cave church, gravesite and other properties found at the site characterise an execution of indigenous traditional beliefs prior to the arrival of missionaries at Modderpoort. However, the first-time visitor will realise that a confluence of two traditions is practised on the grounds of the site.

On an ordinary day, there is not much activity inside the site. Normally the staff members are present at the site. Traditional practitioners will be seen at the Cave Church and at the gravesite. On ceremonial days, however, the site becomes crowded with clergy, members and indigenous believers.

The site gives the expression that it accommodates African expressions of religion, whilst the structures and symbolism of the buildings promote Christianity, which is largely built into the site by the Anglican Church. Over the decades, this phenomenon has overshadowed indigenous traditional religion/s at the site. The impression is also that the site is managed with more control over the movement of people.

There is a popular spring named after the prophetess Mantsopa, where she, according to tradition, frequented the locality and conducted her healing rituals from this spring. It is, however, not easy to test the veracity of this claim, but the pilgrims, visitors and traditional healers see the spring as mystic and sacred.

Indigenous belief systems on the site can only be witnessed from the perspective of indigenous practitioners visiting the site and the indigenous notions attached to the prophetess Mantsopa. It is for this reason the Anglican Church has not compromised the indigenous influence of the site, instead the church has fused Christianity with indigenous traditional beliefs in order to reach out to the community at the time of its church planting. In other words indigenous belief systems were allowed to operate alongside Christianity. The impression gained in this regard is that the first church in the area, which was a cave, could not have had a congregation, but only the missionaries and perhaps the prophetess Mantsopa joined in a foreign worship alien to African belief systems.

The atmosphere is different here: the movement of people are more regulated, they are fewer and no permanent residence for local site users – obviously except those belonging to the priory.

The physical localities of Modderpoort as mentioned above revolve around the prophethood of Mantsopa. Furthermore, it is obvious that the Zionists or Independent Churches make frequent visits to the site and the impression drawn from these visits is that these churches often refer to the site of Modderpoort as a sacred location.

## **2.9 Impressionistic description of Oetsi Site**

The cave is surrounded by indigenous trees and there are waterfalls on either side of the cave. The snake path to the cave is cumbersome and reaching the actual cave requires over an hour of travelling to the mountaintop. Once inside the cave, the visitor will see rocks and some San rock paintings inscribed on the walls. Piles and piles of rocks believed to be graveyard of the Basotho people who died inside the cave in defence of their land and property.

Oetsi Cave, on the other hand, has a historical and a cultural significance for the tribes of Qwaqwa, particularly that of the Makholokoe, who sees the cave as a fortress where Chief Oetsi sought refuge during the skirmishes with other tribes and the settlers.

The feeling of the Makholokoe about the site is that it is sacred because of its tribal history with Makholokoe, an opinion held notwithstanding the fact that the site lacks the properties found in other sacred localities of the Eastern Free State.

## **2.10 Site-internal localities at Mautse**

The internal structure at Mautse comprises a variety of properties ranging from caves, waterfalls, thatched dwellings, springs and a river. The internal structure is largely made up of physical localities, which determine to a great degree the work carried out at the site. However, the landscape of the site clearly shows that the internal structures of the roofless huts of the site is premised on the indigenous architectural design, except for the new buildings at Maseeng, which is extended with stone erections and extra dwellings to meet the demands of communities visiting the locality.

The extraordinary offering of different forms of spiritual services and stations built for the rendering of cultural and religious activities underscore the notion of the site as a defined sacred space. In this regard, the colour of each compound structure informs the visitor about the sacred practice being performed at the location, and the range of colours of flags indicate whether the structure is faith bound or in tandem with indigenous traditional healing. The diviners or faith healers at these structures display indigenous items and ritual elements are always present. These ritual elements may include a Bible, candles of different colours, incense and herbal medicine. Furthermore, this is an indication that significant cultural and spiritual activities are performed there.

The sequencing of the physical localities on the aerial map is significant. It indicates the topographical layout of the sacred valley and the pathway to be followed to specific sacred locations to the reader. It is important to note that the nature of the following descriptive order of physical localities at the valley is not organised systematically or in terms of geographical orientation. It is rather organised in terms of the importance, which may arguably not be agreed upon by some pilgrims and visitors.

The Nkokomohi clay location starts at the beginning of the site and the Moshoeshoe spring would arguably be at the end of the valley. Naledi is situated in the middle of the aerial map. It is one of the physical localities not far from the entrance of the gate at the valley. Naledi is also one of the smaller localities in the valley.

### **2.10.1 Nkokomohi**

Nkokomohi is a Southern Sotho name meaning: “to rise up”. This is the largest clay location in the Eastern Free State. The clay consists of various colours and each is used for a variety of different illnesses by traditional healers. There is a particular conviction among the informants that the sacrality of the location stems from a narrative that the Basotho Ancestors used to cook clay found beneath the surface of the earth. The ancestors would summon the sangomas at about 3-4am to come and harvest the cooked clay to perform rituals and healing with it.

Nkokomohi is regarded as an earlier site in ritual function and the most authentic of the other physical localities because of the stories told by the elders about the mysticism connected to the site. Nkokomohi according to an informant possesses spiritual power and energy because of the sporadic combustion of reed beds that produces small particles of powder to be used for



healing by traditional healers. According to informants, before a person could enter the site, Ancestral observance and approval are required by performing a ritual of entrance into the clay site. Clay digging holes are often marked with candle wax where prayer rituals took place.

A particular indigenous traditional view is held that Nkokomohi is a domain of the Ancestors of the site and that its sacredness is beyond question. In amplifying this assertion, the late Monica Magengenene says that during the period from the 1960s to 1970s the indigenous community that stayed at the site at that time witnessed fire that came from beneath the surface at about 3 a.m. daily. In addition, there is a conviction held to this day that the Ancestors cooked clay and prepared it for harvesting by traditional healers. According to Jolly (2010:44),

The valley became associated with spiritual power by the Sotho when decaying reed deposits in sinkholes beneath the surface of the earth and the mounds of powder were sought out and used in rites of healing, fertility and initiation by traditional healers.

The view of the host community at the site is that the fire that was seen at the Nkokomohi site was actually started by the ancestors and that the decaying reed deposits at Nkokomohi had nothing to do with the fire, the ancestors were solely responsible for this occurrence. The harvesting of the clay for medicinal purposes is in the first instance aligned to a performance of a ritual; after the ritual is performed, it is harvested. Nkokomohi is actually the original cultural location of the entire site; the other sacred locations came into being because of the evolution of the site.



*Figure 7: Sinkhole of grey clay at Nkokomohi<sup>7</sup>*

The first picture above is that of grey clay harvested by traditional healers and people at Nkokomohi clay site. The picture clearly shows a sinkhole dug for purposes of harvesting clay for various reasons. There are various colours of clay at Nkokomohi, namely red, white, and black and grey and their function vary in terms of the ailments prevalent at the site. The harvested clay is used by sangomas for curing different illnesses and used for the performance of rituals.

### **2.10.2 Tempeleng**

Tempeleng at the far end of the site has a pool and a small waterfall that symbolises the biblical Old Testament temple in a minimalist manner with its two stone altars and an ascended edifice. The “roof” of the “high place” at the end of the flight of steps has a round opening in it so that the face of a worshipper is concealed when standing on the platform.

According to a resident informant at the site, an angel appeared in a vision to prophets at the site sometime in the 1970s and instructed that the location be called the Roman Catholic Church. The prophets interpreted this to mean the location must be called the Old Testament temple. The elevated altar at Tempeleng is colloquially called “God’s telephone” meaning a person can have direct communication with God or the Ancestors. However, at some of the

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<sup>7</sup>Cawood 2009:10

high niches at the “temple” there are still small Catholic images to be seen. At the top of the stairs that lead to some kind of altar or a lectern rosaries of the Roman Catholic Church are displayed.

Tempeleng is one of the localities that use the two streams of indigenous traditional healing, which is faith healing and indigenous traditional healing. Divination also takes place at Tempeleng and indigenous baptismal rites take place at a pool next to the two altars at the location. The late Monica Magengenene, the longest-serving traditional healer at the site, started as an apprentice traditional healer at Tempeleng before moving permanently to the Madiboko locality.



*Figure 8: Place of prayer at Tempeleng<sup>8</sup>*

The picture of Tempeleng clearly shows the two brick altars erected alongside the stairs that ascend to the top of the edifice. One can detect candle wax in the area and the creativity that is aligned to the design of Tempeleng. The erection of the two brick altars are meant for praying and appeasing ancestors before a person could ascend on the stairs to the pinnacle of the locality.

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<sup>8</sup> Cawood 2010:33

### 2.10.3 Yunivesithi

The word “Yunivesithi” is a vernacular word for the English word “university”. This locality is where higher learning takes place. Furthermore, sacred instructions by “Badimo” or the Ancestors are believed given primarily at this location. The university has a number of special enclosures where learning takes place. In this regard, apprentice healers and prophets receive intensive training that accord with their calling from senior traditional healers, who act on the instructions of the ancestors.

The choice of the enclosure where learning is undertaken is determined by the Ancestors who are actually responsible for the programme and syllabus of the “university”. At this location, the trainee traditional healer’s courage to withstand the demands of this calling is tested by the Ancestors. A senior traditional healer may be appointed to perform rituals to intensify the calling of the trainee. An informant at this location says that strange voices reverberate throughout the night in the cave. A thorough assessment of the calling of the trainee healer is carried out at this locality.

“University” incorporates a cave, an altar and a pool, which are symbolic institutions for conversing with the Ancestors during the period of training. Furthermore, these institutions resonate with popular symbols of Old Testament literature as well as indigenous symbols, particularly the cave and the altar. The sacredness of this locality is obtained through its important function of training and teaching. School-going children often visit the “university” when their examinations are about to begin so that the Ancestors can bless them for the exams.



#### **2.10.4 Maseeng**

The physical locality Maseeng at Mautse is important for female persons who are barren or do not conceive. The word “Maseeng” is a Southern Sotho/Tswana word for a new-born baby. The primary function of Maseeng is that is an indigenous fertility hospital. However, other important cultural processes also take place at Maseeng. At this locality, a woman might be instructed by the Ancestors to perform a special ritual associated with the rite of fertility in the form of slaughtering a goat or sheep for the ancestors who then will bless the couple with a child. Couples with marital problems also visit the site and from the graffiti names at the locality, one may gauge that this site is also used by White people.

The sacredness of this locality is informed by its role of helping women who want to conceive. Maseeng locality as a fertility site is also renowned for its help towards sick children. According to informants, it possesses spirits that are able to heal children and the rites of healing for children in particular are performed at this locality. The sacredness of this locality is determined by its healing service mainly to infertile women. The building activity amongst the impressive stone structures around this locality indicates to its popularity and importance.

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<sup>9</sup> Cawood 2010:7





*Figure 10: Fertility location at Maseeng<sup>10</sup>*

#### **2.10.5 Spring of King Moshoeshoe**

The spring of King Moshoeshoe I is located at the tip of the eastern border of the site. Mr Seeiso Makhetha, an informant about the spring, says that the spring was discovered by King Moshoeshoe I of the Basotho people prior to land demarcations between Lesotho and South Africa. He further explains that the skirmishes between a two tribes, the Batlokwa and Bakwena tribe, made him frequent the spring in order to gather more strength from his Ancestors. Basotho people were engaged in perpetual skirmishes over landownership, which also included the village of Mautse.

After the death of the King, many Basotho people came to the spring believing that underneath the spring lay the powers of the Basotho Ancestors. The majority of pilgrims to the spring believe that when they bathe in the spring they actually assume the powers of King Moshoeshoe. This indigenous perception about the Moshoeshoe spring is still prominent amongst the user community at the site.

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<sup>10</sup>Cawood 2010:35



*Figure 11: Spring of King Moshoeshe<sup>11</sup>*

#### **2.10.6 Cave of Lower and Upper Madiboko**

Madiboko is an extremely important and significant sacred location. It was the cultural residence of the late Monica Magengenene, who was the most senior traditional healer of the site. Madiboko is a Southern Sotho word meaning a “place of different tribal names”. Madiboko is a plural reference to the name of the location, “Seboko” being the singular reference to the name. At Lower Madiboko, there are living quarters for trainee traditional healers.

These living quarters at Lower Madiboko are meant to accommodate traditional healers in training; there are separate quarters for female healers and male persons. Even patients who come for treatment at this locality can be accommodated at these quarters. The late Monica’s dwelling, called “Bethlehem of Judea”, is solely used as a consulting place when the traditional healers want further confirmation of the divination they have carried out next to a compound that is mainly used for diagnosis and divination. Monica as the most senior traditional healer will be consulted by her junior and trainee healers in her dwelling as per the protocol observed by indigenous belief systems.

At Monica’s dwelling, there is an altar where two candles constantly burn. Bibles of various languages and rosaries are displayed at the altar. This altar is further used for prayer every

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<sup>11</sup> Cawood 2009:15

morning before the traditional healers commence with their work. A significant syncretic feature of Monica's work is observed in this compound in view of the fact that she is a professed Christian who came to the Valley with a strong Christian background.

A waterfall divides Lower Madiboko from Upper Madiboko. The cultural and spiritual significance of the waterfall is that any patient who is sent to Monica will first undergo a ritual washing under the waterfall. This is a revered space for the commencement of healing at Lower Madiboko. Furthermore, at Lower Madiboko, a confluence of healing tradition is vigorously practised. In this regard, the late Monica Magengenene, who was a former nun of the Roman Catholic Church, would perform a ritual that is inclusive of the Catholic liturgy and indigenous formulae. Monica had the highest number of trainee healers from both the apostolic faith churches and indigenous traditional practices.

Upper Madiboko specialises in tracing lost identities of people who want to know their tribal lineage. Most times, pilgrims want to know their totemic names and they will be told which tribe they come from after a special ritual has been performed. Persons whose parents have never been married or people who were born out of the wedlock come to this locality to be informed about their authentic identity. Reclaiming identity is perceived by indigenous communities to be a cardinal ritual act performed at Upper Madiboko.



*Figure 12: Dwellings at Lower Madiboko<sup>12</sup>*

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<sup>12</sup> Cawood 2009:15



### 2.10.7 High Court

The Sesotho name for this locality is “Khotla e Phahameng”. There is evidence from a number of informants that the physical locality is a “police station” for those who break ancestral laws and laws of the site. At this locality, the Ancestors instruct the traditional leadership of the locality through dreams and visions on how to administer discipline in an event where a transgression was committed. At this locality, the Ancestors are the judges of this court; they decide on the merits of the case before them. Furthermore, the Ancestors bestow more authority on traditional healers with a high calling. The High Court is an extremely significant locality because it protects the sanctity of the site, particularly its religious and cultural function.



*Figure 13: High Court at Mautse<sup>13</sup>*

### 2.10.8 Sefotho

Sefotho is a Sesotho word meaning “steam”. This locality is located next to the pathway to Tempeleng on the mountain slope. In the context of its presence at Mautse, this locality specialises in the healing of swollen feet. This locality is a crevice hewn in the mountain at Mautse. An informant claims that the Ancestors of the crevice administer healing from below the crevice. When the steam comes out of the crevice, the general understanding is that healing is taking place.

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<sup>13</sup> Cawood 2009:22

The crevice has candle wax that has coloured the rock around the locality and the pilgrims and visitors to this locality would throw money into the crevice with the belief that the Ancestors of the crevice would heal the ailments of those sick. Various informants attest to the healing powers of the crevice and qualify this claim by showing one of them who had been healed at the crevice.

Sefotho represents an indigenous technique of exorcising evil spirits from the body. The patient would be covered with three to four blankets and seated next to a pot with extremely hot water mixed with medicinal herbs. It is thus claimed that the ancestors manage Sefotho at Mautse.



*Figure 14: Sefotho crevice<sup>14</sup>*

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<sup>14</sup> Moephuli 2010:13

#### 2.10.9 Tsullung

Tsullung is a Southern Sotho word meaning the highest protruding place. The Tsullung locality is the highest elevated peak next to the Moshoeshoe spring. This locality is associated with Chief Sekonyela of the Batlokwa tribe, because this peak is called “Sekonyela’s hat”. According to an informant, originally, trainee prophets would be called to the summit of the peak to receive higher training in prophetic vocation from the Ancestors.

According to an informant, the great traditional leaders often visited the peak to listen to what the Ancestors wanted from them. They believe the peak was where the Ancestors of Batlokwa resided; however, they believe Tsullung and the Moshoeshoe spring were the subjects of land contestation between the Basotho tribes and the Boers.

The Batlokwa Ba Sekonyela viewed the peak as holy and sacred. The informant says that these days not too many people undertake a pilgrimage to this locality and trainee prophets do not come to the peak because the Ancestors of the locality would select the people who must undergo prophetic training at this locality.



*Figure 15: Protruding peak at Tsullung<sup>15</sup>*

#### **2.10.10 Lehaha la Bataung**

Lehaha la Bataung is cave that belongs to a tribe whose totem is a lion. Lehaha la Bataung means literally “cave of the lion tribe”. This cave is viewed as sacred by the Bataung tribe. Some informants at Mautse say that this cave is solely for the tribe of the Bataung (lions) because this locality has been called into being by the Ancestors of the Bataung tribe. Furthermore, this cave was the cultural school of the traditional healers from the Bataung tribe. Traditionally no other tribe than the Bataung would receive training at this cave due to strict rules designed by the elders of this tribe.

The Bataung tribe view this locality as highly sacred and it is believed that this cave promotes the cultural beliefs of the Bataung tribe. In the main, laws pertaining to male circumcision would be dealt with by the elders of this tribe when the season of circumcision dawns. Only the principal elder of the tribe performs the circumcision ritual and the actual circumcision. The traditional healers at this cave would communicate with the Ancestors on every cultural matter that affects the Bataung. The Bataung claim that this locality is respected by the Basotho tribe, both in Lesotho and South Africa.

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<sup>15</sup> Cawood 2009:11





*Figure 16: Tribal cave of Bataung<sup>16</sup>*

#### **2.10.11 Lehaha la Nkopane**

This cave belonged to the Bakwena tribe at Mautse. This cave within the site was the traditional place of the Bakwena. According to Cawood (2010:77), Meiring described the Nkopane Cave as an overnight place for those visiting Nkokomohi, while Coplan (2003:984) says, Mankopane was the mother in law of the popular prophet and seer of Mohlomi the great of the Bakwena tribe, therefore the cave is connected to the Bakwena tribe.

Mohlomi was a Mokwena who was connected to the cave in terms of tradition and lineage in the dynasty of the Bakwena chieftaincy. Mohlomi belonged to a stream called “Bakwena Ba Nkopane Ya Mathunya” and Moshoeshoe belongs to “Bakwena Ba Mokotedi”. These are a few descriptive streams of the Bakwena tribes who occupied the cave at Mautse. According to Cawood (2010:77),

The place is currently also being used as a place where one could request assistance from Ancestors, where one accepts instruction from Ancestors regarding initiation.

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<sup>16</sup>Cawood 2010:10

This is possibly true, because the traditional and customary precepts of initiation could be assigned to the elders of the tribe at a place determined by the tribe. In this regard, Bakwena named their cave for initiation at Mautse as “Lehaha la Mankopane” the cave of Nkopane.



*Figure 17: Tribal cave of Bakwena<sup>17</sup>*

#### **2.10.12 Lehaha la Sebolai**

Lehaha la Sebolai (the cave of Sebolai) was the hiding place of Sebolai during the tribal skirmishes between the Zulus and the Basotho people. This cave is two kilometres from the spring of King Moshoeshoe I on the south-eastern side of the site. According to an informant, Sebolai was a compatriot of Moshoeshoe. According to Cawood (2010:65),

The notion of ownership as applied here refers to a meta-physical ownership, as Mr Sebolai is the ancestral spirit associated with the location.

What corroborates this assertion is the fact that the informant claims that he was instructed by Moshoeshoe and Sebolai in a vision to stay at the cave and look after the spring until the time when he would receive ancestral blessings in order to become a traditional healer.

According to Meiring (1995), the cave was also a meeting place or lekgotla (traditional court) where Badimo would meet with their descendants that are in breach of ancestral laws. This

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<sup>17</sup> Cawood 2010:11

locality is regarded as sacred by the Basotho people in view of the fact that it protected the Basotho people from the Zulu onslaught during the Difaqane war.



*Figure 18: The cave of Sebolai<sup>18</sup>*

## **2.11 Site-internal localities at Motouleng**

The physical localities at Motouleng are situated inside the cave not far apart; however, in addressing their functions, one has to understand the background of the physical locality and its meaning within the context of the sacred cave. In attempting to know the nature of the locality and its broader mandate in indigenous work, I had to request permission from an informant who had an in-depth knowledge about most of the localities in the cave. (See Figure 3 for the localities at Motouleng).

### **2.11.1 Maseeng**

The physical locality, Maseeng, on the graphic picture appears next to the ditch at the entrance of the cave on the left-hand side when one has crossed the ditch. The green colour code indicates that this is a physical locality.

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<sup>18</sup>Cawood 2009:15

Originally, Motouleng was a fertility cave. An informant by the name of Betty Nhlapo from the Clarens location says she grew up at Motouleng. Betty is about 115 years old. She speaks nostalgically about this fertility site, and how visits to the site were limited to elderly people only, not children.

Maseeng is the oldest physical locality at Motouleng. It is actually the first locality of the site, and upon crossing the ditch at the river the first locality to be encountered is Maseeng on the south-eastern side of the cave. According to Nel (2011:9), “Originally Motouleng was a site known for fertility rituals where barren women could get help to conceive a child”. Popularity caused the site’s transformation so that other internal localities came into being without any close association with fertility.

The graphic picture further shows the areas where there are living structures to the immediate right. They are occupied by Mr Joseph Tjama, known at the site as “Ditaba Tsa Badimo”. These structures are open compounds with many women occupying them. The structures are lined up about 20 metres away from the grand altar.

Pilgrims and visitors are restricted from walking freely from one point of the cave to another. From Maseeng, the authority of the cave would guide the pilgrims, along a designated route to proceed to the other physical localities. Ditaba Tsa Badimo, the most respected spiritual leader of the cave, is normally the one who guides the tour of the cave.





*Figure 19: Maseeng fertility station<sup>19</sup>*

### **2.11.2 Tafole ya Lehodimo**

The rock is called “Tafole ya Lehodimo” (table of heaven). This ordinary rock lies between the Grand Altar and the Royal Kraal. Its physical appearance is that of a rock set aside for special duty.

This rock was initially meant for chopping of wood when a burnt offering was to be performed. The senior traditional healer at the site, Ditaba Tsa Badimo, says that he has received a directive from God and the Ancestors to preserve the rock solely for burnt offering. The informant says the location was declared a “Table of Heaven”.

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<sup>19</sup>Cawood 2009:18



*Figure 20: A rock set aside for burnt offering<sup>20</sup>*

### **2.11.3 Grand altar**

This physical locality is distinguished from other numerous altars in the cave. The grand altar has a pyramid shape with different colours caused by multi coloured candles burning on it. Immediately from the fertility site, pilgrims and visitors would be led to the grand altar for prayers in an effort to request the Ancestors to allow them to take part in the rituals of the cave. They would light their candles of various colours and place R1, R2 or 50c coins on the altar.

The grand altar is important for both pilgrims and visitors because this is the locality at which a person prays for luck and success in life and this is the locality where permission is granted by the spiritual leadership of the site to freely explore the mystery of the cave. When pilgrims and visitors leave the cave, they will converge in prayer to thank God and the Ancestors for the opportunity at the Grand Altar. Ditaba Tsa Badimo will lead the prayers of thanksgiving.

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<sup>20</sup> Moephuli 2009:32



*Figure 21: Grand altar for prayer<sup>21</sup>*

#### 2.11.4 Dingakeng

This locality is situated deep inside the cave. It is a secluded locality in the cave because of the nature of its sacrality and it is not reached easily. In order for a person who wants to reach Dingakeng he/she has to receive prior permission from the Ancestors themselves. The user community refers to this locality as the domain of the Ancestors. At this locality, trainee healers are taught about the art of indigenous healing by the Ancestors. The calling of the traditional healer is fortified at this locality.

The informants assert that the link between Modimo (God) and Badimo (the Ancestors) is stronger at this locality. The perception in this regard is that God sends the Ancestors to the cave to help his children. These divine healers, according to an informant, are the ones who qualify whether a trainee healer can graduate to the next level of indigenous traditional healing or not.

The other name for this physical locality is Emakhosini = the place of great ancestors. There is a level of consciousness that this locality is a representation of a cosmological notion, which denotes the spiritual presence of the Ancestors in the cave. These Ancestors are conceptualised

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<sup>21</sup> Cawood 2010:30

as authentic traditional healers of the site. The trainee healers who graduate from this locality are seen as powerful healers who will dispense healing clothed in the spirit of the Makhosi (healers) of the locality.



*Figure 22: Makhosi/Healers' secluded enclave<sup>22</sup>*

#### **2.11.5 Mabitleng**

Mabitleng is situated behind the Grand Altar. The locality is characterised by small heaps of stones, said to be graves at the site. There are many altars in the locality where pilgrims and visitors can pay their last respects to those departed. Initially the altars of the indigenous peoples were not plastered, but were only erected from stacked stones. Independent Churches preferred plastered altars, even whitewashed altars.

This physical locality at the cave is not a graveyard in the true sense of the word, but denotes the spiritual presence of Ancestors. Mabitleng was revealed when the place was cleared of rocks after a vision had been received by the traditional healers of the sacred cave that the locality be set aside as a graveyard. Pilgrims and visitors light candles at this graveyard to appease the Ancestors.

Mabitleng is also a locality where a person can look for answers relating to a missing family member. Rituals of tracing loved ones who are missing are performed at this locality. The

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<sup>22</sup> Cawood 2009:35



informants in this regard claim that the location is very sacred and tranquil; it represents a graveyard in its true character. Furthermore, an area at the back of graveyard is considered sacred because of its powerful water. Plastic buckets are a common feature here.



*Figure 23: Imagined stony graveyard<sup>23</sup>*

#### **2.11.6 Mokgorong**

Mokgorong is actually the “television location” of the site. This locality can be entered only on one’s knees. It is located at the back of the cave. Ntate Ditaba Tsa Badimo, the oldest traditional healer at Motouleng, says this locality is extremely sacred. According to various informants, this locality is mystical because ancestral spirits dwell there forever. However, nowadays pilgrims from indigenous churches enter the locality with burning candles, which is actually against the laws of the site.

Indigenous traditional healers at the site have cautioned against undermining the sacredness of the television locality. One is inclined to infer that the indigenous churches did not grasp the original narrative of the location by placing candles inside the television room; they did not understand the tradition of the locality. The locality is further profaned by the roaming goats

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<sup>23</sup> Moephuli 2009:9

brought there for slaughtering. They also go into the cave to eat from the food offering inside the locality. This is a clear example of negligence towards the original reverence of the site.



*Figure 24: Ancestral television location<sup>24</sup>*

#### **2.11.7 Khotla**

Khotla is the “royal court” of the site. The court has been constructed with stones in an oval fashion. In the course of time, it has been plastered with brown clay outside so that it remains intact as the traditional court of the site. The court is situated in the middle of the cave.

The user community at the site view the court as extremely important, because it represents the ethics and authority of the site. It is the epicentre of discipline meted out by the Ancestors. In the event of uncontrolled discipline occurring in the cave, those responsible will be summoned to appear before the royal court. It is believed that only male persons with a sacred standing will adjudicate matters pertaining to ritual desecration, disrespect for elders of the site and Ancestors.

According to Nel (2011:10),

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<sup>24</sup> Moephuli 2010:8

The lekgotla has lost its original function as a location of tribal deliberations. It is used for ordinary prayer occasions, and often it is the site where spiritual leaders determine the good (white) or bad (black) spirits in his/her clients.

The original use has disappeared with time. The regal structure of the lekgotla was truncated by the many changes taking place at the site; however, some informants still reminisce about the authority and the sacredness of the court. One is mindful of the fact that site transformation is central to the many changes in the original features of the physical localities; this is also witnessed at other spots.



*Figure 25: Indigenous royal court<sup>25</sup>*

#### **2.11.8 Clay site**

The clay sites at Motouleng are small compared to Nkokomohi at Mautse. The main clay site at Motouleng is situated in the middle of the cave. Although soil is taken from the grounds of the site throughout the cave, the actual soil locality is clearly designated.

The clay site at Motouleng is called “Thotobolong” (heap of ash). This locality in the cave is considered very sacred by the user community. This clay is harvested by pilgrims and visitors

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<sup>25</sup> Moephuli 2010:9

alike. This clay is not loosely taken, because, it is in different colours and heals different ailments.

The colours of this clay range from black, dark grey, white and yellow. The colours of this clay soil have a particular meaning for people who harvest it. According to Cawood (2010:113), “Clay can be administered by applying the clay all over the person’s body, or mixing it with water to form a paste for consumption”. Most of the traditional healers mix with herbs to produce medicine that may help the sick person. In this regard, Trabold (2008:47) state,

Red and white clay can be smeared on the whole body with butter. The white clay is indicative of the closing stage of becoming a zangoma. Clay used for beautification is often mixed with body lotion or Vaseline, while black clay is mixed with water and or *mpepo*.

The usage of clay in traditional African settings is instigated by a particular ceremony that is celebrated in a specific season, e.g. during the rite of passage of young initiates coming out of circumcision, white clay could be smeared on the girl’s faces and red clay on the faces of the boys.



*Figure 26: Clay location*<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Moephuli 2009:13



### 2.11.9 Motouleng deeper section

The Motouleng sacred site is divided into two sections. The section that starts at Maseeng and ends at the clay site is managed by Ditaba Tsa Badimo. The latter part of the cave starts immediately from behind the rock-fall behind the section managed by Ditaba Tsa Badimo. A stone wall-structure with a gate separates the two and is entered by permission of the late Mr Sam Radebe and his wife.

This part of the cave is quiet. There is not much activity, but it has beautiful unoccupied thatched structures and compounds. Sam Radebe used to stay with his wife and child at the last compound of the cave. This deeper section of the cave was transformed by the late Sam Radebe and nowadays this section is considered sacred to a growing group of pilgrims.

The structures that Sam Radebe built at the cave represent church liturgical architecture, such as community assembly spaces, baptismal fonts and Christian symbolism. There are about four baptismal fonts erected in Sam Radebe's part of the cave. Apparently, the cave was originally meant for *sangomas* and *inyangas* were demarcated to serve the Christian tradition and indigenous traditional beliefs.



Figure 27: Entrance to Sam Radebe's part of the cave<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Moephuli 2010:14

The picture above shows the entrance constructed in stones and the gate made out of sticks. Special permission has to be sought from Sam Radebe to enter this section. The beautiful structures in this section were meant to accommodate pilgrims and visitors to this section of the cave.

One is inclined to infer that the altars and baptismal fonts were a foreshadowing of church services to be held at this section. Baptism will not take place in the river nearby; instead, it will be conducted at this section of Sam Radebe.



*Figure 28: Thatched dwelling<sup>28</sup>*

The structure above is one of the many erected by the late Sam Radebe. The indigenous architectural skill of erecting such structures was invented by Sam Radebe. Even the grounds of this section are clean and tidy. Although the structures did not have people occupying them consistently, they are quite an attraction at the cave.

Finally, there is a smaller cave about 800 metres away at the same mountain slope associated with Motouleng and mainly in use for female initiation and healer training. It consists of a rock cave, called “Gethsemane” and a few open stone structures against an overhang for accommodation. Male persons are prohibited from entering this locality.

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<sup>28</sup>Moephuli 2010:15

## 2.12 Site-internal localities at Modderpoort

The layout of the Modderpoort physical localities are captured in a diagram below, which specifically indicates where the localities are situated. However, the layout or diagram does not only address the physical localities, but also addresses the key areas that define the Modderpoort landscape.

In this regard, the focus on this diagram will be the physical localities reflected on it. The artist who drew the diagram gave a picture of the Modderpoort landscape in its totality and how it looked before the physical localities took centre stage in the area.

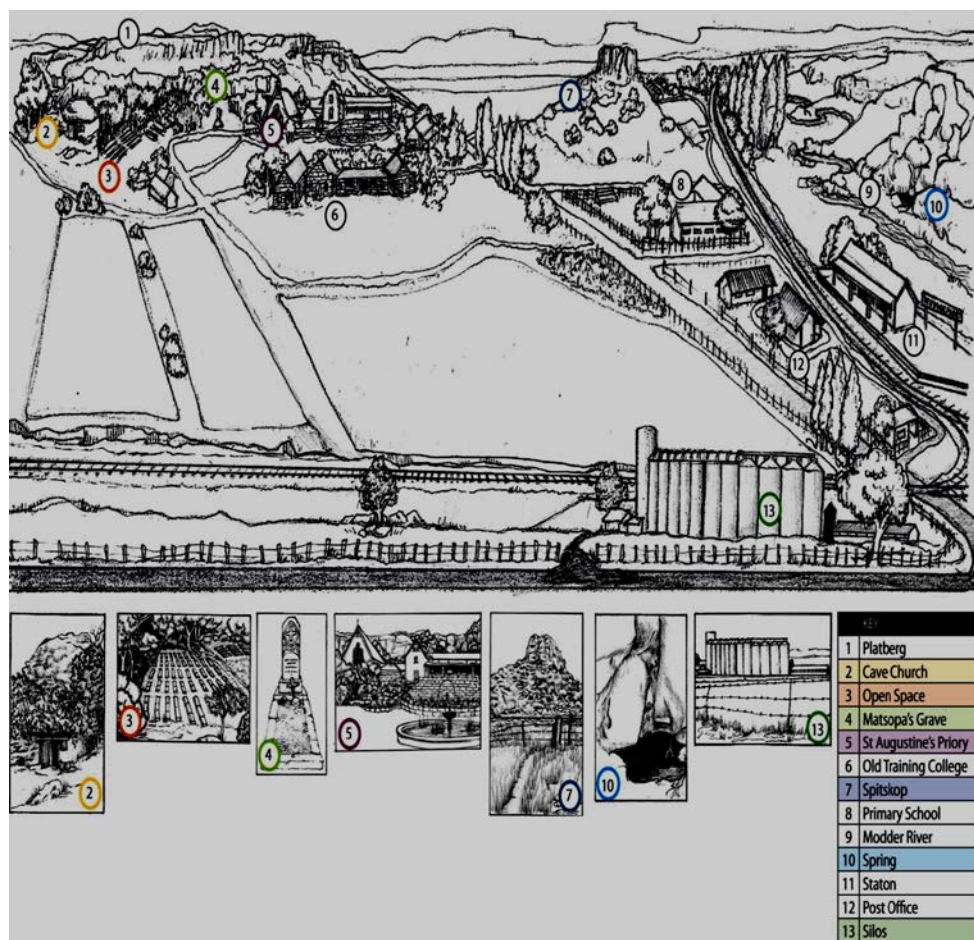


Figure29: A schematic diagram of the localities at Modderpoort<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Coleman 2008:1

### 2.12.1 San rock paintings

The San rock paintings are not enlisted in the diagram above, but they form an important part of the sacred nature of the Modderpoort site. These paintings were designed by the San community, who were the indigenous tribe of the site. They were originally called the “Makhomomoholo” (the great people at herding cattle) who were apparently the first people to live at the site. They painted images of their spirit world whilst staying at the site. These paintings are prominently inscribed on the walls of the Rose Chapel.

The paintings reveal strong attraction to both earthly and spiritual levels. Rock art at the site is viewed as sacred, because it relates to indigenous traditional beliefs as well as shamanistic ritual performances of San hunter-gatherers of the pre-Colonial era. The ability to produce images on rocks by the San community illustrates that indigenous art has its genesis in the San community at the site.

Primordially the Cave Church was a well-known hunter-gatherer rock-art site. The ceiling of the cave shelter has a number of San paintings, which illustrate that the San people could have used the cave as an art location. There are estimated 20 not so visible figures on the cave walls of San paintings. The paintings are fading due to candle-smoke ritual burnings and graffiti.



*Figure 30: Rock paintings in the cave church<sup>30</sup>*

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<sup>30</sup>Coleman 2008:2



### 2.12.2 The Anglican Church

The Anglican Church at the Modderpoort site has been realised through the labours of Bishop Twells of Bloemfontein, who purchased a farm at Modderpoort in 1865 to start mission work in the area. According to Nzumbulolo Heritage Solutions (2010:15),

In 1865, Bishop Twells of the Bloemfontein Anglican Church Diocese bought the two farms Modderpoort and Modderpoortspruit as a base for missionary work in the area.

Nobody had been evangelised prior to the labours of the missionaries, who aspired to conduct church work on the farm.

The area became the property of the Anglican Church, thus converting the area into a Christian-dominated locality. Informants at Modderpoort claim that, the site was a contested land between the Basotho people, particularly Bataung and the missionaries. The San community is also featured in the land contestation.

A mission station was established in a cave, and subsequently a church and a sacred dwelling for the missionaries were built. This mission station was perceived to be highly sacred by both the church and the community. There is a cemetery of the missionaries alongside the priory, with graves of the former residents of Modderpoort.



*Figure 31: Saint Augustine priory<sup>31</sup>*

### **2.12.3 Mantsopa Grave**

Modderpoort is revered by multitudes of people because it is the resting place of the formidable prophetess Anna Mantsopa Makhetha who was buried at the graveyard at Modderpoort in 1906. Many pilgrims who view the grave as highly sacred visit her grave. The Anglican Church has annual pilgrimages to the site; therefore, the grave of Mantsopa is properly preserved by the Church.

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<sup>31</sup>Coleman 2008:3



*Figure 32: Prophetess Mantsopa's grave<sup>32</sup>*

#### **2.12.4 Cave Church or Rose Church**

The Cave Church is a revered heritage site in the Eastern Free State and it is associated with the prophetess Anna Mantsopa Makhetha. The Cave Church at Modderpoort is a sandstone rock shelter. This shelter is fenced off, although there is visible accessibility to the chapel. The entrance to the chapel is often locked. Next to the Cave Church, there is an open space with some kind of stone benches for congregants to sit during services that commemorate the site and the prophetess Mantsopa.

According to Nzumbulolo Heritage solutions (2010:26),

The cave is also believed to have provided refuge to some Sotho communities during tribal and colonial wars. Very little is documented about the history of the use of the cave except for conflicting information about its use by Mantsopa and the Anglican Church Brothers of the Sacred Heart Order.

Historically the Cave Church from the period 1870 was used by the Anglican Church. It is not clear whether the prophetess Mantsopa used the Cave Church to carry out her prophetic work, but the archival records of the Church show that Mantsopa lived in a cave near Spitskop Mountain, close to Modderpoort.

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<sup>32</sup> Cawood 2010:5



*Figure 33: Cave Church<sup>33</sup>*

#### **2.12.5 Mantsopa Spring**

The spring is located to the northwest of the Cave Church, about a kilometre from the Saint Augustine priory. Mantsopa used the perennial spring during her stay at Modderpoort. This spring is situated amongst trees just outside the pathway from the church grounds and, adjacent to the spring, about 50 metres away, is the actual cave where Mantsopa stayed. Mantsopa later moved to a compound against the hill.

Pilgrims and visitors flock to this spring because of the belief in the fact that Mantsopa carried out her healing and ritual duties at the spring. The pilgrims and traditional healers believe that her powers are still present at the spring, and they would come to the spring with bottles to fetch holy water, also believed to take bad luck away.

The aura of the location possesses sacrality. This is holy ground where the great diviner bathed and foretold what the future held. This episode of Mantsopa's association with the spring is an analogy of King Moshoeshoe's association with the spring at Mautse.

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<sup>33</sup> Cawood 2010:6





*Figure 34: Mantsopa Spring<sup>34</sup>*

### **2.13 Site-internal locality at Oetsi**

The Oetsi Cave differs from the other Eastern Free State sites in the sense that it does not display a multitude of site-internal localities. The internal physical locality of Oetsi Cave is filled with rocks all over the grounds of the cave, although there is faint graffiti on the walls of the cave, illustrating the fact that the San drawings could have been prevalent in the Stone Age during the era of the San people. The faint San drawings on the walls of this cave point to the fact that the site has a history regardless of the tribal contestation for land.

The Stone Age has been categorised as the prehistoric era. However, nothing is said about the San people staying in the cave. The only evidence before the researcher is the graffiti on the walls of the cave that attest to the presence of the San community before the tribal feud between the Batlokwa, Bakwena and Makholokoe. The researcher is mindful of the fact that the multitude of rocks inside the cave are said to represent a significant epoch in the history of the Makholokoe. The following is an image of the internal setting at the Oetsi Cave:

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<sup>34</sup> Cawood 2010:7



*Figure 35: Interior of Oetsi<sup>35</sup>*

## **2.14 The history, legend and myth of the Mautse Site**

The history of the Mautse sacred site is best described in the understanding of the Caledon Valley starting in Lesotho to Bethulie in the Southern Free State. Mautse, like other sites of the Eastern Free State, is situated in the middle of the Mohokare/Caledon Valley. The stories, myths and legends of the sites in some cases overlap because they happened in a similar context.

The major Basotho tribes comprising Batlokwa, Bakwena and Bataung, were involved in a fierce contestation for the Mautse Valley, which took place in 1867-1868. This assertion is congruent with the fact that some sacred sites are named after prominent Basotho tribes and personalities. The reference in question is the Bataung Cave, Mankopane Cave and the Moshoeshoe Spring.

In this afore regard, there was fierce contestation for the Mautse sacred site, apparently between the Batlokwa of Chief Sekonyela and the Bakwena of King Moshoeshoe. The Mautse site was

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<sup>35</sup>Moephuli 2012:3

the pre-colonial territory of the dynasty of Batlokwa chiefs; however, because of the splendour of its terrain, the Bakwena sought to assume traditional leadership of the site.

Tribal conflict in the Mohokare Valley produced an unsavoury tale of intergroup conflict, which directly affected the Mautse sacred site. This conflict among the Basotho tribes did not affect them only. The encroachment of the colonial forces into indigenous land played a leading role in destabilising various Basotho tribes. The facts run ominously through the history of colonialism and contestation for land conquest. The narrative of Mautse could be viewed within the parameters of these occurrences in the Mohokare Valley.

Therefore, the genesis of the Mautse site is captured in the indigenous belief systems, of the various groups/tribes, which are visibly rife today throughout the site. In other words, indigenous communities resided at the site long before the advent of colonial encroachment. A correct interpretation with regard to this assertion is that the relationship between colonialism and indigenous people in the Mohokare Valley was based on the subservience of the indigenous people and the imposing power of the colonists, and the outcome was the contestation for land.

With regard to the above assertion, Cawood and Moephuli (2014:27) state,

The colonial border created artificial geographical and cultural demarcation between the local tribal communities. This action also resulted in the current *de facto* situation that the sites are alienated from communal ancestral land and located on privately owned property-itself a highly complex situation.

The Caledon Valley, which forms part of the territory conquered by the colonists, may have included some of the current sacred locations. It remains however, uncertain whether the colonists were aware of these spiritual sites of the Mohokare Valley. According to Coplan (2003), the sites are pilgrimage destinations that symbolically signify the reclamation of ancestral land amongst Lesotho pilgrims.

Furthermore, Coplan (2003:1-5) claims that the visitations to and permanent dwelling of Lesotho citizens at the site manifest a form of political re-appropriation of the land that had been forcefully removed from indigenous inhabitants by colonial administration. The Mohokare Valley had encapsulated the ancestral lands, which inevitably became subject to land contestation. Pilgrims to these lands or sites are re-appropriating ownership of the sites,

and their claims might be legitimate, but this did not surface in the research outcome. This affected the Mautse sacred site to a greater degree.

Colonial conflict and tribal conflict over land may have contributed immensely to the unstable situation of the Mohokare Valley. It is generally accepted that the colonists were largely responsible for land conquest, but tribal conflict fuelled this unfortunate occurrence.

There is no clear historical picture of the religious use of the sites prior to or during the colonial conflict and the intertribal conflict over land. The researcher assumes that in terms of the memo-history of the Basotho people and oral literatures, these sites have long-standing histories and attachment to Basotho religious practice. One may also accept that the popularity of these sites has increased over the years and that their status goes far beyond the historical beginnings one might project. The evolution of the sites' internal localities to complex sites is certainly linked to traditions from the latter half of the previous century.

In this above regard, Cawood states (2010:49),

The Caledon Valley is the land enveloping the South African-Lesotho border and following the flow of the Caledon River in the Free State, and has been a contested territory especially since the 1800s when Basotho and Boer clashed over land.

The history of the sites in the Mohokare Valley is accentuated by the on-going conflict for land ownership; however, the sacred properties of the sites were hardly known to the colonists. This resulted in the fervent resistance of the indigenous communities to forego land at all cost.

The clay site at Mautse was the original physical locality at the valley, as has already been alluded to above. The valley did belong to the local people before the era of the Conquered Territory, but that does not mean that the localities in the valley now considered sacred were recognised sacred places. One may arguably assume that most of these localities (if not all) have, through different dynamics, evolving myth and narrative obtained a status of sacrality, which in many respects is still in a fluid state and not fixed.

This historical position may have been generated by factors manifesting themselves through cultural and spiritual attachment to the environment, a need for sense of belonging and a claim that denies the legitimacy of the historically imposed reality.

Constant visits by the Basotho people to the sacred sites of the Eastern Free State and others, turning them into residences, are acts of reclaiming lost territory during the colonial era. This opinion is strongly advocated by Coplan (2003). The expansionism of the colonists in the sacred valley bordering Lesotho and South Africa tainted the cultures of the indigenous tribes.

#### **2.14.1 Myths at Mautse**

The English dictionary (2000) defines myth as “traditional or fable embodying the primitive ideas of a people”. The body of myths are prevalent throughout the sacred sites of the Eastern Free State; they exist to narrate the belief systems of the indigenous communities. This body of myths are re-enacted by virtue of the existence of various rituals at the physical localities.

According to Mbiti (1975:82), “A myth is a means of explaining some actual or imaginary reality which is not adequately understood and so cannot be explained through normal description”.

In this regard, myth and ritual complement each other; however, never completely coincide. It is important to note that ritual repertoires involve the execution of ancestral instructions as expressed in the myths; in short, mythology substantiates, justifies or explains a range of rituals. According to Cawood (2010:205), “Mythmaking is a dynamic process with new myths or ceremonies determined by pre-existent cultural forms where private ritual can become conditioned to the whole group”.

An essential component of myth, which is clearly exposed at the sites, is religious significance. This is undergirded by indigenous cultures that are encapsulated in religious rituals, which explain the myths at the Mautse site. The following are the myths and legendary stories encountered at the Mautse sacred site:

The narratives pertaining to the clay site at Mautse are related by the informants as authentic. The informants claim that in the 1960s, smoke would be followed by fire coming from the clay site from as early as 3 a.m. The late Monica Magengenene claims that by 3 a.m. the ancestors were cooking the clay, preparing it for harvesting by traditional healers. This fire could be seen from as far as Madiboko.

The Madiboko physical locality is divided into two sections. At Lower Madiboko, the late Monica believed her patients first had to be washed at a waterfall that divides the two sections

before they could be diagnosed. Monica believed strongly in the mixing of Christian liturgies with indigenous divination. She would always end her work with a burning sacrifice. The narrative pertaining to Upper Madiboko is that of specialising in tracing tribal totems of people who do not know their origins.

The narratives of Tempeleng are anchored in the belief that a person must ascend the stairs to meet with God or the Ancestors and that the pool next to the altars can be used for baptism and the exorcising of evil spirits.

The narratives at the university are centred on the ancestors teaching trainee healers about the art of healing and the number of shelters built there are enclaves for ancestral instructions and orders. The conviction here is that ritual and healing training are centred here.

The narrative of the Moshoeshoe spring is that the Basotho people believed that the powers of the Basotho Ancestors reside underneath the spring; therefore, if they also used the spring water they would assume the power of King Moshoeshoe.

Lower Madiboko has been led by Monica Magengenene for almost two decades. The second in command at this locality is Ndaba Tladi, who comes from Bohlokong in Bethlehem, Eastern Free State. An old man by the name of JW Mokoena, who originally comes from Mapoteng in Maseru, lives in a small shelter at the site. He claims that he met the spirit of Monica at night. They should go to the “university” so that Monica can transfer her power to him after her death. The myth making is further evident from his account that at the back of the rock where his shelter is, he can hear the voices of the ancestors. In prayer and dreams he is able to interact with them.

## **2.15 History, legend and myth at Motouleng**

Historically the site was only used by traditional healers (sangomas) and with the evolution of the site, the faith healers conducted services at the site. A certain Reverend John Mphuti of an independent church was the first faith healer at the cave. He was instrumental in introducing a diverse indigenous practice of belief systems in the cave, which originally was meant only for sangomas. During the 1960s to 1970s, the Motouleng site was only visited and no person was supposed to stay there. Even the independent church of Rev John Mphuti would hold a service there and disperse before sunset. During the years mentioned above the cave was understood

to be the sacred residence of the ancestors and that they stayed there; therefore, no service would be held at the cave once sunset approached.

Motouleng is considered highly sacred because of its close relationship with the ancestors of the site; it is situated close to a powerful stream. According to Nel (2011:7), “In the East African religious landscape, the ancestor connection to water source is important. Therefore, the river close to the sacred cave has obtained mythical significance.” The rocks in the river are inscribed with biblical verses that signify the importance of water to the practices of the cave. The crossing of the stream into the cave is compared to the crossing of the biblical Jordan into Canaan by the senior traditional healer. This understanding attaches biblical significance to the cave.

The rules of the site were very strict, but were not written down; they were transmitted orally to the traditional leadership of the site by the Ancestors of the site. The process of transmission with regard to the oral history of the site is understood to come originally from the spirit to the human person who ensures the capturing of the history. Originally, one physical locality of the site meant for consultation was called “Maseeng”.

#### **2.15.1 Myths at Motouleng**

The birth name of the present senior traditional healer at Motouleng is Joseph Sebala Tjama, known at the site as “Ditaba Tsa Badimo”. He claims that Ancestors do not have similar powers. He alleges that the Ancestors at Motouleng are more powerful than the Ancestors at Mautse are. This narrative also serves the dominant spiritual position of Motouleng. Ditaba Tsa Badimo claims there was a period in the existence of both the sites that Ancestors would travel from Motouleng to Mautse to exert their authority. However, these days, such travelling between the sites has stopped. Ditaba Tsa Badimo claims that Motouleng is the most powerful site in the region, meaning that the ancestors at Motouleng are the strongest than those at Mautse.

The myths and legendary stories at Motouleng are enlisted in summary form:

- The graveyard within the cave is believed to have been built by the Ancestors.
- It is believed that there are graves of the Ancestors on top of the cave.



- It is believed that the physical locality “Mokgorong” is a television station where the Ancestors speak.

With respect to the history and myth of the graveyard at Motouleng, Nel claims (2011:9),

Various narratives exists as to who are the Ancestors buried there are and one is not sure if there are in fact graves.

The nature and topography of the location do not depict a graveyard per se. There is a perception among the inhabitants of the cave that this ‘shadow’ graveyard connects with the other authentic graveyards in the townships where their Ancestors are buried. That is why the graveyard at Motouleng is said to be denoting the spiritual presence of the Ancestors.

An in-depth analytical approach to the imaginative setting of the ground formations of the setting cave is further probed by Nel (2011:9):

What should be noted here is the fact that the physical objects or ground formations in the cave have been the causes of imaginative reflection; natural objects are often the inspiring nodes for historization.

The majority of customary functions, which form the basis of a litany of myths, are exercised throughout the cave by indigenous traditional practitioners. The functional processes at Motouleng are directly linked to God and ancestral spirits and the process of healing cannot take place in the absence of the latter. The mythology connected to healing is affected by supernatural spirits and the traditional healer conducting the ritual is not the one who heals but the Ancestors.

In this regard, the myth of fertility is directly connected to “Modimo and Badimo” (God and the Ancestors). The physical locality “Maseeng” is seen as an indigenous hospital for barren female persons who cannot bear children. At this locality, strict instructions are adhered to when a woman wants a child. Often the traditional healer will tell the woman to bring a pink cloth if the woman wants to conceive a girl, or a blue cloth if the woman wants to conceive a boy. The myth of the colour of cloth is central to the conception of a baby at Motouleng. A conviction is held in this regard, that the colours of the cloth are instrumental in the process of conception and the choice of colour of the cloth would always be the prerogative of the couple whose quest is to have a child.



The myth of fertility is as old as Motouleng site itself, thus it has become a “sacred myth” that defines the sacred landscape of the site itself. The myth of fertility has religious significance in the site; therefore, the altar or shrine where the ritual is performed of fertility is of a religious nature, because it communicates the importance of the “Maseeng fertility site” as a physical locality that solves problems of infertility.

The Motouleng sacred site has other mystical narratives that relate to how people are sent and directed to the cave by the Ancestors. In this regard, there is a myth about a foreign African female healer from Zimbabwe, who saw Motouleng in a vision. She was instructed by her ancestors in a dream to undertake a journey to the site, which she did. She stayed at the cave until she died. Her grave is understood to be on top of the cave.

The second section of the cave, which was managed by the late Sam Radebe and his wife, was classified as sacred by the couple because of its outlook from the section managed by Ditaba Tsa Badimo. Sam Radebe cleansed the back part of the cave and saw sacrality emerging from this cleanliness; furthermore, Radebe constructed baptismal fonts, which foreshadowed a Christian church that would one day perform baptisms in that part of the cave. He and his wife claim that they are trained and instructed by the ancestors in 2009 to reconstruct the area and perform healing rituals there.

Ditaba Tsa Badimo claims that the Ancestors instructed him not to interfere with Radebe’s section of the cave, because they were unhappy with the demarcation of the cave, which apparently was done by Radebe.

Radebe died whilst fishing at the local river. Ditaba Tsa Badimo relates that Radebe angered the Ancestors by fishing at a time not required to be at the river. The Ancestors had him poisoned by a fish or a snake at the river, which ultimately killed him. Ditaba Tsa Badimo believes the Ancestors of the site punished Sam Radebe by killing him for dividing the cave without their permission.

Ditaba Tsa Badimo is now awaiting instructions from God and Ancestors to cleanse the side of the cave where Sam Radebe was staying. He says that the Ancestors will instruct him about the rituals to be performed before cleansing takes place in the part of the cave. However, Sam’s widow claims that she is now the spiritual leader of the deeper side of the cave and that she will continue with the work that her late husband performed in this side of the cave.

## 2.16 History, myth and legend at Modderpoort

The only sacred site with precise contemporary history in the Eastern Free State is Modderpoort, popularly known as the Mantsopa sacred site. Modderpoort is also known as “Lekgalong La Bo Tau” (Pass of the lions) in Sesotho. The history of the site is based on the establishment of the St Augustine Priory at Modderpoort in 1870. This site is located 14 kilometres outside a town called Ladybrand, which has a rich history in the Free State. The Basotho people from Ladybrand and the surrounding Mohokare Valley areas were defeated and displaced because of the Siqiti wars, which saw the Eastern Free State being declared Conquered Territory. The conquered territory was turned into farms and was taken over by the colonial conquerors. According to Coleman (2009:4),

At some point after the 1865-1866 war fought with the Boers settlers in the Free State, Lekhalong la bo-Tau was ceded to the Free State government as victors of the battles and after the peace of Sorghum (Khotso ea Mabele) in 1866, the ‘Conquered Territory’ as it came to be known, was surveyed and perceived and parcelled into farms.

The conquered territory saw the merging of the two farms, namely Modderpoort and Modderpoortspruit into one farm, which is the present Modderpoort.

In 1865, Bishop Twells of the Anglican Church in Bloemfontein purchased two farms, Modderpoort and Modderpoortspruit, from the colonial conquerors in order to establish a mission station to evangelise the Eastern Free State. The missionaries first arrived at the site in 1869, led by Henry Beckett.

According to Hodgson (2010:221),

“In 1863 Edward Twells was consecrated bishop of the new Diocese of Bloemfontein, incorporates the Free State and Basutoland. Eager for closer British ties, Moshoeshe and Moroka (Rolong chief at Thaba ‘Nchu) welcomed the bishop’s promises of Anglican missionaries despite the vehement protests of long-established French and Methodists missions. But priests were not forthcoming and so Twells, a staunch Tractarian, tapped into the newly restored Catholic life in the Church of England and established a monastic order, the

Missionary Brotherhood of St Augustine of Hippo (SSA), to serve his diocese as a self-supporting community.

The missionaries sought shelter in a cave and held church services there. The Church of the Province's archival records clearly shows that the Cave Church is a consecrated Anglican Church (2008:44). The infrastructure of the buildings in the site started in 1871. According to Nzumbulolo Heritage Solutions (2010:15),

Most buildings were built using sandstone bricks quarried from the surrounding hills. It is also understood that the sandstone used for the union Building also came from the source.

The significance of the sacred architecture of Modderpoort is closely related to the prophetess Mantsopa, who carried out outstanding prophetic work in the area of Modderpoort during the period of colonisation and the arrival of missionaries. Mantsopa was born in Lesotho in about 1795. In 1851, she accurately predicted the victory of the Basotho people over the colonial invaders led by Major Warden. It is for this reason that Mantsopa gained popularity among the majority of Basotho people. This consequently led to King Moshoeshoe I becoming jealous of her prophetic gift and she sought refuge at Modderpoort for her safety.

#### **2.16.1 The legend and myth of Mantsopa**

The Mantsopa story of Modderpoort is drawn mostly from oral transmission. The credibility of these stories connected to the prophetess Mantsopa has the capacity to resist competing claims of truth or reality. In this regard, the frame of the mythical assessment of the Modderpoort site is premised on the malleability of the oral tradition of the site itself. This assertion does not discount the authentic nature of the prophecies carried out by the prophetess Mantsopa.

The physical localities connected to Mantsopa, namely the grave, the spring and the cave, are said to represent her legendary and prophetic status in a broader sense. However, the grave could conclusively prove to be linked to her. On the other hand, her association with the spring and the cave are possibly subjects of oral transmission in an effort to imbue the physical localities with her status. There could be lack of tangible evidence as to the nature of the oral story in this matter; it appears obvious that there is a thread of myth to her connectedness to the localities.

The physical localities of Modderpoort reflect a deep reverence for the prophetess Mantsopa by the Sotho people. The mythical profile could be submerged in order to accord credence to the localities associated with Mantsopa. However, myth may be bolstered by the popularity of each physical locality within the site that attracts a phenomenal number of tourists to the site. The important Christian dates observed by the Anglican Church in commemoration of Mantsopa also are a contributory factor in promoting the legend of Mantsopa and underplaying the myth linked to the acclaimed exploits of the prophetess.

According to Hodgson (2010:220)

As with all prestige myths, there is an ongoing need to increase the value of the symbol so that it can function more powerfully to achieve its goal. The growth of the Mantsopa tradition not only added to her prestige as a prophet, but also released a dynamic, which had a spiralling effect on her symbolic importance.

Mantsopa's prophetic exploits and her memory are unforgettable to this day among the Basotho people and the pilgrims to the site. Modderpoort is a site of magnificent pilgrimage, and this sacred aspect of the site overshadows the myth linked to the site and its associated physical localities. The significance of the site is demonstrated by the harvesting of sacred soil at the back of the cave church, the collecting of sacred water from the spring and the visit to the grave. All these important factors are significant cultural factors intertwined with the history of the Modderpoort sacred site.

At a practical level, indigenous traditional religions are practised at the site, pre-Christian Basotho rituals are observed at the site and established mainline churches with a mission orientation are part of a broader meaning of the Modderpoort sacred site. The co-existence of pre-Christian Basotho rituals with Christianity ushered a new era of belief systems entwined to religiously serve the communities of Modderpoort and adjacent territories who subscribed to this entwinement of African traditional religion with Christianity.

## **2.17 The history, legend and myth of Oetsi**

The precise history of the Oetsi Cave is riddled with conflicting claims of ownership among the major Basotho tribes. This cave is named after Chief Oetsi and later changed to Wetsie of the Makholokoe tribe in Qwaqwa. A document written by the Makholokoe claims that Chief Oetsi arrived at Witsieshoek about 1810 and found a suitable settlement for his subjects. As

Chief Oetsi moved around Witsieshoek, he was attacked by White settlers. He then fled to a place called Monontsha in a nearby cave and turned it into a fortress against the onslaught of the White settlers. This cave was given the name Oetsi. He was tracked down by the White settlers to the cave and as a result, the majority of the Makholokoe who were hiding in the cave were killed.

It is claimed in the document of the Makholokoe that Chief Oetsi fled to the second cave at a place called “Phatsoe” near the Lesotho territory. This information was given to the researcher by Chief David Makause Moloi, a descendant of Chief Oetsi.

However, another version of events regarding the area of Monontsha is recounted differently by other tribes, who reside in Monontsha, that in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century there were conflicts between Chief Oetsi and the Boers who claimed that their cattle were stolen by the Makholokoe and these conflicts were part of the *Difaqane wars*.

The different Basotho tribes who claim this history allude to the fact that the Monontsha area was ruled by the Bakwena of Mopeli. Incidentally, the Batlokwa were in the majority at Monontsha. The cave is situated at Monontsha and entitlement claims to the cave are between the Bakwena, Batlokwa and the Makholokoe. The events connected to the occupation of the cave by Chief Oetsi are not clear, verification of this saga by the surviving chiefs of the Makholokoe is not clear as to whether Chief Oetsi could have escaped or killed when the white settlers attacked the Makholokoe in early 1830s.

### **2.17.1 The legend and myth of Oetsi**

There is a strong belief that the cave at Monontsha was discovered by Chief Oetsi and the Makholokoe people. The cave as it stands today is viewed as the heritage of the Makholokoe, bequeathed to them by Chief Oetsi. However, other Basotho tribes also claim the cave as their own.

The cave is filled with stones, which the Makholokoe claim to be the graves of their Ancestors who were killed by the Boers around the year 1830. At the mouth of the cave, there is a multitude of stones. No physical localities inside the cave depict any sacredness of the context. It would be mythical to think that this cave has a special relationship with other sacred sites in the Eastern Free State.

The aura of sacrality is evidently absent from this cave. If this site is a contested terrain among the Basotho people of QwaQwa, then one cannot reliably conclude that the cave belongs to one tribe. However, interestingly, the Makholokoe tribe ascribes sacrality to this cave, because they view the cave as a commemorative historical site. Therefore the Oetsi site may differ from the other three sacred sites for reasons pertaining to tribal commemoration of the cave against sacrality based on ritual, culture, and religion as carried out at Mautse, Motouleng and Modderpoort.

Although the cave is named after a chief of the Makholokoe, care should be taken in ascribing the events pertaining to the killings inside the cave as solely belonging to one tribe; however, there is no conclusive evidence to prove this assertion. It is claimed that dead bodies of people and cattle are buried beneath the piles of rocks inside the cave. In other words, the cave is perceived to be a graveyard. This saga may amount to a myth of the Oetsi Cave, but it may also be revered as a sacred site by the Makholokoe.

The Makholokoe claim that Chief Oetsi was killed by White settlers at Phatsoe. He was subsequently beheaded and his skull taken to Holland by the White settlers. There is no factual evidence about this occurrence in the history of the Makholokoe. The myth of the site negates the important contributions made by other tribes like the Batlokwa and Bakwena to the history of the Oetsi Cave.

## **2.18 The status and significance of the sites**

The sacred sites of the Eastern Free State are culturally and spiritually important for indigenous communities both residing at the sites and those outside the sites as part of the user community through periodical visits. These sites are expressions of religious-cultural practices of communities who desire to be in communication with their indigenous belief systems that emphasises spirituality through nature. A broader significance of the sites is their ability to synergise the authority of the Ancestors with that of the traditional leadership of the sites.

The communities of the sites revere the cultural and religious work offered by the sacred sites, as this illustrates traditional indigenous belief systems entrenched in the sites themselves. The sites have a plethora of cultural and spiritual agendas that are executed every day at the sites. This ranges from customary to ritual work. Within each site, there are physical localities, which

to a larger degree explicate the significance of their cultural functions. The site has a diverse array of practices and rituals to serve the communities.

In the above regard, the physical localities accord significance based on the ritual and healing exercised in the place. Some physical localities are an evolution of supernatural occurrence and some localities are constructed at the sites only for a particular cultural event; however, the significance of the localities is determined by the ritual performance that would precede an act of healing at all times.

Healing spots and places at the sites signify how memory attachment and spiritual attachment give a cultural meaning to an event performed at a physical locality and influence sacrality that emerges because of the significance of the locality. The sites can only be significant insofar as the user communities deem them so; this is a very important assessment of the relationship that exists between the communities and the sites.

The significance of the physical localities located at the sites is premised on unique belief systems that are important by their very nature and meaning. The variety of indigenous activities taking place at the sites is a confirmation and evidence of what the forebears of the user communities used to do in order to locate indigenous belief systems, including faith healing systems, in particular localities earmarked for the work of ritual and healing.

However, the original function of the sites was carried out by sangomas and inyangas and African traditional religions formed part of this indigenous schema of the cultural work of the sites, which is why certain rituals at the sites required the person to light a candle and call the name of God and Ancestors. When the sites evolved in relation to the needs of the user communities' religious expression was emphasised at a majority of physical localities to signal the imperative nature of religion in the indigenous traditional function carried out by the "sangomas" (diviners) and the "Inyangas" (traditional healers).

### **2.18.1 Status and significance of the Mautse Valley**

The Mautse Valley is arguably one of the biggest living heritage sites in South Africa. Its landscape is occupied by a plethora of physical localities ranging from faith healing localities to localities occupied by traditional healers. Mautse is a place of spiritual and cultural pilgrimage. It is also a tourist destination in the Eastern Free State; it attracts a wide range of communities who aspire to understand the indigenous way of life.

According to Coplan (2003:933), “Sacred sites such as Mautse are shrines to commemorate ancestral wonders, as well as a platform for expressing religious commitment.” However, such a contention expressed by Coplan could be partially true for the reason that the multiplicity of belief systems at the site clearly shows that the ancestors have a central role to play in the spiritual life of the valley.

However, it is true that Mautse has shrines and altars to pay homage to the ancestors and traditional leaders who perform rituals at the site. This site is particularly respected for its training of traditional healers. A respective dwelling where this training is taking place is clearly demarcated, if it is a faith healing locality, a flag sign will be hoisted indicating the mission and work of the locality. Apart from the training of healers, male and female initiation takes place at respective localities.

Mautse is equally renowned for its sacred space, which embraces traditional African religion and includes separatist church groupings ranging from Apostolic to Zionist indigenous churches who own particular spots in the site so that they can conduct worship services and perform faith healing. In this regard, the religious dimension of the valley is an integral part of the holistic nature of healing dispensed at the site.

The further significance of the valley is that it attracts people from around the country and outside the country. The mere size of the site makes movement within the site easy; however, some sites in the Caledon area are populated during the festive days; therefore, this does not make movement within the valley easy. At Mautse, the spread of the valley and its length and breadth affords pilgrims, visitors and tourists space to view the physical localities at the site clearly.

The pertinent historical association of Mautse with King Moshoeshoe<sup>1</sup> add to the popularity of those who share his legacy. It is common belief that he frequented the site during the inter-tribal feuds and wars with colonists connect the site to his popular standing among the Basotho people. This is fortified by the spring named after him at the valley.

In conclusion, the Mautse Valley is further amplified by its long oral tradition of Nkokomohi clay site and its association with the valley broadens its impact, popularity and eminent spiritual leaders at the site foster recognition of the place.



### 2.18.2 Significance of the Motouleng Site

The Motouleng Sacred Cave is smaller compared to Mautse; however, this is a gigantic cave and it is its enormity, which imbues admiration and awe. Ancestral worship and veneration take place here. This cave is significant for its work in training traditional healers who come from various corners of the country. This cave has a very rich legendary history in terms of its indigenous work among the user communities.

According to the old spiritual leader of the site Joseph Tjama (Ditaba Tsa Badimo) it is Motouleng where Modimo and Badimo co-exist in harmony. The Badimo here also includes white people's ancestors. In some sense, it is the "gateway" to the ancestors.

Symbolism plays an important role at the site; an informant relates that originally, there was snow and butterflies in the site, and this is a sign of symbolic presence of ancestors. Healing will flow to those who are sick with various diseases; infertile women will begin to conceive. The most significant thing about this cave is that originally it was only meant to perform fertility rituals. With the evolution of the site, a number of important localities have emerged and are playing an important role in the life of the site.

The cave is considered highly sacred because of its close connection to the ancestors of the site it is situated next to a powerful stream. According to Nel (2011:7), "In the East African religious landscape, the ancestor connection to water source is important. Therefore, the river close to the sacred cave has obtained mythical significance." The rocks in the river are inscribed with biblical verses that signify the importance of the water to the practises of the cave. The crossing of the stream into the cave is compared to the crossing of the biblical Jordan into Canaan by the senior traditional healer. This understanding attaches biblical significance to the cave.

There are numerous views regarding the supremacy of cultic and cultural practices between Motouleng and Mautse. A popular view held at Motouleng is that this site is the strongest of all the sites in the Free State. The narrative of the greatness of this cave emanates from various religious persuasions prevalent in the site, regardless of the fact that the cave is separated into two sections. In this regard, the informants assert that Motouleng holds a significant position in ancestral work and it surpasses other sites with regard to this ritual work. One must acknowledge that this contention is contested by the user communities of other sites.

According to Nel (2011:9), “The historization process has resulted in a fairly unanimous, collective memory of Motouleng supreme status as residing place of the Ancestors, which does not mean that the Ancestors cannot be revered at other sites”.

The sites of the Eastern Free State have mythical histories attached to them, the user communities at the sites all claim superior status for their sites. Significance also is attached to collective memory of the site and its successes and this legitimises the claim of the supreme status of the site.

A significant number of tourist activities have become popular at Motouleng, which did not happen with the other sites. Modderpoort also experiences occasional tourism visits to some extent, but not to the level of Motouleng.

The significance of this site is further strengthened by the graffiti and symbolism of structures at Motouleng; this reminds one of the projections of dreamscapes. According to informants, some of the wall paintings and décor on the walls and roofs are from what people have dreamt and seen in visions.

## **2.19 Significance of Modderpoort**

The site is quite significant for its profound mission status to the communities of South Africa and Lesotho. The site is more than a mission station on the grounds of the St Augustine priory; most of the physical localities at the site carry the name of the prophetess Mantsopa, who is held in high esteem by Christians and indigenous traditional people. The site is a popular destination for tourists and visitors wanting to gain knowledge about the site, particularly gaining insight into the work of the prophetess Mantsopa. The physical localities at Modderpoort are pilgrimage spots for mainline churches and indigenous churches.

The cultural history of the Modderpoort area also plays a significant role in the cultural landscape of the Free State and the site itself. The cultural history of Modderpoort goes back to the Stone Age period. It appears the San community lived in the area for centuries before other communities could stay in the area.

According to Nzumbulolo Heritage Solutions (2010:13) “The san-hunt gatherer left behind a large archaeological evidence including hunting camps marked with stone tools, rock art (usually on rock shelter and cave walls and as well as cliff faces) that today are some of the

most unique prehistoric paintings on the continent. Some of the most Stone Age sites in this milieu include Modderpoort, Rose Cottage and Tandjiesberg important caves, which are particularly noted for their rock paintings and large deposits of Stone Age cultures”.

The Modderpoort area was also very important for early railway infrastructure for steam locomotives in the country and for producing the first mission station in the area. Furthermore, the area is home to the graves of the first British settlers and an 18<sup>th</sup> century post office building. The status of the Modderpoort sacred site has received recognition for its important work among archaic and modern communities. This important site was declared a national heritage site in 1936 and there have been further assessments and appraisals to place the site on a different grading as a national heritage site post 1994.

According to Ouzman (1999:57), “The rock art site at Modderpoort was one of the 12 national rock art sites and has been considered for provisional nomination to the UNESCO world heritage status in the past.” The status of the site for its pioneering work has been recognised internationally and this gives significant impetus to the function of the Modderpoort site.

## **2.20 Significance of Oetsi Cave**

The tribe of the Makhlokoe makes a strong case for the sacrality and significance of the cave. The pressing issues in this claim are that they believe there are graves inside the cave of their Ancestors who were involved in the resistance against the Boers brutality.

The Makhlokoe further claim that the significance of the cave is made strong by the fact the Chief Oetsi set foot into the cave and turned it into a fortress when the Makhlokoe were ambushed. The only compelling issue for the Makhlokoe is to seek provincial or national heritage status, so that many tourists can visit the cave. In this regard, the Makhlokoe claim that the cave is not properly marketed like other sites in the Eastern Free State. They feel the popularity ascribed to the other sites should seemingly be ascribed to the Oetsi Cave as well, regardless of the wide differences of cultural function between them.

One may finally, conclude that the different sites have acquired different historical, cultural and religious characteristics to emphasise their relevant status and significance. A major prevailing systemic feature is the assumption that their sacrality cannot correctly be assessed without regard to Ancestral presence.

## 2.21 A portrait of central figures/personae at Mautse

Each sacred site has persons who are knowledgeable about the history of the site or the history of a specific locality within the site. The nature and symbolism of the site are transmitted by them to visitors, pilgrims and tourists alike. These central figures are the traditional authority of the site; they are the custodians of the indigenous laws of the site.

Their knowledge of rituals and herbal medicines is dictated to them by the Ancestors who have called them to perform these duties at the site. Concomitant with this fact are the user communities who are directly related to the ritual performance done at the sites by those who are assigned by the Ancestors. Nothing at the sites will derogate from the Ancestors and the traditional leadership assigned to deal with the everyday affairs of the site.

Physical localities at Mautse are assigned names and traditional figures that look after them and fulfil the mandate given by the Ancestors. Other central figures take care of localities named after people who do not reside at the site. However, it is their duty to ensure that the sacredness of the locality is not profaned.

Mention also the guardian at the Moshoeshoe spring.

One of the most prominent figures at Mautse was Monica Magengenene; she was born on 15 August 1942 in the Sterkspruit area in the Eastern Cape Province. Her ancestral lineage reaches from Nkandla in the KwaZulu-Natal Province. She actually grew up there until she received her calling to become a traditional healer and she started her training as a traditional healer in Tembisa, Gauteng before she went to Mautse for further training in indigenous traditional healing.

The late Monica Magengenene arrived at Mautse during the winter of 1974. Her Ancestors told her to stop working at Tembisa. Instead, she had to go to Mautse where her calling as a traditional healer would be realised. When she arrived at Mautse, she was instructed by her Ancestors to commence traditional work at the “university” (Yunivesithi). She later frequented the Nkokomohi clay location, where she studied various type of clay because they are different colours and the medicinal herbs related to particular clay in performing a ritual for healing.

In her later years, Monica Magengenene spent most of her life in a cave at Lower Madiboko with the name “Bethlehem of Judea”. That is where she trained most of her trainee healers,

educating them to become qualified sangomas. In her compound, there is one important room where she entered alone. No other person was allowed to enter that room. Apparently, medicinal herbs were kept in that room, which is next to the room where she consulted sick people.

Monica's background as a Catholic nun obliged her to include the liturgies of this church whenever she was to perform a ritual. She mixed African traditional religion with Christianity and during the performance of the ritual; she would pray fervently and chant liturgical hymns on her own. A confluence of these different traditions in the ritual performance amounted to a hybridised typology of worship and praise at Lower Madiboko. The paraphernalia of the Catholic Church is displayed in the corner of the room where she is consulting and two candles of different colours would be burning next to the symbols of both traditions and this is an important indication of the significance of the two traditions.

The picture below shows the late Monica Magengenene holding multi-coloured candles. Next to her is one of her trainee healers. The picture illustrates the performance of a ritual and invocation of ancestral spirits through singing and burning of multi-coloured candles. Monica as the traditional leader of the compound initiated the syncretic nature of the ritual act in her compound and her initiates and fellow traditional healers followed suit in terms of how she performed ritual and healing.

Monica became ill during the early months of 2013. She died in hospital and she was buried at Sterkspruit near Herschel in the Eastern Cape. She was an astute leader of the site, eloquently conversant about the sacred work of the site and the numerous physical localities spread across the Mautse Valley. She was a well-rounded traditional healer, who was able to mix faith healing with indigenous way of healing. In this regard, there would be no trace of contradiction when she executed a ritual that included both traditions. Her knowledge of herbal medicine was enormous and she would instruct her junior traditional healers on how to mix medicinal clay with herbs to effect healing of a patient at her compound.

Monica had extensive knowledge about clay and how the different colours of clay work in relation to cultural work, as well as about the customs of various tribal groups in South Africa. She also had extensive knowledge about the biblical burnt offering. She would perform the offering in full view of her initiates, pilgrims and visitors. Her following of the biblical burnt

offering in ritual performance made Madiboko a syncretic space for dispensing traditional work with Christianity.

Monica used to work with a powerful traditional healer called ‘Ma Tladi Ndaba’ who comes from Bohlokong in Bethlehem Free State. The latter was second in command at the compound. Upon Monica’s death she was destined to occupy the compound permanently and assume the leadership of Lower Madiboko. However, there had been constant arguments by various traditional leaders about who should succeed Monica at the compound.



*Figure 36: Monica and trainee faith healer at Madiboko<sup>36</sup>*

## **2.22 Portrait of central figures/personae at Motouleng**

Central figures with authority at Motouleng among the many are “Ditaba Tsa Badimo” (wise words of the Ancestors). His birth name is Joseph Sebala Tjama. The Ancestors gave him a name of their choice when he became a traditional healer – “Ditaba Tsa Badimo”. He is popularly known by this name to pilgrims and visitors as well as fellow traditional healers.

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<sup>36</sup> Cawood 2010:17



Ditaba Tsa Badimo was born in Lesotho in the district of Butha-Buthe, where he grew up looking after the cattle at his homestead. He came to Motouleng in 1986 because he was asked by God and the Ancestors through dreams to take over the work of Reverend John Mphuti, who used to conduct faith healing at the site in 1966. Ditaba Tsa Badimo further claims that he was commissioned by the Ancestors as the overseer of the site and that it is his responsibility to protect the site and to reprimand those not observing the site through acceptable conduct or ritual performance.

Ditaba Tsa Badimo has the ability to narrate with ease the work of each physical locality at the site. Half of the cave falls directly under his authority and the other half of the cave fell under the late Sam Radebe.



*Figure 37: DitabaTsa Badimo standing next to the Grand Altar<sup>37</sup>*

The picture below is that of the late Mr Sam Radebe holding his child at the section of the cave assigned to him by the ancestors. Mr Radebe has transformed his part of the section as per the instructions of his ancestors. The child he is holding in his hand was born in the cave. Sam Radebe claimed that he was trained personally by his ancestors to become a traditional healer.

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<sup>37</sup>Moephuli 2011:9

The division of the cave into two gave Sam an opportunity to transform his part of the cave into a liturgical space by erecting a number of baptismal fonts and thatched dwellings that would accommodate future visitors and pilgrims to his part of the cave.

After Sam's death, his wife temporarily assumed the leadership of that part of the cave. However, it cannot be said precisely whether Sam's wife had received instructions from the ancestors to continue looking after that part of the cave based on the transformational work her husband initiated.

Another important figure at Motouleng is Abraham, whose shelter is directly to the left after crossing the river. He portrays himself as a spiritual guide to the different stations of the cave and his actions are tolerated by the Ntate Ditaba Tsa Badimo.



*Figure 38: Sam Radebe holding his baby<sup>38</sup>*

## **2.23 Portrait of central figures/personae at Modderpoort**

The central figures at Modderpoort site are undoubtedly the missionaries who turned the area into a mission station for the Anglican Church. However, more importantly, the most popular

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<sup>38</sup>Du Plooy 2010:5



figure in the memo-history at this site is the prophetess Mantsopa. The majority of the Basotho people refer to the Modderpoort site as the Mantsopa sacred site. They see her as the core player in the sacrality of the site.

The prophetess Mantsopa was hugely respected by the Basotho people because of her gift to foretell things that would happen in Lesotho. This gift threatened her brother, King Moshoeshoe, who banished her to Modderpoort where she eventually found refuge. It was at Modderpoort where Mantsopa met the missionaries and became famous for her sterling prophetic work. There is a special memory attachment to her prophetic work. That is why, to this day, she is still revered and Modderpoort has become a major site of pilgrimage.

Mantsopa was legendary, because the cave church as a physical locality owes its heritage status to her legend. The cave church is also believed was home to some Basotho people who ran away from the colonial wars and these were the efforts of the prophetess Mantsopa. There are conflicting claims as to who resided in the cave, first Mantsopa or the Anglican Missionaries? Mantsopa was a resident of the area for a long time; therefore, it is possible she could have been one of the first inhabitants of the cave.



*Figure 39: Picture of Mantsopa<sup>39</sup>*

## **2.24 Portrait of central figures/personae at Oetsi**

The Oetsi Cave at Monontsha has several central figures who claim authority over the cave. Vocal in this matter is the Makhelokoe tribe of Chief Oetsi. Chief Makausi Moloi, chief among the elders of the Makhelokoe, fondly recounts how the Makhelokoe fought battles under the astute leadership of Chief Oetsi.

Makausi recounts how the Makhelokoe were murdered at Thaba Kholokoe (Mountain of the Makhelokoe) at Standerton by various tribes including the Zulus in 1800 the descendants of the murdered Makhelokoe fled to Natal and found refuge there. Makausi maintains that is why the Makhelokoe are a valiant tribe influenced by the fighting courage of Chief Oetsi.

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<sup>39</sup> Coleman 2009:2



Figure 40: Descendants of Chief Oetsi<sup>40</sup>

## 2.25 Performance of rituals at the sites (activities at the sites)

A cluster of rituals performed at the sites is the result of consultation with the Ancestors through divination. The types of divination range from using ancestral bones, water, candles and the bible. The rituals are varied in terms of the different needs of people who visit the sites for different reasons. Some rituals are performed by the leaders of the indigenous Christian Churches. It has become evident at Mautse that different localities have come into being for offering different ritual services.

### 2.25.1 Ritual of baptism

The ritual of Christian baptism by immersion is popularly practised by indigenous churches or Zionist churches. Before the performance of the ritual, a leader of the church would pray at the foot of the river and appease God and the Ancestors to allow those to be baptised and those baptising to succeed in this baptismal rite.

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<sup>40</sup> Moephuli 2012:6

The person who is baptised will be immersed seven times into the water. This is done to depict how Naaman in the Old Testament was instructed by the prophet Elisha, “Go wash yourself seven times in the Jordan” (2 Kings 5:10). This ritual brings about cleansing on the one who is baptised. This ritual at Mautse is performed at the Tempeleng sacred pool, which is next to the two altars in the temple precinct. At Motouleng, this ritual is performed at the small Caledon River that runs past the cave.

### **2.25.2 Rituals of healing**

Rituals of healing are central to the work of the sites as directed by the Ancestors. In a comprehensive sense, the ritual of healing is most probably the most important and diverse when performed. In this regard, healing would include body illness (health issues), exorcising of evil spirits, promoting unity in the family and reconciling broken relationships. According to Mensele (2011:57), “This ritual is usually performed when all other possible methods of healing (Western and Traditional) have been explored and the illness persists. It is believed that this situation occurs only as indication that the ancestors are not happy about something; perhaps the patient is ignoring them or has in one way or other angered”. A prominent healing ritual in indigenous traditional beliefs is one of taking the patient to a running stream and use a razor blade to make small cuts on the forehead, ankles of the feet, the wrist and at the back of the head. Then medicinal herbs are applied to the small incisions on the body. When this ritual is performed, the patient stands undressed in the middle of the running stream with the traditional healer who performs the ritual with medicinal herbs and clay.

Healing at the sites is conducted in various forms. When a patient consults with a traditional healer, he/she may be told that the Ancestors are directing the traditional healer to use particular herbs for healing to take place. Various kinds of illnesses require different kinds of clay and herbs; should such clay or herbs are scarce at the site, the traditional healer concerned will take a trip to look for the herbs and clay elsewhere.

The different physical localities in the sites are managed by different skilled spiritual leaders who use different methods of applying healing. These spiritual leaders and their methodologies for diagnosis as well as treatment vary largely. For instance, at the physical locality called “Sefotho” at Mautse, only the healing of swollen feet takes place, the steam comes from a crevice and applies healing in a method different from the other physical localities. A skilled traditional healer in understanding how Sefotho works is the one who can take the patient there.

### 2.25.3 Rituals for fertility

Rituals for fertility are specifically carried out at 'Maseeng' locality. The couple that seeks to have a child will be instructed by the traditional healer to consume prepared herbal medicine that will make the woman conceive. Normally the medicine is taken simultaneously by the couple. In this regard, strict instructions will be given to the couple by the traditional healer, regarding the instruction of the ancestors in the process of ensuring that the woman conceives the baby. Both the maternal and paternal ancestry is bound together in ensuring that the ritual of fertility work through the traditional healer. At all times, the ancestors instruct the traditional healer about the herbs and how they should be mixed.

### 2.25.4 Rituals of slaughtering

This ritual encompasses the sacrifice of a goat, sheep, cow and a chicken. The person who is to execute the ritual is the most senior traditional healer at a specific sacred location where the ritual will be conducted. The spot where the slaughtering will be conducted will always be the same spot when this ritual is performed.

At Motouleng there is a special stone where slaughtering takes place. This is in line with the instructions from the Ancestors of the site, and the elders of the site do not deviate from these instructions. However, the slaughtering is only done on particular special dates on the cultural calendar of the site. The cave is regarded as the divine space where rituals for slaughtering can take place and the stone in the middle of the cave is regarded as chosen by the ancestors for the ritual performance and slaughtering. This ritual does not dispel ritual performance at the homes of the people who want to slaughter for their ancestors. However, the ancestors are the ones who instruct the traditional healers and people about where the slaughtering should take place. The ancestors may instruct that the slaughtering should be done at home or at the site.

Entrance into the sacred site at Motouleng signals spiritual borders found at the crossing of the river and ritual of entrance into the cave. Prayer plays a very significant role in the ritual of entrance into the cave. In one instance, the entrance rituals were conducted with two candles appearing on a stone in the middle of the river. These two candles displayed on top of a stone in the middle of the stream where place there by the traditional healer "Ditaba Tsa Badimo".





*Figure 41: Small Caledon with two candles displayed upon a rock<sup>41</sup>*

“Rituals of good luck” are commonly linked to slaughtering in order for the ancestors to dispense luck upon the one who is supposed to have bad luck. Before the slaughtering takes place, the person who seeks “good luck” would be given an opportunity to speak spiritually to the ancestors through performing a ritual connected to this quest.

“Rituals of initiation” and becoming a traditional healer are also commonly linked to sacrificing however, central to this ritual are the ancestors of the one undergoing initiation or one training to become “*itwasa*” (a trainee traditional healer) because these ancestors are the final authorities in these rituals.

“Ceremonial rituals” are linked to independent churches at major spiritual calendar events. It is common in this regard that an animal sacrifice is performed in order for the event to play a significant role in explaining the sacrality of “place”. In this regard, the “place” is where a ritual is blessed by God and Ancestors.

In conclusion, ritual performances are in the first instance meant to draw attention to which “ritual” is conducted and the ritual spot becomes a place for cultural exploration; however, strict sets of rules or liturgical rules like those of the temple are absent. Smith (1997:91) alludes

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<sup>41</sup> Moephuli 2013:1

to the fact that entry to the temple becomes a marked-off space, in other words, space is strictly defined. Space at the sites is not strictly defined, but an exercise of rituality becomes a force of attraction; space is revered. On the other hand there are rules meted out by Ditaba Tsa Badimo about the sacred space of the cave and how this space can be utilised for ritual performance, the space cannot simply be explored without due consideration for the traditional leadership of the site.

A plethora of rituals at the sites complements one another in the form of function and operation. Post (2008) calls this a 'ritual repertoire', which means a set of ritual assumes a coherent form from place to place. In this regard, the rituals performed at Motouleng and Mautse are of a similar nature, however there is a conviction that Motouleng's ritual execution is better than ritual execution at Mautse.

A ritual act attracts many people to the sites; the entire ritual performance from its commencement to the end attracts pilgrims and visitors at the sites. It is common among the many people who visit the sites that a particular ritual is a vehicle that interacts with the Ancestors who actually make the ritual work.

The majority of festivals on the cultural and religious calendar of the sites are expressed and celebrated in ritual performance. People come in droves to Mautse, Motouleng and Modderpoort to take part in these ritual acts. User communities are built around ritual making and ritual performances. This emphasises cultural and religious expressions that define how the sites function in the realm of indigenous belief systems.

## **2.26 External dynamics and factors at the sites**

The sacred sites in the Eastern Free State have attracted a lot of political interference on the part of government agencies. A regulatory framework for the sites would impinge on the religious and cultural work of the sites. Because the sites are not structured systematically, their operation is obviously unstructured and political dynamics compromise the nature and functionality of the sites.

On the other hand, there are regulatory dynamics on the part of the farmers who own the farms on which the sites are situated, although these regulations only pertain to control at the entrance into the sites. For instance, at Mautse, people who stay inside the valley pay a monthly fee to the farmer; they cannot stay in the valley without any payment. The Department of Tourism is

a significant stakeholder in the site because tourism industry booms when foreigners visit the sacred sites. The tourists are enchanted by the setting and nature of the physical localities and the landscape of the site. A direct consequence of the Department of Tourism is manifested in an entrance wall erected at Mautse and Motouleng together with a claim that it is a “heritage site”. (The farmers also insist on regulatory measures to inhibit unsavoury elements from coming to the sites, for those have been involved in theft and other criminal activities in the past.)

The Department of Arts and Culture is also an important stakeholder in the site. Its critical role is to harness its cultural agenda on the sites. The promotion of culture is seen as properly located within the sites; therefore, the department that deals with cultural matters has a stake in the site. This also applies to the local municipality that controls the Mautse Township, of which the local government structures are located at Rosendal. Although the Mautse sacred site is located on a number of farms belonging to different farmers, the truth of the matter is that the local government structures also have a stake in the sacred valley.

External control of the sites resides outside the confines of the sites because of the huge interest of the government and other heritage agencies, whose quest is to champion the issues pertaining to heritage and sacrality at the sites. At times, decisions that affect the status of the site within the community are done unilaterally without involving the user communities who are the principal stakeholders at the sites.

The external dynamics could be antithetical to indigenous belief systems at the sites; the process in this regard would be to marginalise the sites’ traditional leadership and independent church leadership. It is important for structures to be put in place in order to have proper control over the sites without isolating the communities of the sites.

The central question to be posed in respect to the concern above is what would motivate an interaction between the internal and external stakeholders about the sacred sites? The external factors that may be construed as political interference are based on what the informants imparted to the researcher. The informants say that at times it appears as though there is contestation for the sites between the user communities, farmers and external political groupings like the local government.

External and political interference often has to do with the financial/economic value of the sites for various interest groups. The state also has an interest to incorporate the sites within the



heritage and collective ownership. The informants in this regard have identified a number of salient factors related to external factors in the life and activities of the sites.

- The informants were more concerned about the nature and essence of the sites in the light of external interests in the life of the sites.
- The informants were of the view that tourism pressure was a major external factor that required some regulatory framework in order not to impinge on the work of the physical localities.
- The informants say that the landowners on whose property the sites are located could interact with the relevant government departments or heritage agencies for the external control of the sites.

The absence of how the sites operate is a serious indictment on the part of landowners, because it creates an impression that whatever happens at the site is the sole responsibility of the internal stakeholders and has nothing to do with the landowners. This assertion should not be construed to mean that the landowners are knowledgeable about the work carried out at the physical localities. Multiple external factors pertaining to the sites have an influence on ownership of the sites and its properties. According to Nel (2014:137),

To own is to symbolically appropriate all immaterial associations of the site as part and parcel of one's socio-political and cultural-religious landscape, as well as finally to possess it materially. It has therefore also become a major quest for indigenous peoples to reclaim their sacred sites from which they have been removed through occupation and forceful removal, irrespective of the fact that the sites may now be owned publicly or privately.

The spiritual ownership of the sites resides with the Ancestors and the physical ownership of the sites resides with farm owners. Material property like clay at Mautse may be deemed the sole property of the Ancestors by the user communities. This understanding is captured in the belief systems of the people. Nel further claims (2014:137), "The ownership of the sacred may secondarily also signify superiority or authentic allegiance with the most original or most important branch of religiosity."

The scars of colonialism in terms of land conquest inevitably compromised ownership of the cultural and religious locales in the Mohokare Valley, although it might be surmised that the

contestation for land was about the fertile Caledon, not knowing there were ancestral sites in the Mohokare Valley.

The broad implications of entitlement and ownership of land where the sites are located also have much to do with what Nel terms “Economic versus symbolic ownership of sacred sites in the Eastern Free State” (2014:165). In other words, the farmlands are objectively meant to commercialise the products of the farm; on the other hand, the indigenous as well as present user communities see the sites as symbolising what their Ancestors bequeathed them.

An extreme external intervention has occurred at Mautse very recently. The farm on which the site is located changed ownership. For various reasons, the current owner was not in favour of the permanent dwellings at the site as well as activities taking place there. Unsavoury elements also took shelter in the valley. He obtained a legal order to remove all site-internal inhabitants and demolish the structures. The conclusion of this incident cannot be foreseen yet. One may certainly expect reactions from traditional user communities and probably also from heritage agencies.

#### **2.26.1 Political dynamics affecting the sites**

The political dynamics affecting the sites as alluded to above are generated chiefly from (a) local government authorities, (b) the Tourism Board, (c) heritage agencies, and (d) academic institutions.

These above-stated groupings are stakeholders with a keen interest in life at the sites. Their core interest is to protect and market the work of the sites freely. These sites in the Eastern Free State are not formally declared heritage sites, whether at provincial or national level. However, they are known to be heritage sites with informal recognition on the part of the external stakeholders.

The user communities as internal stakeholders and the external stakeholders concur that the upkeep of the sites must be prioritised. The sites have political issues that must be treated sensitively by all stakeholders. The protection and preservation of the sites comprise the main agenda of the external stakeholders, but there is a suspicion that on the part of the user communities this can potentially translate itself into political interference at the sites.

The cycle of political suspicion impacts on the nature of the work carried out at the sites. However, protocol is always observed when engaging the sites for tourism reasons or cultural reasons. Nevertheless, the traditional leadership at the sites is always vigilant of encroachment into the work of the sites. For example, the entrance gates at both Mautse and Motouleng have been boldly marked NKOKOMOHI HERITAGE SITE and MOTOULENG HERITAGE SITE. These inscriptions were done without the knowledge of the internal stakeholders, namely the residents of the sites. These are also done without direct approval of the farm owners where the sites are located. Such is the nature of political interference into the most sensitive part of indigenous African religion and cultures at the sites.

Political dynamics at the sites would be detrimental to a balanced approach to what the sites mean for the broader communities of the country, specifically communities who are part of the rich religious and cultural repositories of the sites. The nature of function at the sites is not necessarily for political commentary, but advances indigenous knowledge in its extant form. This is extremely sensitive in view of the fact that ancestral reverence is extensively observed at the sites. Customs and rituals executed are cherished as belonging to the domain of the Ancestors. Therefore, external dynamics into the sites should tread very carefully when dealing with the site as perceived heritage localities.

In this regard, Cawood says (2010:222),

Intervention by state departments, if it occurs, should furthermore be coordinated and be sensitive to stakeholder interest and subject to extensive stakeholder consultation. To disregard the sensitive nature of stakeholder's interest would be reckless and detrimental to the sustainability of the sites.

This clearly articulated assertion by Cawood further illustrates the need for external interest group structures to obtain knowledge of the sites and their related indigenous practices from the user communities or internal stakeholders at the sites. Indigenous knowledge about the physical localities at the sites is a mammoth assignment that requires intensive communication from the internal stakeholders.

#### **2.26.2 Internal factors**

The internal factors with regard to the control and management of the sites stem from a number of reasons that illustrate power struggles within the sites or competition for authority. This is

clearly seen at Mautse with “gatekeepers” who jockey to assist visitors and pilgrims when they arrive at the site. Normally the visitors and pilgrims would observe the rules for entering the site by praying at the first altar of the site and leaving coins on the altar. After the visitors and pilgrims have entered the site the “gatekeepers” would take the coins left on the altar for themselves, which impacts negatively on the visitors.

There are further internal dynamics at Mautse, mainly between Lower Madiboko and Tempeleng, although it is critical to point out that the traditional healers posted at different physical localities view their localities and their work more powerful than those of the other localities do. For instance for some, Tempeleng is seen as more important than the work done at Lower Madiboko. Informants at Tempeleng say that this locality is the more powerful site. They scorn the fact that Lower Madiboko is powerful. These internal dynamics translate into a form of tension and conflict at the said localities. However, this dynamic cannot be attributed to two localities only; it is prevalent throughout the site. On the other hand, there is increased commercialising of the sites, which has sparked off greater competition for clients and promotion of the importance of internal localities and their guardians.

The Motouleng Sacred Cave also experiences internal power dynamics between Joseph the senior traditional healer, Abraham and Sam Radebe. Abram is a resident of the site, who stays at the entrance of the cave adjacent to the river. These three people reside at the site and they are perceived to have authority in the site. Some informants say these power dynamics are responsible for the division of the cave, because the Ancestors have not given permission for the cave to be divided. The power struggle inside the cave has influenced diverse user groups to go into different power camps in the cave.

In this above regard, it is possible that, the sacred site of Mautse and Motouleng are desecrated because there is no control over keeping the sites environmentally friendly and purely sacred. The sites are open to abuse and trafficking because people can exercise their quest to become indigenous traditional practitioners without due regard for the sacrality of the environment; hence, there is visible environmental degradation of the sites. Visitors are equally responsible for the degrading the sites.

The user communities and the ever-increasing visitors to the sites are less mindful of the degrading status of the sites. The numbers keep on growing, particularly on religious holidays.

This has an adverse impact on the environment at the site. Filthy papers, beer bottles and cold drink tins are left all over the place, polluting the sanctity of the sites.

According to Cawood (2010:222),

Increased interest from the tourism sector could add further stress to the sites if not properly managed to handle large numbers of tourists, while the impact of tourism on the sacredness and practices at the sites could be incalculable if not sensitively approached.

In this regard, the critical component of management at the site is of utmost importance to control and direct the tourists. If there is lack of it, the sites will be exploited and desecrated at an alarming rate. However, tourism is an important industry that would market a better image of the sites outside the perimeters of the country, only if a healthy environment of the sites is preserved.

The threats to the healthy preservation of the sites are multifaceted and stakeholders' concerns regarding the situation are valid. A strong advocacy for a concerted intervention on this pressing issue is important, because the deterioration of the sites can be solved only if the stakeholders concur on placing measures that will safeguard the sanctity of the sites. Furthermore, the state of security at the sites is of a major concern because there are reported incidents of criminal elements taking refuge at the sites, specifically at Mautse. The police would trace these elements and find them hiding at the site.

The stakeholder meeting of 10 February 2009 further enumerated internal factors that are detrimental to the environment at the sites, listed below as follows:

- (i) Permanent residents at the sites
- (ii) Security at the sites
- (iii) Increased visits and overwhelming numbers of pilgrims and visitors
- (iv) Pollution and sanitation
- (v) Damage to the sites (vandalism, graffiti)
- (vi) Increased building activities to the sites by semi-permanent and permanent residents

- (vii) Uncontrolled harvesting of plants and clay
- (viii) Self-appointed guardians at the sites
- (ix) Commercialisation of the sites
- (x) Criminal elements
- (xi) Runaway bushfires and
- (xii) Conflict at the sites between controlling parties
- (xiii) Stock theft

These internal dynamics summarises precisely the nature of the threats and the damage done to the sites and illustrates the degree to which there is the involvement of rogue elements in the profanity of the sacred sites. The clay site at Mautse is completely vandalised; people simply harvest clay without consulting the traditional healers at the site. The absence of consulting the traditional leadership of the site and the non-performance of the “harvesting ritual” have proliferated the situation. The result would be compromising the authority of the ancestors who are viewed as the spiritual owners of the sites.

This whole debacle about the degraded status of the sites underpins the fact that the sites are more than vulnerable from people who do not have the interests of the sites at heart. Lack of protection regimes for the sites poses a challenge for all stakeholders involved in the life of the sites. In this regard, a technical report titled ‘CAFF DOCUMENTS’ on the conservation value of sacred sites in Russia sheds light on the protective measures the Russian authorities have in place for the protection of the sacred sites in that context. The opening paragraph of Chapter 3 of the technical report states,

The status of sacred sites of indigenous peoples of the Russian North is receiving increasing national and international attention due to the growing number of developments threatening their use and protection.

Indigenous people in Russia raise their opinions and concerns about the state of their sacred sites and the state authorities take concerns very seriously. The technical report further states (2004:1)

Indigenous organizations, researchers and other institutions have sought to document their sacred sites and obtain new protection measures.

In the above regard, there is a measure of vigilance and seriousness about the protection of sacred sites by all the stakeholders and chances of the sites being vandalised are slim in Russia. For this reason, it is clear that the South African context, particularly the Eastern Free State, lags behind in the global understanding for the protection of sacred sites.

## **2.27 Site-peculiar conceptions of sacrality**

Conception of sacrality in this chapter is mentioned in general terms, because sacrality will be treated extensively as part of the analysis and interpretation of data in its actual chapter.

The actual landscape of the sites is characterised by a presence of physical localities signalling the cultural or religious work performed there. These physical localities are deemed sacred by the user communities at the sites, based on the ritual activities carried out at the physical localities. Efforts have been introduced at great lengths to demarcate the larger and smaller site-internal localities as “different” from the rest of the environment. Artificial “borders” have been created by means of physical structures such as entrance walls, but also by the signposting of symbols indicating a new domain, e.g. flags, etc.

Ritual work is performed at individual sacred locations as per the instruction of the ancestors and all participants in the performance abide by their instructions. The sacred at the spot where the ritual is performed includes the reverence and respect to be shown to the traditional leader assigned to carry out the performance by the ancestors.

The chapter on the interpretation of data will treat the conception of sacrality as a subject influenced by culture and religious work. In a general sense, the nuances of the sacred emerge from performances at what is called site internal localities. In this regard, this may be influenced by cultural and religious expressions, found in the Mohokare region.

A majority of traditional healers at Mautse and Motouleng claim that their Ancestors instruct them through dreams and visions to construct a church or a place where people can find help and this can be detected by the various signs and names the places are given. According to Sheldrake (2007:7),

Place is space which has historical meanings, where some things have happened which are now remembered and which provide continuity and identity across generations.

Therefore, the foreshadowed aspects of sacrality in the data chapter would address the theme of sacrality based on context. The clay site at Mautse assumes significant sacral status through its contextual influence and the service it renders to the user communities. The Mautse Valley's association with the Basotho colonial struggle in a general sense influences the ascription of sacrality to the site.

Ultimately, local site-internal localities claim their sacral status from ritual performance. The spiritual leaders at these localities would exercise their duties in a varied form and determining sacrality would be done in a dissimilar fashion.

The significance of on-going myth and narrative about mystical events at the sites adds to inculcate senses of supernatural power and sacrality. The wide range of ritual performance at Motouleng and Mautse is also indicative of the sacral status of the sites.

The data analysis chapter would examine the magnificent Motouleng overhang in its relation to historical memory, memo-history and a long tradition of indigenous traditional healers as well as religious leaders influencing the evolution and transformation of the site. Sacrality in this regard would be influenced by culture and religion.

At Modderpoort, aspects of sacrality relate directly to the Anglican historical establishment of a mission station there and to the legacy of the prophetess Mantsopa. In addition, the sacrality of Modderpoort relates to the heritage of San settlement however in a lesser degree, although the Stone Age epoch influenced rock art paintings that the San community became famous for to a greater degree and aspects of sacrality that relate to Modderpoort are traced to pre-historic times.

Finally, conceptions of sacrality that are attributed to the sites in question are not an isolated notion; it derives from a place occupied by people paying homage to their belief systems. The stones, mud altars and shrines are hierophantic objects defining the degree of sacrality at the sites. For instance, the sites are located on ancestral land occupied by people chosen by their Ancestors to oversee cultural and religious work at the sites. The faith and cultural practices of ritual exercise explains the nature of sacrality as conceptualised by user communities in their interaction with the sites. Sites render service to the communities in a manner that affects the significance of indigenous traditional culture as an ideal component for the construction of sacrality at the sites.



**Concluding remark:**

The last paragraph about the ascription of sacrality to the sites alludes to the complex nature of claiming and owning the sacred. It also alludes to a theoretical synergy between accepted narratives of manifestation of the sacred and ingenious attempts to claim sacrality through performances that take place and narratives that extend the sacred to localities previously not regarded as sacred spots.

## **CHAPTER 3: INTERPRETIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS**

### **3.1 Data analysis and interpretation**

The working model described in the first chapter provided the baseline for data collection. In this chapter, the presentation of data is aligned to the field interviews carried out at the sites. Information gathered at the sites is informed by a descriptive nature of the sites, main results, interaction, presentation and interpretation of results.

The focus of this study is the analysis and interpretation of the information collected from the informants at the sites. In this regard, De Vos states (1998:203), “Data analysis entails that the analyst breaks down data into constituent parts to obtain answers to research questions and to test hypotheses”. This analysis resides in the domain of the research analyst who is in the best position to provide analytical answers to research questions.

Mouton and Marais (1991:103) differentiate between deductive and inductive strategies when dealing with the subject of data analysis and interpretation, these authors ask a question: “How is data systemised in a meaningful manner by means of analysis and interpretation?” Two answers may be offered to these questions, involving a deductive and an inductive strategy, respectively.

The core aim of interpreting data is to reduce it to an erudite and interpretable form so that the relations of research problems can be studied and tested and conclusions drawn. De Vos further says (1998:203), “On the other hand, when the researcher interprets the research results, he/she studies them for their meaning and implications”. The outcome of the analysis and interpretation is premised on comprehending the nature of the data and the ability to unravel it, so that it becomes meaningful for its readership.

The Wikipedia article of December (2008) asserts,

Analysis of data is a process of inspecting, cleaning, transforming and modelling data with the goal of discovering useful information, suggesting conclusions and supporting decision-making. Data analysis has multiple facets and approaches, encompassing diverse techniques under a variety of names, in different business, science and social domains.

The data presented here and interpreted elaborate the more important aspects presented in the preceding chapter. Ranging from the geographical setting of the sites to the internal descriptions of the physical localities, the information would show the symbiotic relationship that exists between the myths/legends of the sites with the user communities and how the internal/external dynamics play an influential role at the sites.

The presentation of the site's information and knowledge was largely derived from the research participants in their home languages, in this regard, the Southern Sotho language is predominantly spoken at the sites and other research participants shed information in isiZulu and isiXhosa; however, the translation of the interviews was done into English by John Moephuli the researcher.

The arduous task of capturing information in the field research interviews about the sites of the Eastern Free State required the researcher to decipher the unclear concepts of the functionalities of the sites as they unfolded in the process of the interviews with research participants.

There are principal research participants at the respective sites of the Eastern Free State. These participants have been living at their respective sites for more than ten years and are very knowledgeable about the nature and properties of the sites. When they shed information about a site and its properties, it was done with authority and with precision. However, some information provided by the research participants may overlap from one site to another because of the relationship that exists between the sites and the common cultural practices that co-exist among them.

The research participants in fieldwork are informants who assist field researchers who wish to obtain vital information about the sites and the physical localities at the sites. This stage of information gathering is of paramount importance to the nature of research and its end objective. In this regard, the informants would strictly give information about the sites based on assurances of confidentiality and respect for ethical conduct required of the field researcher. Permission will always be sought for taking photos of the informants and the images of the physical localities to enhance a relationship of trust between the researcher and the research participants. The aspect of anonymity and the identity of key informants was agreed upon between the researcher and the informants in regard to their details and the protection of their reasons why they gave information in the research process.

The participation of informants, through providing information in the fieldwork process, becomes an important interaction between the informants and the researchers, the purpose of this interaction being the holistic approach to the research endeavour at hand. The researcher and the informants are stakeholders in the research process.

Sillitoe, Dixon and Barr utilise the phrase “participant observation” extensively in their book *Indigenous knowledge inquiries*, as a preferred reference to informants in field research. The authors of this book state (2005:87),

The purpose of Participant Observation is to understand and validate field data within a culturally specific but holistic context through accessing local actors’ knowledge and perspectives.

The authors’ view is in tandem with the assertion expressed above that the relationship or interaction between the informants and the researchers is critical for the core objective of the research, as well as the results that are to follow. The information derived from the participants in the fieldwork is a means by which the “local actors” add value to what is being researched. The participants are information specialists, because they are the only actors that can access information in respect of the sacred sites. This view is of critical importance, because it affords the informants a role as stakeholders in the research process by giving them a voice in unfolding the intricate dynamics of information gathering.

Henceforth, the analysis and interpretation of the actual research undertaken at the four respective sacred sites of the Eastern Free State will be provided. Much of the information was obtained through unstructured interviews at the caves and compounds of the sites. In other words, the researcher was involved in a verbal exchange with the respondents or informants in a rigorous way. In this regard, Sillitoe, Dixon and Barr state (2005:95),

In the social sciences, interview/discussion has historically been used by researchers for accessing knowledge held by informants/and/or for exploring their behavioural characteristic.

The sacred sites contain objects of significance, which afforded the researcher an opportunity to understand their sacred value for the user communities. In determining the object of the research, a method/s would be designed on how information could be collected.

Sillitoe, Dixon and Barr further state (2005:95),

Informants/respondents are those from whom data are collected (they 'respond' to verbal cues) but do not have a role in the research design.

The objective of this chapter is to show in an interview format how the information was collected at the sites; however, as much as is important to note that the informants are stakeholders in this process, the design of the investigation is the sole responsibility of the researcher. The thrust of the interviewing process maintained the ambit of the research without confusing the research process with a structured interview.

Structured interviewing involves exposing the informants to a standardised approach when posing questions and the questions may be asked in a pre-determined order. Whereas unstructured interviewing assumes a broader outlook when posing questions, the thrust of the interview is not dependent on the set questions, but can be substantiated in order to obtain clarity on questions. In this regard, Wimmer and Dominick state (1991:127),

Structural interviews are easy to tabulate and analyse, but do not achieve the depth or expense of unstructured interviews. Conversely, the unstructured type elicits more detail but takes a great deal of time to score and analyse.

In the same vein, Sillitoe, Dixon and Barr assert that (2005:101),

The intention of unstructured interviewing is to derive information from the respondent in as natural a setting as possible. This usually means striking up conversations in surroundings that respondent(s) are at ease (such as their own home, the market) and on topics which they have an interest in or activities that they are currently engaged on (such as weeding a field).

That is why the field interviews at the sites were conducted within reach of the respondents in their own context, where they were at ease to give answers in an unstructured fashion. These kinds of interviews at the sites do not have implications of hierarchical structures and they do not inhibit the required responses in the field interviews. Deriving responses from the informants in an unstructured interview has the benefit of allowing an interaction led by the interviewer in an effort to generate information required for the qualitative outcomes of the investigative process.

According to Sillitoe, Dixon and Barr (2005:101)

All social research is designed to generate data in response to the questions Who, What, When, Where, How, To/With Who, and Why, but to do this in a way which minimises interviewer impact on the data proffered by the respondents.

In this regard, it is of critical importance that the informants lead the interview, but the researcher/interviewer should define the scope of the interview process and the informant/respondent, defining the required content for the interview process. In other words, the process becomes crucial for both the interviewer and the respondent with respect to information collection and the unstructured interview process does not restrict the parties to the process into a compartment.

Unstructured interviews can be conducted with groups or individuals. Conducting interviews with groups assists in eliciting phenomenal data in a relatively short space of time. Sillitoe, Dixon and Barr further state, (2005:102), “An exploratory interview may be almost completely unstructured and be held with a random (heterogeneous) sample of respondents”. This means that heterogeneous group interviews could be effective in eliciting a range of responses and opinions from a collective at the sites, e.g. women, children and at times this group would prove to be difficult in communicating information to the researcher.

On the other hand, homogenous group interviews are equally significant for retrieving important information from individuals in the group; however, the process is tedious, because the individuals communicate the information that is required to the best of their best knowledge.

The major differences between the structured and unstructured interviews are that the method of administration cannot be reconciled; there is no point of commonality between the two methods in field research. In the structured interviews, the informants are subjected to a set of questions that may pre-empt responses already predetermined. These questions are prepared by the interviewer and their systematic appearance could mean that they are examined as to whether they are reliable, while the participation of the respondents would ensure that the validity of the process is credible.

The field research interviews were anchored on unstructured interaction with the informants, throughout the sacred sites under investigation, although the authoritative figures at the sites

were interviewed individually in many cases and the information given was based on extensive knowledge of the sites. Individual physical localities in the sites have been covered extensively in the interview processes, both the faith healing and the indigenous traditional communities of the sites have participated comprehensively in the interviews.

The afore mentioned communities were respondents to the process, at some stages of the interviewing process varying degrees of explanation of the sites and their respective physical localities overlapped from site to site. This explicates the important cultural relationship that connects the sites in the Mohokare Valley. A unique symbolic relationship exists in relation to ancestral pilgrimages between the sites. A synergy of rituals and customs co-exist. This is captured in the collection of data during the investigation process. The process of interviews was conducted with pertinent leaders at the sites.

### **3.2 Mautse data analysis and interpretation**

The majority of physical localities at this site have names that are unfamiliar with common vocabulary used in day-to-day communication; however, the name of the sacred mountain is taken from the Black township called Mautse this township is about 20 kilometres away from the Mautse sacred mountain. An informant from Willie Nel's residence by the name of Johannes was asked why the mountain was named after the township. He replied that the residents of the township used to travel a lot to the sacred valley and eventually the mountain was seen as the extension of the township. He further explained that this was not the original name of the mountain.

According to the informant, from 1920 onwards, people from the Mautse township used to visit the mountain, particularly a place called Nkokomohi (the clay site), which was to the informant's knowledge the main destination of the entire mountain village. Responses derived from the informants regarding the history of Mautse pointed clearly to Nkokomohi as the principal sacred location in the nineteen hundreds, before the sacred village was invaded by people from Mautse location and the neighbouring farms.

Nkokomohi had become famous for its variety of indigenous medicinal clay. There were conflicting interpretations concerning the actual name of the Nkokomohi location, although a general view was held that the location was the oldest locality in the context of the Mautse sacred valley. It was quite imperative in the investigation process that the researcher understood

the meaning of the name Nkokomohi and its cultural importance to both the Basotho people and the traditional healers utilising its medicinal clay for ritual and healing purposes.

For this reason, the late Monica Magengenene, who was a senior traditional healer at the Mautse sacred village was interviewed primarily about the name Nkokomohi, its meaning, cultural attachment to the Basotho people and as a major clay location in Eastern Free State. The interview was conducted in Sesotho and translated into English in November 2008.

The full version of the interviews with the pertinent leaders on the physical localities at the sites is reflected in the addendum. What is provided here before the interviews are the data analysis and interpretations of the various physical localities, but they are systematised in terms of their geographical setting. The main aim of the analysis and interpretation is to clarify the nature of the interview, because it was conducted in the vernacular language.

### **3.3 Data Analysis and interpretation of Nkokomohi**

The interview conducted with the late Monica Magengenene about Nkokomohi substantiated the popular view that this locality was managed by the Ancestors of the valley. And this view is supported by an understanding that African cosmologies are premised on the Ancestors who in this regard are responsible for the fire at the clay site.

Empirical views interpreting and analysing the strange occurrences' at Nkokomohi contradicts a conviction held by the Basotho people that the Ancestors are in control of the locality. These views are questioning the authenticity of the occurrence and how possible is it that this occurrence can happen systematically at 3am? However, the indigenous community of the site believes that the smoke and the fire occurred at 3am.

This does not dispel indigenous belief systems in the significance of clay as an African medium for ritual and healing, and other related aspects of African belief systems in any way. In analysing the sacred location of Nkokomohi as a major physical locality insofar as medicinal clay is concerned, the indigenous communities view the location as ancestral property because it addresses the cultural needs of the user community.

Coplan's interpretation of the decaying reed beds in sinkholes beneath the surface at Nkokomohi could well have tainted the indigenous conceptualisation of ancestral presence at the location. Coplan's assessment may hold scientific truth with regard to the decaying reed



deposits, but may not necessarily have responded to the sacred nature of the location and the cultural understanding of the people espousing this occurrence (2003:981).

On a research visit in 2012, to Nkokomohi by the Department of Microbiology of the Free State University with Professor Osman the former director of the Centre for African Studies at the same university, 15 particles of various clays were taken to the University for Scientific Assessment. The scientific results of the tested clay indicated that this clay had medicinal properties in it.

The above research work might be a scientific breakthrough emanating from an indigenous sacred clay locality that has been there for decades, serving the ritual and customary needs of indigenous communities. A further analysis of the clay location is that it is multi-functional, because various types of clay have different colours that serve to enhance the concept of healing in the user communities. What has been found among other tribes is that white clay is used for removing pimples from a woman's face, in other tribes white clay may be used as sign of young women and men who have just graduated from the circumcision school. According to Trabold (2008:214), "White clay is indicative of the closing stage of becoming a sangoma". Trabold's thesis clearly shows the varied cultural work among the indigenous tribes ascribed to the work of clay.

The views of the late Monica Magengenene on Nkokomohi were substantiated by other informants who adhered to the traditional notion that this location was extremely sacred, because the clay location was secluded from the other localities clustered around the sacred valley. It stood alone next to a river, trees and reeds; its sacrality, however, cannot be detached from the other physical localities at Mautse. The sacred design of this locality commences at a manmade stone altar *en route* to the clay spot, which houses clay of different colours. There is no other physical locality next to the clay location other than the reeds and the river. An analytical exposition of the location openly indicates that clay is a prized commodity for the Basotho people; however, not only the Basotho, but also the Xhosa, Zulu and the Batswana people attest to its indigenous healing powers. This clay can heal bad sores, can exorcise evil spirits, can heal swollen feet and remove pimples on a woman's face.

With regard to the above assertion, the territory where Nkokomohi is located is without question a mode of constructing worlds of meaning; a sacred world in which men construct a place, a meeting place with Ancestors. The framework for this expression is found in the

unending pilgrimages to the locality as a quest to grasp the power of the locality through its sacred and healing properties. (See Addendum A-J, P224-225 for a full interview about Nkokomohi.)

### **3.4 Tempeleng data analysis and interpretation**

The picturesque site of the Tempeleng location in relation to the information obtained from the two informants in the persons of the late Monica Magengenene and Ntate Mokaleli clearly shows an effort on the part of the prophets of the site to transform the location into Biblical temple architecture, with the elements of a temple with the elevated altar of worship. Furthermore, the interviews have revealed the significance of the functionality of the location as an extension of how Old Testament religion is transported into the site as a measure of amplifying a spiritual relationship between the temple narratives in the Old Testament and indigenous belief systems.

The massive pool next to Tempeleng is where baptism takes place through immersion. No infant baptism takes place; the baptism represents a vestige of the cleansing of Naaman in 2 Kings 5 at the Jordan river and the baptism of Jesus at the Jordan river (Matt 3:13-17) to name but few instances in the Bible where the river plays a significant role in the Old-Testament holy land. This spiritual or religious act has impressed itself extremely well on the indigenous belief systems of the Mautse sacred site, specifically the Tempeleng locale. The above biblical chapters are taken from the “The new international version” (NIV 3<sup>rd</sup> edition).

The research informants claim that the name “Tempeleng” was given by the prophets of the Mautse sacred valley, contradictory to the name ‘Angel’, who had appeared to the healers and said the locality should be called the “Roman Catholic Church”. However, the prophets felt that the locality was serving a wider audience than Catholic members only and resolved not to call the locality the Roman Catholic Church. The researcher did not dispel the spirituality of the Biblical narrative as it exposes itself at Tempeleng, but tended to believe that on hearing the voice of the angel giving a name to the place it was a divine direction evolving at this locality. Its sacrality is therefore beyond question.

The elevated altar at Tempeleng assumes a role that affords a person who wants to ascend the altar an opportunity to speak with God or the Ancestors about his or her pressing cultural or spiritual needs. The altar connects the person with the mystical aura of God or ancestral spirits

at its summit. Pilgrims and visitors at the elevated altar place coins as a token of appeasing God and the Ancestors. Candles are also lit as a demonstration of the significance of the burning fire in the Old Testament literature whenever a sacrifice was performed.

The setting of Tempeleng is of a rare nature, compared to the other locations within the valley; however, the leadership of the locality has often changed hands from 2008 to date, which has affected a smooth flow of data capturing at times because of the conflicting entitlement claims to the location. Strangely enough, Tempeleng is not dominated by a single spiritual leader. There are always ritual performers. However, the leading personalities change and go. Often an Independent Apostolic Church group would encamp there during festive events for some time. Nevertheless, the data provided by Monica Magengenene and Ntate Mokaleli about the locality have a trait of reliable and valid information dispensed honestly by the informants in the research undertaken about the physical presence of the Tempeleng physical locality in the broader Mautse sacred valley. (See Addendum A-J, pp. 24-226 for a full interview about Tempeleng.)

### **3.5 Moshoeshoe spring data analysis and interpretation**

At the outset, interviews have been undertaken with a number of informants about the spring of King Moshoeshoe; chiefly among them was Monica Magengenene at the physical locality of Madiboko. Although Monica had provided succinct data in relation to the Moshoeshoe spring, she also confirmed Mr Seeiso Makhetha's information on the spring of King Moshoeshoe.

What was retrieved in the field research with a specific reference to the Moshoeshoe spring is that, the spring is relatively small but has a phenomenal ritual and customary history. The data captured clearly show that there is a particularly strong cultural inclination towards water as a priceless commodity of springs and waterfalls at the sacred sites. Springs are seen as vehicles that bring about sources of spiritual energy, as in the case of King Moshoeshoe bathing at the spring. The information captured clearly shows that the spring of King Moshoeshoe has become a cultural heritage site for the Basotho people and other tribes in South Africa. It is further clear that the information obtained from Ntate Seeiso Makhetha address the significance of the spring within the Mautse context and how pilgrims to the location ascribe ancestral presence underneath the spring a belief system formed in essence to ascribe sacred status to the locality.

The skirmishes between the Bakwena and Batlokwa for land ownership at Mautse had been confined to small parcels of land within the broader landscape of the valley in its totality; the spring in this regard would fall under that definition of small parcels of land. The location of the spring is adjacent to the cave of Ntate Sebolai who was a respected Chief of the Batlokwa. However, the Bakwena of King Moshoeshoe wanted to own the entire valley, including the cave of Sebolai. Tribal entitlement to the land question at Mautse is highly influenced in this respect by powerful personalities whose names are symbolically inscribed on the physical localities in question.

The data provided about the Moshoeshoe tilt towards the power of a king who utilised the spring for empowering himself and perhaps performed ritual activity before bathing in the spring. The above assertion explicates the complex nature of ownership of sacred locations by historical people of influence in the Mohokare environment. Furthermore, the spring is an important dimension of a tribal hegemony that seeks to stamp its authority over other tribes that might have an interest in claiming the ownership of the spring.

The chief informant, Ntate Seeiso Makhetha, had received dreams from the late King Moshoeshoe and Chief Sebolai to take care of the spring. According to Ntate Makhetha, he received these dreams because of his tribal relationship to the late King Moshoeshoe I.

Therefore, dreams played an important role in the saga connected to the spring of King Moshoeshoe. The power of dreams ensured that Seeiso Makhetha moved from Gauteng to Mautse, specifically to take care of the renowned spring. According to Chidester (2012:113), “dreams were often understood as call to action”. Through the medium of dreams, Seeiso Makhetha resolved to undertake a journey to Mautse and acted on the instruction given in a dream. In other words, dreams are central to revelation and purpose of pilgrimage and in the case of Ntate Makhetha, he undertook a pilgrimage to the sacred valley based on the revelation by Moshoeshoe and Sebolai.

The information provided by Ntate Seeiso Makhetha clearly shows a heavy reliance on dreams, which have shaped his belief systems in the mysticism of the spring of King Moshoeshoe. The majority of the user communities would attest to the significance of the dreams as a medium that connects the Ancestors and the living people. In this regard, Chidester (2012:113) states, “Through the medium of dreams, Ancestors called for sacrificial offering, affirming on-going relations of material exchange between the living and the dead.” Therefore, the Ancestors can

direct any course to be taken in relation to their demands through sending dreams to messengers. In the case of the Moshoeshoe spring, Ntate Makhetha obeyed the instruction from the king, other powerful personalities at Mautse such as Monica had also attested to dreaming about the spring whilst residing at Tempeleng.

The information about the spring of king Moshoeshoe is significant as it links, cultural and religious memory to the locality. Pilgrims would therefore visit the site for cementing historical-cultural memory as well as for performing rituals and prayers there. The spring is deemed extremely sacred for both its memo-history and the current service it renders to the user-communities.

The final words of Ntate Seeiso Makhetha on the significant work of the spring indicate that, the spring has medicinal properties with a special balm in it. This view confirms a belief system grounded in a conviction that is embedded in an African conceptualisation of springs as providers and sustainers of life. This largely defines African cosmology as it relates to the created world and the immovable properties found in it as spirited. The ancestral activities underneath the spring are visualised to be that of king Moshoeshoe himself and a host of other Basotho great Ancestors, which is why a pilgrimage to the location is of a particular significance to the user community.

The information gathered from Ntate Seeiso Makhetha revealed that the spring is both a religious and a cultural space that encourages on-going spiritual relations with the Ancestors in observing special ritual that fortifies these relations. The assertions indicate the power of the Ancestors in the day-to-day activities at the spring. However, a figure like Ntate Makhetha is accorded secondary power in administering the affairs of the spring. Ntate Makhetha has been given the position of the custodian of the spring, not as a ruler of the spring. His claim to custodianship of the spring was confirmed through dreams. The real authorities at the spring are the Basotho Ancestors, particularly King Moshoeshoe I.

The evidence suggests that the spring of King Moshoeshoe is a sacred location designed and pre-determined by the Basotho Ancestors themselves. Its sacredness is beyond question; it resonates with the indigenous belief systems of the Basotho people. The information obtained about the spring from various research participants as primary informants in this regard are in accord about the significance of the spring within the Badimo Valley, both in terms of the oral tradition attached to it and the ritual performances at the spring. This confluence of narrative

and ritual practice explains the degree to which sacrality is attributed to the Moshoeshoe spring and further authenticated by the inter-tribal allegiance to the location.

The community of traditional healers and faith healers from independent Christian churches share the same indigenous sentiments about the power of the spring. After performing divination, they often take their clients there to cure them with the waters of the spring. According to information that has surfaced throughout the investigation about the status of the spring, the authority of King Moshoeshoe and the authority of the spring in relation to ritual and healing performances are premised upon this bulwark. (See Addendum A-J, pp. 228-230 for a full interview about Moshoeshoe Spring.)

### **3.6 Yunivesithi data analysis and interpretation**

The information obtained from Ntate Mohlokatulo Tsotetsi who is a traditional healer specialising in divination through a small mirror, he comes from Maseru in Lesotho. He clearly demonstrated the symbolism of an indigenous university visualised in the eyes of traditional practitioners who strongly held the conviction that the teachers of this university were the Ancestors. Therefore, anything that happens at the university is predetermined by the Ancestors of the location in consort with the indigenous traditional leadership of the site. The data offered by Ntate Tsotetsi were congruent with the information given by the late Monica Magengenene on the significance of Yunivesithi and several other research information on the work of this physical locality.

The information obtained from Ntate Tsotetsi illustrates a picture of the Ancestors encountering the apprentice traditional healer personally on a one-on-one basis. At this sacred location, the trainee healer's courage to withstand the demands of this calling is tested by the Ancestors. According to the informant, Ntate Tsotetsi says only senior traditional healers can perform important rituals connected to the training of the apprentice healer in order to intensify the calling of the trainee traditional healer. In this regard, Jolly (2010:48) says,

The University has a series of enclosures, which function as lecture rooms where apprentice healers and prophets are taught their art, with different grades of knowledge being associated with different enclosures.

The nature of teaching at this location called Yunivesithi is segmented to resemble the normal teaching at a school or tertiary institution with its different enclosures.

According to an informant, the Yunivesithi is the primary location where foundational teaching about ancestral work takes place, although there are numerous sacred locations with the Badimo village claiming to offer foundational teaching about indigenous healing and ancestral work. However, this does not dispel the fact that Yunivesithi has its own peculiar laws with respect to the sacred status of the location. In this regard, there is competition in the physical localities of the valley about the authority of a locality and the popularity of the locality in respect of the training of initiates, carrying out ancestral instructions as well as dispensing of ritual and healing performances.

The Yunivesithi is popular among the townships in the Mohokare Valley because many school going children visit the locality prior to their school examinations to seek ancestral help in order to pass exams. The senior traditional healer of the locality would perform a ritual for passing exams for the students after this ritual was performed the students will go back home. This practice clearly shows that the location identifies symbolically with the needs of the children who believe extra luck can be realised once they have visited this site. Furthermore to name a sacred location a Yunivesithi indicates that the Ancestors of the location had taken education very seriously, not only indigenous knowledge but also education of our children in the Black townships. The thinking behind naming the location a Yunivesithi was a process of harmonising the needs of the society outside the valley and the needs of the society in the valley, although this is debatable. However, this process that is unfolding with the evolution of the site.

Ntate Tsotetsi, who is in training to become a traditional healer at the Yunivesithi, was sent by his Ancestors to the location so that he could become a qualified traditional healer when he graduates from the Yunivesithi. He has been through three different enclosures in training and his Ancestors will instruct him as to whether he is ready to leave the sacred valley. At the end of the interview, Ntate Tsotetsi held a strong conviction that the Yunivesithi was extremely sacred. In his mind, this place was the domain of the Ancestors of the Badimo village. (See Addendum A-J, pp. 231-232 for a full interview about Yunivesithi.)

### **3.7 Lower Madiboko data analysis and interpretation**

The responses obtained from Monica Magengenene about her work at Lower Madiboko had clearly showed a systematic articulation of information in relation to the site itself, particularly her space of operation at this two-pronged Madiboko sacred location. Although the two

locations are demarcated by the waterfall, they share the same name “Diboko” because of the close proximity the locations enjoy.

The information provided by the late Monica Magengenene about the nature of her work in her cave are stretched to accommodate faith healing, Catholicism, Zionism and indigenous traditional practices of the African people who are traditional by nature and practice. The nexus of her practical function is to intertwine these traditions to produce a hybrid approach to ritual and healing in an indigenous context. In this regard even the people who work under her traditional leadership are immersed in this nature of ritual and healing practises. This ministry or style of operation at Lower Madiboko shows a seamless execution of work done under Monica Magengenene by everyone staying and working at this place.

The use of the Roman Catholic liturgy to enact ritual activity at Lower Madiboko ushered a Christian dimension into the indigenous work of the site. Monica was a qualified Nun of the Roman Catholic Church in Natal before she became a traditional healer. This is the reason why she uses the Catholic liturgy in her ritual execution. Specifically the Christian paraphernalia in the location is used to emphasise the significance of Christianity with matters pertaining to indigenous knowledge and to profile the place as a station where confluences of different traditions meet to provide effective healing. Biblical knowledge of sacrificial offering is sternly observed at Lower Madiboko to a degree, which acknowledges indigenous herbal intervention with the significance of the word of God as pivotal in this regard.

The information obtained from Monica clearly illustrates the pattern of ritual healing followed at Lower Madiboko. This pattern is accentuated by the religious expression entrenched at the location to afford cultural and spiritual meaning to the scope of the work done. She ensures that all the traditional healers working under her leadership emulate her style of dispensing healing regardless of how the initiate was called at the outset.

This dimension of the ancestral work at Lower Madiboko calls into question the critical role, Ancestors play with regard to the person they commission to Lower Madiboko for training as a traditional healer (sangoma). It is common course that the senior traditional healer shall receive instructions on the kind of methods to be used in training their chosen apprentice for this vocation.

The interview does not elicit the fact that there was agreement between the Ancestors of the trainee and the trainer concerning the method of training, particularly the usage of Christian



liturgy in the actual training. In this regard, Monica's stronghold in her ministry is also premised on Christianity as a tradition in fortifying her work as an indigenous traditional healer. The question is whether this Christian liturgy works to the advantage of the one to be trained, or whether it enhances the profile of the trainer.

The information further shows that the in-depth knowledge of the late Monica Magengenene about the other physical localities in the site exposes her universal understanding of the sacred valley, its workings and its evolution as it grows in stature and becoming renowned for its sacred status. It is important to note that the late Monica Magengenene cultural residence is called "Bethlehem of Judea" within the larger area of "Dibokong" and there are compounds surrounding Bethlehem of Judea where extensive work of divination takes place, where rituals are performed as per the instructions of the late Monica Magengenene.

In the interview that is reflected in the addendum, Monica Magengenene had been asked why the medicinal herbs were kept in her dark room, her responses illustrated the fact that the dark room was the dispensary and she carried out this duty on ancestral mandate. Her second-in-command at Lower Madiboko, 'Me Tladi Ndaba', is a top diviner, but she could not enter the dark room. She revealed that was an indigenous conclave. Furthermore, traditional healers working under Monica would enter Bethlehem of Judea when instructed by Monica, but the dark room was a no-go area. Furthermore, the dark room was where she kept the money given to her for training of her initiates and the payments done for healing many patients. Many gifts given to her by visitors and pilgrims both in the country and overseas were safely kept in the dark room.

At Lower Madiboko, Monica connected with the other physical localities prevalent in the valley. For example, if healing of a sick person were to be done, she would send one of her trainees to get water from the small spring of Maseeng, and send another trainee to get clay at Nkokomohi so that she could combine these important healing properties to effect healing. She knew exactly how the sites' physical localities operated. The data she gave in the interviews reflect her voluminous understanding of how the properties of other sacred locations work and how these could be employed to the success of her healing work.

In this regard, the responses obtained from the late Monica had explicated the significance of the combination of cultural and Christian traditions practised at Lower Madiboko and this is influenced by a syncretic mode of work at this locality.

The bulk of the work done at different physical localities is evidence of the critical role the localities are playing in the mission of ritual and healing in the site. Monica's management of Lower Madiboko is not limited to the location itself; it has an influence on the other locations as well. The data provided by her clearly show the significance she attached to the other physical localities, both in terms of faith healing and indigenous traditional concepts of healing.

In the interview, she showed a lot of respect for Nkokomohi, the largest clay site in the Mohokare region. In an interview with a research cohort from the Centre for African Studies at the Free State University she alleged that a farmer who had been trying to shoot at the first inhabitants of the valley had sunk into a hole next to Nkokomohi with his horse and rifle and died instantly. She strongly believed this was an act of the Ancestors protecting the inhabitants of the site.

The late Monica Magengenene was an astute research participant who discharged the information with amazing diligence. Most of the times she would require no assistance in responding to the interview questions in English when research was conducted about the valley. Her impeccability in allowing the research cohort to obtain information was often ended with a sacrificial service that explained the success of the interview process in obtaining the data. The crowning moment of the interview would be observed in the outside precinct of Monica's compound where she will make a burnt offering of unleavened bread as the fire continues to burn she will select scripture readings connected to the offering and participants in the burnt offering would run around the fire singing or chanting a hymn of praise to God and Ancestors. After the fire has died down Monica will disperse the people who attended the ritual with a blessing.

The validity of the information she gave could be replicable, for the mere fact that it concurs with that of other informants in the Badimong Valley. She considers her task dependent on the authority of God and the Ancestors. Her work reflects her humility before God, the Ancestors and the user community of the valley, particularly Lower Madiboko.

The researcher once asked Monica why we always had to take our shoes off when entering Bethlehem of Judea, her residence. She simply answered,

You see, I do not have my shoes on but I stay here; it is because this place is the holy of holies, it is like the ground on which the Biblical Moses was standing when encountering God for the first time. (See interview E on Addendum A-J.)

She insisted there should not be a deviation from the Biblical account. At her place respect for God and the Ancestors was paramount. Her God-fearing and loving nature was the barometer on which her sacred location operated, and her reverence for God and the Ancestors defined her complete spiritual being in an environment that largely emphasised belief systems aligned to indigenous knowledge practises.

The information obtained from Monica; clearly show Black and White people embraced her for what she was to them in relation to the dispensing of information, foreign in some instances to White people who visited Madiboko for the first time and clearly leaving the place with a sense of being schooled in African traditional beliefs. She only reserved information during the interviews about the so-called “Lake of Prophets and Healers”. The only information she could give about this location was that the Ancestor of this locality was a White female person and if one went to this location, one might not return. This white female person could be a (Mermaid). She requested the research cohort that a reference to this location had to be avoided in future, for it was a very sacred physical locality that could only be entered by her and those in a similar position who had been anointed to perform rituals at this lake. (See Addendum A-J, pp. 233-240 for a full interview about Lower Madiboko.)

### **3.8 Upper Madiboko data analysis and interpretation**

The information obtained on Lower and Upper Madiboko clearly shows that these physical localities in close proximity have their own distinguishable agendas. The chief informant at Upper Madiboko is Maseromo Matankiso Diboko, originally from Maseru in Lesotho. The data obtained from her indicate that her Ancestors entrusted her with special powers of predicting tribal totems of various tribes and to some extent trace the lost identity of the person being diagnosed. In this regard, no sacred location in the valley other than Upper Madiboko carries out these predictions. Ntate Mooching, who apparently stays in a small thatched shelter *en route* to the Sefotho physical locality, also claims to have been endowed with this gift.

Matankiso’s information gave an indigenous exposition of how indigenous people see themselves in relation to the created world order and its species. Such an exposition clearly indicated a relationship between certain animals and humanity in the indigenous cosmologies of the creation story and Africans in particular began to identify with these animals within their tribal hierarchies. For instance, the totemic description of King Moshoeshoe’s tribe is a crocodile, and this is the royal tribe of the Basotho people, they identify strongly with the

crocodile as their totem. The totemic relationship is based on a cultural episode in the life of the tribe. This narrative has clearly emerged when data was obtained from the informants and the contextual setting of the tribes is done in terms of the totems. According to Smith (1993:265),

There are some animals which have played so decisive a role in the history of religions that they may truly be seen as emblems (if not totems) of our discipline.

Matankiso alluded to the fact that some people may have been brought up in a particular cultural group whilst they actually belonged to another. This was then communicated to them through the divination of bones. Matankiso would perform a ritual at her compound after which she will instruct the person who is consulting about his/her identity.

The information obtained further highlighted how indigenous African people attached significance to totems in their lives and their children are taught praise songs that are interwoven with totemic references. The Basotho people are particularly conscientious about this aspect of their culture. In the Mohokare region, “Dibokong” is the epicentre of totemic description, irrespective of the fact that similar rituals are performed at some other localities. This also indicates the close relation between the ascription of identity and the performance of a ritual at the sites.

The foregoing helps to address issues pertaining to identity reclamation in a manner that incorporates totemic ascriptions of the various ethnic groups seeking help at Upper Madiboko. According to Matankiso, identity reclamation is a big challenge because often people want to know their authentic origins and backgrounds and upon hearing the truth about themselves, they begin to have more questions about themselves, however, when the truth of one’s identity is revealed other people are overcome by emotions, others become very angry and others are seemingly confused about the revelations of their authentic identity. Other people are grateful that they have finally come to know their identity, the reactions to this revelation are never the same.

In this regard, Chabal (2009:30) states, “Of all the issues connected with study of African societies, none has been more problematic than that of identity.” Mother Matankiso alluded to this fact by stating that people as far as KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape, Lesotho, Botswana and other parts of the country visit Upper Madiboko to address this issue of identity.

Matankiso further stated that what complicated the problem was the fact that the identities of most Black people working on the farms surrounding the sacred valley and other sacred sites of the Eastern Free State had been compromised, thinking that they legitimately belonged to the working class of the farm.

The information obtained has also addressed the significance of origin as well as how the issue of origin affected identity.

In this regard, Chabal (2009:27) declares,

Among the many important dimensions of origin, I want to highlight three in particular; land, Ancestors and belief systems. They form the core of what I would call the constraints of origin.

Although the information does not specifically address itself to land in the outcomes of the interviews, it foreshadows the significance of land in relation to identity reclamation. Furthermore, the ancestral theme features prominently in the identity issue because the belief is that the Ancestors are the ones who tell the person what is his/her identity.

The aspect of lost identity could be addressed contextually in South Africa because of fragmented homes and the absence of certain fathers in the lives of their children. This situation fuels identity crises in our country and Madiboko could be an ideal place to address this sensitive issue in our Country.

The triad of land, Ancestors and belief systems are the subjects related to the spiritual and cultural activities of the valley. They are symbiotic in relationship and most of the data obtained attest to this fact that this relationship is inseparable, be it in ritual performance or healing exercise. In this regard, Upper Madiboko as a physical locality within the greater Mautse sacred site defines specialises in lost identity and totemic ascriptions.

A significant assessment of the data given by Matankiso clearly shows the texture of identity is linked to place and belonging, influenced strongly by the mediation of Ancestors. In this regard, Matankiso emphasises the importance of Upper Madiboko as a place and space specifically set aside by the Ancestors to address identity reclaiming through a myriad of cultural interventions.

During the field interviews, it was surprising that the late Monica Magengenene conceded that Matankiso had not yet graduated for this work at Upper Madiboko although her Ancestors allowed her to help people who had problems of identity and tribal totems. This assertion calls into question the authenticity of a person's calling to become a traditional healer and given a specialised vocation of addressing identity reclamation and totems without ancestral qualifications. On the other hand, the Ancestors are the ones giving the mandate on how the work is carried out in the location. They are the final arbiters insofar as ritual and healing acts are concerned. The Ancestors are the ones communicating the nature of divination and the outcomes of such divination.

In conclusion, Upper Madiboko in its cultural functionality is pivotal to entrenching indigenous knowledge on the significance of totemic ascriptions and issues pertaining to identity. The location is not charged with the political understanding of lost identity or identity crisis, but is charged with identity reclamation from a perspective that addresses holistically African belief systems, in other words totems and identity are tied together in indigenous African cultures and they are explicated from the following dimensions: geography, origin, being, place and space. These dimensions are packaged together to describe fully the human being seeking true totemic identity.

It is common knowledge that validation of data relating to Upper Madiboko is congruent with many informants who substantiated the views of Matankiso Diboko on the work done at this physical locality. This work is conceptualised as core in the belief systems of indigenous communities who inhabited the site particularly Madiboko as a central place of meeting Ancestors as mediators between the sacred location and their spiritual realm. (See Addendum A-J, pp. 241-244 for a full interview about Upper Madiboko.)

### **3.9 Maseeng data analysis and interpretation**

The word "Maseeng" had been widely used by the traditional leadership that has indigenous oversight over the sacred location. According to the data obtained, Masechaba is not the first traditional leader appointed by the Ancestors to oversee the affairs of this physical locality. Masechaba had found a certain Mr Mofokeng overseeing Maseeng before she took over the location. The traditional functions of Maseeng are varied; therefore, the meaning of the word cannot be construed to mean literally "infant babies". The location has multiple functions that respond to the ills and problems of the user communities.

Maseeng specialises in solving infertility problems from an African belief system that views the location as an indigenous hospital that solves this biological problem through African rituality enacted at the location. However, Maseeng has been used also as a praying station for young students who aspire to pass their examinations at schools but its main course of action is to help give babies to mothers who want to have babies or who are infertile.

According to the information obtained from Masechaba it is clear that the mandate given to her by the Ancestors was to execute this indigenous work at the location and give credibility to this work among the user communities. Masechaba alludes to the fact that the location belongs to the Ancestors and that her Ancestors in consort with the Ancestors of the site agreed that she must manage the location for the benefit of God and ancestral work, to prosper among the infertile female persons who desperately needed children. In this regard, Masechaba takes instructions on how to manage the location from the Ancestors, as they are the primary custodians of the customs and rituals utilised in bringing about conception for barren women.

The information obtained from Masechaba about Maseeng indicate that its spirituality emanates from Ancestors interacting with the work of healing at the location and the traditional healer herself being empowered by the Ancestors to carry out the work at Maseeng. In this regard, for miraculous conception to take place, the traditional healer, in consort with the Ancestors, will make a prescription of herbal medicine and Masechaba is the only traditional person to administer this indigenous healing act.

Masechaba's status as a secondary person to the act of healing shows that the pre-eminence of Ancestors to this work is depended on them. Masechaba is extremely important for the success of the fertility work ultimately leading to the conception and birth of the child; however, Masechaba is mindful of the centrality of Ancestors in this work.

According to the nature of information obtained on Maseeng, traditional healers are sent there by Ancestors and taken out by Ancestors, as in the case of Ntate Mofokeng who previously oversaw the work at Maseeng. This situation substantiates the centrality and the power of Ancestors over the work carried out at the Maseeng location. The fertility rituals are carried out at this locality through a cultural consultation process with the Ancestors by the traditional healer assigned to deal with problems relating to infertility. Currently Masechaba is responsible for communicating with the Ancestors about fertility rituals.

According to Gill (2010:48), “Maseeng or Abantwana, is associated with the spirits who care for and heal children, and this is where healing rites for children are performed”. Although Gill uses the word Masieng instead of Maseeng, this is a grammatical error for the word Maseeng; however, the thought behind the understanding of the main function of the location is correct in view of the fact that the spirits in the form of Ancestors are the main actors of the activities of the location.

The various connotations attributed to the locality Maseeng goes beyond its actual meaning and assumes a meaning that embraces extended functions of the location like healing rites for children with various ailments. There is no conflict of indigenous function between healing of infertility and healing of other ailments at Maseeng, the place is a healing location. The responses obtained to a large degree accentuate the indigenous function of the location in its various forms of action as directed by the Ancestors.

The chief informant during the interviews claimed a special spiritual relationship with Moshoeshoe, Lekganyane and Mantsopa who, in the view of the data given, gave Masechaba ancestral powers to resolve infertility problems, perform rituals connected to fertility and observe the laws of the locality strictly. It would be relevant to understand the relationship between Maseeng and the ZCC based on the spiritual relationship that existed between Masechaba and Lekganyane as well between the locality itself with Moshoeshoe, Lekganyane and Mantsopa.

In a small cave shelter, richly decorated inside with religious symbols, within the broader compound of Maseeng, a young female informant recounted her story of barrenness and that she was instructed by the ancestors through mediation at Maseeng to remain at the site until such time the ancestors “release” her. During this period, she was compelled to undergo ritual cleansing, prayer and sacrifice on the nearby altar. Her barrenness was clearly understood as an affliction of the ancestors.

Finally, the information obtained show that once infertility has been healed some people did not come back to Mautse to observe the post rituals associated with fertility, whereas this ritual, according to the informant, was obligatory on the part of the people seeking help about their problems. Ritual performance at the commencement of the healing is pivotal at Maseeng. The biggest challenge in the latter regard is that either patients or people with solved problems



undermine the work of the location, or they only use it to their selfish ends. This poses a problem to the authority of the place and the Ancestors.

This afore-mentioned problem is not only connected to Maseeng. Almost all the sacred locations face a similar problem of desertion after help has been obtained. Although the work of the location continues unabated, this emerges quite strongly from the data obtained. Supplementing the actual fertility work is the small lake, which I was made to understand does not dry up in any season and this water is part of the supplement that the person drinks to make fertility possible resulting in the conception of the child. (See Addendum A-J, pp. 245-248 for a full interview about Maseeng.)

### **3.10 Sefotho data analysis and interpretation**

Sefotho is a Southern Sotho word meaning “indigenous steaming” in the context of healing practises at Mautse. This word has popularly been used among the African traditional communities who sought healing for the exorcism of bad spirits in a person. It is furthermore an indigenous method of covering the patient with a number of blankets during the steaming so that the evil spirits may be destroyed during the steaming. However, Sefotho in the context of the Mautse site assumes a different role distinguishable from the known features of Sefotho in its original setting. The functionality of Sefotho at Mautse may have stemmed from the understanding that the steam comes out of the crevice after certain rituals were performed and this gave popularity to the name of the location.

This physical locality is old in the valley; it has a long-standing tradition that most senior spiritual leaders found it in existence when they arrived. Its origin could go back to times long before the current use of the site. In this regard, the geology of the site with its unfamiliar crevice could have attracted symbolic attention.

Analytical scrutiny of the location gives an impression that there is no traditional oversight accorded to any traditional healer at the site. The site is located on its own in the middle of the valley and is used for healing by the traditional healers. The location is only visited when there is patient to be treated for swollen feet through steaming and according to the information obtained on the location, most patients with swollen feet from Lower Madiboko are taken to Sefotho “steam”. Therefore, those accorded the right by the Ancestors to take patients to Sefotho do not claim entitlement to the location; they only come as per the instruction of the

Ancestors. After rituals have been performed and healing dispensed the traditional healers go back to their compounds or caves.

Various interpretations attributed to Sefotho are demarcated by the common usage of the custom in the townships and villages from the usage of the practice at the Mautse sacred site. It has been said that Sefotho as in steaming is an old indigenous healing practice of healing. At Mautse, the practice assumes different dimensions of functionality than the usual and common execution of the practice by traditional healers away from the Mautse sacred site. Sefotho at Mautse is typically structured to cure swollen feet only; however, in the townships and villages not only swollen feet are cured. The entire body of the patient is steamed.

The responses obtained about the location show a heavy reliance on ancestral instructions for healing to take place at the location. During the course of the interviews information was not shared about who had named the location Sefotho, whether it was the Ancestors or the elders of the site. This is a vital question for naming of a sacred place for ritual and healing practices. In this regard, the Sefotho sacred location falls in this category of being named an indigenous steaming place at Mautse.

Furthermore, the information show that Sefotho was constructed specifically for addressing the exorcism of evil spirits, but could later have been transformed to specialise in healing ailing feet by elders of the site, who later attributed the existence of the locality the Ancestors. This may not be an isolated case relating to the naming of the locality and attributing the formation of the location to the Ancestors; however, in this case, the dual role of the name takes the centre stage in transmitting the work of Sefotho in indigenous communities and the communities outside the Mautse site.

There is a general concession among the traditional healers at the site and user communities that Sefotho in its original form meant the cleansing of the whole body, not only a certain part of the body. However, people with swollen feet who consulted a traditional healer at the valley would be taken to Sefotho to administer healing to the feet, this was a basic understanding in respect of the work of the crevice, furthermore people considered to be in possession of evil spirits would also be taken to the crevice for steaming so that the evil spirits could be exorcised.

The information retrieved on Sefotho had exposed a trend towards limiting the legitimate objectives of Sefotho as an indigenous healing resort of African people. Did the Ancestors limit the legitimate Sefotho as known to indigenous communities in order to give a new meaning to

Sefotho as a sacred location at Mautse? Alternatively, did the user communities, including the traditional leadership of the site, accord a new meaning of indigenous function to the tradition? The answers to these questions are not easy to conceive because the informants rely on what was told to them by the current leadership of the site.

Finally, it is possible that the Sefotho crevice was not manmade; it is a natural rock crevice. The demarcation of stone around it is the result of human action. The name Sefotho was linked to the popular usage of the steaming ritual in the African communities. This analysis does not discard the notion that the Ancestors created the crevice but supplements the directives of the Ancestors to the people they assign to carry out cultural duties at the mountain under their authority and name. The question that follows in this regard is: Does Sefotho contains any sacred reality if situated in a sacred context of Mautse. Sefotho is a sacred location at the Mautse sacred site, which incorporates a plethora of sacred locations or physical localities that define African belief systems in a mystical way.

In conclusion, the crevice at Sefotho could be described as a sacred space that is perhaps hierophantic in terms of Eliade's view on objects that define sacrality of place and space. Religion and culture are tied to Sefotho, because prayers are pronounced before the ritual and healing are performed; the relation of religious man to the location is of the utmost importance. This creates the impression that this locality is one of the oldest in the valley, it has a cultural and customary history aligned to it in terms of the healing it dispenses to the exorcism of evil spirits and healing of swollen feet. (See Addendum A-J, pp. 249-252 for a full interview about Sefotho.)

### **3.11 High court data analysis and interpretation**

The information obtained on the High Court point to the fact that this is an important indigenous institution, which upholds the sanctity of the laws and traditions of the sacred valley. The reference to High Court could refer to a superior court at the site. The information from Mrs Ndaba clearly show that the court is neither a healing station or a ritual making locality, it is an indigenous court built like a kraal and administered by the Ancestors. At any particular location where ritual and healing are undertaken, should there be a defiance of the discipline of this location. The High Court should hear the matter and rule on the appropriate steps to be taken to correct the offence. Furthermore, the data show that the severity of the offence determines the level of sentence. I was informed that the court can punish the offender spiritually, in other

words, the Ancestors can take away the spiritual power the offender possesses for a period stipulated by them.

The informant claims that the High Court was also called a “police station” because of its strict rules. Although no person stays at the court, there would be senior traditional leaders of the site assigned by the Ancestors to look after the court. In this regard, the data obtained clearly show that not every person, even persons of eminent standing in the site, would inhabit the court permanently because it was extremely sacred and set aside for meting out ancestral discipline.

According to the information obtained about the kind of people who could enter the High Court, the late Monica Magengenene name featured prominently. The existence of the location was formed along the basis of a patriarchal system that excluded women from entering the High Court. This assertion was supported by other informants at Mautse who claimed that the Basotho tribe, mainly men, originally inhabited the site. With the evolution of the site, women started playing an important indigenous role in terms of their calling to the vocation of being traditional healers.

Monica Magengenene may have been among the prominent women of the site who visited the High Court on the instructions of the Ancestors. The data obtained from Mrs Ndaba indicate that she was second in command to the late Monica Magengenene at Lower Madiboko, who gave her instructions to respond to questions pertaining to the High Court. This sums up the fact that female traditional healers had a special indigenous attachment to the High Court. The Ancestors could have blessed the presence of women at the High Court.

During the interview the following question was posed by the researcher, “Whom does the Ancestor instruct to refer the case to the High Court”? The reply to this question placed the senior traditional healers in a better position to be instructed by Ancestors to take offenders to the High Court. The instruction does exclude women from entering the High Court. However, the patriarchal indigenous set up favoured men to enter the High Court at Mautse excludes women for reasons pertaining to patriarchy, not necessarily female traditional healers’ capability to carry out the instructions of the Ancestors.

The circumstances surrounding the information about the High Court show transformation of the physical locality by recognising female healers into the locality. It is a case here that a cultural institution is transferred onto a sacred site and deemed a legitimate place to settle spiritual offences. One also sees that the original male-dominated institution is transformed to

accommodate female spiritual leaders as well. In this sense, we have a clear case that sacred sites often move away from the traditional gender ascription to a site. Sacred sites become more “emancipated” from traditional patriarchal rule. The prominence of women in general is a feature of the sacred sites at Mautse and Motouleng.

The responses obtained from Mrs Ndaba on the High Court show a secluded place within the site that is not accessible to the community visiting the site or accessible to some practising traditional healers and diviners. The massive pool next to the court was also not accessible to the community of people visiting the site, it was only meant for used by prophets and traditional healers (sangomas). The seclusion of the place signified that the High Court was a very sacred location, in the sense that no mention is made of it being encroached for cultural reasons or customary reasons. It belonged strictly to the Ancestors. Secondly, it belonged to those prophets and traditional healers with a high calling at the site.

The information, further show that reference to the High Court as a ‘police station’ is metaphorical, in other words, there are strict rules for detention in a cave next to the court. These rules are attributed to the Ancestors who enact the rules of the court. In turn, they mandate the chosen leadership of the site to execute the rules of the court. In this regard, the late Monica Magengenene was one of the senior traditional healers permitted by the Ancestors to execute the laws and rules of the court. Therefore, she assigned Mrs Ndaba to provide information about the High Court, its sacred significance and its standing regarding those who committed offences that desecrated the sacrality of the site. In other words, traditional protocol is of vital importance; Mrs Ndaba can only speak about the High Court if instructed by her senior.

The individual physical localities at Mautse have put laws in place to curb profanity of the site and the High Court remains central to upholding the sacrality of the site. (See Addendum A-J, pp. 238-242 for a full interview about High Court.)

It should be mentioned that a recent development at Mautse site has the potential to obliterate most of the stories and physical sites. The farm on which the valley of Mautse is located has changed ownership. The current owner bought it as a business concern and was probably not well informed of the spiritual importance of the sites, although he made afterwards attempts to converse himself of the situation. On his demands, a court order was obtained and people removed from the site and most of the structures demolished. The current owner is not in

principle against a form of restoring the site for religious practice, but this would be under more strict management regimes. At this stage the reaction from traditional user communities and heritage agencies are uncertain and the impact of the recent developments on the site internal localities is unpredictable. One may assume that the status of the site with its plethora of minor localities will be transformed significantly if not destroyed permanently.

### **3.12 Motouleng data analysis and interpretation**

The name *Motouleng* means “repeated drum beating”, or a perpetual hammering of an object with intensity. Therefore, an interpretation of the name Motouleng in another sense would illustrate that the sangomas at the cave repeatedly beat their drums, as required by African indigenous tradition, aligned to the practice of culture and custom. The beating of the drum is often done by a trainee traditional healer because this is part of training for the initiates at the site. The drum is a cylindrical object meant to be heard far from the cave. To this day, the beating of the drum is still practised by traditional healers and when in a trance, the drum beating increases the momentum.

The information obtained at Motouleng about the site and the physical localities were collected between 2008 and 2010. The principal informant was Ntate Joseph Sebala Tjama, known at the site as “Ditaba Tsa Badimo”, meaning “wise words of Ancestors”, or the wisdom of Ancestors. Other informants at the site substantiated what Ntate Ditaba Tsa Badimo said during the interviews.

The genesis of the site was premised on helping infertile female persons. The information obtained from the research participants, principally Ntate (Father) Ditaba Tsa Badimo and Betty Nhlapo shows clearly that the site had a set of cultural rules that protected the sacred practices of the cave. There is a recurring mention of the holiness of the site apart from its sacrality and sanctity.

Ntate Ditaba Tsa Badimo would often mention the omnipresence of God at the site without demeaning the Ancestors. When pressed to shed light on this, he stated that God had created Motouleng. He strongly believed the Ancestors did not create the cave, but God did. In a number of field interviews, he stressed that God had called him to the site through his Ancestors. The secondary status accorded to the Ancestors by Ntate Tsa Badimo explains his

conviction that God called the Ancestors into being and that the Ancestors are not the owners of the site but custodians of the sacrality of the site.

The extracted data on Motouleng show that the evolution of the site started with the advent of the presence of indigenous Christian services being conducted at the site. There was a breaking away from the long-standing tradition of the cave as a purely fertility site. This evolution is attributed to the Rev John Mphuti; however, the information obtained do not state as to whether the church at the cave in the 1960s was earmarked for fortifying the central ritual of fertility through religious means.

The information from the interviews signal clearly that those given cultural and spiritual oversight of the cave had a conviction that the site was directed by God and the Ancestors, meaning that even the fertility rites could be effected by God and the Ancestors. The traditional leadership could not enact the rites independently, but with the instructions of God and the Ancestors only.

This assertion does not dispel the significant role the traditional leadership of the cave play in executing the directives of the Ancestors in respect of rituals congruent with infertility of barren women.

It is evident from the information given by the research participants that the cave stood in the Mohokare Valley as a sacred site for the Basotho people who pilgrimaged there, in particular to solve difficult problems plaguing the community. Bearing children in the Basotho tribe was viewed as a blessing from the Ancestors and barrenness was viewed as ungodly; therefore, Motouleng was seen as an indigenous hospital that could cure barrenness and infertility.

The information given by the respondents indicate that the entire cave, from the eastern to the northern side, was a fertility site. There are no demarcations in terms of various healing stations visible at the cave today. It was one site with one objective to deliver healing through the intervention of God and ancestral powers. This is attested by Betty Nhlapo in her interview with Stephanie Cawood, even though she did not say there were no other sacred stations inside the cave apart from the fertility location. She amplified her view of the cave as one that promoted healing to infertile women in need of help. Her reading of the landscape of the site clearly describes an area unnecessarily inhabited, because it was an ancestral site, which had to remain sacred. Betty's Nhlapo understanding of the current situation is that it has forfeited

its sacred status; it has furthermore forfeited its indigenous healing status as a legitimate fertility cave.

During the interview, one could detect the lamentation of Betty Nhlapo over Motouleng because it no longer serves the needs of the barren women. Its status as a fertility hospital has dissipated with time. Ditaba Tsa Badimo, however, holds the conviction that the present cultural and spiritual services of the cave are mandated by God and the Ancestors, meaning that the sacred locations presently found at the site are sacred constructions of God and the Ancestors.

The mystical happenings at Motouleng narrated by Betty Nhlapo, like the flowing of snow and appearance of white butterflies are conceptualised as a blessing from the Ancestors only if the fertility rites were properly carried out at the cave. If the rituals of fertility were not properly carried out, there would be no snow or white butterflies at the cave. The data captured in this regard show a strong belief that the cave at Motouleng represented the presence of God and the Ancestors and it could only be visited for ritual and healing work on the instructions of the Ancestors.

The space of the cave in its evolution gave way to indigenous religious practice, which meant the cave was not only the domain of sangomas, but was beginning to accommodate people called to utilise church spirituality to advance other healing methods of the cave.

The Zion Christian ethos is prominent at the site, which calls for a combination of indigenous healing traditions under the aegis of African belief systems. In this regard, Ntate Ditaba Tsa Badimo professes to practise both traditions. Not only he, but also a number of traditional healers are both sangomas and faith healers. In this regard, there are similarities between his mode of practice and that of Monica at Mautse.

The narratives about Motouleng by Betty Nhlapo and Ntate Ditaba Tsa Badimo do not contradict each other, although they represent various schools of the cave as elicited in the interviews. When analysing Betty's data, one realises the rigidly strict rules of the cave and the patriarchal overtones attached to the cave, which appears to be a sacred conclave known to the elderly Basotho people of the Mohokare Valley. Entry into the cave would have required special permission from the elders of the village where Betty resided; this would be coupled with ritual performance prior to the entry in an effort to appease the Ancestors who were deemed permanent residents of the cave.



Ntate Ditaba Tsa Badimo represents a cave that was transformed by members of the community staying in the cave. This community is not necessarily from the Mohokare region; they come from as far as Kuruman in the Northern Cape. This transformational position of the cave explains that the rigidity of entrance to the cave has been supplanted by this influx of people turning the cave into a permanent home, resulting in the main fertility motive of the cave being less observed.

The cave, according to Betty Nhlapo, was the permanent domain of the Ancestors in the years when it was understood to be purely a fertility cave. Although the present status of the cave still emphasises the presence of God, the transformation of the cave may have been brought about by the church services conducted in the cave and the Ancestors are still very much central to the ritual and healing services of the cave.

Betty Nhlapo represents a version of a collective memory of the sacrality of the cave. Its indisputable purity of form, in other words, the cave, was not profaned by the traditional leadership of the cave who were assigned to uphold the sacrality of the cave by the Ancestors. At the time of Betty Nhlapo, there was an absence of religious paraphernalia and bible verses inscribed on the inside walls of the cave, because only sangomas with a reputable standing were allowed inside the cave.

With regard to the above assertion, it could be argued that when the churches started coming to pray at Motouleng under the leadership of Rev John Mphuti, the cave walls were given a different image of Christian religious language and appeal, signalling the presence of indigenous Christian spiritualism in the cave. The cave assumed a different dimension of form and character. The river next to the cave was used for baptismal services, and a fully-fledged indigenous Zion Christian lineage was enacted, which finds support in Ntate Ditaba Tsa Badimo.

The responses from the research participants indicate a primordial phase of the cave, governed by the Ancestors themselves with the help of senior traditional leaders assigned specifically to sustain the cave as an indigenous fertility hospital and to preserve the rituals of fertility and the sacredness of the cave. The next phase of the cave starts with the introduction of Christianity from 1966 onwards, which resulted in a religious expression that became a central part of the life of the cave. However, the research participants still view the healing of infertility as an important function of the site.

The Motouleng cave has two sections, one belonging to Ntate Ditaba Tsa Badimo and the other belonging to Sam Radebe, who has placed regulations of entry to this part of the cave. This development is viewed by some informant as intruding on the holistic work of the cave. They claim the cave was never meant to be divided. (See Addendum K-T, pp. 257-262 for a full interview about Motouleng.)

### **3.13 Maseeng data analysis and interpretation**

Maseeng has been revered as a primordial fertility location that previously encompassed the entire cave. The information given by two principal research informants, namely Ntate Ditaba Tsa Badimo and Betty Nhlapo indicate that the word “Maseeng” was used by the inhabitants of the Mohokare region for indigenous healing of infertile female persons. However, the word Maseeng in its literal meaning refers to infant babies. It is a plural reference against a singular reference “Lesea”; therefore, Maseeng would literally mean “a place of babies”.

Originally, the Maseeng locality was used mainly by the Basotho women. With time, the site evolved as a destiny for women of different tribes. With regard to the indigenous worldview, the Ancestors are the principal role players who are in communication with the traditional healer assisting the couple. This triad relationship between the Ancestors, traditional healer and the couple must co-exist to ensure that the desired results are obtained at Maseeng.

This triad relationship is not permanent; it only exists for the duration of the performance of the fertility ritual up until the child is born. There is no admitted trace of failure on the part of Maseeng as an indigenous hospital responding to the fertility needs of barren women. All research participants are in one accord with regard to the power and authority of Maseeng.

The overall information obtained clearly show that nothing negative is reported about Maseeng or any mistrust levelled at the sacrality of the location by the research participants. This assertion supports the views of the informants about Maseeng’s nature and sacrality. However, the researcher is mindful of the fact that the cultural ethos of the location is premised on Basotho cultures and belief systems.

The research participants imparted an insightful understanding of Maseeng as a sacred location at which the powerful presence of the Ancestors can be experienced. In this regard, the Ancestors constantly reside at the site and in the cave as a whole. The cave itself may be viewed

as “home” to the Ancestors. This cultural conviction and spiritual attachment to the cave and its healing powers form the pivotal anchor for people in dire need of a child.

Betty Nhlapo’s responses on Maseeng show that a rigid protocol was observed at Motouleng with a special reference to the enactment of the fertility rituals that prepared the way for the Ancestors to bless the couple with a child. The protocol prescribes who may enter the cave, who may intercede on behalf of the couple with the Ancestor, and who will perform the “ritual of appeasement”. Usually this protocol and procedure is executed by the most senior traditional healer at the site. Betty’s information show a minimum of female activity at the site, although some older women of a greater stature were present at the site to assist the traditional leadership of the site with fetching water from the river and serving meals when it was necessary.

The information given by Betty differs from those provided by Ditaba Tsa Badimo in a number of respects; her information indicates a cave that was never inhabited by a multitude of pilgrims and sangomas staying there. Her information points to the original status of the cave whereby Maseeng subsumed the entire cave and not only the part that is presently found at the entrance of the cave. However, it is not clear as to why Maseeng was reduced to a small area in the cave.

Ditaba Tsa Badimo paints a picture of a cave that originally was only the domain of sangomas and how the cave evolved with the introduction of indigenous church services in 1966. Analysing the information given by Ditaba Tsa Badimo prompts the researcher to infer that 1966 was the year in which two different traditions operated on the same turf for advancing African belief systems, both from a faith healing position and divination through ancestral bones. Apparently, Ditaba Tsa Badimo is both a faith healer and a sangoma.

The question concerning the two traditions at Motouleng is how have they influenced Maseeng as a fertility station? Prior to 1966, Motouleng was a fertility site and post-1966 Maseeng became a fertility location reduced to give space to other sacred locations at the site. This assessment is congruent with the data provided by Betty Nhlapo on the original setting of the cave and the significant work meted out to the communities of the Mohokare Valley, which incorporated Lesotho.

Whether the aforementioned traditions at the site could be explained as cultural power shifts that seek to define the role of the indigenous church and that of the sangoma inside the cave is difficult to explain. What is significant, however, is the fact that both traditions honour the

Ancestor presence, and this may be the point of convergence of these two traditions. (See Addendum K-T, pp. 263-266 for a full interview about Maseeng.)

### **3.14 Tafole ya Lehodimo data analysis and interpretation**

The literal translation of “Tafole ya Lehodimo” is ‘table of heaven’. Tafole ya Lehodimo direct connotation in relation to the context is “this stone resembles a table of heaven” in the cave; however, heaven is not understood here as the cave itself. It rather corresponds with the general African cosmology relating “heaven’s table” on earth to presence of ancestral spirits dwelling in sacred sites.

According to the information obtained from the interviews, “Tafole Ya Lehodimo” is a sacred stone upon which sacrificial or burnt offerings could be performed by traditional healers at the cave. The data retrieved in this regard indicate that “Tafole Ya Lehodimo” was just an ordinary flat stone in the cave before 1966; it was only declared a sacred stone at the time when Ntate Ditaba Tsa Badimo began to operate at the cave. The traditional healers who used to work at the cave before 1966 concentrated their efforts on fertility. The flat stone formed part of the numerous other stones found in the cave.

The core purpose of this stone is for burnt offerings. Any kind of burnt offering could be performed on the stone, regardless of whether it is a faith tradition or a purely African customary tradition. However, the researcher is mindful of the fact that burnt offerings have Old Testament roots and may have influenced the ritual performance of Reverend John Mphuti who initially came to the cave in 1966 and introduced a faith healing tradition, which included a service of burnt offerings on the stone.

With regard to the above assertions, the researcher is inclined to conclude that the instructions that the senior spiritual leader claimed to have received from God and the Ancestors about the naming of the stone and the work to be done on the stone had actually commenced during the time of Reverend John Mphuti. Ntate Ditaba Tsa Badimo carries on with the work of the Reverend who entrenched burnt offerings at the cave in an effort to show that faith healing was as important as indigenous traditional healing.

It is the researcher’s opinion that this stone that was originally used for chopping wood, were transformed through the intervention of the spiritual leadership at the cave into a sacred location for two reasons: to manifest the general sacrality of the cave and to arrange ritual

performance in the cave more systematically. There are numerous flat stones in the cave, and one might think that with time some may also receive sacred attention from the Ancestors.

The information given illustrates how biblical references were pivotal to the evolution of the site. The “table of heaven” is one such story of the evolving site because of the change in the cultural life of the site. In this regard, the researcher observes a transition from a purely indigenous cultural site to a religious site with poignant religious expressions found in the site and many other cultural objects defining the work of the site. The entwinement of the cultural and spiritual expression in respect of naming an ordinary stone is congruent with what Eliade calls the “*ganz andere*”. According to Eliade (1959:12)

The sacred tree, the sacred stone are adored as stone or tree; they are worshipped precisely because they are hierophanies, because they show something that is no longer stone or tree but the sacred, the *ganz andere*.

The grounds of the cave are sacred by their very nature and this will affect the objects found at the cave. One such object is the “table of heaven”, pronounced sacred by the Ancestors for the sole purpose of burnt offerings.

According to Eliade (1957:12),

But for those to whom a stone reveals itself as sacred, its immediate reality is transmuted into supernatural reality. In other words, for those who have religious experience all nature is capable of revealing itself as cosmic sacrality.

For the reasons advanced above in respect of an ordinary stone becoming a table of heaven, assuming the status of sacrality, corroborates Eliade’s assertion about the transmutational being of the stone. The change realised in the stone could be an act of religious experience, which does not compromise the cultural element originally attached to it; however, religious tradition could have been the motive to call the stone a “table of heaven” and the setting at Motouleng may have been influenced by the transmuted objects of the cave.

Critical analysis and interpretation of the “table of heaven” as a hierophany are equally important to show the cultural and religious tensions subtly executed to impose a particular tradition on the site with the sanction of ancestral instruction. The fact that the original cultural function of the stone has been changed to an exclusive religious-ritual use, not only transforms

the status of the stone, but also serves the ascription of sacrality to objects incorporated in extended ritual repertoire. (See Addendum K-T, pp. 274-276 for a full interview about the Table of Heaven.)

### **3.15 Aletare e Kgethehileng data analysis and interpretation**

The name “Aletare e Kgethehileng” means an altar that is more sacred than the other altars in the cave. Because of the size of the altar, it is referred to as the “Grand Altar” of the cave. This altar is a stalagmite rising from the cave floor, and the niches are most probably formed through the process of drippings from the cave’s overhang. The shape of the Grand Altar differs from the normal shape of the known altars encountered at the other sacred sites.

The information provided by Ditaba Tsa Badimo point to the fact that the indigenous work of both faith healing and divination perspectives took their lead from the Grand Altar. In other words, any other aspects congruent to the mission of the cave can only find meaning if prayers are done at the Grand Altar in order to appease the spiritual authority of the cave. In this regard, a cautious analysis of the altar sees it linking all the sacred locations of the cave. This appears to be a spiritual and cultural requirement of the cave designed to centre the indigenous work of the cave on the Grand Altar.

The Grand Altar does not offer any healing or herbal medicines. It is only a praying station, which would help facilitate a process in which it would be possible for the visitors and pilgrims to obtain their cultural and spiritual needs. A question was put to the informant about the main objective of the Grand Altar in view of the fact that it appeared that the majority of people going to the Grand Altar were people from the faith healing stream or so-called Independent Christian Churches.

According to the information obtained, the Grand Altar’s function is simply “prayer of entry” conducted by Ditaba Tsa Badimo to ensure that proper procedure in upholding cultural and spiritual protocols of the cave are followed rigidly. However, it is also observed that the prayer leading is not always done by the main spiritual leader. Independent Church groups do the prayer ritual under their own religious leader at the altar. Often groups have a combined prayer ritual at the altar, in particular before leaving the cave. Individuals may also pray at the altar without the assistance of a spiritual leader.

The information obtained about the Grand Altar show that it has always been part of the cave's cultural and later religious life. In this regard, since the use of the cave by the Independent Churches, the stalagmite has been transformed into a site of prayer and in terms of biblical tradition renamed as an altar. The unique structure of the stalagmite might have attracted attention and played a part in its transformation as a sacred location within the extending ritual repertoire of the cave.

The research participant has shed information on the Grand Altar as an obligatory station where a person had to stop before visiting other stations in the cave. However, it is worth mentioning that the invocation of ancestral spirits performed at this altar not necessarily denounces the fact that at other stations the spirit of the Ancestors may also be invoked. This is a pivotal cultural and religious act advanced by the Grand Altar. Not only do the candles, candle wax and dark burnt surfaces decorate the altar; coins are left in the small holes on the altar as an appeasement to God and the Ancestors to bestow blessings. (See Addendum K-T, pp. 277-279 for a full interview about the Grand Altar.)

### **3.16 Dingakeng data analysis and interpretation**

Dingakeng or Emakhosini is located between the Grand Altar and the clay site. It is secluded, under a small dark hole in the crevice in the middle of the cave. This area appears to have originated with the genesis of the site. Its indigenous power is explained in terms that characterises the supernatural powers of the Ancestors. The informant seems always reluctant to explicate the pragmatic nature of this physical locality, especially its relationship with the Ancestors of the site. This lack of pragmatic nature of the location largely confounds the indigenous function of initiation, particularly with respect to the training of new sangomas.

According to the information obtained from the informant, the location strongly leans towards a training institute for trainee healers and not faith healers. This part of the cave is preserved and guarded from profanity by people who have no idea about its deep sacred standing in matters of ancestral presence in the cave. The informant's strong belief in the presence of God at the cave holds the conviction that Emakhosini has a special link between God and the Ancestors. In other words, this could be a meeting place of God and the Ancestors to converse on matters pertaining to the life at the cave and the training of sangomas.

The information obtained clearly indicates that an element of faith healing could have been imported to the location because of allowing the God element to be present in the indigenous functions of the locations. Originally, the site or the cave was inhabited by traditional healers, who liaised with Emakhosini for possible solutions to the problems of the people and bringing trainee healers into contact with the unseen traditional healers of the location, thereby allowing the Ancestors to influence decisions taken at the location.

According to the information, people were prohibited to leave burning candles in the location. A person could enter with a candle and leave with it, but with the evolution of the site, people started leaving burning candles inside the location, thus contradicting the sacred laws of the location. This further explains that the original intention of the location has been profaned in order to extend a new function of the location unwittingly.

There was no influx of people going to the location because of its secluded nature. It was only known to the traditional leadership of the site before 1966. However, the researcher cannot negate the significance of the inter-mingling of traditions at the site that ultimately influenced cultural and spiritual change at the location and this position again does not mitigate the profanity brought to this location.

There can be no doubt that the cave was a fertility site with sacred enclaves and offered ancestral help, including Emakhosini. The indigenous architectural layout of the cave illustrates the mysterious housing of ancestral objects that cannot be defined in human terms, except to acknowledge their mystic presence; this is a case in hand for the location where Emakhosini is located at the cave.

According to the informant, God sends the Ancestors to Emakhosini to help his children who are in need. The nature of this information shows that there is a perception that God is in control of Emakhosini and that the Ancestors are secondary in command at the location. This is a perception ingrained in the minds of many people who visit the site. Nevertheless, God's control could have been invented to give a relevant religious meaning to the location so that it resonates with the spiritual needs of the visitors, although this is an invention to augment the sacrality of the locality.

The information obtained show a strong cultural and religious attachment to this location by the many people coming to the cave and this is promoted by the local traditional leadership, who are also responsible for the application of the laws of the cave. In this regard, Makhosini



as a revered sacred location in the cave serves the purpose of placing indigenous traditional healing in the forefront of the functions of the locations in the cave of Motouleng. The main objective of Emakhosini illustrates the deep-seated nature of ancestral presence entrenched in the practice of indigenous traditional healing. The location is not easily accessible, because of the inherent belief that the linkage between God, the Ancestors and sangomas is stronger in this location.

Accessing the location requires the permission and intervention of a senior traditional healer who will communicate in the language of the Ancestors. It could be through divination bones or other means related to the invocation of ancestral spirits at the location. It is clear from the information obtained that Emakhosini is a special place of the cave with a special mission to teach, instruct and direct trainee healers about the work of indigenous healing. Emakhosini serves as one important dimension of the overall sacred status of the cave, and the work at this location is clearly intertwined with other significant sacred stations found at the cave. (See Addendum K-T, pp. 280-282 for a full interview about Dingakeng.)

### **3.17 Mabitleng data analysis and interpretation**

The word “Mabitleng” is a direct translation of the English “graveyard”. According to the information obtained from the informant, Mabitleng was deemed as an “imagined graveyard” that served as an important tribal function that dealt with missing people from their homes and that further dealt with people who died far away from their homes. The rocky arrangement into some heaps of small rocks depicting them as graves gave rise to a popular view among the Basotho people that this was a graveyard designed by the Ancestors for the purposes mentioned above.

Although this assertion above did not find corroboration with the principal informants on the status of the “graveyard” in the site but a common understanding is that the graveyard had one objective of tracing people who were missing for years and could not be found and rituals of tracing the missing people would be done at the graveyard.

The informant alludes to the fact that the coming into being of the Mabitleng sacred location was a result of senior traditional healers receiving a vision to turn the location into a grave. The vision spelled out that the people who died in the cave would be buried in the cave in order to make the graveyard at Motouleng authentic.

According to Nel (2011:9), “Various narratives exists as to who the Ancestors buried there are, and one is not sure if there are in fact graves.” In this regard, the information obtained do not respond to this fact. An inference could be drawn that the topography of the location does not depict a graveyard per se. There is a perception among the inhabitants of the cave that this imagined or shadow graveyard connects with the other authentic graveyards in the townships where their Ancestors are buried, which is why the graveyard at Motouleng is said to be denoting the spiritual presence of the Ancestors.

Nel further analyses and interprets the notion of an imagined graveyard (2011:9)

What should be noted here is the fact that the physical objects or ground formations in the cave have been the causes of imaginative reflection. Natural objects are often the inspiring nodes for historization.

This observation cannot escape the imaginative reflection of the graveyard at Motouleng. Even though it came about through ancestral instruction, this cannot negate an imagined space for promoting sacrality in the cave, although the graveyard has become a belief system among the tribes visiting it for the purposes of conscientisation with pragmatic involvement of the Ancestors in the work of the cave.

The information reflects an advance architectural framework of the cave by the traditional leadership of the cave; what is actually contained within the cave may not necessarily depict its original setting. This includes the formation of the graveyard. The interview with the informant does not elicit Mabitleng as a legitimate subject of the original setting of the fertility cave. An inference could be drawn in this regard that the period during which the cave was only visited for matters relating to fertility, no natural objects of the cave were tampered with, and no changes were made to the natural setting of the cave.

Indigenous architectural work in the cave after Betty Nhlapo’s era might have been done for the good of the traditional beliefs of the tribes in the Mohokare region, so that the cave becomes a bastion of South African cultural and customary beliefs. The advent of the imagined graveyard at Motouleng fortifies the belief that those who have departed to the other world could be found with the intervention of the Ancestors. In this regard, the graveyard at Motouleng becomes a revered space for user-communities that holds the conviction that Mabitleng is a sacred location.

The information obtained show that Mabitleng became the ultimate location where a missing family member could be traced and found. However, although the number of people who came to this location for help could not be accessed, the informant's data showed no statistics of people who received help at this location. During the researcher's visit, the graveyard in the cave appeared as a rocky area with very few people carrying burning candles visiting it. Therefore, it would be difficult to trace the families that came to the graveyard and test the veracity of the main mission of Mabitleng in a practical sense.

Mabitleng forms part of an African religious framework. The African views of Mabitleng are congruent with lamentation over the dead person who is interred in the grave. Mabitleng forms part of remembering the departed. This location represents such remembering as a cultural and religious expression prevalent in most African cultures. (See Addendum K-T, pp. 283-285 for a full interview about Mabitleng.)

### **3.18 Mokgorong data analysis and interpretation**

Mokgorong according to the data obtained, is primordial in its status; it is located at the far back of the crevice or overhang. Its particular feature is a shallow cave that can only be entered by crawling on one's knees. The information clearly show that the context of this shallow cave maintains a strict discipline of entry into the area for reasons pertaining to the continuous presence of ancestral spirits in the cave, a conviction still held to this day.

The word *Mokgorong* would have other meanings apart from an indigenous television site, as has been alluded to in the interview with the informant. The exact meaning of the word Mokgorong, in this regard would refer to the area where the television site is located. It could in the Setswana language mean in a singular sense *kgoro = a door*. The word in the context of the study is Mokgorong, meaning, "Where the door of the television site is located". The traditional leadership of the cave in its primordial setting could have used the expression Mokgorong to emphasise that the television site was the "holy of holies" and the entrance was Mokgorong.

The informant on various occasions during the field research to this sacred location stressed that Mokgorong as understood to be the television station of the cave was where ancestral spirits dwelt. Therefore, this is designed on how pilgrims and visitors to the cave should approach the site. The assertion above could have been a subsequent insertion into the laws of

the cave in view of the fact only chiefs would enter the shallow cave and consult with the Ancestors. In this regard, the changes to the laws of the cave could have had an adverse effect on the traditional understanding of the sacred location and its cultural functions.

The information clearly show a move away from the original understanding of the television site, its indigenous mandate and the desecration of the domain of the Ancestors by the pilgrims and certain interest groups who wanted to gain knowledge of the African belief systems. In the process, this undermined the laws of the cave. According to Nel (2011:9),

This site Mokgorong is believed to be the “most sacred” (holy of holies) and according to tradition, it was used originally only by chiefs to consult the Ancestors. It was believed that the Ancestors provide light inside.

The significance of the television site of the cave has been alluded to by other research participants, who cited the fact that Mokgorong is as old as the fertility site. The only distinction is that Mokgorong was mainly used by the senior traditional leadership of the cave. In this regard, part of the transformation of the site now includes the practice that ordinary pilgrims enter Mokgorong and burning candles and offerings are often left behind inside, actions believed to be a profaning of the site according to a traditional prescript.

Mokgorong, according to the body of data obtained, was an enclave selected only for chiefs who went into the television site to speak on behalf of the indigenous activities of the cave. In their meeting with Ancestors in the cave, they would converse on indigenous traditional healing as the core mandate of the cave and report back to their respective constituencies about the information from the television site. The respective constituencies were not located in the Motouleng cave, because no person was allowed to stay at Motouleng. The Mohokare valley had villages, including farms, next to the sacred sites; therefore, the most senior chiefs from the valley were the ones acting as conduits between the Ancestors and the people.

This part of information is substantiated by Betty Nhlapo, who clearly articulated the indigenous and patriarchal laws of the site during her stay at a farm next to Motouleng. The laws clearly stated that no person was supposed to stay at the cave and only selected men of sacred standing would come to the cave at certain times to speak on behalf of the communities. An inference could be drawn here that these men of sacred standing visited Mokgorong and met with the Ancestors in the television site.

Mokgorong, the television site of Motouleng, is the only one of its kind in the Mohokare valley and this makes the Motouleng sacred site unique among the other sacred sites in the Eastern Free State. However, the invasion of Mokgorong by unauthorised people against the chosen chiefs had compromised this uniqueness. (See Addendum K-T, pp. 286-288 for a full interview about Mokgorong.)

### 3.19 Khotla data analysis and interpretation

The literal translation of *Khotla* is a court. The Khotla at Motouleng is called “Khotla e Phahameng”. This would mean a *High Court*, but the preferred reference is the *Royal Court*, because the word “Phahameng” refers to an elevated place or a place of immense respectability. In an indigenous sense, a lekhotla is the place where an assembly of revered men converge to dialogue on cultural and customary issues. *Khotla* is an indigenous structure without people in it and *Lekhotla* is a structure with people within it, comprising membership of the Royal Court.

The information obtained show that lekhotla was a location where the ethics and traditional legal matters of the cave were executed. This was done to emphasise how important the laws of the cave were for observance of the sacrality of the cave. In other words, if there were activities at the cave that conflicted with the standard functions of the cave, then the Royal Court would converge to deliberate on the issues that are supposedly undermining the ethical and traditional function of the cave. The Royal Court may be called to adjudicate on matters of the processes of initiation as meted out by the Ancestors, in the event that these processes were not followed to the letter of the ancestral laws the assembly of the court would deal with the matter.

The nature of the information obtained shows that the Royal Court was the epicentre of discipline at Motouleng. The court is there to protect the sacred statins spread across the cave and to ensure that ancestral laws are not undermined by the user communities and those called to be prospective sangomas or traditional healers. Evidence would often be led by those who lodge a complaint against the transgressor of the laws of the cave, including disrespect for Ancestors. In certain instances, the trainee healer would not follow the instructions of the senior traditional healer. The senior traditional healer may then lodge a complaint against the initiate with the court.

According to Nel (2011:10),

The lekgotla has lost its original function as a location of tribal deliberations. It is used for ordinary prayer occasions but often it is the site where spiritual leaders determine the good (white) or bad (bad) in his/her clients.

This observation is quite true, because deliberations in the Royal Court seem to have disappeared with time. The sacred structure of the cave, in particular with special reference to the Royal Court, has been truncated by the many changes taking place at the site; however, some informants still reminisce about the authority of the court.

The lekhotla presently appears to be dysfunctional for reasons pertaining to lack of traditional leadership at the site, an assertion corroborated by other informants residing at the cave. The core reason for this dysfunctionality stems from power struggles inside the cave. The powers are a consequence of the cave demarcated into two parts and led by two different traditional authorities. This demarcation has adversely affected the operation of the sacred locations within the cave; this includes the lekgotla, which plays the role of discipline and mediation in the site. This has resulted in the misuse of the lekgotla for ordinary domestic cooking and staying. Household utensils are often to be seen inside the structure.

The responses from the informant are not clear about the genesis of the Royal Court as a sacred location of the Motouleng site. This would include the period in which the location functioning as part of the fertility mandate of the cave. The information in this regard are not clear; however, the question has to be asked whether the original fertility cave encompassed the Royal Court as a site of defending the ethics of the cave? Betty Nhlapo is a point of reference concerning the cave and its cultural activities because in her interviews with Cawood she did not say anything about the presence of the Royal Court at the cave and the role it plays there.

The researcher would assume that the Royal Court is an extremely important member of the Motouleng sacred site and its presence would have been there when the cave did not have people staying permanently at the cave. On the other hand, the location could have been the product of the evolution of the site, particularly the period from 1966 onwards.

The argument for the presence of the Royal Court during the Betty Nhlapo era may be bolstered by the fact that only male figures with a sacred standing were allowed in the cave, the Royal Court we are told was managed by respectable men who carried the mandate of the Ancestors. On the other hand, the court may have been linked traditionally to the community with the

traditional leaders and sangomas visiting the cave. In other words, the court could have been there long before 1966.

The chiefs in the Mohokare Valley would visit the cave at certain times to be in conversation with the Ancestors. They would probably meet at the Royal Court to make critical decisions about the life of their subjects and matters significant to African Belief Systems. Furthermore, they would meet with the traditional leaders to check whether the basic tenets of the rituals and customary needs of the cave are met at the cave. This exercise would ensure a smooth running of the affairs of the cave by all the stakeholders who are afforded cultural oversight of the cave by the Ancestors.

The information obtained indicate that the cave could have had significant places of observing special calendar dates of celebrating important rituals of the cave and lekgotla could have played a leading role in this regard, where preparations were made and dates set for the observance of the rituals. Lekgotla was central to such a cultural determination.

The present condition of the Royal Court signals a major shift from its authoritative and central role in the affairs of the cave, it is quite clear no cultural and ritual deliberations are still held there. In other words, the Royal Court has become a lifeless structure at Motouleng. The information clearly shows that the extent of profanity on the lekgotla has affected the sacredness of the site drastically; although the informant has a glimmer of hope that the lekgotla would regain its former glory. In this regard, the researcher is of the view that the many changes at the cave would make it difficult for the lekgotla to be regarded as the epicentre of the ethical landscape experienced before.

The Motouleng sacred site is divided into two sections as indicated in the previous section of this study. The latter part of the cave is managed by Sam Radebe who comes from Kroonstad in the Northern Free State. Sam Radebe claims that his Ancestors asked him to purify the cave, as it was not well looked after. In a short interview with Sam, it was clear that Sam did not have a calling to become a sangoma or a faith healer. However, he maintained that his Ancestors were training and equipping him to manage a special ministry in his part of the cave.

Sam as a research participant claims that in future, big church services will be held in his part of the cave, as this was the directive from the Ancestors of his part of the cave. He corroborates this claim by erecting a number of baptismal fonts in his part of the cave. When the researcher inquired about the significance of these baptismal fonts he responded that by the time the

church starts the sacred objects that define a church would be present in his part of the cave. The informant was further asked about the attractive thatched dwellings in his part of the cave. He replied that he envisaged that there would be tourists coming to his part of the cave once the church operated.

His relationship with Ntate Ditaba Tsa Badimo in the former part of the cave was just cordial. He claims that because he does not want to interfere with the ancestral work done in the other part of the cave. His mandate is strictly to remain in his part of the cave. The narrative of Sam Radebe and his wife in the back part of the cave illustrates the fluidity of the site dynamics as well as new transformations of the site are emerging. In this regard, sacred sites exist within the reciprocal tension between its form ascribed by tradition and history and the current use and demand for incorporation of new transformations. (See Addendum K-T, pp. 289-292 for a full interview about Khotla.)

### **3.20 Data analysis and interpretation of Modderpoort**

The Modderpoort area, which is near Ladybrand in the Eastern Free State as well as closer nearer the Maseru border gate in Lesotho, the site has a rich history of cultural and spiritual activity. This area is a place of convergence for pre-historic and historic communities like Black communities and the San hunter-gatherer. In terms of Nel (2014:139), the sacred site of Mantsopa (Modderpoort, near Ladybrand on the border with Lesotho) exhibits the complex hybrid nature of spiritual tradition.

Prior to the Europeans coming to this part of Southern Africa, particularly the area of Modderpoort, the San communities, followed by the Bantu-speaking farmers, criss-crossed the region. By the time the missionaries and colonists arrived in the Modderpoort region in the year 1867, the San hunters and the Africans had prehistoric villages constructed. These were utilised by the missionaries for the extension of their missionary endeavour, in an effort to get these villages to spread a new European culture in the area.

Today the focus of Modderpoort is the Mantsopa sacred site, which comprises a number of important physical localities. Many of these localities are a product of the missionary enterprise in the area; however, the prehistoric villages afforded the missionaries an opportunity to evangelise in the area and utilise the prehistoric villages for the development of sacred



locations, giving the nature of sacred work an important dimension of research into heritage in all its formats.

The sacred locations are a product of the cultural belief systems of the Basotho people and the manifestation of the Anglican Church spirituality. The data collected from the interviews indicate convincingly that Modderpoort is a unique cultural and spiritual landscape and the domain of four sacred locations, known as the San paintings, the Cave Church or Rose Chapel, the Anglican Church cemetery, Mantsopa's grave. A spring outside the grounds of the sanctuary is named after Mantsopa.

The interviews concerning the sacred locations at the Mantsopa sacred site were conducted in English with the manager of the Modderpoort site Mr Johann Friezt, Father Jacob Mekgwe and other informants who came to the annual commemoration of the site called the Cave Sunday on the Anglican Church's calendar.

The information obtained on Modderpoort shows a number of interesting issues of subtle conquest of land and property by Europeans who invaded the area in the name of Christian religion, although the information does not spell out how the original inhabitants of Modderpoort the San people were conquered from their land. The information also does not shed light about the Bantu tribes who apparently may have stayed at Modderpoort subsequent to the San community.

“Lekgalong La Bo Tau” is a Sesotho name for Modderpoort, meaning a “pass of the Lions”. In terms of Hodgson (2010:212), “Modderpoort is an Afrikaans name meaning ‘the gate of mud’. The Sotho name, *Le Khalo la bo tau* means ‘the pass of the lions’ and referred either to the lions living amongst other wild animals such as rhinos, hippos and many different kinds of antelope in the *poort* or else to the lion totem of the Bataung who lived alongside the San (Bushmen) at Mekoatleng”. This kind of reference would mean there was a time in the life of Modderpoort that a Basotho tribe whose totem was a lion stayed on the farm; however, there is no clear record as to what happened to this tribe when the site was evolving or when it was conquered. Contemporary history of the site would simultaneously refer to the entire area of Modderpoort and to some degree to Ladybrand, meaning that prior to 1865 the Kingdom of Lesotho may have extended beyond Modderpoort. In this regard, border demarcations were not in place and the Bataung tribe in the tribes of Lesotho resided at Modderpoort as their home in terms of tribal affiliation. (Sparks; 1990:137)

The Basotho dispersal throughout the Free State, particularly the Eastern Free State, exposes a similar topographical terrain between Lesotho and South Africa, which means some parts of the Lesotho land were displaced and eventually incorporated into the Free State. Historical references allude to the fact that by the year 1866 during the Seqiti wars of which the Europeans instigated, the Basotho lost a huge portion of their land by being displaced and found themselves aliens in their own land; it is undeniable that these wars affected the Modderpoort area.

The extensive nature of the data obtained on Modderpoort points to the unique cultural landscape of the place, unique in the sense that this was originally a domain of the San who left their record of paintings, a trade learnt out of a cultural milieu informed by the artistic gifts of the San community.

The information contained could be interpreted to indicate to the reader that the period in which the missionaries arrived at Modderpoort the cultures of the time carried with them substantial and spiritual weight. Over time, it obliterated the traditional indigenous belief systems of the area and replaced them with a Christian religion, which sought to convert a majority of the inhabitants of Modderpoort to Christianity. Obviously, the San people and possibly the Bantu tribes in both the farms of Modderpoort and Modderpoortspruit could have been displaced for not converting to an imported belief system. However, the indigenous cultures of the area were represented by the prophetess Mantsopa whose prophetic gifts may have paved the way for Christian spirituality to interact with the Basotho cultures and customs in a context that changed with time.

The cultural life of Modderpoort was set to change from 1870 onwards, leading to the formation of St Augustine Priory as a bastion of Christian spirituality in a land that had a unique culture entrenched in its inhabitants. A careful reading of the information obtained from the informant shows that the priory was a strategic institution to advance the objectives of the missionaries in evangelising the people of the two farms regardless of how significant their cultures were. Therefore, the prophetic work of Mantsopa could have harmonised the local cultures with the Christian religion and thereby paving the way for Modderpoort to be equated to legendary prophecies of Mantsopa. (See Addendum U-Y, pp. 293-297 for a full interview about Modderpoort.)

### 3.21 San rock paintings data analysis and interpretation

Who were the San community? San also called Bushmen, an indigenous people of Southern Africa, related to the Khoekhoe (Khoikhoi). They chiefly lived in Botswana, Namibia and South-Eastern Angola. The San populated South Africa before the arrival of the Bantu-speaking nations, and thousands of years before the arrival of Europeans. In terms of Lewis-Williams and G.Pearce (2012: 696), “The San are the best model we have for the hunter-gatherer lifestyle that saw so many generations through the Stone Age, and it is tempting to say that the history of the later Stone Age is the history of the San. This can only be done at a very broad level of generalization, but evidence does points to a San history”.

Rock art by the Stone Age hunter-gatherers can be found in the form of paintings or engravings in almost every district in South Africa. There is no comprehensive list of all sites, and many have not been recorded, but it is estimated that there are at least 20 000 to 30 000 sites and well over a million individual images. Although many are not well preserved, collectively they represent a remarkable record of the beliefs and cultural practices of the people who made them. Most were created by San hunter-gatherers, but Khoikhoi herders and Iron Age farmers added to the collection (South African History online; 2014:1).

The information obtained at Modderpoort point to the fact that San rock paintings were an art entrenched in the cultural lives of the San people their expertise in this field is illustrated by their ability to utilise stone to enhance their prowess in rock painting. The information obtained from the informants clearly shows that the area of Ladybrand and Modderpoort could have been a domain of indigenous trading of stone painting by the San people. Although the information does not deal with the commercialisation of the paintings it only deals with the art of painting by the San people on cave walls; furthermore, it could be that this kind of art emphasised the patterns of culture and custom of the San people in an indigenous sense.

Furthermore, rock-painting sites form part of this sacred landscape where the rock art relates to the beliefs and shamanistic ritual performances of San hunter-gatherers of the pre-colonial era. The main panel at the site contains remarkable depictions of birds and an unusual winged figure with zigzag legs, believed to represent a shaman or priest who had assumed bird-like form to undertake the journey to the spirit world. Flight is a widespread and recurring metaphor for altered states of consciousness in South Africa rock art and folklore. (Wikipedia; 2000:3)

The information obtained substantiates the fact that the San people reflected their belief systems on the walls of their shelters through their unique artistry of rock painting. The walls of the Cave Church bears witness in this regard and the large deposits of ancient rock paintings at Tandjiesberg in Ladybrand corroborate the nature and function of the San tribe in the production of these paintings. These paintings were systematically produced, maybe by those chosen to be the artists of the tribe, although the data obtained did not probe this assertion of the chosen artists in the San tribe. However, the systematisation of the paintings signals an orderly ancient regime of indigenous art.

According to the information, during the years ranging from 1720-1820, the San tribes painted on rocks, pointing to the fact that they lived productively during the Stone Age. Prehistorically this is called the Palaeolithic age, literally meaning Stone Age period. The San Tribe were Palaeolithic hunters; therefore, the engraved animals and other images on the walls of the caves could possibly represent a cultural milieu dominated by rock painting.

The information obtained addressed the question of ritual concerning rock painting. This is a hypothetical enquiry, because the question of the images and paintings were cultural, they stemmed from the customs of the San people. It is likely that the rituals of the tribe were performed in front of the images or paintings in an effort to be lucky when engaged in hunting. The hypothesis of the San hunter is clearly seen in animal representation and this may probably have served as teaching tools in order to instruct the trainee hunter about the various species to be hunted.

The rock art on the walls of the Cave Church at Modderpoort are congruent with Palaeolithic engravings, which was significant for the San people, because their identity and broader belief systems found meaning in these paintings. Hunting and rock painting were intertwined in the Palaeolithic period of the San people. These themes were central to the livelihood of the San people. The stone stools found at the Cave Church bear testimony to the archaeological ability of the San people in their endeavours to exist as a community in a pre-historical era, which did not prescribe to them how they should live. The question is: what have happened to the San people beyond 1820 in the Modderpoort area? The possible answer is that the San people were misplaced and subjugated in their land; however, they left behind a rich legacy of their prehistoric culture.

The San people, as the indigenous tribe of the site before any other tribe inhabited the site, had left a legacy that defined their pre-historic significance to growing importance of the site. Therefore, in the researchers' estimation, evidence of the San's legacy of stone art adds to the sacrality of the site. However, the researcher is mindful of the fact that this evidence is overshadowed by the voluminous work done in historic times by the Anglican Church, which significantly placed the centre at the centre of recognised sacrality.

The sacrality ascribed to the site because of its San connection deals with a cultural practice of the time, which the researcher believes was unique to the context. This culture may not have been deemed sacred at the time; however, the groundwork for sacrality of the site found its genesis in the work of the San, which in the view of the researcher, influenced the Stone Age art and building. In this regard, it may be the historical-cultural recognition of the San that ascribes a commemorative element to the site. The San rock paintings illustrate the artistic gifts of the San people. Presently the vestiges of this art on the walls of the Cave Church points to a pre-scientific ability of the tribe and this foreshadowed the sacrality of the site. (See Addendum U-Y, pp. 298-299 for a full interview about the San Rock Paintings.)

### **3.22 Cave Church data analysis and interpretation**

The information about the Cave Church indicate to the researcher a place where the indigenous tribes of the area stayed temporarily for protection against skirmishes aimed at them by colonial forces and other ethnic groups who were involved in the Difaqane War, who contested for the land of the San people. In this regard, the interview shows the Cave Church as an extremely sensitive location from its religious function to archaeological deposits and the rock art reflected on the walls of the cave.

The Modderpoort cave existed in its natural setting before the monks arrived at Modderpoort. When the monks arrived at Modderpoort, there was no place for accommodation. The names of the monks were Father Herbert Kelly, Canon James Douglas and Bishop Edward Twells. They moved around the area and came across a cave that was next to the Platberg Mountain. This they expanded inside so that there could be ample space for them to move around. In doing so, they constructed a chapel inside the cave, hence the Cave Church.

It is clear from the information collected that the methods used to modify the cave in its natural standing explicates how architectural and building skills were used by the monks to turn the cave into a church. According to Jolly (2010:37),

A space about 3, 5 by 4 metres was created for a chapel, and on one side, a small area screened by a boulder served as a bedroom.

A cautious reading of the excavations to the cave quite clearly shows the intentions of the monks in transforming the cave into a church, with perhaps a vestry and dormitory added to make the cave a complete sanctuary.

The objectives of the monks in turning the cave into a church was one of evangelising the Modderpoort area and make it Christian; therefore, the Cave Church was to become the strategic central place to conduct mission work among the Basotho people and build this mission strategy upon the cultures prevalent in the area. The cave characterises the traditions of the people. A new tradition would not easily supplant the existing traditions of the indigenous tribes. In this regard, the monks had to build their missionary strategy upon the traditions of the place in order to succeed.

The information clearly shows how the Anglican Church supported the effort to sustain the missionary strategy of the monks by recognising the Cave Church in its liturgical calendar annually. The mission strategy has been used successfully by not prohibiting cultural groupings to perform their belief on the grounds of the site and by allowing independent churches to visit the Change without any obstacles. When Bishop Twells of the Bloemfontein Diocese bought two farms, namely Modderpoort and Modderpoortspruit, it was to enhance the farms strategically as a base for the missionary work in the area.

The question of the San existence beyond the Stone Age serves to show how contestation for land can obliterate a tribe from its place of belonging, which would severely destroy the cultures of the people. The cultural landscape is bound to change if the indigenous tribe is conquered. Although the San tribe were the indigenous people of the site, it is not clear whether they were still there when the monks arrived. Another possible theory is that the San could have fled earlier in the face of Black tribes infiltrating the region, as was the case in the Natal and Drakensburg regions.

The cave was occupied by the monks for possible reasons pertaining to Christian missions in the area. This missionary effort by the Anglican Church had a spirituality based on sound Christian principles, which ushered in a new era of ritual and cultural observance in the area spearheaded from the Cave Church.

The information obtained further show that the excavations in the cave by the monks in order to create a church was done with the purpose of staying permanently in the area and making the cave a newly found home for the spreading of the gospel in an area that had been dominated by Stone Age cultures. The cave had a systematic purpose for the monks, for this was where they would institutionalise the area and construct buildings that would match the European civilisation at Modderpoort. This new civilisation would weaken the existing cultures and absorb them into Christianity; should they not be absorbed, they would be allowed to practise at the Modderpoort site as a new epicentre for spreading the beliefs of the settler mind set. This is how significant it was for the monks to operate from the cave and formulating mission strategies, which gave them the upper hand in gaining control over Modderpoort successfully. In this regard, the cave was pivotal to the planning and evangelisation of the Modderpoort area, which was once famous for its Stone Age paintings.

The cave laid the foundation for what is called the Saint Augustine Priory, which became the permanent domain of mission subsequent to the successful stay at the Cave Church, institutionalising Modderpoort was becoming a reality in the eyes of the established church. The Stone Age era, which was personified by the San Community, had ended, but the vestiges of their tireless work remains inscribed on the walls of the caves in Modderpoort and Ladybrand. Before the cave became a church it characterised the nature of the place, it was a custodian of indigenous cultures and customs, it was a tribal space or an ancestral space that protected the Pre-Historic tribes of the area when in danger of attack from their foes particularly the colonists and the Black groups. The role of the cave at Modderpoort ensured an attachment to the spiritual and cultural landscape; there could be no deviation from what the cave stood for and what it represented to the tribes. In this case, the San people and Basotho people, who are referred to in the prehistoric data as Bataung tribe (Lion Tribe) could have used the cave as their habitat.

The association of the Bataung tribe one of many Sotho groups with the site may inevitably have led to the disappearance of the San, but such has not been tested. The purchase of the Modderpoort farm by Bishop Twells meant the end of Stone Age painting. The methodology

used by the established church was to preserve the artefacts with respect to the paintings and preserve the beauty of the artistic ability of the San people. On the other hand, there is scanty information about the use of the cave, except for contradictory information about its use by the prophetess Mantsopa and the monks.

Finally, the Cave Church, according to the information obtained, is a rare site in the current heritage status of sacred locations. Even though the cave had belonged to the San people, the monks had transformed it into a formidable site that intertwined the Christian faith with other traditions prevalent at the site. Religious and cultural freedom is visible inside the cave. Alcoves are used for holding the burning candles of different colours to drive home the sacredness of the Cave Church. The burning of the candles in the African belief systems signifies the presence of ancestral spirits. According to Jolly (2010:37),

The candles combine with the natural light that enters from the top of the cave to create a beautiful light within the chapel.

The candle plays a central role in the life of the Cave Church for it brings hope and life to those who come to worship there. The transition from a cave in the Stone Age to a Church Cave in the Christian era makes it a meeting place of different cultures and ultimately a place of indigenous worship, where independent churches and mainline churches can discover the entwinement of their belief systems. (See Addendum U-Y, pp. 300-303 for a full interview about the Cave Church.)

### **3.23 Mantsopa grave data analysis and interpretation**

The grave of the prophetess Mantsopa is located in a cemetery that could have been designated for the religious ministers of the Anglican Church. However, an exception was made because of her prophetic and legendary status. She was buried in the historic Anglican Church cemetery. Her grave was one among more than 200 graves mainly of the clergy of the Anglican Church.

The tombstone of the grave is made out of cement plaster and the headstone is inscribed with the words **Anna Mantsopa Makhetha a Hlokahala ka9 lilemo ele 111**. Although the exact date of her death is in dispute; however, what is written on the tomb of Mantsopa in Sesotho literally means that Anna Mantsopa Makhetha died at the age of 111 years. The data given by the informant show the grave of Mantsopa was revered particularly by the people who espoused her prophetic gifts. The grave itself explicates the prophetic power of Mantsopa beyond death



and the life hereafter. This is illustrated by the data, which suggests that many people visit the grave and perform rituals, which indicates that a grave of a divine person symbolises life in death.

The information show that the grave as an embodiment of the traditional beliefs of the people who holds the conviction that Mantsopa was now an Ancestor of the Modderpoort site. She is buried alongside the monks of the Anglican Church and their divine status cannot be placed above her prophetic gifts. Even though she was baptised by the monks, it did not diminish her legendary status or minimise her prophetic gifts in her interactions with them. In this regard the monks could have wanted to understand the cultures and the customs of the Basotho people and Mantsopa could have provided them with answers to this enquiry.

The meaning of this relationship between the monks with Mantsopa was one of understanding the divinities of each other in relation to their backgrounds and divine teachings. Mantsopa as an African prophet could have given prophetic advice to the monks about the context of Modderpoort and the cultures of the geographical sphere of the Eastern Free State and Lesotho. The researcher detects that there was no animosity between the Monks and the prophet Mantsopa in their encounters on the grounds of Modderpoort. This would mean there was harmony of African cultural discourse with the fundamental tenets of the Christian faith.

In this above regard, Mantsopa was Christianised through baptism. Nothing is said about the acknowledgement of indigenous belief systems by the monks in the Eastern Free State. Even though the area became the property of the Anglican Church, it would not have been easy to change the belief systems of the Basotho people. Mantsopa played a key role in making the intentions of the monks succeed on foreign land. It is clear from the data obtained that the cultures of the area are still being observed by many people, these cultures are entrenched in a context that has institutionalised Christianity or Christianity co-exists alongside a culture embraced by the Sesotho-speaking people of Lesotho and the majority of Black people in South Africa.

According to the information obtained, the gravesite of Mantsopa is seen as key by visitors. Religious practitioners and traditional practitioners view it as opening a line of communication between themselves and their Ancestors, meaning that Mantsopa in her spiritual being would act as a mediator. In turn, the Ancestors would respond in their favour, informal informants in

this regard have attested to the fact that when they visited the grave of Mantsopa and spoken to her spirit. Their prayers and concerns were answered by their Ancestors.

The information has explicitly dealt with the roots of Mantsopa. When she came to Modderpoort, her only name was Mantsopa and her identity as an African prophet was intact. However, a new name given to her at baptism, “Anna”, in sense had shifted her identity. One would interpret it to be a Black and White identity. Mantsopa is Southern Sotho and Anna is European. This amounts to a mixture of identities. Why could Mantsopa not be baptised with her African name in order to preserve her identity? According to Bekker, Dodds and Khosa (2001:1),

Analyses of ethnic and religious identities predominate; historical investigations cover the period of colonial as well as postcolonial national rule; and issues of racial domination come to the fore as the geographical focus shifts to the south of the continent.

Even if the name Anna were given within the aegis of Christian faith, traces of identity distortion were visible enough, the monks may have acted in good faith by giving a Western name but this amounted to colonial influence with enduring effects on identity construction, in a context which collective identity is purely Southern Sotho.

Analyses of Mantsopa’s baptism and her newly found name may represent a voluminous number of Basotho people baptised at Modderpoort and given colonial names to fit in with the Christian faith. The data obtained do address this assessment; however, Mantsopa could not have been the only Black person living at Modderpoort, there may have been other black people living and working on the farms in that area that could have been baptised and given colonial names by the Monks. According to Cawood (2010:134),

Oral testimonies gathered in the current project place the site where Mantsopa lived at the southeastern side at the foot of Spitskop. Apparently, Mantsopa lived here in a settlement with a number of followers.

The effects of identity shifting, particularly at Modderpoort were clearly experienced with the expansion of the church in the Free State and Lesotho, the mission of the church was to give African converts European names at baptism. The shifting identities at Modderpoort had a religious effect, which to a larger degree was set to be in dialogue with African belief systems

and the objective could have been to position the Christian faith above these belief systems. In this regard, Bekker *et al.* (2001:148) argues,

We never have only one identity. All of us have multiple identities, i.e. we identify in different degrees with many different groups.

This assertion could be different from an imposed identity; however, it is true today we have many languages because we live in a multicultural and multilingual context.

The question of the significance of Mantsopa's gravesite during this age should be viewed from a historical, cultural and social context with respect to the status of the person buried in that grave. Mantsopa's grave, because of its high social significance, both in the church and the public amplifies the authenticity of her sacred status. The grave is not only visited by members of her family; it is also visited by people who have never seen her in person. This grave has a social cohesion that brings different tribes and traditions together. (See Addendum U-Y, pp. 304-306 for a full interview about Mantsopa Grave.)

### **3.24 Mantsopa Spring data analysis and interpretation**

The information obtained on the Mantsopa spring again points to the legendary status of the Prophetess Mantsopa.

The information obtained expose the high usage of the spring by pilgrims who believe the prophetic and healing powers of Mantsopa are represented by the spring. It is common knowledge that the Prophetess Mantsopa extensively used the perennial spring to execute her prophecy vocation during her stay at Modderpoort. The symbiotic relationship between the cave, the cemetery and the spring explicates the grand nature of Mantsopa whom by definition she personifies the sacred status of Modderpoort through the sacred objects mentioned above.

There are a number of challenges that the interview has dealt with which influence the life of the spring in a long term, such as contamination through littering and using the spring as a ritual spot. However, the data show Mantsopa was bathing in the spring and gathering healing power by performing certain rituals, perhaps through the instruction of the Ancestors. The informant attributes the significance of the spring to the Prophetess Mantsopa and its cleanliness could have been uppermost in the mind of the prophetess, because the spring is a

sacred place, it is located on sacred ground, and therefore it would be improper for the pilgrims to commit acts of profanity at the spring which are anti- Mantsopa.

Mantsopa Spring, in terms of the information obtained, represents cultural and religious values of the site. These values extend beyond the site where the sacred water is a rare commodity; the water is bottled for commercial use by the Anglican Church to far places from Modderpoort. This act explains the critical role that legendary figures like Mantsopa play in a broader society that only hears of her prophetic exploits. In other words, the bottled water symbolically presents the power of Mantsopa as it is found in the spring and the many people who owe allegiance to her would be content to have the bottled water in their possession. The informant giving the information about the commercialisation of the spring water indicated to the researcher that actually the Anglican Church marketed the sacred power of the prophetess Mantsopa to places far from the Modderpoort site.

The sensitive nature of the Mantsopa spring is of a remarkable historic significance. This historic significance is anchored in the intangible heritage of the legendary Mantsopa. Though there are no protective measurements in place at the grounds of the spring, its major historic significance illustrates the central place of water in the indigenous prophetic ministry as foreshadowed in Mantsopa.

In collective religious memory, springs are symbolically connected to deeper spiritual dimensions. In the biblical period and in other religious traditions, springs are often accorded religious symbolic value. In East African religious traditions, springs and river pools, even the sea, are associated with Ancestors residing. Thus, it no wonders that Mantsopa's association with the spring adds to its sacrality and the power of its water. (See Addendum U-Y, pp. 307-309 for a full interview about the Mantsopa Spring.)

### **3.25 Oetsi cave data analysis and interpretation**

The Oetsi (Wetsie) Cave in Monontsha Qwaqwa is a perpetual subject of land contestation among the many Basotho tribes, who are in conflict about the rightful ownership of the cave around the area of Monontsha, which is the context of the cave. The historical and cultural significance of the cave is clouded by the tribal contestations; therefore, it is not easy to unravel its sacred nature and how its sacred status can be determined, for the information record the

interviews were conducted inside the cave with “Morena Makausi Moloi” with his younger Brother.

The Oetsi cave (Wetsie cave) information, points to a situation of tribal feud among a number of Basotho tribes staying in Qwaqwa. The tribes in question are the Makholokoe, whose totem is a “Hen”; the Batlokwa, whose totem is a “Wild Pig”; and Bakwena, whose totem is a “Crocodile”. The information obtained from Chief Moloi of the Makholokoe seems to favour the view that the cave at Monontsha belongs to the Makholokoe tribe because of their tribal links to Chief Oetsi.

The irony of the matter in terms of the data in question is that, the area in which the cave is localised is Monontsha, the tribal home of Batlokwa who, in an informal interview, discounted the claims of Makholokoe about the ownership of the cave. Chief Moloi claims that their Ancestor, Chief Oetsi, was the first to set foot on the cave, which is why it is called the Oetsi cave. Should the Batlokwa or Bakwena dispute the authenticity of the claim, then the cave is a property of all the tribes of Qwaqwa.

The information obtained favours the view that there were skirmishes at Witsieshoek between the Makholokoe and the White settlers around 1830. This forced Chief Oetsi to seek refuge in the cave with his tribe and apparently, Oetsi and his tribe were traced to the cave and massacred by the settler troops. Although Oetsi escaped the massacre, the information does not spell out clearly how he escaped when many of his people died in the cave.

The massive cave is infested with rocks and stones, which the chief claims are graves of the people killed by the White settlers. There was no corroboration of this saga by the other tribes in Qwaqwa about the deaths at the Oetsi Cave. Neither was extraordinary measures taken to remove the bodies from the cave.

The question on the comparison between the Oetsi cave and two major sacred villages of the Eastern Free State, namely Motouleng and Mautse, clearly shows from the information obtained that the sacredness of Oetsi cave was not at par with the above-mentioned sacred villages. However, the Makholokoe tribe reveres the cave, for it became the fortress of their foremost Ancestor, Chief Oetsi. This conviction makes the Makholokoe tribe to visualise the cave as sacred. They further see the cave as an ancestral home, for the spirits of those Makholokoe who were killed inside the cave are still prevailing.

The belief in the cave as belonging to the Makholokoe brings to the fore a land contestation among tribes who use popular leaders as owners of land or particular objects that ultimately defines their entitlement to that object. Chief Oetsi was extremely popular among the Makholokoe. To this day, his stature as the father of the Oetsi Cave has increased among his people. The name Oetsi cave could have raised the ire of the other tribes, particularly the Bakwena, who is the principal tribe of the Basotho nation. The reasons for entitlement to ownership of land or an object within land resides within the birth right to the land or conquest of land, maybe for political reasons. However, the reasons advanced for ownership of the Oetsi cave are tribally driven. It would be difficult in this regard to conceptualise sacred space and sacred place in a context absorbed by incessant tribal conflicts.

The significant thing about the Oetsi Cave is that it is central to the commemoration of the Makholokoe tribe and their history. The Oetsi cave as a culturally historical place would often acquire sacral status. Furthermore, the understanding that there are dead bodies of the Makholokoe who perished inside the cave adds to the significance of the site as a sacral ground because of the belief that the mortal remains of the Makholokoe are still buried there.

The site, in as far as historical tribal affiliation is concerned, resembles the connection the Mautse sacred site has with King Moshoeshoe I, specifically with the spring named after him. Even though there are a myriad of views concerning the ownership of the Oetsi cave, there is a significant sense of memory and cultural attachment to the cave by the Makholokoe tribe, which means its sacral status is emboldened by the historical events of the tribe. (See Addendum Z, pp. 310-311) for a full interview about the Oetsi cave.

## CHAPTER 4: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

### 4.1 A comparative assessment of the sites

The working model of the study reflected in Chapter 2 forms the basis of the comparisons of the sites in question. The comparative assessment of the sites is influenced by the topographical landscape and the geographical setting in which the sites are situated. In this regard, the Caledon/Mohokare region is pivotal to the comparative assessment of the sites, because of the degree in which cultural practices seemingly function along similar ritual and customary lines. Although one cannot discount dissimilarities of cultural function at the sites, owing greatly to belief systems executed differently in terms of the needs of the site and the user community.

#### 4.1.1 Similarities and dissimilarities of the topography

A relative deduction in terms of the sites in the Eastern Free State is that they share the historical context of the Mohokare Valley. They are interconnected by the Sesotho language, which is predominantly spoken at all the sites of the Eastern Free State. The topography of the sites is seen in the mountainous terrain of the Maloti landscape, which denotes a large influence of the Lesotho Mountain Kingdom. The sacred natural sites of the Caledon Valley are equally affected by the skirmishes of *Difaqane*, which led to the loss of this arable land to the Boers. The impact of the *Difaqane* skirmishes disintegrated the communities of the Caledon/Mohokare who fled largely to Mautse Valley and other mountain areas of the Caledon.

The similarities of caves, compounds and dwellings at Mautse and Motouleng are visible enough for the execution of ritual and healing work. At Mautse the site, internal localities are spread across the mountain valley, with specific biblical or cultural names ascribed to a specific locale. At Motouleng, internal localities are found inside a cave, which is demarcated into two sections. In the first section of the cave are compounds in which traditional healers stay and work, in the other section of the cave there are thatched, largely unoccupied dwellings.

The Modderpoort site differs from the sites at Motouleng and Mautse, because it is structurally regulated, even though it represents indigenous cultures of the African people. This site has one cave that was converted into a Cave Church. This site is a combination of Christian tradition and indigenous traditional beliefs. Here there are no compounds or dwellings where people live. This site has a guesthouse and training facilities run by the Anglican Church;

however, the genesis of the site points to the fact that people had been staying on the site before the Anglican Church owned it.

The Oetsi cave has no dwellings and compounds. It is located on top of a mountain, with no internal localities like Mautse and Motouleng. Furthermore, it cannot be compared to Modderpoort with its structural context. The only comparison to be drawn from this cave is that it is central to the status of the site.

The sites in question have a close association with water sources that are deemed powerful. At Motouleng, the small Caledon River runs next to the cave and its waters are used by the traditional healers' rituals and healing of sicknesses. At Mautse, there are waterfalls and the spring of King Moshoeshoe, which healers and pilgrims deem to have ancestral power. At Modderpoort, there is the spring of Mantsopa, whose waters are used by traditional healers and pilgrims alike, while the spring water has been commercialised by the Anglican Church throughout parts of South Africa. At Oetsi, one passes by a waterfall when ascending the mountain to the cave. According to Mbiti (1991:152), "Rivers, lakes and waterfalls in many parts of Africa these are regarded with religious awe."

Water sources play a fundamental role in the African belief systems of indigenous people, in this regard, some people who are called by Ancestors to become traditional healers could be called to a river, pool or a lake to receiving training there. Bernard says (2001:33) "The spirit world is regarded as the ultimate source of such life sustaining source. Integral to such beliefs is various zoomorphic spirit manifestations, primarily the snake and the mermaid, who reside in or beyond the water and who interact with humans in a variety of ways".

Penny Bernard's research into water sources has indicated the profound attachment African people have for the spirit world under the water, as well as how trainee healers encounter water sources like snakes and mermaids to become qualified healers. Bernard further says (2001:34) "The Rivers, wetlands and the sea, are the dwelling places of such manifestations and are of fundamental importance to many of the African healing traditions and their practitioners (*e.g. amagqirha, izangoma*).

Finally, many rivers and pools contain water sources that are culturally important for the indigenous communities of Africa. Pools, rivers and expanses of water are held with a mixture of awe, fear and reverence. This is particularly important for communities of Mautse and Motouleng who revere water. The small Caledon at Motouleng is a sacred locality that is held



in high esteem by the host community and the people who are taken to the river for a number of significant services at the river.

#### **4.1.2 Comparison of the sites' impressions**

At Motouleng and Mautse, the constant movement of pilgrims are noticeable. This is evident during the Christian Holidays and national holidays of the country. Pilgrimage to these sites is undertaken for purposes of cultural and spiritual observance as well as immersing one- self into the cultures and customs of indigenous people. At Modderpoort or Mantsopa site pilgrimage is largely undertaken on the Cave Church Sunday and this is observed by the various Dioceses of the Anglican Church in the Country. At the Oetsi cave, the constant movement is absent. As a supplementary to the above assertion, pilgrimage may be defined as: “undertaken by individuals or groups, based on religious or spiritual inspiration, to a place that is regarded as more sacred or salutary than the environment of everyday life, to seek a transcendental encounter with a specific cult object, for the purposes of acquiring spiritual, emotional or physical healing or benefit” (Margry 2008:36).

At Motouleng and Mautse, one observes the structures erected by permanent dwellers. At Modderpoort, the permanent dwelling is restricted to the official houses and institutions of the Anglican priory. No pilgrims are permitted to stay. The same rules apply at Oetsi cave. Also noticeable at Motouleng and Mautse is the symbolism at dwelling sites and graffiti on rocks and cave overhangs. These portray modes of not only owning places symbolically, but they also show how beliefs, often inspired by biblical traditions, “take place” in a literal sense. At Modderpoort, these are less noticeable, for the Anglican Church occupies the space that is open at the other sites to pilgrims and permanent dwellers.

Further pertinent features of the main sites are the plethora of altars and candle lights. At Modderpoort, the cave church also has candles, but for purposes different from other sites. At Oetsi there is no altar or traces of regular candle burning. The various altars found at Motouleng and Mautse have been structured as to signal to the visitors and pilgrims that entry to the sites was based on the permission of the Ancestors, therefore the alters were a conduit by which one can encounter ancestral presence at the sites. This structural arrangement is a control measure that people cannot simply enter the sites without making due supplications to the ancestors.

One also observes different forms of tension at the sites between spiritual leaders, for at all stations there are people in charge on own claimed authority. At Motouleng, it involves, two

major figures, but at Mautse, the numbers are bigger. At Modderpoort, one is less aware of the indigenous user community, because the authority and management reside with the Anglican priory and no real contestation exists between leaders at the site. The tension is more apparent between the Church authority, other claims to the sites and the legacy of Mantsopa.

What one further observes at Motouleng and Mautse in particular is the apparent seamless co-functioning of indigenous belief systems and independent Christian beliefs. This is expressed in a collective ritual and prayer.

#### **4.1.3 Site-internal localities similarities/dissimilarities**

All the sites are of a complex nature, except for Oetsi. Sites have several sacred physical localities in them. The four at Modderpoort are mainly associated with the prophetess Mantsopa, and one with the San community. At Motouleng, there are nine physical localities and Mautse Valley has seventeen physical localities, at Mautse a spring is associated with King Moshoeshe<sup>1</sup>, as well as two localities are associated with the tribes of Bakwena and Bataung. Motouleng site was increasingly visited by independent Christian Church pilgrims. Prior to this point, the site was mainly associated with Maseeng, the fertility site. It is however, possible that the Lekgotla and Mokgorong had already been in practice before. This assertion is tested based on what the researcher was told by Ditaba Tsa Badimo about the pre-eminence of Mokgorong and Lekgotla.

There is a tendency towards increasing the sites, or at least increasing significant homesteads with special powers or designated by the Ancestors. At Mautse, an array of different sites exists, some with purely tribal connections, but the majority are related to ritual performances and an offering of diverse services and healing. Some of them have long-standing traditions such as at Moshoeshe Spring, Maseeng and Tempeleng. Others are from recent times such as Lower Madiboko.

#### **4.1.4 Comparisons of history, legend, myth and memo-history among the sites**

The history of Mautse site is influenced by the different tribes of the Basotho people. The Batlokwa Ba Sekonyela and Bakwena Ba Moshoeshe historically contested for the site in the 1900. This assertion is largely derived from oral transmissions by the informants, which plays a primary role in memo-historical recollection of events of the past. According to Cawood

(2010:8), “The nature of oral history is to challenge the conventional historical endeavour by using eye witness testimony of events for historical understanding and reconstruction”.

Historically Motouleng was a fertility site. It only housed sangomas, but after the 1960s, the site evolved and allowed faith healing to be practised at the cave. The history of Modderpoort is also not the same as that of Mautse, Motouleng and Oetsi, because it combines the work of the San people, the Bataung and the Anglican Church.

The myths surrounding Motouleng, Mautse, Modderpoort and Oetsi are not the same. At Motouleng, ancestors are believed to be travelling to Mautse to do ancestral work and then return to Motouleng. This belief is absent at Mautse, but ancestors are believed to be residing permanently in the mountain valley. At Mautse the narratives surrounding the main clay site, Nkokomohi are more extensive than those to be found attached to other localities. The myths/narratives of the other localities at Mautse do not add up to a single grand narrative of the site. At Motouleng, one encounters a preliminary phase towards a grand narrative of the site-at least with respect to the older section of the cave. In this regard, the role of the spiritual leader cannot be overlooked, for he has consistently broadened the scope of the narrative during the research period to accommodate competing versions, or to enhance the divine presence at the site.

At Modderpoort, any mention of ancestors relates specifically to prophetess Mantsopa. Although some aspects of the historical background of the prophetess Mantsopa is clouded with uncertainties and mixed legendary claims about her spiritual gifts, the memo-historical allusions to her extraordinary life story and power imbued this site. At no other site, such a pertinent narrative about a historical figure exists.

At Oetsi, the cave is believed to belong to Chief Oetsi of the Makhlokoe. The narrative here serves tribal intentions to denounce other competing versions of historical incidents here.

Ritual performance at Motouleng and Mautse follows the same pattern of execution before healing can be applied, depending on the intervention of the ancestors. At Modderpoort, members of the Church of Zion often harvest clay at the back of the cave and harvest the spring water to perform ritual work at their churches and homes. At Oetsi, no ritual or healing is conducted.

There are also differences in terms of the availability of shelter for clients. At Mautse, there is better “catering” for clients at compounds, e.g. Lower Madiboko, Tempeleng and Maseeng. At Maseeng in particular, there are “good” shelters for people seeking help here. The open structures at Motouleng have not the same comfort and privacy.

Although the sites cannot be compared in terms of the work they dispense, the exact performances differ as well as some of the services provided. People move from one site to another, looking for ancestral answers to their problems. In this regard, the art of divination at Mautse includes using divination bones, cultural diagnosis through a mirror, diagnosing through a glass of water, diagnosing through candles and the Bible. At Motouleng, the majority of traditional healers use ancestral bones for divination; however, the principal healer uses prayer and candles to help his patients.

It is to be noted that, although the historical origin of the sites are not well documented, except for Modderpoort, the memo-historical associations in general, forms a basis for extended myth-making and ingenious story elaboration. Consequently, almost all site internal localities accrued their own “history”. The stories/histories also add to an ongoing competition between sites for recognition and status.

#### **4.1.5 Status, legitimacy, importance of the sites**

Mautse, Motouleng and Modderpoort are significant sites in understanding how indigenous cultures work. Mautse and Motouleng are equally significant sites for pilgrimage; unlike Modderpoort, pilgrimage popularly happens on liturgical calendar dates of the Anglican Church. However, at Mautse and Motouleng, pilgrims regularly arrive in big numbers. In terms of touristic value, the Motouleng cave and Modderpoort enjoy greater significance. Organised tours are often geared towards these sites. At Oetsi, this is absent and in general, this site has not received mainstream interest as a touristic or pilgrimage destiny.

The status of the sites is legitimate, because of the following they have among the user communities. They are deemed as bastions of African culture and are therefore important sites to advance indigenous traditional beliefs practised among various African tribes. In general, one may conclude that the sites of Mautse and Motouleng have accrued more spiritual and cultural capital amongst indigenous as well as independent Christian Church groups.

The similarities between the statuses of the sites are that they each have a particular cultural and spiritual history. The sacred natural sites of the Eastern Free State, except for Oetsi, are acclaimed for their symbolic and spiritual value as living heritage, in this regard, the user communities feel they own the land not only in terms of shared historical affiliation but also in a wider sense as part of the cultural heritage of South Africa as whole.

#### **4.1.6 Similarities and dissimilarities of central figures at the sites**

A central figure at Mautse was the late Monica Magengenene, while at Motouleng the principal traditional healer is “Ditaba Tsa Badimo”. These figures are considered authorities at their respective sites. However, the dissimilarity of function between the two is that Monica used Christian liturgy, divination bones and candles to advance her work, whereas Ditaba Tsa Badimo uses prayer and candles. The researcher has never seen him using divination bones. At Modderpoort, the central figure in memory is the late prophetess Mantsopa, although the Anglican Church is in control of the site. At Oetsi Cave, the central figure is Chief Oetsi, but the present chief claims to be the custodian of the site.

#### **4.1.7 Similarities and dissimilarities of performance of rituals at the sites**

There are also similarities between Motouleng and Mautse regarding the announcement of prayer and recognition of ancestors. There are marked ritual procedures to accentuate the entrance into the holy ground. At Modderpoort, there are only remnants thereof at the Cave Church and the spring of Mantsopa. The pathways to Motouleng and Mautse reveal similar spiritual attitudes. At Monica’s compound visitors are often invited to extended ritual performances, whereas Joseph at Motouleng will resort only to prayer ritual at the Grand Altar.

The ritual of baptism at Mautse and Motouleng is done at a river. At Mautse it is done in a pool next to Tempeleng and at Motouleng, the small Caledon is used for this ritual. The ritual of baptism is absent at Modderpoort and Oetsi.

The rituals of healing at Mautse and Motouleng are central to the directives of the ancestors who prescribe what herbs must be used for healing. Although the physical localities at the sites work differently in the work of healing, the ritual of healing is not practised, at Modderpoort and Oetsi, although the Modderpoort people and pilgrims consider the grave and spring of Mantsopa to be healing locations.

The ritual of sacrifice normally includes sacrificing a cow, goat, sheep or chicken, which is normally observed at Mautse and Motouleng. At Modderpoort, no slaughtering is done and at Oetsi this ritual is absent.

#### **4.1.8 External and internal dynamics at the sites**

These dynamics are particularly rife at Mautse and Motouleng. The heritage agencies and government are involved in trying to control the two sites. Modderpoort is controlled by the Anglican Church although there are external factors involved in trying to exert some political influence. At Oetsi, tribal dynamics are rife in respect of entitlement and ownership of the cave.

Mautse and Motouleng are infiltrated by rogue elements that profane the sites in the name of culture; however, at Modderpoort and Oetsi no rogue elements infiltrate the sites to profane them.

Motouleng and Mautse are vulnerable to profanity, due to people who litter the grounds of the sites with filthy papers, used plastic bags, bottles of liquor and used cold drink cans. With regard to the pillaging at the sites, Hodgson claims, (2010:232) “Certainly there has been abuse of mission property over the years: sheep, goats and cockerels have been slaughtered on the cave altar, there has been theft from the farm, drunken behaviour, quantities of litter pile up all the year around, grass fires have been caused by candles left burning at the grave”.

In summary, three of the four sites mentioned above are inter-linked. The sites are all situated culturally, historically and ceremonially in the Eastern Free State, which is home of the Basotho people. The three sites that fit the above description are Mautse, Motouleng and Modderpoort. The fourth site, the Oetsi cave, does not fit into sacred function of the other three sites because of reasons pertaining to perpetual contestation for land in Monontsha Qwaqwa. Furthermore, Oetsi does not contain the sacred stations that define the sacrality of the site, whereas the other three sites contain sacred stations that define their cultural and religious work.

It is important to mention that Mautse Valley has been sold to a new owner, who apparently cleared the site of all traditional healers and done away with compounds that characterised some of the physical localities. The future of the valley as a site of pilgrimage for many people in South Africa and Lesotho has been curtailed by this current events at the former site. The inter-cultural relationships between the sites of the Mohokare are also curtailed, maybe to the detriment of indigenous traditional beliefs previously embraced.

#### 4.1.9 Commonalities of the sites

The terrain of the sacred sites reflects a complex layout of the sacred indigenous landscape in Eastern Free State. The sacred geography of the sites explains a common link between the sites, even though they are apart from one another. These sites represent features of indigenous belief systems and religious traditions. At the three sites, a combination of multiple religions with culture is performed; thus, the service dispensed to the communities does not lack the cultural and religious needs they espouse.

These sacred sites of the Eastern Free State are not only significant for culture and religion; they are also significant for indigenous cosmology. They are the locus for crucial daily social interactions as well as the ceremonial reproduction of indigenous cultural identities and social relationships. The sacred linkage between land and user communities is conceptualised as a cosmological ideal that forms a powerful relationship between the community and the Ancestors. The three sites at Mautse, Motouleng and Modderpoort represent the belief systems of the Basotho people who are predominantly the tribe at the sites.

The nature of cultural and religious function between the sites in question is different. This has been borne out of the fact that Mautse and Motouleng have a similar religious/cultural programme. Modderpoort is owned by the Anglican Church, which has the right to practise pure Christianity on the grounds of its property. However, the church exercises religious and cultural tolerance in allowing African independent churches to conduct services in their religious space.

There are commonalities of cultural and religious exercise between the sites in question. A common linkage of indigenous traditional beliefs is evident in all the sites. There are springs at all the three sites, which make them uniquely common in their functions. These springs serve a similar function of healing, cleansing of evil spirits and ritual performance. The springs are named after legendary persons who have carried out their vocations at these springs. The clay locations at the three sites serve a common purpose of healing. In this regard, the harvesting of clay is meant to solidify the process of healing; the various colours of clay at these sites are specifically prescribed for various ailments. The same route of observing certain rituals before harvesting the clay is a common cause at these three sites, although the biggest clay location is called Nkokomohi just outside the Mautse site. Even though Nkokomohi is big in size, the purpose of healing through clay remains a common denominator.

There is a strong belief at the three sites about the writing of scriptural verses on the walls of the sites, signalling that the religious element of the sites is an important dimension in executing the work of the sites. The belief in God at these sites clearly shows that culture is embroidered with religion in order to have a balance between the two. This is a syncretic view of the sites, where a combination of religion and indigenous beliefs makes sense. At Mautse, on entering the gate that goes into the sacred valley, there is a colourful array of flags belonging to independent churches. The compounds are draped with the colours of the indigenous denomination. This is a common scene at Mautse, in sharp contrast to Motouleng and Modderpoort, which do not have these flags and compounds of various independent churches.

The Mohokare Valley is surrounded by mountains. The sites are also located in mountainous terrain; however, they are an integral part of healing and restoring life to sick people through God and Ancestors. These sacred sites are not 'Lego Blocks' which happen to come together and market themselves as sacred sites; they are an integrated whole aiming at advancing the core values of traditional African belief systems. It is for these reasons that these sacred sites are independent on one another, with the common purpose of advancing healing and restoration.

The three sacred sites in the Eastern Free State in question are not products of marketing. They are not commodities sold to the public that derived a sacred definition because they are invented by the public. They are derived by virtue of ritual performance and rites acceptable to the Ancestors. The symbolic presence of the Ancestors at the sites is central to the work of the traditional healers who are understood to derive their authority from the Ancestors.

The Oetsi cave does not share a common understanding of cultural and religious function as seen at the other three sites. This cave lacks the characteristics of a religious site of pilgrimage. It cannot be equated in sacred status to the three major sacred sites of the Eastern Free State. The lack of visible sacred stations inside the cave makes it impossible to regard it as sacred; however, its links to the ancestry of the Makholokoe makes it culturally significant for this tribe. Furthermore, it is not listed as a heritage site, possibly for reasons pertaining to lack of sacred character. However, it is critically important to understand that the site is also situated within the Mohokare region, in the same way as Motouleng, Mautse and Modderpoort. It is a site that is embraced by the Makholokoe throughout South Africa. Even if the claims of the Makholokoe are not tested historically, the site remains the epicentre of the so-called historical claims of the Makholokoe.



## 4.2 Generalities about the construction of sacrality at the sites

The ascription of sacrality and the nature of sacrality of the sites are at the centre of determining a spot, place or space for performing various tasks assigned by the Ancestors. The selection of a spot in the majority of cases comes as a directive from the Ancestors who will give the spot a cultural or religious name, depending on the nature of work to be conducted there. Some of these spots have become famous for the work they render to the user communities. A case in hand is the sacred station Naledi. It was so named by the Ancestors to a woman who dreamt whilst sleeping during the day that the physical locality must be called Naledi (Venus)

The name Naledi would foreshadow the faith healing work it would render and the church services that would be held there. Ancestors have been instrumental in naming spots, whether faith healing or indigenous traditional practices and the people assigned to manage these spots abide by the directive of the Ancestors, although the naming of “Tempeleng”, as understood, was done by the elders of the locality. The Ancestors wanted the place to be called “Roman Catholic Church”. At Mautse, there are noticeable marks on the rocks of the site indicating that this is a location for a particular church group. Biblical verses written on the rocks of the site indicate that the spot assumes sacral status.

The process of claiming a local spot within the larger site of the Mautse Valley as a sacral locality is predetermined by the Ancestors who may direct performance of a ritual before cultural or spiritual work can be conducted. In this regard, I observe at Mautse Valley, that a particular rock is selected under the guidance of the ancestors, and then then a particular independent church would claim the site by physical symbols such as a biblical verse and the graffiti of the independent church or the status of the churches leader. Subsequent to the location of the spot, dwelling structures will be erected and often developed into a whole compound. The spot/locality is then demarcated not only as “belonging” to the specific church or group, but also as their sacred location at Mautse.

Ascription of sacrality to sites cascades to erecting dwelling places and living quarters at Motouleng and Mautse. These places assume residential status approved by the Ancestors and this further symbolises the presence of Ancestors at the sites as members of the site’s community. In this regard, some of the sites are sacred dreamscapes, meaning that dreams can be incubated until the ancestors makes the dream to be real, and the majority of people at these dwellings have received a dream from the Ancestors about erecting a dwelling place and

staying in it. A case in hand is Sam Radebe at Motouleng. He states that the sacred communal areas at the back of the cave were revealed to him in dreams by his Ancestors and that he had to clean the back of the cave in an effort to generate a sense of sacrality to the back of the cave.

Ditaba Tsa Badimo, the senior traditional healer at Motouleng, claims he has been assigned by the Ancestors to protect the site and in this way; the traditional healer justifies the sacrality of the sites and the observance of divine rules. This would further mean that sacrality of the place is determined by the Ancestors and the choice of person to protect this sacrality is arranged by them.

#### **4.2.1 Myths and narratives**

Myths and narratives are an important dimension for the on-going process of ascribing sacrality to localities and objects. At the sites, particularly Motouleng and Mautse, there are entrenched beliefs that the Ancestors travel between Motouleng and Mautse. These myths are intended to show that the sites are spiritually managed by the Ancestors; furthermore, this kind of myth is intended to communicate an explanation about something.

Ascription of sacrality to the sites through myth and narrative finds its meaning in the activities of the sites themselves. These activities have no written record of ideas and events; they simply emerge on the sacred spots of the sites. For instance, the perception that white clay could cure pimples has circulated from one site to another and from one generation to the next. Therefore, the myth surrounding white clay plays a leading role in the sacrality of the clay sites, both at Mautse and Motouleng. Colour symbolism of clay has played a significant role in the cultural work of clay, colours of clay are applied to various ailments and to events of cultural and customary importance like the 'rite of passage' in the traditions of Sesotho and Xhosa that relates to the completion of the period of circumcision

Concerning the above assertion on myths and narrative, sites are inhabited by objects considered sacred, like stones, plants, water and springs. These objects are central to the work of the sites and to the work of the physical localities. For instance, at Mautse, before a person can be diagnosed, he/she is placed at the spring so that its waters can begin a process of cleansing. After that, divination will be conducted and the Ancestors will give direction on how the person should be healed. Certain medicinal plants can be taken from the fields around the sites to administer healing directed by the Ancestors. Objects of the sites ascribe sacrality to the ritual and healing processes executed at the physical localities. The work of the physical

localities is described in the above-mentioned objects of the sites. However, these objects are not isolated entities at the sites; traditional leaders are chosen by the Ancestors to look after these objects and these leaders are “holy” in the sense that they have a special sanction from God and Ancestors. Their aura and their paraphernalia are holy and in a way that renders them authoritative to intercede for the numinous.

The Modderpoort/Mantsopa sacred natural sites’ sacrality is ascribed to it because of the commemorative activities observed on specific calendar dates of the Anglican Church. However, it is important to note that the San community had lived in the area long before the advent of the Monks at the site and they left a legacy of rock art on the site that signifies the importance of the area prior to it converting to Christianity. They had left a legacy of rock art, which means the sacrality of the area could have been determined well before it was taken over by Christians. The Oetsi area is regarded as having sacred status by the tribe owing allegiance to Chief Oetsi and the ascription of sacrality to the cave is generated by the belief that the mountain at Monontsha and the cave are of the Makhelokoe. Therefore, ascription of sacrality to the cave is determined by memo-history and a tribal cultural attachment to the site.

It is common knowledge at the sites that sacrality is determined from various points of views, primarily because there is a plethora of sacred locations. Some originate at the sites and some are constructed by the user communities on dates that commemorate significant cultural and religious activities.

With regard to the above assertion, ritual observance can be enacted on a particular spot at the site in order to accord the place sacred status. Certain regulations from the Old Testament literature about taking one’s shoes off before stepping on holy ground are prevalent at the sites. (Exodus 3:5).

God’s instruction to Moses to take off his shoes on that particular place resonates with Smiths’ (1987) significance of “emplacement” in the performance of ritual. In other words, that biblical place has assumed sacral status. Because the Hebrew people would always refer to that awesome experience as sacred, because God spoke to Moses at that “place”.

In this regard, Smith may be implying that rituals are practices that function to sacralise space by calling attention to difference (1987:103). In many cases ritual performance precede the assumption of sacrality. This may clearly be deduced from the physical localities at Motouleng and Mautse. At Mautse and Motouleng, the increased popularity of the sites for Independent

Christian Churches has caused ritual performances such as burnt offering, ritual bathing, baptism and faith healing at localities, which were soon viewed as charged with the power of God and the Ancestors. Tempeleng with its minimalist temple architecture is a good example in case.

In probing further Smith's idea (1987) that a form of reciprocity gradually develops, one must also admit that with time a particular site harbours a sacrality that is accepted by the user community, and directs the kind of ritual performance taking place there. Thus, not only the performance renders a site sacred, but a site also has a hierophantic character in the minds of the user community. In this regard, people now accept that Mokgorong at Motouleng is an extremely sacred locality where the Ancestors may be consulted, because they reside there and they are permitted to perform certain rituals only there. In a way, the object or locality acquires sacrality or a notion of holy ground without ritual. Spiritual leaders may therefore point out the different sacred locations and reasons why they are sacred to the user community. It is important to emphasise the fact that ritual locality is not entirely bound to the mere performance of a ritual but the choice of the space at the sacred sites of Motouleng and Mautse predetermines the choice of space. It is therefore obvious that the site internal localities abound and that they are not replaced by rituals at any other places in the vicinity. The aura of the sites attracts the attention to have a locality there to perform a ritual or to render a spiritual service. Although one cannot argue with J Z Smith that ritual has always to do with emplacement, the "emplacement" is often foreshadowed by memorial associations of sites like Motouleng and Mautse. (Smith, 187)

The majority of traditional healers at Motouleng and Mautse claim that their Ancestors instruct them to construct a church or a compound where people can find help and this can be detected by the various signs and names the churches and compounds are given. In terms of Sheldrake, (2001:7),

Place is space which has historical meanings, where some things have happened which are now remembered and which provide continuity and identity across generations.

However, Smith would counter this thinking by looking at the actual space as emerging arbitrarily, because rituals are eminently transportable, and not tied to any particular area. The position of ritual performance at sacred sites would always evoke memories of such ritual

activity. The understanding is that in this performance, the Ancestors are present and there is a due responsibility to go back to the space to evoke the sense of sacrality.

Ancillary to the assertion above is the conversion of a ritual or healing spot into a permanent sacred place for posterity. This creates a strong identity with the spot by the user communities inside and outside the site. Memory of the sacred space should always be ingrained in the mind of the user community. The Eliadean view of the sacred centre as a specific geographic place or locality, where the sacred manifested it in some historic moment in the past, clearly illustrates the view that sacrality could be determined by a cultural episode in the life of the sites community. (Eliade, 1959)

The user communities view the sites as ancestral homes, hence the various meanings attached to place and space within the sites. At Mautse and Motouleng, space is inhabited by the user community and this place bears the notion of a home at the sites. Sacrality is inevitably obtained from this inhabitation; there could be no piece of space unoccupied at the sites for reasons pertaining to the nature of cultural and religious vocations. This assertion is bolstered by Bachelard (1969:10), “For our house is our corner of the world. As often been said, it our first universe, a real cosmos in every sense of the word. But home is more than simply where we originate.”

Construction of sacredness is not an empty notion; it derives from a place occupied by people exercising their belief systems and the objects aligned to their beliefs create a notion of sacrality. The stones, alters, shrines and manmade compounds are hierophantic objects defining the degree of sacrality at the sites. For instance, the sites are neither sacred land nor ancestral lands occupied by people chosen by Ancestors to have religious and cultural oversight over the sites. In this regard, faith healing and indigenous practices of ritual performance on the place and space of the sites describes a method in which construction of sacredness is determined at the sites. Culture and religion are inseparably intertwined in the life of the sites because they render sacred service to the communities; therefore, it would be virtually impossible to construct sacrality without these two important elements.

According to Lefebvre in his book, *Production of Space* asserts that (1974) “if space is a product, our knowledge of it must be expected to reproduce and expound the process of production. The object of interest must be expected to shift from things in space to the actual production of space; but this formulation itself calls for much additional explanation”. The

production process propounded by Lefebvre in respect of space calls into question products located in space and this would ultimately supply clues on how to define sacrality in terms of Lefebvre's assertion. Shifting things in space, paves the way for a concrete production of space. In other words, producing space commences with an effort to convert the actual space into a productive space, in practical terms place and space at the sites are productive entities that brings about healing and wellness, productive space brings about sacrality.

There is a variety of phases to the construction models in respect of sacrality. The natural model is that the sites have been there as a natural reality and with the evolution of the sites becoming more majestic, the communities of the sites develop a sense of creating sacred spots aligned to the natural model. According to Eliade (1959:10), "The sacred always manifests itself as a reality of a wholly different order from natural realities."

The sacred sites of the Eastern Free State are embraced by the user communities, because they possess mystic elements that are inexplicable in terms of their energy and force. Therefore, constructing sacredness is premised on the religious and cultural beliefs of the user communities and archaic societies who are members of the sites. The natural status of the sites and their sacred locations illustrate how indigenous cosmologies influence the realm of sacrality within the sites and their geographical setting. Sacredness is a mystery and is influenced by human effort, which adds to what is assumed the work of the supernatural.

Ascription of sacrality to sites is closely intertwined with indigenous African beliefs, where ritual performances at the sites are the strong conduits of religious tradition and the preservation of culture and custom. There is no book religion. The conceptual aspects of belief are attached to places where ritual is performed. The Eastern Free State sites of Motouleng and Mautse, and probably Modderpoort as well, are closely knitted to the peoples of the Lesotho border region. Thus, their existence cannot be conceptualised detached from the cultural and spiritual bearing they have on those communities. The original functionality of the sites is obviously extended over time and transformed in such a way that only limited resemblances remain with its immemorial history.

The concept sacrality to sites finds another meaning within the aegis of a diversity of user communities claiming allegiance to these sites. They do so in a collective manner and according to an autochthonous ideology described by Coplan. According to this view, groups of people would consider the sites as part of their cultural legacy, based on the identification

with indigenous cultures as a whole and not necessarily on the grounds of a historical connection to the sites (Coplan, 2003).

The working model or categories that influence the sense of sacrality, ranging from the topography of the sites to the internal and external dynamics of the sites, constitute a comprehensive or broad approach to ascription of sacrality. The Independent Churches and the indigenous traditional practices fit into the sacred landscape, which to a large degree influences ascription to sacrality in various sites. Faith healing as an important component of sacrality at the sites, particularly Motouleng and Mautse, is related to the afore-mentioned influence; the signs of faith healing localities at the sites generate ascription to sacrality.

The categories mentioned in Chapter 2 constitute the sacredness of the sites. This would largely include the universal claim to the presence of the Ancestors throughout the sites; Ancestors are deemed permanent members of the sites spiritually. Their authority cannot be defied for fear of punishment; therefore, the Ancestors' role at the sites ascribes sacrality symbolically. The physical localities at the sites are generated through the conviction that they were called into being by the Ancestors.

The generation of sacrality at Modderpoort revolves around the prophetess Mantsopa, who did sterling prophetic work at Modderpoort. In her interaction with the monks at Modderpoort, it is clear that the monks were foreigners in the Free State; therefore, they could have learnt a lot from Mantsopa about African culture and customary issues. Ascription of sacrality to the Modderpoort site is premised on Mantsopa's influence and the Anglican Church. The Anglican Church's commemorative assembly on Rose Sunday adds to the collective stance of the church's observance of this Sunday as a sacred day and celebrating the life of the prophetess Mantsopa.

In conclusion, lived cultural and religious experiences of the user communities at the sites, particularly Mautse and Motouleng, have played a significant role in promoting sacrality at the sites. It is for this reason that the internal physical localities find their mandate of function from culture or religion, and this becomes an important factor in assigning sacrality to the site or physical localities.

## CHAPTER 5: THE SURVEY OUTCOMES AND FINDINGS

### 5.1 Conclusion

The Sacred Natural Sites of the Eastern Free State, Motouleng, Mautse, Modderpoort and Oetsi provided the researcher with the opportunity to formulate a ‘critical review’ or a critical analysis of their *modus operandi* with regard to their individual standing in the communities of the Caledon Region as well as their cultural and religious mandate.

The contexts of the sites are situated on privately owned lands whose owners are white people, with little knowledge about the critical role these sites play in the lives of indigenous people. The time lines of the research into the sites were done when Mautse was still the exclusive property of white farmers. It is now the property of a black man, who bought it from the original owner. The Motouleng Cave is also situated on an exclusively white farm. Modderpoort is situated on church land, while Oetsi is situated on tribal land.

The researcher cannot dispute the importance of the sacred natural sites because their mandate is specifically to address the cultural and spiritual needs of the communities of the South Africa, particularly communities that espouse African traditional beliefs and African traditional religion(s).

The researcher infers that there are contesting dynamics at the sites and strong competition amongst spiritual leaders to maintain the centre of power and authority at the sites. With this in mind, one may now look at the predominant cultural and spiritual significance of the different sites.

#### **Mautse Valley**

The Mautse Site is the biggest of the four sites researched in the Eastern Free State. However, there was lack of management and leadership on the part of farm owners who had exclusive ownership of the site. Furthermore, those people who have been put in charge of the sites were more interested in maintaining their positions instead of advancing measures for cleanliness and the sanctity of the site. This assertion is not limited to the management of the site, but the lack of proper management also reflects negatively on the traditional leadership of the valley,



which has become a bit chaotic with the increase of the number of site-internal localities with numerous claims to ancestral work.

There are stakes of traditional leaders who claim deep knowledge of the site and its physical localities and their methods of function in the site are popularised in order to attract initiates, visitors and pilgrims. This site does not have a common definition of its collective work from Nkokomohi to Tsullung to the east of the valley. This situation is precipitated by the individual powers of the physical localities operating as autonomous entities within one big space and place. One may conclude that the physical localities at Mautse have assumed multiple identities within the 'indigenous schema' of its mandate. These multiple identities are confusing and often in competition, because localities house independent churches that market themselves with flags of various colours alongside more local indigenous organised sites and practices. Contrary to the vocation of traditional healers who are represented by their garments that are knitted and embroidered with images of an elephant or a lion, church affiliates and mixed groups operate as both faith and traditional healing stations. The leadership of both these localities claim authority over their respective work. However, the overriding mandate of the site is one of assisting people who are in need of healing and acceptance by the Ancestors. Contestation for the power of ritual making and the power of healing is rife at the site and the choice of a physical locality by a patient or an initiate is dependent on the ancestor; however, often he or she is directly influenced by a traditional healer at the site or his/her accomplice. The general assumption is that, the traditional healers cannot choose patients or initiates who must be trained by them; appointing a person to become a traditional healer is the work of the Ancestors. Nevertheless, this belief is ingeniously circumvented.

Madiboko was a famous locality for its ancestral work because it was managed by the late Monica Magengenene who was a powerful traditional healer, but she was despised by other traditional healers who felt that their physical localities had more longstanding traditions than Madiboko.

The Mautse Valley as a site has accrued many features to signal to the visitor that it is holy ground. The number of altars at the entrance, as well as along the main path through the valley and at every inter-locality is erected to steer the visitor towards the spiritual significance of the site. At some of the internal sites, visitors are instructed to remove their shoes. The spiritual significance is further enhanced by the plethora of biblical citations on rocks and on the structures of localities. The "liturgical" environment of the site is further accentuated by the

minimalist copying of biblical temple architecture. Tempeleng is most impressive in this regard with its sanctuary pillars and “high place” for the supplicant.

The whole valley is a picture of the cultural activity of the Basotho people and memo-historical memory, emplacement of biblical reference; fantastic and simplistic spiritual arrangement; colourful decoration of localities for attraction; and creative narration to bolster status and acclaimed power.

Spatial tactics are highly visible at Mautse, from both inside and outside the valley. This unfortunate occurrence is brought about by lack of proper leadership and management. If the leadership of the site were invisible with specific reference to the owners of the land, rogue elements would advance their interests at the site to the detriment of the spiritual and social objectives of the site. Nel cites Low and Lawrence-Zuniga (2006:30) on spatial tactics (2014:142):

Spatial tactics are encountered when spaces are claimed in terms of the hegemony of the state or authoritative bodies. Spatial tactics obviously follow power-related strategies to maintain a vested interest or to enforce a particular view of or claim to the site. These tactics not only affect the use of the space, but also impact on the image of ownership.

These spatial tactics at Mautse are motivated by the absence of visible leadership on the part of landowners who are supposed to build protective regimes around the site from Nkokomohi to Tsullung. In a way the farmers just let go, which in fairness may relate to their fear of intervening in a highly explosive situation. Spatial tactics of possible responsible authorities are also cumbersome, for they have particular interests in the site, mainly for their touristic value, but not really to protect and manage the site for its intrinsic cultural and spiritual value. This precarious approach by the authorities, or mere lack of commitment has obviously played into the hands of internal site contestations and lack of management regimes, except for some control through the collection of entrance fees by the farm owners. The site’s possible value as a living heritage site and spiritual haven for many pilgrims has never been taken seriously.

These internal and external dynamics have proven to be detrimental to the intentions of Mautse Valley as a sacred site of note. The internal dynamics in this regard, range from gatekeepers who steal coin offerings placed at the entrance altar by visitors and pilgrims and the fierce

contestation between Lower Madiboko and Tempeleng for power of ritual and healing. These power dynamics have given way to the commercialising of the sites' intended work by discreet agents who are not necessarily compliant with the laws of the site.

These unfortunate occurrences at Mautse may have precipitated the change of ownership of the site recently. Decades of ancestral work carried out at Mautse have dissipated because the site had become a haven for unsavoury elements concealed within the site by the traditional leadership of the site as this could largely be blamed on the lack of vigilant leadership by the farm owners. What will happen to the physical localities of the valley? Will the historical consciousness of tribal allegiance to a number of localities lose historical meaning? What is the future of Mautse in terms of witnessing to the symbolic nature of ancestral presence at the valley? Are the compounds and the caves that were representative of ritual and healing events at a *cul de sac*? These questions form the backdrop of the critical review or critical analysis of the Mautse sacred site in its previous form and in its current form.

### **Motouleng Cave**

Motouleng remains one of the most impressive spiritual sites in the Eastern Free State and probably in the whole of South Africa. Its geographical and spiritual ambiance is an intense experience for all who visit the cave and, in particular, for those who have made it their permanent "residence".

This cave represents an existential space for the poor people of communities seeking to reconnect with the realities of their cultures. The interior structure of the cave reflects physical localities that are representative of the daily activities of culture and religious life in the townships. A case in hand is the graveyard in the cave, which, to my understanding, has been constructed to trace people in the outside communities who are missing and perceived to be dead. The traditional user communities of the site may have constructed the graveyard and created a narrative that it was the resting place of missing persons and the dead, who might be reconnected with ancestral power. However, the narrative has not been tested to prove its veracity. Nel states (2014:186), "The researcher's contention is that these mere physical material shapes have been the origin of a narrative that ancestors are buried there, for which there is no historical evidence." However, for this reason a site obtains its "history" and significance, which cannot be explained in rational terms.

In this regard, Nel cites Foucault's (1986:24) concept of heterotopias "where all other real sites that can be found within the culture are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted" to the permanent residents and pilgrims. The physical localities at Motouleng are real heterotopias that attract those who mainly poor communities who believe that they are fortunate to meet their ancestors at these locales and their lives can be changed for the better specifically regarding their spiritual and cultural expectations. For the majority of site users the spiritual drive to come to Motouleng for contact with the ancestors and healing in both physical and spiritual sense remains the predominant motivation. It also remains a significant feature of Motouleng for training and/or revitalisation of ancestor calling towards *kuthwasa*. It is therefore no surprise that an adjacent small cave is exclusively used for female initiation and healer training.

The entrance to the cave and the built stone wall and altar, as well as the rocks of prayers aligned along the path to the cave has a deliberate accentuation of holy ground. The crossing at the river close to the entrance slope to the cave with its large rocks for prayer and candle lighting adds to the sense of entering holy ground. It is in this instance the physical arrangements that accentuate holy ground and not per se the presence of a holy person.

We have seen that the front section of the cave has always been the recognised as a "sacred" section. The current demarcation of the cave into two sections has a negative overtone for visitors as well as for the ritual importance of the cave and spiritual significance in the Mohokare Valley. The two sections in one cave promote an image of a site in contestation for sacred space and power of ritual performance instructed by the ancestors. Apparently, 'Ntate Ditaba Tsa Badimo' claims to represent the true objectives of the site. However, the late Sam Radebe claimed to have received a message from the ancestors to clean the other section of the cave so that he can start ancestral work there. These positions are conflicting for those visiting the cave in anticipation of ritual performance and healing.

The claim that Motouleng was a stronger space in terms of ancestral work than Mautse cannot be proven. These claims are a recurring dynamics of power in the sites, whereas the core aim of the sites is to perform rituals and administer healing to the sick. Seemingly, there is no evidence that Sam Radebe was ever called by the ancestors to become a traditional healer. Nevertheless, this did not distract him from cleaning the inner section of the cave and deliberately fashioning a structural layout that symbolises a liturgical space with biblical

resemblances. Even after Sam has passed away, there is no clear evidence that the deeper part of the cave is recognised by traditional site users as part of the holy ground of Motouleng.

The mere gigantic scale of the Motouleng Cave as well as the proximity of sacred stations inside the cave imbues the pilgrim and occasional visitor with a bigger sense of awe. The gatherings of a diverse population of site visitors and the participation in prayer, ritual and music reverberate a feeling of spiritual and cultural connectedness and a symbolic belonging. The message of the pilgrims leaving the site and those staying behind is that of spiritual and cultural fulfilment, despite the negative issues surrounding the site, which includes increased pollution and commercialisation.

Finally, it should be stated that the density of cave dwellers and site visitors causes extreme pollution and environmental deterioration of the mountain slope and river. However, Motouleng seems to maintain an aura of awe that also “speaks” to the casual visitor of the cave. For the committed traditional site user, the site still constitutes a spiritual centre and to dwelling healers an *axis mundi* where the voices of the ancestors are more audible than in any other place.

### **Modderpoort Site**

This site is historically important in terms of its genesis as a site that inhabited indigenous tribes of Southern Africa, a San community. Subsequent to that, it possibly inhabited the Bataung people of Lesotho based on its Sesotho name “Lekgalong la Bo Tau”. The prominent citizen of this site, however, was the prophetess Mantsopa. Until she set foot there, it was only the Anglican missionary shelter cave. Only later, because of her prophetic exploits in the area, different localities were associated with her name, the spring, the cave and eventually her grave. However, the whole site is popularly referred to as the Mantsopa site because of the popularity of the prophetess.

Through its missionaries, the Anglican Church bought the Modderpoort farm around 1860 and took control of the site to date. In this regard, Christianity applied a *coup de grace* to capture the way of life of the Basotho people in the area. It is for this reason that Mantsopa was baptised and given a European name Anna at baptism. The idea to introduce Christianity was not draconian, because prior to this period French and Catholic missionaries had evangelised the Mohokare Region to introduce the Christian way of life to the communities of the area. The

only problem realised with these developments is that the Anglican Church established a church hegemony that would supersede all other traditions of living at Modderpoort to the detriment of the local cultures, rituals and customs.

Modderpoort is a site of pilgrimage for thousands of pilgrims in the country and outside, who come and pay their respects to Mantsopa. The church converges on the grounds of Modderpoort on special days to celebrate the life of Mantsopa, because the original cultures of the area have been interspersed with the Christian religion. This chain of events influences the power dynamics of both a religious and political nature. The Basotho people celebrate the legacy of Mantsopa by visiting the grave of the prophetess and to revive their cultural roots. The church has not met the people's deepest spiritual needs and one now finds that Anglican Church members also cherish Zionist affiliation.

The Rose Cave Sunday at Modderpoort in September of every year is used by the Anglican Church as a highlight to market the legend of Mantsopa and thereby promoting the idea that there was synergy between the Christian faith and African belief systems preached by the prophetess Mantsopa. Furthermore, this Sunday reconnects the significance of indigenous traditional beliefs to the pilgrims and visitors who observe this day.

Hodgson says (2010:228), "These people had no covenant of their own to them to leave. We need to rediscover pride in our past. An African theology has to be done by the black people themselves."

This assertion from Hodgson speaks to underlying factors of dismay and protest about the obliteration of African spirituality at Modderpoort by a foreign spirituality that has marketed the Cave Sunday as a rallying point to draw African people to Modderpoort and espouse Christianity. This would mean many pilgrims visit Modderpoort solely to reconnect with the original rituals and customs, particularly those of the Basotho people practised by the prophetess Mantsopa at Modderpoort. On Rose Cave Sunday, one may witness some tension between the Church congregants and indigenous pilgrims joining as well, for this may be their only opportunity to enter the cave freely.

Finally, the Christian faith in the Mohokare Region played a catalyst role that eventually sacrificed the land of the Basotho and paid the price of supplanting their ancestral heritage to obtain something they cannot call their heritage. Jonathan Z Smith states, "Christianity was a portable religion" that may be carried easily around the world (1987). This religion is so

powerful that it is transformative in its nature; it changes traditional beliefs of an area and enacts its own belief systems that people follow with zeal. Modderpoort was evangelised by missionaries and the church has succeeded at Modderpoort, but it has not succeeded in changing the mind-set of the people who still believes in the power and authority of their ancestors. It is therefore still a cause of disagreement regarding the property claims to the site as well as control of the sacred locations by the church.

## **Oetsi Cave**

The tribal contestation around this cave by the Makholokoe, Batlokoa and Bakoena has created an impasse concerning its true identity with a particular Basotho grouping in Qwaqwa. This tribal contestation has minimised its chances of becoming a sacred site of the same strength as the other sites of pilgrimage in the Eastern Free State. The claims by the descendants of Chief Oetsi that the cave belongs to the Makholokoe lacks veracity based on absent information attesting to this.

This cave is the ancestral home of the Makholokoe because of the belief that Chief Oetsi perished there; however, it is difficult to attribute sacrality to this cave owing especially to legitimate ownership of the cave. The lack of physical localities within this cave makes it difficult for the researcher to point out any pointers to heritage space that profile this cave as representing the indigenous beliefs of the Basotho groupings in Qwaqwa.

The question that must be asked is: How did the Difaqane War affect the cave or the tribes connected to the cave? Oetsi Cave is part of the Caledon region and the dispersal of the Basotho people into the mountain terrain of the Eastern Free State during the Difaqane could have influenced the communities staying at Monontsha, a village next to the cave. Is the cave socially significant for the people of Qwaqwa? The answer is negative. In view of the fact that the space of the cave is only meant to deal with tribal allegiance to the late Chief Oetsi, there is no reference to historical events taking place in Monontsha that would illustrate a socio-historical witness of the area of the struggles of the people against colonial and white repression at the time.

The huge rocks found inside the cave do not illustrate any hierophantic objects as eloquently expressed by Eliade (1959). These are just piles of rocks found at any mountain terrain. The fading rock art on the walls of the cave explains the presence of the San community in the

1800s. One may think that is the significance of this cave, but one can also not ignore the power of memo- historical narrative associated with caves.

The Oetsi Site does not have the attraction other sites enjoy in the Mohokare Valley. The contestation of the site by different local tribal groups; however, signals a particular need for local groups to have entitlement of a specific locality that has historical relevance or has accrued memo-historical association. The contestation raises awareness of the importance of the site and in the near future this may become a site of greater visibility for visiting. We have seen that the stronghold of Moshoeshoe has become an increasing popular destination for pilgrimage in Lesotho. In a similar fashion, adjacent groups may also promote localities with strong tribal associations as destinations that exceed the narrow tribal connection. Such actions obviously are fuelled by commercial expectations.

## 5.2 Critical analysis of scholarly views of sacred space and the ascription of sacrality

I have set out in the aims of this study that part and parcel of the research project is to engage with scholarly views about sacred spaces and to relate the outcomes of our investigation to these views. The theoretical views advanced by scholars about space, place and sacrality differ and often relate to theoretical or ideological assumptions. These views are consequently advanced in terms of scholarly expertise in a particular academic field of practice. This section will offer a critical assessment of these views as captured in the opening chapter of the dissertation in view of my research findings.

### **Mircea Eliade**

Eliade may have been the most popular and influential contemporary historian of religion, who formulated concepts like the *ganz andere*, *hierophany* and *axis mundi*. Eliade states in his book *The Sacred and the Profane* (1959:11) “Man becomes aware of the sacred because it manifests itself, shows itself, as something wholly different from the profane. To designate the act of manifestation of the sacred, we have proposed the term hierophany.” Eliade’s assertion of referring specifically to the senses of man in differentiating between the sacred and the profane is partially correct, but one would not say in all circumstances of life that this is sacred or profane. The manifestation of the sacred cannot be categorised as though it supersedes the profane. My view is that one has a choice to make when making a distinction between the



sacred and profane. The sacred and profane are dual emblems that deal with the social and religious aspect of man. Therefore, I think Eliade would have said it is important for man to distinguish carefully between what is sacred and what is profane.

Eliade employs the term “hierophany” which is the manifestation of the sacred. The word is a derivative of the Greek adjective *hieros* (Greek=sacred/holy) and the verb *phanein* (to reveal/to bring to light). The question in this regard is, how does an object, be it a stone or a tree, become hierophantic? Which process would be followed to determine whether this object is now a hierophany? I agree that the term *hierophany* is important, but its application is difficult to execute, particularly when trying to sift profaned objects from sacred objects. Eliade has failed to afford the reader an opportunity to understand how the sacred is generated from the profane. In most cases at the sacred sites researched, the traditional healer is the one who ascribes sacredness to an object. This means the traditional healer is the hierophant, the one who declares a hierophany.

Eliade further claims (1959:12), “The sacred tree, the sacred stone are not adored as stone or tree; they are worshipped precisely because they are hierophanies, because they show something that is no longer a stone or tree but the sacred, the *ganz andere*.”

I disagree with Eliade with regard to the claim that a stone or a tree can change and become a hierophany. It is not as simplistic as he points out. For the researcher they remain characteristically a stone and a tree, and it would be difficult to point to a change in character of these objects. The sacrificial stone at Motouleng called ‘Tafole ya Lehodimo’ (Table of Heaven) is a stone used for slaughtering sacrificial animals, and one may be tempted to view it as a *ganz andere*, a stone set aside for ancestral work, but it cannot be given status different from its natural appearance. Eliade does not address the natural status of the stone. All he does is drawing his readership to the hierophantic status of the objects. However, Smith may emphasise the significance of ritual act prior the hierophantic qualification. Eliade accepts the intrinsic quality of the object to be sacred, but ignores the process in terms of which the object accrued assumed sacred status.

Eliade, in dealing with the polarity of the “sacred and profane” (1959:13), makes a distinction between the modern man and the archaic man. He says the modern man represents the profane world and the archaic man represents the sacred world. He states, “The behaviour of the modern man has desacralized his world and assumed a profane existence.”

I do not agree with Eliade. This polarity does not address the religious and social contexts in which human beings find themselves. By nature, people would pillage the environment but it does not mean they are not sacred. For instance, in a church setting, certain congregants may attend a church service tainted with profanity. These may be the worst sinners who seek redemption in the so-called sacred space.

Specifically Eliade's contribution that the theory 'sacred' is a structure of human consciousness is not clear in practical terms as well as in symbolic term. Symbolism plays a vital role with regard to the establishment of the sacred at the sites of pilgrimage; if this contribution lacks the practical and symbolic application, Eliade's theory of the sacred cannot be empirically provable. The category of the sacred can only be established through the practical involvement of the user community.

Eliade claims that, whereas for non-religious man or modern man the spatial aspect of the world is experienced as uniformly neutral, for religious man it is experienced as non-homogenous, partly sacred and partly not so. In particular, religious man experiences the world as being sacred and seeks to live there. It is difficult to assume a distinction between the religious man and the non-religious man and equate this to the sacred and the profane: the religious=sacred and the non-religious=profane. This kind of equation is not realistically pragmatic in a real world where non-religious people are upright and ethical and where religious people are skewed in their application of religious demands.

Eliade qualifies his claim that modern man and non-religious man's experience of the spatial is dependent on personal associations, his place of birth and the context in which religious expression is communal. He claims that this sort of experience is to be regarded as degraded religious experience. Personal associations, the place of birth and the communal context cannot make one religious. Religion is often a private matter that has nothing to do with friends or associates. Furthermore, modern man is not always irreligious, the context in which one practises religion cannot determine the social and religious stratification of the place; the matter is personal.

Eliade discusses sacred places. An obvious example is the church, whose door is a threshold between the profane on the outside and the sacred on the inside. An equivalent to the church in archaic cultures was the sacred enclosure, which opened upwards towards the sky, the world of the gods. Sacred places were revealed to religious man by means of signs of various sorts,

recognised as coming from the divine. Eliade assumes that an assembly of people converging in church comprises the sacred and people converging outside the door of the church as the profane. When the religious service is complete, the sacred meets non-religious man outside the sacred. This theory will promote disharmony in societies where people attend church and others do not. On the other hand, it is possible that there are profaned elements in a setting that is sacred, but there are extreme shortcomings that are visible in Eliade's concept of the sacred and profane.

Finally, Eliade's association of hierophanies with the sacred sites is appreciated; however, one has to be cautious about ascribing the sacred nature of a physical locality solely in relation to hierophanies. In this regard, hierophanies cannot be a determining factor to arrive at the category of the sacred in the fieldwork, although some data obtained at Mautse and Motouleng indicate the importance of hierophanies. The visions and dreams by traditional healers who are commissioned by ancestors to do ancestral work at a specific spot in a site may be enacting the spot as a hierophany. It is for this reason that the late Monica and Ditaba Tsa Badimo had clear visions and guidance from the ancestors, but also "real" encounters with the ancestors at their various sites and in terms of what their missions should entail at the sites.

Although one cannot claim sacrality solely on the grounds of Eliade's view, one is however struck by evidence from some narratives at Motouleng that reveals close ideas of *axis mundi*. The user communities at Motouleng claim that the site is the most powerful congregation of the ancestors, not only of black people, but also of white people. Inside the cave, the presence of ancestors reverberates from the cave floor. Motouleng is by far the most powerful place for ancestral connection.

### **Jonathan Z Smith**

Smiths' theory of place and ritual is fundamentally important for the understanding of "ritual emplacement". Smith says in his book *To Take Place* (1987:103), "Ritual is, first and foremost, a mode of paying attention." Smith goes on to explain the role of place as a fundamental component of ritual, place directs attention. (1987:103). Smiths' theory is confined to a temple setting which he refers to as a 'marked-off space'. Ritual for Smith cannot be equated with anything other than it being a conduit towards sacrality. The reformers in a temple service did not ascribe significance to ritual. Here Smith disagrees with them by proclaiming pre-eminence of ritual in a temple setting. In other words, the temple is a place that directs attention and ritual

comes out of the liturgical space in temple. The temple itself as a marked-off space proclaims the centrality of ritual as a mode of paying attention.

I agree with Smith regarding to the role of the temple as a marked-off place. The physical localities at Mautse, Motouleng and Modderpoort are marked-off spaces of ritual making and performance. For instance, at Mautse Valley, a physical locality named Lower Madiboko was a marked-off space.

Smith says (1987:104), “A ritual object or action becomes sacred by having attention focused on it in a highly marked way. From such a point of view, there is nothing that is inherently sacred or profane.” I partially agree with Smiths’ assertion; however, it is not always a ritual object that generates sacredness, in a majority of protestant churches a ritual is not determinative for applying sacrality, although liturgical space is revered. Often at the sites, when a ritual action takes place, that space can only be declared sacred by virtue of it being the ‘place for ritual action’. Ritual enactment is a conduit to sacrality, the ritual spot according to Smith is a “marked off space” that signals the significance of the space even after the expression of ritual.

Smith says (1987:105), “Ritual is not an expression of or a response to “the Sacred”; rather, something or someone is made sacred by ritual (the primary sense of *sacrificium*).” In the data section of my thesis (page 209) I said, “In other words, sacred space is not absolute and given, but its sacrality is created through a ritual, which is to say, marked by difference.” This view may explicate the centrality of emplacement ritual as the main vehicle to ascribe sacrality, the main cause of a sacred locality. Smith has limited this view to the space/temple and the ritual. In respect of the sites researched, space, place and ritual are fundamentally central to determining sacrality these aspects are treated equally, even though a locality is a marked-off space. Maseeng is a marked-off place because it is a fertility station, the rituals carried out to cure infertility gives impetus to the place and a combination of these aspects generates sacrality. If the genesis of a sacred site is taken out of the picture and the focus is directed entirely to the particular site in its experiential context, it is difficult to accept that the place has no “sacred” nature and is merely considered sacred by virtue of conferred sacrality. It is a matter of choice from which angle one asserts the space as sacred. If one focuses on the modes in terms of which it has accrued a “sacred” status, Smith is correct in his assumption. However, if one looks through the eye of the pilgrim to any of the sacred sites in the eastern Free State, then one in

inclined to share the pilgrim's view that the site as such is set apart as holy ground and intrinsically accepts the sacred quality without questioning.

Place and ritual are fundamentally central to proclaiming sacrality; therefore, one has to assume that the ancestors are symbolically responsible for the choice of place where the ritual shall take place, however it is not always the case that ritual is determinative of sacrality. The triad of place, ritual and ancestors is intrinsically linked to the overall wellbeing of the sites; a singular approach to understanding how the sites arrive at sacrality is problematic. Many people come to the sites and choose a spot where they can perform a ritual immediately after this act they go back home, this does not mean they have left the place with sacred status.

The emplacement of ritual on its own deals with the instruction of ancestors to the traditional leader enacting the ritual and the ritual enactment may be of an ephemeral nature to which sacral status may not be obtained permanently. This theory of Smith does not address the nature of fieldwork and its implications in the different rituals performed, it only looks at the emplacement of ritual as core to the work of the sites or the work of the churches where liturgical and sacramental rituals are performed in a space marked as different to other spaces.

In as much as Smith vehemently opposes Eliade in applying religion as a determining factor for sacrality, one is inclined to think that the theory of ritual emplacement would be tantamount to religious acts perceived to invoke the presence of God whereas, on the contrary, the presence of God cannot be invoked religiously, nor can sacrality be realised in a context of ritual making. In this regard, I am inclined to refer to Grimes who rightly points to the theory of action in determining sacrality regardless of the importance of place and space. In terms of Van Beek (2014: 66), "This is a sacred place where nothing is done, no ritual, and no narrative, a 'place of power'."

This assertion strengthens the view that a ritual action has a profound influence in determining sacrality; in other words, sacrality may happen without the aid of any ritual. However, Molendijk (2010:89) states, "The sacred has to be demarcated, set apart in a special way, usually by some form of ritualisation." Molendijk seems to be concurring with Smith about the importance of ritual in basing sacrality. Shrines are sacred by appearance. I do not think it is wise at a particular spot to construct sacrality through ritualisation. Altars are equally sacred; their construction was done without any act of ritual.

## **Ronald Grimes**

Grimes advocates the importance of action in space for the determination of sacrality (1999:261). He believes that actions, objects and times are determinative for ascribing sacrality. In other words, space must not be marked for ritual enactment, work done in that space gives way to sacredness. I agree with Grimes concerning his theory because he is affording the reader with building blocks towards the attainment of sacrality in relation to the primacy of place or his emphasis that ‘action’ is central in determining sacrality.

On page 212 of my thesis in the data section, I state that Grimes is advancing a position in place and space that must not occlude the “where” of the ritual place in action. I partially agree with Grimes. However, my experience is that at the sites researched ritual action is often regulated, in other words ritual performance cannot be conducted anywhere in the field certain spots must be designated for ritual performance, of course this incorporates action.

Grimes theory dispels the notion that an arrangement could be made through ritualisation in order to obtain sacrality, the theory could be challenged, because in field research at the sites of the Eastern Free State ‘place’ is important, as well as space, coupled with the performance of ritual are vehicles by which sacrality is obtained. How does a ritual theorist privilege action in order to obtain sacrality? Grimes is a ritual theorist who in my view thinks that a structural approach to obtaining sacrality is not a pre-requisite. Structural approach would commence with the physical place and the performance of ritual and then the attainment of sacrality. All of these elements are included in the action propounded by Grimes.

Grimes fortifies his concept of the primacy of “action” in determining sacrality by stating (2013:64) that space is empty; it is then given shape and life and so it becomes a ritual place. My understanding is that when space is identified for ritual making, the life of the ritual gives birth to a sacred space. Grimes advances a solid case for seeing space as ultimately becoming a ritual place, and this would fundamentally lead to sacrality.

## **Victor Turner**

Turner’s theory of ‘Liminality and Communitas’ is written from a context quite different from the sites of pilgrimage of the Eastern Free State. Turner’s position is that pilgrimages are regularised, but the pilgrimages to the sites are not regularised and of a collective community nature, but are commonly non-regularised and of an individual and informal nature. Turner

links *communitas* to an inclusive pilgrimage journey of people who converge around a ritual spot that binds them to the inclusive nature of this pilgrimage. I agree with Nthoi (2006) that the kind of pilgrimage Turner assumes for his thesis cannot be extrapolated to those witnessed at the Eastern Free State sites. The larger community is of lesser significance and usually absent.

The nature of Turner's theory is negatively premised on the misconception that a pilgrimage journey to a site dispels the notion of exclusivity to a notion of inclusivity, from particularism to universalism and egalitarianism. Perhaps Turner writes from a context where people do not meet to uphold religious tenets regularly or practise rituals as a community but they elect to uphold religious tenets as a community when they undertake a pilgrimage, and this corroborates the concept of *communitas*.

There are shortcomings in Turner's theory of the pilgrimage that makes me disagree with him. His theory in its structural form advances the liminal stage of ritual and members of the community in their inclusive nature converge on a ritual spot to observe a ritual being performed, these members divest of their identity and time. Turner's idea is one of intertwining the individual with the collective in regard to pilgrimage. However his theory may promote shortcomings of attaining the intended objective of a *communitas* objective. The theory cannot be functional in a context where pilgrimage is not designed to concentrate on participants' titles and standing in society.

A shortcoming in Turner's theory of Liminality and *communitas* is that community determines the nature of pilgrimage. Individual pilgrimage is not allowed because that will compromise the community dynamic that fortifies the inclusive nature of the pilgrimage. The pilgrimages to the sites of the Eastern Free State are often undertaken by individuals or groups of 10 to 20 people who are driven to the sites by their cultural and spiritual needs.

One cannot help but to think of Turner's concepts of liminality and *communitas* when one witnesses the groups of pilgrims to the sites, often from the poor communities and with great sacrifice and financial burden to make the journey. The hardship of the journey is often overshadowed by the joint spiritual celebration and company at the sites. To displaced communities confined to informal settlements at the outskirts of towns and cities, the sites offer a safe haven of spiritual belonging and cultural affiliation. Although it is not in the proper sense comparable to the more formal and communal base of Turner's theory, the idea of liminoid

cannot be discarded altogether. The sacred is embedded in deep-rooted feelings and associations at the sites in partnership with many co-pilgrims, whether coming as an individual or as an organised group.

What one can, however, appreciate about the theory of Turner is his emphasis on “communitas” as final destination. Although communitas cannot be site-to-site transferred onto the pilgrimage at sacred sites in the Free State, one witnesses at the sites that the user communities are joining in celebration and shared feelings of belonging. Therefore, in a way there are spurs of “communitas” at the sites, although the pilgrimages are not organised in collective community modes. The sacred is also not exclusively linked to the place as final destination of pilgrimage.

## **Sheldrake**

Sheldrake’s theory is more abstract than practical. His theory of place or concept has limitations in determining sacrality in the fieldwork. Sheldrake’s theory is detached from ritual performance as a conduit to the notion of sacrality. (2001:7) Sheldrake, says, “Spaces receive their being from locations and not from place.” I do not agree with Sheldrake, because spaces give birth to places; hence, the infrastructure in the world has been constructed from space. However, for Sheldrake, geographical location infuses a sense of dialectical relationship between the environment and human narrative. In this regard, Sheldrake does not explain what the human narrative entails with respect to the sense of place. One would imagine that the human narrative might refer to memo-history, myths, stories and legends of the place that are propounded. In attempting to explain the human narrative, Sheldrake seems to engage a theoretical exposition of the “sense of place” as brought about by “human narrative”.

However, Sheldrake emphasises that geographical space often has immense spiritual or cultural associations. Spaces may therefore have “sacred” associations, which may even surpass the physical dimension. In the case of the sacred sites of the Mohokare Valley, they reflect a historical and spiritual association. The sacred sites are therefore concentration points where these memories and associations find concrete expression. The sites are therefore sacred to the user communities, particularly for those forcefully removed and are longing for reconnection and a sense of belonging.

The notions of space and place in Sheldrake’s theory by their abstract nature are far from being realistic with regard to space and place to the terrain of the sites researched. His argument that



spaces receive their being from locations and not from place is compelling. Locations have been built out of space. Before the locations were built there was an empty space. This space has been filled with houses that make up the location. The abstract nature of Sheldrake's theory borrows from Lefebvre's concept of the geometrical space, which was empty before it became a social space.

Finally, Sheldrake's notions of space and place could be supported by a number of scholars who differentiated between geography of place and the performance of the ritual in that geographical space, in this regard, he minimises the significance of geography and elevates the ritual act in that space. For me both geographical space and ritual space must complement each other so that the objective of the intended act can be obtained.

## **Henri Lefebvre**

Lefebvre writes about production of space and he enlists three spaces that would potentially deviate from the traditional mathematical ascriptions to space. The three spaces are: 1) Perceived space; 2) Conceived space; and 3) Lived space. Lefebvre classifies these spaces according to certain ranks in society.

It seems that Lefebvre deals with a three-dimensional triangle of space, which is constantly in motion to produce place and situation. To some extent, this space would resemble a township or a location. Production of space may be aligned to a process of dreams and visions of how future space should look like, maybe at sacred natural sites. By this assertion, Lefebvre refers to it as spaces of representation, which has much to do with religion and sacred perceptions, and which speaks to the indigenous activities at the sacred natural sites of the Eastern Free State.

The production of space as Lefebvre describes in his triad becomes a practical living experience in that people in that space start to generate, use and perceive this space and project their ideals, ideas and vision on their new environment. The neighbourhood adapts and changes according to their wishes, demands, and ideas (Schippers 2014:108).

These three classifications of space by Lefebvre have shortcomings in relation to how space is produced by the indigenous communities of the Eastern Free State and how compounds and caves are constructed in these areas. The spaces where the physical localities are located are a symbolic design of the ancestors; empty spaces of the sites are filled at times to observe a ritual

act directed by the ancestors. However, I do consent to Lefebvre's contention that a perceived space or conceived space may be a representational dimension of producing activity in the empty space. This does not contradict production of spaces at the sacred sites. The spaces of the sites researched in the Eastern Free State are not devoid of the action of production. In this regard, spaces are produced, even if spaces in the researched areas are symbolically produced by ancestors and even if our sense of a mountain or cave is produced.

Concerning Lefebvre, sacrality is determined by the triad reflected above, and it can only be obtained when the triad is social by nature and influences the lived experiences of the user communities of the sacred sites in question.

One cannot help thinking that the sacred sites of the Eastern Free State are magnificently constructed spaces in Lefebvre sense of the word, where the geography is transformed into cultural and religious landscape in which the physical is entirely immersed in the cultural and spiritual. That does not imply that the space loses its significance for ritual they remain focal nodes to pay attention to the commission of the ancestors. The order is hard to determine: in some instances, the locality attracts ritual and in other instances the performing of ritual plays a determining role in the demarcation of a site to become "sacred". In more than one way one should endure the uneasiness of no conclusive answer to the question whether space or ritual performance should receive priority regarding the status of the sites in their actual relevance to the user communities. One will also have to deal with the ambivalence between scholar explanation of origin and user community perceptions of the sites as real living heritage sites of culture and religion in which the question of origin plays an insignificant role. Memo-historical narrative serves purposes of status and important ancestor presence at a particular site and is not a factual account for a site's sacrality.

The assumption of the sacrality of the sites is also intertwined with a landscape of belief and culture and is not restricted to an engagement with the numinous. In other words it is not a presence of the sacred that only attracts people to the sites. It is a multi-layered landscape informed by shared memory, but also a landscape innovatively enriched by ongoing myth-making and ritual performance recreation.

In conclusion, one may argue that the analysis pertaining to sacrality advanced as critical analysis should be valued in terms of context and not used in an absolute, deductive manner to determine sacrality of the sites. The complexity of the sacred natural sites of the Eastern Free

State, has forced one to accept the relevant value of different theoretical positions depending on the specific line of questioning and the context. The sacrality of the sites acquired stable over-tones of fixed meaning, but simultaneously remains embedded in on-going processes of sacralising.

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## ADDENDUMS

### ADDENDUM: A-J INTERVIEWS AT MAUTSE

#### *A. Interview on Nkokomohi with Monica Magengenene: September 2008*

**Q) Nkgono Monica ke lebohela monyetla wa ho lo bua le wena hape (Mother Monica, thank you for affording me an opportunity to speak to you again).**

**A) Kea leboha John, o batlang kajeko (Thank you, John; what do you want to know today)?**

**Q) Nkgono Monica Kajeko ke ne ke kopa hoba le puisano le wena ka sebaka se bitswang Tempeleng (Mother Monica, today I request to interview you about a place called Tempeleng).**

**A) Ho lokile o ka tswella pele wa botsa dipotso (It is fine, you can interview me).**

**Q) Nkgono ke ne kopa o hlalose Tempeleng bakeng sa tulo ena (Mother, could you explain the concept *Tempeleng* in regard to this place)?**

**A) Sethatong ke rata ho hlalosa lebitso lena Tempeleng sebakeng sena sa Mautse (At the outset, let me explain the word *Tempeleng* in the context of the entire valley of Mautse),**

**Q) Hlalosa Nkgono (Explain, my mother)?**

**A) Tempeleng ke lentswe la puo ya Sesotho le Setswana le tolokaneng lentswe la sengesemane Temple (Tempeleng is a Sesotho and Setswana word taken from the English *temple*).**

**Q) Sebaka se se bopehile jwaloka Tempele (Are the features of this location like a temple)?**

**A) Sebaka sena sebopeho sa sona se ya makatsa, hona le dialetare tse pedi tse ahuweng mono, enngwe letsohong le letona enngwe letsohong la molema, mahareng ke ditepese tse entsweng ka majwe tse nyolohelang qoweng ya Tempele e bitswang sefala se halalelang, tlase Tempeleng hona le Letsha moo ho kolobetswang teng (This place is extremely mystical. At the base of this place there are two altars built, the one on the left, the other on the right, and there are stairs made out of stone to reach the pinnacle of the temple, which is called the pulpit).**

**Q) O amana jwang le Tempeleng (What is your relationship with Tempeleng)?**

**A) Ha ke fihla ka thabeng (Mautse) ke fihletse Tempeleng ke hlaha Tembisa Gauteng ha ke nepe selemo hantle (I arrived at Tempeleng from Tembisa in the Gauteng Province; I cannot recall the exact year).**

**Q) Tembisa ke hae (Is Tembisa your home)?**



A) Tjee, ke ne ke ile Tembisa ka mosebetsi wa Badimo, ke ne le ngaka ya setso monono ho fihlela Badimo baka ba ntaela hore keye Mautse sebakeng se bitswang Tempeleng (No, I went to Tembisa to carry out the work of the Ancestors, until at a certain time when my Ancestors instructed me to leave Tembisa for Mautse and go to a place called Tempeleng).

**Q) Hantle mosebetsi wa Tempele ke ofe (What is precisely the work of Tempeleng)?**

A) Mosebetsi wa Tempeleng, ke ho laola ka ditaola, ho laola ka moya, ho phekola le ho fodisa ba kulang (The main work of the temple is to do divination through ancestral bones and invoke the spirit in the divination and to heal those who are sick).

**Q) Sebaka sena se ikgethile ha ho tliwa tshebetsong ya mofuta ona (The sacred work carried out here has a huge success rate)?**

A) Se ikgethile haholo, se ya halalela (This is a hugely sacred place).

### *B. Second Interview with Ntate Mokaleli at Tempeleng: October 2008*

**Q) Ntate Mokaleli, hobaneng sebaka sena se bitswa Tempeleng (Father Mokaleli, why is this place called Tempeleng)?**

A) Sebaka sena se bitswa Tempeleng hobane, dilemong tsane tsa bo 1970, Lengoloi le ile la hlahela Baporofeta Ba Thaba ena ka pono ya mohlolo, hore sebaka sena se bitswe Kereke Ya Khatoliki, mme Baporofeta Ba thaba ena ba toloka molaetsa ona e le hore sebaka sena se tshwanetse ho bitswa Tempeleng (This place is called Tempeleng, because some time in the 1970s, an angel appeared to the prophets of the sacred valley and told them that the place should be called the Roman Catholic Church, but the prophets interpreted the angel's message as saying the place should be called Tempeleng).

**Q) Ha Lengoloi le re sebaka sena se bitswe Kereke ya Khatoliki, empa Baporofeta ba se bitsa Tempeleng, ha o nahane hore Baporofeta ba entse phoso ka ho reya sebaka sena Tempeleng (When the prophet declares the place the Roman Catholic Church, don't you think the prophets made an error in calling this place Tempeleng)?**

A) Tjee, Baporofeta ha ba etsa phoso, ba ne ba nepile hobane ditumelo di di ngata ka thabeng, le meetlo e mengata ka thabeng (No, the prophets did not make an error in calling this place Tempeleng, because there are multiple religions, faiths and belief systems found in the sacred valley).

**Q) Dialetare tsena tse pedi di hlalosang mona Tempeleng (What is the meaning of the two altars at Tempeleng)?**

A) Dialetare tsena tse pedi di etseditswe hore pele o hlwela qoweng ya Tempele o kope Modimo le Badimo hoho dumella hoy'a qoweng ya Tempele (These two altars at Tempeleng are meant to be used for prayer to God and the Ancestors before ascending to the summit of the temple).

**Q) Jwale qhowa ena ya Tempele bohlokwa ba yona ke bofe (What is the importance of the summit or elevated altar at Tempeleng)?**

A) Bohlokwa ba sebaka sena ke hore hoba le maqhama ka tsela ya foun'e pakeng tsa motho ya kopang le Modimo kapo Badimo (The importance of the elevated altars at the summit of Tempeleng is that a person can have direct communication with God or the Ancestors, through means of what is called God's telephone).

**Q) Letsha lena le pela Tempele mosebetsi wa lona ke ofe (What is the work of the pool next to Tempeleng)?**

A) Re ntsha meya e ditshila bathing ba kulang letsheng lena, re kolobetsa batho letsheng lena, dintho ngata tsa meetlo re di phethela letsheng lena (We exorcise evil spirits from people in this lake, we baptise people in this lake, we perform a number of rituals in this lake).

**Q) Ha o qetela o kareng ka sebaka sena Tempeleng (In conclusion, what can you say about Tempeleng)?**

A) Sebaka sena ke sa Jehova Modimo, se ya halalela (This place belongs to God, it is highly sacred).

### *C. Interview on the Spring of King Moshoeshoe I: November 2009*

The interview on the spring of King Moshoeshoe I was conducted next to the spring with an informant called Seeiso Makhetha, who apparently stays in a cave next to the spring.

**Q) Ntate Makhetha, hobaneng hothwe Sediba sena ke sa Morena Moshoeshoe wa pele (Father Makhetha, why is this spring called the spring of King Moshoeshoe I)?**

A) Naletsana ya Basotho e re sediba sena se fumanwe ke Morena Moshoeshoe kgale kwana ho soka hoe ba le makgalo (There is information of the Basotho people that says the spring was discovered by King Moshoeshoe).

**Q) Wena Ntate Makhetha o kopane jwang le Sediba sena? (Father Makhetha, personally, how did you come to know of this spring)?**

A) Ke ile ka lora Morena Moshoeshoe le Ntate Sebolai ke sa le Gauteng Diepkloof, hore ke ye Mautse ko hlokomela Sediba le Lehaha la Ntate Sebolai (I dreamt whilst in Gauteng, Diepkloof,

that King Moshoeshoe and Mr Sebolai instructed me to go to Mautse to take care of the spring and Sebolai cave).

**Q) Jwale wa tloha Gauteng o eya Mautse ka baka la toro (Now you left Gauteng for Mautse because of a dream)?**

A) Ho jwalo Ntate, ke tsamaile ho tswa Gauteng ka maoto hot la fihla mona Mautse beke kaofela (I travelled a week from Gauteng to Mautse on feet).

**Q) Ha o fihla Mautse o be o etsa jwang (What did you do when you arrived at Mautse)?**

A) Kei le ka fihlela bakeng se bitswang Madiboko ha Mme Monica, mme ka kopa hlakisetso yah ore Sediba sena se ho kae (I arrived at a place called Madiboko where Monica stays and I asked for help about the location of the spring)

**Q) O ile wa fumana thuso (Did you get help from Monica)?**

A) Nkgono Monica o ile antsha motho ya ileng a nkisa Sedibeng (Mother Monica asked someone to accompany me to the spring).

**Q) Ntate Makhetha o ile wa bona Sediba, ebe ho etsahalang (Father Makhetha, you saw the spring and what happened thereafter)?**

A) Ke ile ka qamaka Sediba, mme ka sesa bosiu pela Sediba yaba ke bona Morena Moshoeshoe le Ntate Sebolai ka pono e tshabehang ba ntaela hore ke hlocomele Sediba ba be ba mpontsha Lehaha leo ke tla dula ho lona, athe Lehaha lena ke la ntate Sebolai (I carefully looked at the spring and spent the whole night there. In an awesome vision I saw King Moshoeshoe and Mr Sebolai instructing me to look after the spring and they showed me the cave in which I will stay; incidentally, this cave belonged to Chief Sebolai).

**Q) Ha o ntse o kopana le batho ba bangata ka thabeng ba reng ka Sediba sena (When you encounter people coming to the spring, what do they tell you about the spring)?**

A) Boholo ba batho ba tlang Sedibeng ke Basotho, mme ba hlalosa Sediba e le sa Mokwena e moholo Morena Moshoeshoe, mme ba toboketse ntlha ya hore ho bile le dintwa pakeng tsa Bakwena le Batlokwa sebakeng sena, mme Morena Moshoeshoe a hlola ntwana a ntoo tla sedibeng ho tola le nka matla (Many people who come to the spring are Basotho, share that the spring belongs to King Moshoeshoe of the Bakwena tribe. They emphasise that there were skirmishes between the Batlokwa tribe and the Bakwena tribe. After these skirmishes, the King would often come and bathe at the spring and gather more strength).

**Q) Bohlokwa ba merabe ya Basotho ke bofe mabapi le Sediba sena (What level of importance does the Basotho tribes ascribe to the spring)?**

A) Wa bona ngwaneso Thaba ena ya Mautse e ile ya tsekwa ke merabe ya Basotho, ka sehlohong ele Bakwena, Batlokwa le Bataung, mme Sediba sena se ile sa tsekwa (My brother, there has been previous contestations for the Mautse Mountain among a number of the Basotho tribes, chiefly among them the Bakwena, Batlokwa and Bataung and the spring became a subject of contestation among the tribes).

**Q) Ntate Makhetha ana merabe ena e ntse e tseka sediba sena (Father Makhetha, are these tribes still engaged in contestation for the spring)?**

A) Tjee ngwaneso, morao ha ho hlokahala ha Morena Moshoeshe<sup>1</sup>, Basotho ka bongata ba bona ba ne ba tla Sedibeng, ba tlo nka metsi ba bang ba wa nwa, ba dumela hore katlasa Sediba matla a badimo ba Basotho a teng moo (You see, after the death of King Moshoeshe, many of the Basotho people came to the spring to get the water, some took it to drink and they believed that there were mystical powers of the Basotho Ancestors underneath the spring).

**Q) Ke dumela ha ho satla Basotho fela Sedibeng sena, batho ba merabe ka kakaretso ba chakela Sediba sena (I want to believe that various people of different tribes and nationalities come to the spring)?**

A) Ho jwalo ngwaneso, hape lebaka ke hore boholo ba batho ba tlang Sedibeng ba nahana hore ha ba tola ka metsi a sediba sena ba tla aparelwa ke matla a Morena Moshoeshe (It is like that, my brother, the main reason why so many people come to the spring is that once they have bathed in the spring water they assume King Moshoeshe's power).

**Q) Ka mantswe a mang Sediba sena ke sa batho bohle, le ba ditumelo tsohle, ho sa kgethuwe mmala wa motho (In other words, this spring now belongs to every tribe and every nation, it further belongs to people of all faiths regardless of the colour of your skin)?**

A) Ke nnete ntate, mang le mang jwale wa tla Sedibeng, ha ho sana dintwa (That is true, everybody can come to the spring, there is no more contestation over the spring).

**Q) Didiba di di ngata kahara thaba ya Mautse, empa sena se nka sekola (There are a number of springs around Mautse, but this one appears to be more popular)?**

A) Ke nnete didiba di ngata kahara Thaba, empa se na sa Morena Moshoeshe se na le naletsana e ikgethileng sebakeng sa Mohokare le ka thabeng ya Mautse (That is true, but Moshoeshe spring has a significant history within the Mohokare environment and particularly the Mautse sacred site).

**Q) Bohlokwa ba Sediba sena habo amane le Mautse feela (The significance of this spring is not only confined to the Mautse sacred site)?**

A) Sediba sena se tsejwa haholo mona Afrika e Borwa le Lesotho, hape bachaki ba mose ba chakalelang ka thabeng ba tseba Sediba sena (The spring is well-known in South Africa and Lesotho and a lot of overseas visitors to the site know this spring).

**Q) Hona le ntho e o ka mpoellang yona, e mohlomong ke sa e botsang ka Sediba sena (Is there anything you could tell me that I did not ask about the spring)?**

A) Sediba se na ke moriana, ke pheko ya Badimo, ke qetella hakalo (This spring has medicinal properties in it, it has a special balm and this is my input).

#### *D. Interview on the Location Yunivesithi with Tsotetsi Sebaka: November 2009*

The interview about this sacred location was conducted in 2009 with an apprentice traditional healer by the name of Ntate Mohlokatulo Tsotetsi who comes from Mpumalanga in Witbank. Ntate Tsotetsi was interviewed in the Sesotho language.

**Q) Ntate Tsotetsi sebaka sena se bitswang (Father Tsotetsi, what is the name of this location)?**

A) Sebaka sena se bitswa Yunivesithi (This place is called the university).

**Q) Hobaneng se bitswa Yunivesithi (Why this name university)?**

A) Batlileng pela ka mona ba paka hore lebitso lena le tlele ka Badimo ba sebaka sena (Those who came before me in this place attest that the Ancestors gave this name to the place).

**Q) Mme wa dumela hore ke Yunivesithi (Do you agree this place is a university)?**

A) Ke Ya dumela hobane mona ke setsing sa thuto ya Badimo (I agree, because here is the foundation of the teachings of the Ancestors).

**Q) Ho rutwa thuto ya mofuta mang mona (What kind of education is taught here)?**

A) Mona o rutwa bongaka ba setso bo tebileng, wa bona hona le dikamore tsa mofuta, ke moo thupelo e etswang teng (Here in this place is where you are extensively taught about traditional healing and these different enclosures you see in this place is where various education take place).

**Q) Jwale Matichere ke bo mang Yunivesithi mona (Who are the teachers here at the university)?**

A) Hona le Dingaka tse kgolo mona tse nkang ditaelo ho Badimo hore ba ruteng (There are senior traditional healers who receive instruction from the Ancestors on what syllabus to teach at the university).

**Q) Ha o akaretsa o kare syllabase ena ya thusa thupelong ya mathuela sebakeng sena (In general, what would you say about the syllabus with a special reference to the trainee traditional healers)?**

A) Dithupelong tsa sebaka sena, hona le nako eo thupelong ya hore lethuela le be mong ka lehaheng kapa mohahong ho tiyana le Badimo ba sebaka seo (In this process, at times a trainee traditional healer has to be alone in a cave or an enclosure with the Ancestors of the location to be given ancestral education).

**Q) Ha lethuela lele leng ka lehaheng ho etsahalang (When the trainee traditional is alone in the cave, what happens)?**

A) Lethuela le tla tobana lepitso ya lona e phephetswa ke diriti tsa Badimo, le mantswe a sa tlwaelehang, a tla utlwahala bosiu kaofela kahara Lehaha, ena ke phephetso e kgolo ya pitso ya lethuela (The trainee traditional healer called to this vocation is challenged by the shadows of the Ancestors and the strange voices reverberating in the cave throughout the night. This is a higher test for the trainee traditional healer).

**Q) Ana hona le mosebetsi o mong wa bohlokwa oo sebaka sena se fanang ka wona, kante ho thupelo ya Mathuela (Is there any special function apart from the training of the traditional that the location performs)?**

A) Eya Ntate, haholo nakong ya dihlahlobo tsa dikolo bana ba tla mona ho tla rapellwa, le ba di univesithi le bona ba tla hot lo rapellwa (Yes, Sir, just before the examinations, school children and university children come to be prayed for at this place).

**Q) Dithapelo tsena di etsahala nakong ya dihlahlobo feela (Do these prayers happen during the exams only)?**

A) Tjee dithapelo di dula di le teng sebakeng sena, ho rapellwa mefuta ya dintho (You see, all kinds of prayers are said in this location for various kinds of things).

**Q) O Kareng ha o qetela ka sebaka sena (What could you say in conclusion about this location)?**

A) Sebaka sena se ikgethile, se ya halalela (This place is sacred and holy).

*E. Interview on the Lower Madiboko and Upper Madiboko: November 2009*

The Lower and Upper Madiboko are two separate physical localities; however, found in the same vicinity at Mautse. When you proceed to Upper Madiboko, you will first pass via Lower Madiboko. These two localities are separated by a waterfall. Lower Madiboko used to be under the indigenous leadership of the late Monica Magengenene and Upper Madiboko is under the indigenous leadership of Mantankiso Maseromo Diboko. In a two separate interviews conducted in 2008 and 2009 Monica Magengenene shared the significance of the work carried out at Lower Village with the researcher.

**Q) Nkgono Monica, sethatong ke rata hoho dumedisa, mme ka hlomphe ke ne ke kopa h oho botsa dipotso ka sebaka sena se bitswang Dibokong (Mother Monica, I want to extend my greetings to you and with great respect, please allow me to interview you about this place called Dibokong and please explain the name to us)?**

A) Ngwanaka ke ya dumedisa, sebaka seo ke sebeletsang ho sona se bitswa Madiboko ya ka tlase, hobane ha o tshela kang qane oya ho Madiboko ya ka hodimo ho Lehaha. Mme lebitso lena Diboko kapo Madiboko e hlalosa ho re Lehaha lena ke la merabe yotlhe (My child, I am also greeting, this place I operate from is called Lower Madiboko, but when you pass that water seepage you now enter Upper Madiboko. This word *Diboko* or *Madiboko* explains that this place is a cave for all nations).

**Q) Lebitso le na Madiboko, ke lentswe la Sesotho le hlalosang diboko kao fapana (The name Madiboko is a Sesotho word meaning more than one tribal name)?**

A) Ke nnete ke kamoo ke itseng hare qala sebaka sena ke sa merabe yotlhe, batho ba anang ka Tau, batho ba anang ka Tlou, batho ba anang ka Kwena jwalo le jwalo (I have said when we began with this interview that this cave was an all-nation cave, people with different totemic ascriptions are all welcome here, like Bataung [lion] Batlounge [Elephants], Bakwena [Crocodiles], etc.).

**Q) Jwale Nkgono o mo kaubere ha ho tliwa tabeng tsa diboko (Now, Mother, are you an expert when coming to issues pertaining to tribal totems)?**

A) Tjee motsamaiisi wa dibokong ka hodimo ke yena ya sebetsang haholo ka diboko Mme Matankiso Maseromo Diboko ke mokaubere ha ho tluwa dibokong tsa merabe (The leader in Upper Madiboko; she specialises in tribal totems).

**Q) Nkgono yena sebakeng sena o sebetsa jwang (Here at Lower Madiboko, what do you do)?**

A) Ke phekola bakodi, ke rapella batho, ke kwetlisa mathuela, mosebetsi waka o mongata haholo (I diagnose people who are sick; I pray for people, I train apprentice traditional healers. My work here is phenomenal).

**Q) Ke bona difaha tse nang le ditshwantso tsa Maria Ma Jesu, ke bona di-rosary, ke bona dibebele le dikerese tsa mefuta di tuka aletareng (I see small crucifixes, pictures of Mary, the mother of Jesus; I see bibles and burning candles of different kind on the altar)?**

A) Dintho tsena tseo o di bonang aletareng di bohlokwa haholo tshebetsong ya mona moo ke sebeletsang teng (This paraphernalia you see all over the altar is of critical importance for my work in this place).

**Q) Nkgona eka re kerekeng kahara Lehaha (Mother, it appears as if we are experiencing a church atmosphere in this cave)?**

A) Ke nnete ngwanaka, ntho enngwe le enngwe e re e etsang mona e qalwa ka thapelo, nto re kena ditshebetsong tse fapaneng (Everything that is done here is started by prayer. Then we can engage in other functions once we have prayed).

**Q) Nkgono Monica ke bona le dibuka tseo o di baling ho lokisetsa thapelo di phahamisa Maria Ma Jesu haholo, ana buka ena ke ya Kereke ya Katoliki (Mother Monica, I see the liturgical books you read are to exalt and glorify Mary the mother of Jesus. Are these liturgical books from the Catholic Church?**

A) Boneteng ke fumane thupelo ya Bo-Nun kereng ya Katoliki, mme le ha ke kena bongakeng ba setso hanke ka lebala seo kereke ya Katoliki eng keleditseng sona, ke kamoo o mponang ke ntse ke sebedisa difapano le dibebele (The truth must be told that, before I became a traditional healer, I was a nun in the Roman Catholic Church, which is why you see this liturgical paraphernalia of the Catholic Church in the cave).

**Q) Nkgono Monica eka o kopantshitse tumelo ya setso le tumelo ya bokreste tshebetsong ya hao ana ke ya fosa (Mother Monica it looks like you are mixing the indigenous traditional belief systems with the Christian faith; am I wrong)?**

A) Ee ke Mokreste e bilane ke ngaka ya setso, ke kamoo o boning ke kopantsha ditumelo tsena tse pedi (I am a Christian and a traditional doctor, that is why I combine the two in my work).

**Q) Dingaka le Mathuela a thupelong ya hao le bona ba tshwanetse ho sebetsa ka mokgwa ona (The traditional doctors and those in training, do they have to work according to this combined formation)?**



A) Wa bona boholo ba dingaka tsena le mathuela ba romelwa ho nna ke Badimo ba bona hore ke bafe bongaka bo feletseng, boholo batla mona e le Bakreste empa eka ba mohlolo ba etla sebakeng sena ba sa tsebe ho rorisa ramasedi (You see, most of these traditional healers and the trainee healers are sent to me so that they can become qualified healers. Most of them come are Christians and they have an understanding who God is).

**Q) Hobaneng sebaka sena se bitswa Betlhema wa Judea (Why is this compound called Bethlehem of Judea)?**

A) Ke e neile lebitso lena ke bona bohalaledi ba sona, hape ke ile ka ba le pono ya lehodimo e e ntaelang ho re ke bitse Lehaha lena Betlhema wa Judea (I gave it this name after I had discovered its holiness and I had a vision from heaven that I had to must call this cave Bethlehem of Judea).

**Q) Nkgono jwale mona Betlhema ya Judea motho e mong le mong o tshwanetse ho rola dieta( Mother, now here at Betlhem of Judea, every person has take their shoes off from their feet)?**

A) Wa bona, ha kea rwala dieta empa ke dula mona; ke ka hobane sebaka sena se ya halalela, eka ke mobu oo Moshe wa Bebele a neng a eme ha a qala ho kopana le Modimo ( You see, I do not have my shoes on but I stay here; it is because this place is the holy of holies, it is like the ground on which Biblical Moses was standing when encountering God for the first time).

**Q) Ke bona hona le kamore e lefifi kahara Betlhema wa Judea, kamore ena ke ya eng (I see there is room that appears dark inside here, what is this room for)?**

A) Kamore ena ke robala ho yona, ke hlapela ho yona, ke beya le meriana ho yona kahodima tseo tsohle ke kopanela la badimo baka mona (This is the room that I sleep in. I also wash in it, I also keep medicinal herbs in it; this is a room where I meet my Ancestors).

**Q) Dingaka le Mathuela a sebetsang le wena a dumeletseha ho kena kahara kamore ena (Traditional doctors you work with, even those in training, are they allowed to enter this dark room)?**

A) Tjee ha ba dumellwa hobane ditaelo tsa tshebetso engwe le engwe e tswa hara kamore ena, le hore meriana ke efe e tla sebediswang tshebetsong ya mokodi (No one is allowed to enter the room because the important instruction of every ritual to be performed comes from that room; even what kind of herbs to be used on the person who is sick comes from this room).

**Q) Nkgono Monica ha motho a qala ho fihla sebakeng sena a re wa kula o mo etsang sethatong (Mother Monica, when a person visits your compound and claims to be sick: at the outset, what do you do)?**

A) Hona le sebaka se ho sona dingaka tse sebetsang le nna ba tla nkang ya kulang ho mo laola teng, ntooo ba mo tlisa ho nna ho netefatsa ho re ba ile ba laola motho enwa hantle (There is an outside room where divination takes place. It is done by the traditional doctors under me. After they have completed with the divination, they then bring the patient to me for ratification of their divination on the sick person).

**Q) Nkgono Monica ntho ena yah o laola mokodi ke eng ana e ka mefuta e fapaneng (Mother Monica, this divination, what is it, has it got more than one layer)?**

A) Ntho ena ya ho laola eya ka sedimo sa mokodi, hore re mo laola ka sedimo sa motho ya batlang thuso (Divination comes through instruction from the Ancestors of the sick person. They may instruct that we use bones, candles, the bible or mirror any form of divination depends entirely on the Ancestors).

**Q) Ha ditaola di re motho enwa o batla thuso ya hao o qala ho mo thusa jwang (When divination says this sick person needs your help, what steps do you take in helping this person)?**

A) Ha mokodi e le motho wa ntate, o tsodiswa ke dingaka tsa bo ntate ntooo di mo Kenya phororong e hlahang kahodimo thabeng ho mo hlatswa pele a ka kena tshabetsong, ha e le motho wa Mme o tla kenywa phororong ke ngaka ya Mme, ho eletsa metsi ana a badimo a qala ka tshebetso ya mokodi (When a sick person is male, a male traditional doctor takes the sick person into a waterfall that would cleanse him prior to undergoing extensive healing process. The same goes for a sick woman; a female traditional doctor will take the sick person into the waterfall in preparation for extensive healing to take place).

**Q) Nkgono Monica, mona dintho ha di etsiwe feela, hona le metja le melao e latelwang (Mother Monica, I observe that rules are strictly followed here and protocol is observed)?**

A) Dintho tsotlhe di qala ho nna sebakeng sena e bilane di qetela ka nna, hobane ha di ntho di sa tsamaye hantle Badimo ba otlala nna, jwale ke tshwantse ho ba ka sehlohong ka nako tsohle (I have to ensure that that everything here starts with me and ends with me, because when things go astray the Ancestors punish me. I must always keep abreast of everything here).

**Q) Makgowa wona a ya tla ka thabeng ho wena ho kopa thuso (Do White people also come to you for help)?**

A) Makgowa a mose, o mona hae a rata ho chakela mona, ba bang ke bahahlaodi feela, ba bang re ba laola mme re ba tsebise Ditaba tsa bona, ke kamoo ke itseng sebaka sena ke sa merabe

yotlhe (White people from overseas and local White people, even those who tour, visit this place. You remember I said Madiboko was for all nations and I meant that).

**Q) Makgowa ana ha ba fihla ho wena ba re ba batlang, hobane sebaka sena ke sa Badimo (What are the needs of these White people when they visit you, because this place belongs to the Ancestors)?**

A) Boholo ba Makgowa a tlang mona ba dumela ho re sebaka sena se ikgethile, mme hape ba dumela hore ha ba tloha mona lehlohonolo le tla ba aparela (Most of these White people who visit me acknowledge the sacred status of this place. They further believe that when they depart from this place luck will follow them).

**Q) Ka mantswe a mang ba dumela ho wena (In other words, they believe in you)?**

A) Ba dumela ho nna, e seng nna haholo ba dumela sedimong sa mona (They believe in my work, but above that they believe in the Ancestors of this place).

**Q) Ha ba tlile sebakeng sena ba tla ka dimpho (When they visit, do they bring gifts)?**

A) Ba tla ka dimpho tsa mefuta futa, ba bang ba tlisa dijo (They bring all sort of gifts; some bring food).

**Q) Nkgono Monica ke utlwile ha o bua le Prof Nel o re o ile wa chatisa ma China a mabedi ba chaketse sebakeng sena (Mother, I heard you telling Prof Nel that you had solemnised a marriage of a Chinese couple in this place)?**

A) Ho jwalo key a chatisa bakeng sena, haholo Makgowa atla mona a kopa hlohonolofatso ya lenyalo (It is true, I marry people here, particularly White couples. They come here they ask for blessings for their marriages)

**Q) Nkgono Monica o ofisiri ya manyalo (Mother Monica, in other words, you are a marriage officer)?**

A) Ee ke nyadisa lenyalo la Badimo e seng lena la dikantorong tsa mmuso (Yes, I perform ancestral marriages, not like the ones at the Home Affairs buildings).

**Q) Lenyalo la Badimo ke le jwang (What kind of marriage is an ancestral marriage)?**

A) Lenyalo la Badimo le tebile, nka nka dihora ka dihora ho le hlalosa, ke kopa hore re seye monono (Ancestral marriage is quite deep and awesome; it will take me hours and hours to explain; please let us not go there).

**Q) Nkgono thaba ena ya Mautse o e tseba ka botlalo (Mother Monica, do you have a full knowledge of this sacred valley)?**

**A)** Thaba ena ke e tseba ka botlalo (I know this sacred valley fully),

**Q) O ka akaretsa fela Nkgono hore o e tseba jwang (Can you in a general sense tell me about this sacred valley)?**

**A)** Thaba ena keya Badimo, ba e file ke Modimo (This valley belongs to the Ancestors but it was given to them by God).

**Q) Hobaneng kahara thaba ena ho ena le mabitso a fapaneng a dibaka tse fapaneng (Why are there different names for different spots in the mountain)?**

**A)** Ke hobane sebaka ka sebaka sena le lengoloi la sona, sena le sedimo sa sona, jwale Badimo ke bona ba fanang ka mabitso a dibaka haholo ho ya ka tshebetso e phetiwang sebakeng seo (It is because every space or spot has its own angel and its own Ancestor. Now, Ancestors name these places particularly for the kind of indigenous work carried out in that space).

**Q) O fana ka mohlala (Can you give an example)?**

**A)** Dibaka tse kgolo mona thabeng jwaloka ka Nkokomohi, Letsha la Baporofeta le Dingaka, Yunivesithi, Tempeleng le Maseeng ke mabitso a hlahang ho Badimo ba Thaba ena (Renowned spaces like Nkokomohi, the lake of Prophets and Healers, University, Temple and a place of conception for barren women these names come directly from the Ancestors).

**Q) Ha ke utlwe o akaretsa Letsha la Moshoeshe le Sefotho (Is there a specific reason why these other perceived major sacred locations are not mentioned by you)?**

**A)** Dibaka tsena kaofela ke tsa Badimo, ha hona sebaka sa motho mona bohle ba rona re katlasa beng ba sebaka sena (All these locations you mention belong to the Ancestors. No person owns a place in the mountain; the Ancestors are the owners of the mountain).

**Q) Dibaka tse ding di filwe mabitso a kahara Bebele, wa dumela (Other places in the valley have been named after Biblical names, do you agree)?**

**A)** Ke nnete sebaka se ka Tempeleng, ke lebitso le hlahang kahara bebele le Naledi ke lebitso le hlahang kahara bebele (That is true. Tempeleng and Naledi are Biblical names).

**Q) Ka mantswe a mang dibaka tse ding kahara thaba di sebetsa ka tsela ya Modimo feela e sa kenyeletse tshebetso ya Badimo (In other words, there are certain spaces in the valley that operate strictly according the demands of God excluding the demands of the Ancestors)?**

A) Wa bona thaba ena, ena le basebeletsi ba moya le basebeletsi ba ditaola, mme Badimo ba hao ke bona bao kgethelang hore okaya tshebetsong ya mofuta ofe (You see, here in the mountain there are faith healers and traditional healers [sangomas], but it is the Ancestors that make a choice which sacred location you should go to).

**Q) Matla a dibaka tsena Nkgono Monica a lekana (Mother Monica, do these different sacred locations carry the same strength and power)?**

A) Haholo hoya ka tumelo ya motho ho seo a se batlang (It depends on the faith of the person, what this person wants).

**Q) Nkokomohi e pakiwa ka matla a diwasho tsa ona (Is this place called Nkokomohi renowned for its medicinal clay)?**

A) Nkokomohi e matla haholo, sewasho sa teng, metsi a teng, le seretse sa teng ke moriana o makatsang (This place Nkokomohi is far too strong, its clay, its water and its mire are themselves indigenous medicinal properties).

**Q) Ke kopane le aletare ya lejwe tseleng eyang diwashong tsa Nkokomohi, bohlokwa ba yona ke bofe (On my way to Nkokomohi I came across a stone altar, what is the significance of this altar)?**

A) Aletareng ya lejwe tseleng eyang Nkokomohi, ke sebaka sa ho phahla Badimo le ho kopa tsela yah o kena diwashong, o phahla Badimo ka ho kgantsha kerese le beya chelate e kganyang hodima aletare (This altar is the gateway to the clay site and before you can proceed to the clay site, you have to appease the Ancestors of the site by lighting a candle and placing some coins on top of the altar).

**Q) Nkgono Monica Diwasho tsena di kopangwa le meriana e tswang mmung ho phekola motho (Mother Monica, could clay be mixed with herbs from the ground to heal a person)?**

A) Ho tshwanetse ho be jwalo di ya kopanngwa ka nako tsohle ha ho etswa mesebetsi e itseng ya setso (It is important that they be mixed when a particular ritual is undertaken).

**Q) Empa motho wa ha ana le diso sefahlehong a ka itlotsa ka sewasho se sesweu ho tlosa diso tsena ho sena motswako o mong (But can a female person with pimples on her face apply white clay to remove the pimples without mixing it with any herbs)?**

A) Hangata hoya kamoo Badimo ba laelang ka teng (There are exceptions to this rule. It depends on the Ancestors).

**Q) Nkgono ha o sheba dilemo tse fetang leshome le metso e mehlano ya tshebetso ena ya Modimo le Badimo ana o fihleletse katleho (Mother Monica, when you look at more than fifteen years that you worked in the valley for God and the Ancestors, do you think you have achieved success)?**

A) Ke fihleletse katleho e makatsang, ke kotlitsitse dingaka tse ngata, ke tisiitse baruti le di Bishopo tsa dikereke tse fapaneng, ke sebeditse dikgwebo tsa Makgowa, ke fodisitse bakodi baba ngata, lethathama la pale yaka mosebetsing ona ha le na kgutlo (I have achieved a lot of success in this work. I have trained traditional healers, I have given power to the clergy of various churches, I have helped White people to succeed in their business endeavours; I have healed many sick people. My success in this work is phenomenal. I do not think I could describe in terms that would bring an end to it).

**Q) O tla tswa neng ka thabeng ho kgutlela hae (When will you leave the valley to go home permanently)?**

A) Eno etla ba taelo ya Modimo le Badimo, ha kena matla lebakeng leo (That kind of decision will only come from God and my Ancestors; that decision is solely theirs).

#### *F. Interview on Upper Madiboko with Matankiso Diboko: November 2009*

**Q) Dumela Nkgono Matankiso, ke ne ke kopa hoho botsa dipotso di se kae ka sebaka sena se bitswang “Dibokong” (Greetings, my Mother Matankiso, I want to request you to allow me to interview you on this place called “Dibokong”).**

A) Ke tla thabela ho arabela dipotso tsa hao, ke kopa o phutulohe (I will be glad if you could ask me questions, please feel free to ask).

**Q) Nkgono Matankiso sebaka sena hantle lebitso la sona ke mang (Mother Matankiso, what is the precise name of this place)?**

A) Sebaka sena ngwanaka se bitswa Dibokong kapo ha Madiboko (This place, my child, is called Dibokong or Madiboko).

**Q) Dibokong kapo ha Madiboko e bolelang (What do the words *Dibokong* or *Madiboko* mean)?**

A) Dibokong e bolela le hona ho hlalosa diboko tsa batho ka ho fapana ha bona (This word *Dibokong* explains the tribal totems of various tribes, particularly in the African context).

**Q) Bohlokwa ba hore motho a tsebe, seboko sa hae se totobatswa sebakeng sena (The importance of knowing once tribal totem is emphasised at this place)?**

A) Ho jwalo boholo ba batho ba tlang sebakeng sena sa Dibokong, ba tloha ba itseba hantle hore ke bo mang (That is true, many people who visit this place, leave this place knowing their true identity).

**Q) Nkgono Matankiso thupelo ya hao bongaka ba setso, keya diboko (Mother Matankiso your training as a traditional healer (sangoma is based on identity tracing and tribal totems)?**

A) Ke nnete sebaka sena se thusa haholo ka ho itseba ha motho hore ke mang o hlaha kae, bahahabo ke bo mang, mme nna ha ke soka ke phethela bongaka baka hantle (It is true, this place is meant to help with their backgrounds, where are they from and who their parents are, but the only problem with me is that I have not as yet completed my training as a qualified traditional healer).

**Q) Nkgono Mantankiso, jwale o laola batho jwang o soka o phethela thupelo ya hao ya bongaka ba setso (Mother Matankiso, how do you help people with their problems, yet you are not a qualified traditional healer)?**

A) Ke tlasa thupelo ya Badimo sebakeng sena, meetlo ke e phethile empa Badimo ke bona ba tla nkang qeto yah ore ke se ke le ngaka e phethahetseng (I am directly under the teachings of the Ancestors of this place. I have completed all the rituals connected to this place; however, the Ancestors are the ones to take a solution about whether I am a qualified traditional healer).

**Q) Jwale Nkgono Matankiso, hore o tsebe hore seboko sa motho ke sefe o laola ka eng (Mother Matankiso, if you trace somebody's identity or tribal totem, what method of divination do you use)?**

A) Nakong tse ngata ke qala ka thapelo, ebe ke sebedisa ditaola (I often start with a prayer and then use divination bones).

**Q) Mme dikarabo di tla di nepahetse ka nako tsotlhe (Are the answers or predictions from divination always correct)?**

A) Ke kopa ho etsa mohlala (Can I make an example)?

**Q) Phuthuloha Nkgono o etse mohlala (Feel free, my mother, and make the example)?**

A) Motho o fihla mona Dibokong a kula, a bua Sesotho, ebe Ditaba tsa hae ha di hlahella ka Badimo ba habo di re ke Mozolo kapo Motswana empa motho enwa o holetse Basothong hotswa bonyaneng (Normally a person comes to consult at this place and he speaks the Sesotho language, but in the process of divination his Ancestors tells him that his rightful tribe is Zulu or Tswana and this person grew up thinking that Sesotho was his language).

**Q) Ebe o joetsa motho enwa hore ke mong (Then you explain to this person his/her tribe and language)?**

A) Ke etsa joalo, empa hoba thata ho moth oho dumela (I do explain, but at times it becomes difficult for a person to believe).

**Q) Ha motho e le Mokwena, o mo hlaloseisa hore ke wa lekala lefe kweneng (If a person's totem is a crocodile, do you normally explain the different dynasties of these tribal totems)?**

A) Ke mosebetsi waka ka Badimo ho hlaloseisa motho o lekaleng lefe la Bakwena, o lekaleng lefe la Bataung jwalo le jwalo (It is my work to explain to people to which dynasty of tribe he/she belongs through the Ancestors).

**Q) Ke ne ke rata hoho botsa ka maqhama a mosebetsi pakeng tsa Madiboko ya Kahodimo le Madiboko ya katlase (I would like to find out whether there is communication of work between Upper Madiboko and Lower Madiboko).**

A) Boholo ba Batho ha batla ho nna ba feta ha Me Monica Magengenene, mme hona le phororo e re arohanyang, sebaka sa Monica le saka ke Dibokong (The majority of people pass through Monica Magengenene's place and there is a waterfall that separates us).

**Q) Dibaka tsena di le pedi di bitswa Dibokong, hobaneng ha ho le jwalo (These two places are called by the same name. Why is it like that)?**

A) Ke nnete empa Monica ha hlahlobe Diboko, ke nna ya hlahlobang Diboko yena ona le tshebetso ya hae mona Dibokong (That is so, but Monica does not deal with identities and tribal totems; I am the only person who directly deals with totems and lost identities).

**Q) Haeba Nkgono Monica aka hlahloba motho a ba fumana hore motho enwa bothata ba hae ke seboko, o romela motho ya jwalo ho wena (Let us assume that Mother Monica diagnoses someone and the results are that there is a problem with the tribal totem; does she refer this person to you)?**

A) Ditaoleng tsa hae ha ho hlaheletse bothata bo jwalo a ka romela motho ho nna (If during her diagnosis she chooses the right to send the person to me).

**Q) Boholo ba batho ka thabeng ba hlomphe mosebetsi wa Nkgono Monica, ba re ke motho ya matla ditabeng tsa Modimo le Badimo (Many people in the valley attest to the awesome work carried out by Mother Monica, particularly the work of God and the Ancestors).**

A) Eno ke nnete Monica ke motho ya matla haholo thaba ena e tseba taba eo (That is true. Monica is a very strong person in the valley; that is clearly known).



**Q) Puisanong ya ka le Nkgono Monica mabapi le diboko ka ho fapana ha tsona, o itse ke wena mokaubere tabeng ena (In my interview with Monica Magengenene she said that in issues pertaining to identities and totems you are the expert)?**

A) Le nna ke mo tseba e le mokaubere mosebetsing ona wa Badimo, o ka hodimo ho nna, ona le mathuela a mangata, wa thwasisa, nna ke sa le kotlisona, thapelo yaka ke ho qeta ke be ngaka e phethahetseng (I also know Monica to be an expert in her work and she is above me in terms of ancestral work, she has many initiates and my prayer is that one day I should be like Monica a fully-fledged traditional healer).

**Q) Nkgono Matankiso ke bona sebakeng sena sa ha oho na le dingaka tse mmalwa (Mother Matankiso, I see there are a number of traditional healers here with you)?**

A) Ke nnete ba tlile ho batla tsebo le sephiri sa diboko ho nna (That is true, they have come to me to seek the knowledge of lost identities and tribal totems).

**Q) Ha ba fihla dibakeng tsa bona ba tla ba na le bokgoni ba ho hlahloba diboko (After their training by yourself, will they be able to diagnose tribal totems)?**

A) Ha ba tswa ka thabeng mona Dibokong ba yo phethisa thomo ya Badimo ho thusa batho ba lahlehetsweng ke diboko tsa bona (When they move out of the mountain; especially here at Dibokong they carry out the instruction of the Ancestors).

**Q) Sebaka sena se ya halalela, se ikgethile, se matla ka tshebetso jwaloka Dibokong tsa Monica Magengenene (Upper Madiboko is sacred; is it as strong as the workings at Lower Madiboko where Monica Magengenene stays)?**

A) Sebaka sena se ikgethile ka nako tsotlhe, se ya halalela jwaloka ka dibaka tse ding tse ikgethileng kahara thaba (This place is very sacred like all the other sacred places in the valley).

#### ***G. Interview on Maseeng with Masehaba Mokoena: February 2010***

This sacred location is situated along the same route with Yunivesithi and Tempeleng. This name Maseeng is both a Sesotho and Setswana word meaning “infants”. Masea is the plural for a number of infants and the word “Lesea” literally means one infant. Therefore, *Maseeng* (infants) literally refers to a sacred location that addresses problems related to the inability to give birth to children. Both parents may be diagnosed and not always the wife alone.

**Q) Nkgono Masechaba, ke ne ke kopa h oho botsa dipotso mabapi le sebaka sena se bitswang Maseeng (Mother Masechaba, I request you to give me permission to interview you about this place called Maseeng)?**

**A)** Ho lokile ho baneng o batla ho tseba ka sebaka sena sa Maseeng? (It's fine, but why do you want to know about this place called Maseeng)?

**Q) Ke ne ke kopa ha Nkgono a ka hlalosa hore Maseeng e hlalosang (I am requesting my Mother to explain what is the meaning of the word Maseeng)?**

**A)** Maseeng ke lentswe la puo ya Sesotho le hlalosang Bana ba e leng hona ba hlahang (Maseeng is a Sesotho word that explains children who have just been born).

**Q) Jwale hobaneng sebaka sena se bitswa Maseeng (Why do you call this place Maseeng)?**

**A)** Sebaka sena se reilwe lebitso lena ke Badimo, sa bobedi bo Mme ba nang le bothata ka hoi ma ba fumana thuso mona sebakeng sena (The name of this place was given by the Ancestors; secondly, women who have problems with conceiving find help at this place).

**Q) Nkgono o bolela hore motho wa Mmme ha sa ime sebakeng sena le ka etsa hore a ime (Mother, do you mean at this place a woman who does not conceive can be made to conceive)?**

**A)** Ho jwalo, Modimo le Badimo ba mofa pelehi (That is true; God and the Ancestors make the woman fertile).

**Q) Karolo ya hao wena ke efe e o e bapalang hore Mme enwa a fumane thuso (And what is your role to ensure that this woman gets the much-needed help)?**

**A)** Ke qala ka ho rapela Modimo o moholo ntoo ke phahla Badimo ba sebaka le Badimo ba motho enwa ya sa boneng bana (Firstly, I pray to God Almighty and appease the Ancestors of the place as well as the Ancestors of the barren woman).

**Q) Ebe ho etsahalang morao ha mekutu ena yohle (Thereafter, what happens subsequent to all these efforts)?**

**A)** Ke tla hlaloesetsa motho enwa hore Badimo ba re a fiwe meriana efe hore a kgone ho ima. Le hore hape ha a batla ngwana wa moshimane kapo wa ngwanana o tshwantse hot la ka seaparo sa ngwana sa mmala o itseng (I will explain to this person that the Ancestors prescribe certain herbs that will make her conceive and that if their desire with their partner is to have a baby boy or a girl they must bring with them a particular colour of the garment that is in line with the sex of the child).

**Q) Nkgono motho enwa morao ha hore a latele tsela ena ya tshebetso le ditaelo tsa Badimo o tla ba moimana (Mother, if this person who does not conceive follow the instructions of the Ancestors, will she conceive)?**

A) Badimo ba tla mofa ngwana, ha ke belaele (Ancestors will give her a child; I have no doubt in my mind).

**Q) Nkgono ke ne ke kopa ho botsa ka thupelo ya ho phetha mosebetsi wa masea (Mother, I want to interview about your training for this work at Maseeng)?**

A) Thupelo yaka ke fumane hotswa Badimong ba ha heso (I received training from my Ancestors).

**Q) Badimo ba hao bao file thupelo e amanang le batho ba senang pelehi (Did your Ancestors give you training that is in line with people who cannot conceive children)?**

A) Badimo ba mphile bongaka ba setso, ba be ba nthomela mona Maseeng ke tlo phetha mosebetsi ona wa Maseeng (Ancestors made me a traditional healer and they sent me to this place to perform cultural work connected to Maseeng).

**Q) Sebakeng sena sa Maseeng o fihletse ho ena le batho ba sebetsang mosebetsi ona (At this place Maseeng, were there no people performing these duties)?**

A) Hone hona le Ntate Mofokeng eo Badimo ba neng ba mo lokolla Maseeng, mme sebakeng sa hae ha kena nna (There was a certain Ntate Mofokeng who worked here at Maseeng; however, the Ancestors released him and he was replaced by me).

**Q) Badimo ba sebaka sena ke bo mang, Badimo ba amanang le sebaka sa Masea (Who are the Ancestors of this place; those who have close connection with this place)?**

A) Seng ka se bolelang ke hore Badimo ba ha heso ba teng mona, kahodima tsena tsohle ke laolwa ke moya wa Morena Moshoeshoe wa pele Ntate Lekganyana le Moporofeta Mantsopa (The only thing that I can attest to is the fact my Ancestors are present here and above all I work directly under the spirit of King Moshoeshoe I, Bishop Lekganyane and the Prophetess Mantsopa).

**Q) Ka mantswe a mang ona le matla a tshebetso ka mekaubere ena (In other words, you draw your strength from these veterans of our cultures)?**

A) Ho jwalo hobane nakong tse ngata ba ntsebisa hore ke tshwanetse ho etsang hore ke atlehe mosebetsing ona (It is true because most of the times they communicate with me about this work and how I can succeed in it).

**Q) Nkgono hoya ka wena ke mang ya qadileng sebaka sena sa Maseeng (Mother, in your own view, who actually started this place called Maseeng)?**

**A)** Ke Modimo o moholo le Badimo ba thaba ena e bitswang Mautse (It is the Almighty God and the Ancestors of this valley called Mautse).

**Q) Nkgono o nahana hore Moshoeshoe, Lekganyana le Mantsopa ba kaba le karolo ya bohlokwa e ba e bapetseng ho qapeng sebaka sena sa Maseeng (Mother, do you think Moshoeshoe, Lekganyane and Mantsopa may have had an influential role in the formation of the Maseeng locality)?**

**A)** Ke nahana hore ba sehlohong ka thabeng moya wa bona o matla haholo (I think that principally they are the foremost Ancestors of this valley and Maseeng).

**Q) O tseba jwang hore moya wa bona o tshebetsona le wena (How do you know that their spirit is in consort with your spirit as you perform your cultural duties)?**

**A)** Sekgutlwaneng ke bua le bona ka tsela ya Badimo (In secrecy I am able to converse with them through their language).

**Q) Sekgutlwaneng Badimo ba ho matlafaletsa tshebetso eo bao fileng yona (When you meet with Ancestors in secrecy, do they empower you thoroughly for the work they have given you)?**

**A)** Haholo, Badimo ba haeso le ba mona thabeng ba mphile ring, bona ka bo bona ba e kenya ho enngwe ya menwana yaka, e le tshupo ya matlafatso ya mosebetsi o bang fileng ona (My Ancestors and the Ancestors of the Mautse Valley put an ancestral ring around my finger as a sign of empowerment to my work)

**Q) Empa Nkgono ring eno ha ke e bone menwaneng ya hao (But my mother, I do not see that ring on one of your fingers)?**

**A)** O kekebe wa e bona, keya Badimo ha e bonwe fela (You won't be able to see it, it belongs to the Ancestors).

**Q) Ke bona Sediba le nkgwana pela mona moo o sebeletsang (I see a spring and a small calabash next to the place you are operating)?**

**A)** Metsi a sediba sena a fodisa malwetse, mme ha motho a batla ho nwa hona moo o nwa ka nkgwana yona eno (The waters of this spring are full of healing; people can drink it on the spot using this small calabash).

**Q) Dibaka tse ding tse kahara thaba le ya sebedisana le tsona (Do you have working relations with other sacred locations in the valley)?**

A) Tshebedisano e kgolo kahara thaba, ka nako tse ding motho ya ba tlang thuso o fihlela Dibokong, ha ho hlalojwa bothata ba hae ho fumahantshala hore bo tshwanetse ho lokiswa Maseeng, mme o tla romelwa Maseeng (There are working relationships in the valley, a person would consult with Madiboko and it will be discovered that the problem could be dealt with at Maseeng and a referral to Maseeng will be made).

**Q) Haholo mathata a amanang le pelehi kapo ho ima (Particularly problems related to infertility would be referred)?**

A) Ee ho jwalo, dibaka tse kahara thaba di na le boikarabelo bo boholo ba tshebetso eo Badimo e ba abetseng yona, mme sebaka se seng le se seng sena le tshebetso ya sona (Various responsibilities are given by Ancestors to various sacred locations; therefore, every sacred location has its own functionality insofar as cultural work is concerned).

**Q) Jwale Nkgono sebakeng sena otlatswa neng o khutlela hae Morija (Mother, when do you plan to come out of this place and go back to Morija)?**

A) Ho tswa mona ke Badimo feela ba tla qetang nna ha kena matla ano (The Ancestors will decide when I will move out of the valley).

#### *H. Interview on Sefotho with Tankiso: February 2010*

The sacred place called Sefotho is situated in the middle of the upper landscape of the valley; Sefotho is a Sesotho word meaning “a place of steam”. No traditional healer is assigned by the Ancestors to manage it. The data on Sefotho came from an informant called Tankiso who worked closely with the late Monica Magengenene at Lower Madiboko. On the instructions of Monica Magengenene, he agreed to offer information on the indigenous basis of the place, and its functions in response to the needs of the user communities.

**Q) Ntate Tankiso sethatong ke kopa ho bots aka sebaka sena se bitswang Sefotho, le hore se hlalose, ebile se sebetsang (Father Tankiso, at the outset, may I ask you about this place called Sefotho, what is its meaning and how does it function)?**

A) Ngwaneso sebaka sena ke se makatsang haholo, se bitswa Sefotho hobane hona le seka mosi o chesang no tswang ka tlase mokoting, mosi o phekolang. Hape Sefotho ke tsela ya setso yah o phekola meya e mebe e meleng wa motho (My brother this is a very mysterious place, it is called Sefotho because there is steam like substance coming out of a crevice).

**Q) Ha batho ba tlang sefothong le ba bea hodima mokoti ona (When you bring people here, do you put them directly on the crevice)?**

A) Tjee Ntate sebaka sens se fotha maoto eseng mele kaofela (The steam here is only for the feet of the person not for the whole body).

**Q) Ntate ke ne kopa ho utlwisisa Sefotho sena ke sa maoto a kulang, mme maoto ana a tlwiswa mona ho phekolwa (My father, I want to understand about Sefotho, is it only meant for the swollen feet of the person)?**

A) Ntate pheko enngwe le enngwe etswa Badimong, mme ha Badimo ba re maoto a mokodi iswe sefothong re tla phethisa jwalo (Every healing act is from the Ancestors, if the Ancestors instruct that the swollen feet of the sick person should be taken to the steam place then that instruction shall be carried out).

**Q) Batho ba na ba tlang sefothong le ba bea hodima mokoti ona (The people you bring here, do you put them directly on the crevice)?**

A) Tjee Ntate sebaka sena se fotha maoto eseng mele kaofela (The steam here is only for the feet of the person, not for the whole body).

**Q) Ntate ke ne kopa ho utlwisisa Sefotho sena ke sa maoto a kulang, mme maoto ana a tlwiswa mona ho phekolwa (My Father, I want to understand about Sefotho, is it only meant for the swollen feet of the person)?**

A) Ntate pheko enngwe le enngwe etswa Badimong, mme ha Badimo ba re maoto a mokodi a iswe sefothong re tla phethisa jwalo (Every healing act is from the Ancestors, if the Ancestors instruct that the swollen feet of the sick person should be taken to the steam place then that instruction shall be carried out).

**Q) Ha le fihla sebakeng seno le etsang pele (When you arrive at this place, what do you do)?**

A) Re ya rapela ntoo re kgantsa dikerese sebakeng seo, re phahla Badimo (We pray, we light candles and call on Ancestors of the place).

**Q) Ke ka nako efe eo mosi otswang ka mokoting (At what moment does the steam come out of the crevice)?**

A) Ha re se re phahlile Badimo, mme le bona ba dumetse hore tshebetso e ka tswella pele (When we called on the Ancestors and they agreed that this healing work can take place there).

**Q) Hona le meriana e le e tshelwang kahara mokoti hoy a ka taelo ya Badimo, ho re mosi otswa hantle (Are there particular rituals you observe or medicinal herbs you perform before the steam comes out of the crevice)?**

A) Ho jwalo Badimo ke bona ba bolelang hore meriana ke efe e sebedisetswang Sefotho (It is true the Ancestors are the ones who prescribe the kind of medicinal herbs to be used for the steam and what rituals to follow).

**Q) Kutlisiso ya Sefotho hoy aka tsebo yaka ke hore motho o hlobola diaparo ebe o kwahelwa ka kobo pela pitsa ya Sefotho, ho sena motho ha hlobole (My understanding is that the person entering the indigenous steam [Sefotho] undresses and kneels before a hot pot containing herbs with hot water that produces the steam but with this one you don't undress)?**

A) Ho sena Sefotho motho ha a hlobole, empa enwa motho o hlahisa maoto a hae kaofela a ntoo a bea hodima Sefotho se tla phekolang maoto a hae (With this steam a person does not undress, but places his bare feet on the crevice so that healing can be effected).

**Q) Ana maoto a mokodi a phokoleha hang sefothong, a bopaki bo teng (Are the feet of the one sick get healing instantly at the steam area, is there evidence)?**

A) Bakodi nakong tse ngata ha ba kgutlela Madiboko a ne a bonahala a fodile ke Sefotho, empa Nkgono Monica o ne a ba nea meriana ya sets oho hlatswa maoto ha ba fihla hae (The sick people, when they come from the steam, they would often go Mother Monica at Madiboko and she will give them herbs to wash their feet with when they arrive home).

**Q) Ka mantswe a mang hore phodiso e phethahale, ho tshwanetse hoba le Sefotho le meriana ya setso e matlafatsang phodiso (In other words, for healing to completely happen, from the steam certain herbs must be given to the patient in order to fortify the process of healing)?**

A) Ee ho jwalo, empa tsela ena ya phodiso e ikgethile, e laolwa ke ba fatshe (It is like that; however, this special way of healing is administered by the Ancestors).

**Q) Ntate Sefotho sena se hara majwe, se entswe ke mang (This place Sefotho that is encircled by stones, who constructed it)?**

A) Hoya ka dihlahoso tsa baholo ba thaba ena sebaka sena se qapile ke Badimo (According to the elders of the site this place was built by the Ancestors).

**Q) Ka mantswe a mang baholo ba thaba ena ba se fumana se le teng mona (In other words, the elders of the mountain found this place here)?**

A) Le nna ke utlwa jwalo, empa motho ya ka arabang potso ena hantle ke baholo ba thaba (This is the information I also have but the precise people who can answer this question are the elders of the mountain).

**Q) Dibaka tsa phodiso di di ngata kahara thaba le sona sena, tse entsweng ke batho ba chakelang le ho dula kahara thaba (There are many places of healing in the site, including this one, which are constructed by people who visit the site and those who reside in the site)?**

A) Potso ena e tshopodi, hobane sebaka se seng le se seng se ba teng ka baka la Badimo, ebe rona kahara thaba re latela ditaelo (This question is intricate because every place and space in the site comes into being because of the Ancestors and we only follow the instructions from the Ancestors).

**Q) Wena o rometswe ke Nkgono Monica ho arabela bakeng sa Sefotho (You have been sent by Mother Monica to give information about the place of the steam)?**

A) Ke nnete, empa ke fumane thupelo e kgolo e tswang ho Nkgono Monica mabapi le sebaka sena, ke kamoo ke nang le tsebo yah o arabela bakeng sa Sefotho (That is true; however, I have received a lot of training from Mother Monica in regard to this place).

### *I. Interview with the late Monica Magengenene about Sefotho: February 2010*

**Q) Nkgono Monica ke ne ke kopa hlakisetso ya Sefotho ke sa nyatse ke se ke se bolelletsweng ke Ntate Tankiso (Mother Monica, I was requesting for clarification regarding the place Sefotho “Steam” not that I am undermining what Tankiso has shared with me)?**

A) Sefotho ke sebaka sa phodiso ya maoto feela, mono dingaka di futha maoto a bakodi (Sefotho is place of healing swollen feet only, at this place traditional healers steam the swollen feet of the sick people).

**Q) Nkgono sebaka sena o se fumane mona ha o fihla ka thabeng (Mother Monica, did you find this place Sefotho when you first arrived in the site)?**

A) Ha se nna fela ya se fumaneng kahara thaba, boholo ba rona dingaka tsa setso re se fumane se le mona Sefotho (Most of us traditional healers have found this place Sefotho here at the site).

**Q) Nkgono ha o shebile sebaka sa Sefotho eka ho ilwe ha epwa mono (Mother, when you survey the area it appears as though some digging was done to make hole called Sefotho)?**

A) Ha ke dumellane le wena, hobane diketsahalo tsa ka thabeng ke le kunutu la Modimo le Badimo (I do not agree because the mysteries of this mountain emanate from God and Ancestors).



**Q) Sefotho ke enngwe ya mehlolo ya Modimo le Badimo kahara thaba, ana o ka e bapisa le Nkokomohi kapo Tempeleng (This place called Sefotho is one of the mysteries of God and the Ancestors, could you perhaps compare it to Nkokomohi or Tempeleng)?**

A) Ke sitwa ho bapisa sebaka se seng ka se seng empa sethatong Nkokomohi e ne e le son sebaka se tsejwang kahara thaba, ke sa nyatse dibaka tse ding (I am unable to compare the sacred locations of the site, but I must point out that from the outset Nkokomohi has been the most popular location, of course without disregarding the other locations).

***J. Interview on the High Court with Ma Ndaba: March 2010***

The Sesotho name for this sacred location is “Lekgotla le Phahameng”. It is the High Court of the Mautse Site because of its inherent traditional authority, and it deals with matters that are in conflict with the rituals, customs and religions exercised at the sites. A person who violates the traditions and laws of the site may be incarcerated at the High Court by the Ancestors of the site and stiff sentences may be carried out by the Ancestors through the senior traditional leadership of the Mautse site. The interview with Mrs Ndaba will reveal the extent to which the function of the location is understood to be a guardian of the sacred laws of the sites. The Sesotho name for this sacred location is “Lekgotla le Phahameng”. It is called “High Court of the Mautse Site”, because of its inherent traditional authority, which is meant to deal with matters that are in conflict with the ritual, customs and the religions exercised at the sites. A person who violates the traditions and laws of the site may be incarcerated at the High Court by the Ancestors of the site and stiff sentences may be carried out by the Ancestors through the senior traditional leadership of the Mautse site. The interview with Mrs Ndaba will reveal the extent to which the function of the location is understood to be a guardian of the laws of the Mautse Sacred site.

**Q) Mme Ndaba, sa pele ke rata ho lebohela monyetla wa ho re o dumele ho re ke be le puisano le wena ke tulo ena e bitswang “lekgotla le Phameng” (Mother Ndaba, I want to say thank you for affording me an opportunity to interview you about the High Court).**

A) Keya leboha le ho nna ke monyetla (Thank you; it is also a privilege to me).

**Q) Lebitso le leng la hao o Mma Tladi, ho jwalo (Your other name is “Tladi”)?**

A) Ho jwalo, empa jwale ke Ma Ndaba (That is true, but now I am Mrs Ndaba).

**Q) Mona Dibokong o hlahlama Nkgono Monica Magengenene (Here at Lower Madiboko, are you second in power to Mother Monica Magengenene)?**

A) Re se hlotswana ba sebetsang ka tlasa boetapele ba Nkgono Monica (We are a few working under the leadership of Monica Magengenene).

**Q) Hobaneng sebaka sena se bitswa “Lekgotla le Phahameng” (Why do you call this place the High Court)?**

A) Hobane ditsetlebo tsohle tse hlokolotsi kahara thaba, tse tlang ka dingaka le batho ka kakaretso di beiwa lekgotleng le Phahameng (All major concerns and complaints, which are dire at the site, and which are fielded by traditional healers or people in general are taken to the High Court).

**Q) Hona le dinyewe tse nyenyane le tse kgolo kahara thaba (Are there small cases and big cases at the mountain)?**

A) Ho jwalo, dinyewe di ya fapana ka seemo tsa sona (Its true offences are different by their own nature).

**Q) Ke nahana hore hona le dinyewe tse ka tsekwang sebakeng seo di etsahalang ho tsona (I think there could be offences dealt with at the place of committal without going to the High Court)?**

A) Ke rata ho etsa mohlala, ha hona le nyewe Dibokong tsa Nkgono Monica, nyewe ena e mamelwa ke baholo ba itseng ba sebaka seno empa hontse ho tsebiswa Badimo ka nyewe e hlalileng (I want to make an example here at Lower Madiboko; if an offence is committed the matter could be dealt with without going to High Court and the Ancestors will always be informed).

**Q) Nkgono ke ne ke kopa o qolle dinyewe tse ka fetisetwang “lekgotleng le Phahameng” (Mother, can you cite cases that could be taken to the High Court)?**

A) Mohlomong ha ngaka e sa latela ditaelo tsa Badimo le dingaka tse kahodimo ho yena, a sa phethisa thomo ka botshepehi, ena ntho eba nyewe e fetisetwang Lekgotleng le Phahameng (Should a traditional doctor in training violate his/her calling and betrayed the trust bestowed on this person, such as a case is referred to the High Court).

**Q) Nkgono Monica o bitsa sebaka sena Police Station hobaneng (Mother Monica refers to this place as a police station, why)?**

A) Hobane Badimo ba kao kwalla sebakeng seno nako e teletsana, ba ka ho kwala moya wa boporofeta kapo moya wa bongaka (If the Ancestors are angry, they can deprive the offender of the spirit of divination and the spirit of prophecy).

**Q) Sebaka sena se entswe ke dingaka kapo Badimo (Who constructed the High Court, is it the traditional healers or the Ancestors)?**

A) Kgotla ena e hahuwe ke dingaka le baporofeta ba thaba en aka taelo ya Badimo (This High Court was built by traditional healers and prophets through the instructions of the Ancestors).

**Q) Ana ho na le melao e ikgethileng e amanang le “Lekgotla le Phahameng” (Are there any special laws that are unique to this location)?**

A) Ho jwalo, Kgotla ena ena le melao ya yona e ikgethileng, e qapilweng ke Badimo ba thaba ena, mme melao ena ha ya ngolwa fatshe, ke melao e tebileng e tsejwang ke dingaka tse ka sehlohong tsa thaba ena ya Mautse (This court has sacred laws unique to itself that were designed by the Ancestors of the Mautse sacred mountain, but these laws are not written down; they are only known to the most senior traditional healers of the site).

**Q) Hona le phororo ya metsi pela Kgotla, e sebetsang (There is a waterfall next to the High Court; does it have got a specific function)?**

A) E teng phororo ena, ho yona ho tola dingaka tsa pitso e hodimo mme dingaka tsena di kolobetswa, di hlwekiswa le hona ho matlafatswa ke Badimo sebakeng seo (There is a waterfall that is meant to baptise, purify and strengthen traditional healers with a high calling for the work of the Ancestors).

**Q) Ha ke mametse ka kelohlolo Kgotla ena, ha ho phekolwe ho yona, enngwe ntho feela e etsuwan mono ke ho kgalemela bakwenhi le ho matlafatsa dingaka tse Phahameng kahara thaba (When I am listening carefully, the High Court is no healing takes place; it is only a place of discipline and fortifying the work of the traditional healers here at Mautse)?**

A) Ho jwalo (It is like that).

**Q) A hona le phororo kgotleng, mme mosebetsi wa yona ke ofe (Is there a waterfall at the court; what work does it do)?**

A) E teng phororo ena, ho yona ho tola dingaka tsa pitso e hodimo mme dingaka tsena di kolobetswa, di hlwekiswa le hona ho matlafatswa ke Badimo sebakeng seo (There is a waterfall that is meant to baptise, purify and strengthen traditional healers with a high calling for the work of the Ancestors).

**Q) Ha ke mametse ka kelohlolo Kgotla ena, ha ho phekolwe ho yona, enngwe ntho feela e etsuwan mono ke ho kga lemela bakwenhi le ho matlafatsa dingaka tse Phahameng kahara thaba (When I am listening carefully, no healing takes place at the High Court, it is only a place of discipline and fortifying the work of the traditional healers here at Mautse)?**

A) Ho jwalo (It is like that).

**Q) Kgotla ena entse e sebetsa jwalo ka nakong tsa kgale (Is the High Court still in operation these days, like in the old days)?**

A) Entse e sebetsa, hobane ditlokotsebe tse ngata le hona matsatsing ana ba tliswa mona (It is still in operation. Many people who are offenders to this are brought here).

**Q) Ho tswa Madiboko ha Nkgono Monica, hona le ditlokotsebe tse kileng tsa tliswa “Kgotleng e Phahameng” (Did you ever bring offenders from Lower Madiboko to the High Court)?**

A) Ee ho jwalo, ha ngaka e kotlisong e tlola molao wa Dibokong, rona ka bo rona re ka ahlola setlokotsebe, empa Badimo ba ka laela hore setlokotsebe se iswe Kgotla e phahameng (It is like that should a trainee traditional healer or a traditional healer, his/her case could be dealt with at Madiboko, but the Ancestors could direct that the case goes to the High Court).

**Q) Badimo ba laela mang ho re nyewe eye Kgotla e Phahameng (Whom does the Ancestors instruct to refer the case to the High Court)?**

A) Ba ka sehlohong mona thabeng, nakong tsothle Badimo ba bua le bona (Those who are in the leadership of the valley; Ancestors often direct them).

**Q) Ana phapang e teng pakeng tsa nako yane yak gale le nako ya hona jwale mabapi le seriti sa Kgotla e phahameng (Is there a difference between the past times and the present times with respect to the dignity of the High Court)?**

A) Kgotla e phahameng e ntse e le teng le kajeno, seriti sa yona se ntse se le teng, phapang ha eyo pakeng tsa dinako (The dignity of the High Court remains intact to this day, the differences in periods and ages does not count).

**Q) Karolo ke efe ya bohlokwa eo Kgotla e ka e bapalang ho tlisa, hlomphe le toka kahara thaba (Which significant role can the court play in bringing respect, discipline and justice here in the mountain)?**

A) Sepheyo se seholo sa Kgotla ena ke ho lokisa dikweta, le ba senang hlomphe kahara thaba, ke nahana ka mantswe ana toka le hlomphe di tla bonahala mona thabeng (The main objective of the court is to correct thugs and those who have no respect for the mountain).

**Q) Ka kakaretso kgotla ena e lokisitse ntho tse ngata kahara thaba (In general, the court has fixed many wrong things in the mountain)?**

A) Ho jwalo mohlomphehi (It is like that, Sir).

## **ADDENDUM: K-T INTERVIEWS AT MOTOULENG** <sup>42</sup>

### ***K. Interview on Motouleng with Ditaba Tsa Badimo: November 2010***

**Q) Lebitso la Ntate ke mang (What is the name of my Father)?**

A) Lebitso laka leo ke le filweng ke batswadi ke Joseph Sebala, sefane sona ke Tjama (My names given by my parents are Joseph Sebala and my surname is Tjama).

**Q) Jwale ntate lebitso lena “Ditaba Tsa Badimo” le hlaha kae (Now my father this name Ditaba tsa Badimo “The wise words of Ancestors”, where does it come from)?**

A) Lebitso lena ke le filwe ke Badimo ha ke kena mosebetsing ona wa bongaka (This name was given to me when I became a traditional healer).

**Q) Ntate o hlaketse ho kae (Where was my father born)?**

A) Ke hlaketse seterekeng sa Leribe, Lesotho (I was born in the district of Leribe in Lesotho).

**Q) O fumane pitso ya bongaka ba setso ne neng (When did you receive your calling to become a traditional healer)?**

A) Ke fumane pitso ya bongaka ke sa le monyenyanane, empa pitso ena ile ya ba matla dilemong tsa bo 1980 (I received a calling to become a traditional doctor when I was young; however, this calling became more intense in the 1980s).

**Q) Motouleng o fihlile neng (When did you arrive here at Motouleng)?**

A) Ke fihlile ka October 1986 (I arrived here in October 1986).

**Q) O hlaha Lesotho (You were from Lesotho)?**

A) Tjee ke qadile Mautse pele sebakeng se bitswang Tempeleng ka 1985 (No I started at Mautse at a place called Tempeleng in 1985).

**Q) Ka 1986 o bo ya Motouleng (Did you go to Motouleng in 1986)?**

A) Ke bileditswe Motouleng selemong sena ke Modimo le Badimo, hobane ho ne ho hlokahala moetapele lehaheng lena (I was called by my Ancestors and God to Motouleng because there was no leader of the cave there).

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<sup>42</sup> Cawood was a co-fieldworker at the time of this interview and both of us have embarked on further clarity about Motouleng.

**Q) Boetapele ba mofuta ofe bo o buang ka bona (What kind of leadership are you talking about)?**

A) Ke bua ka boetapele ba bo ngaka ba setso kahara lehaha, hobane e mong le e mong o ne e se e le moetapele kahara lehaha (I am talking about leadership in indigenous traditional healing, because everyone of the traditional healers was a leader).

**Q) Jwale o bile moetapele wa baetapele kahara lehaha (Now you became a leader among leaders inside the cave)?**

A) Ntate ke kgethilwe ke lehodimo ho ba moetapele lehaheng lena (Sir, heaven has chosen me to become the leader here).

**Q) Ntate Ditaba tsa Badimo lehaha lena le bitswa Motouleng, ena taba e hlalosang (Wise words of the Ancestors, what does Motouleng mean)?**

A) Motouleng e hlalosa sebaka seo ho sona ho toulwang, ho lokiswang, ho phekolwang ka tsela ya Modimo le Badimo (The meaning of Motouleng is that place things are straightened up, fixed and where healing takes place through the willing of God and the Ancestors).

**Q) Batho ba bang ba re ke sebaka seo meropa e tidinyang haholo ho sena kgefutso (Other people would say Motouleng is a place where drums are repeatedly beaten and the sound of the drums until the sound of the drums become intense)?**

A) Ke nnete empa ka lehlakoreng le leng motho wa toulwa mona, ntho tsohle di ya lokollwa mona eka ke panelbeatara mona (The truth is this place a person is made straight here, everything is made right here, this place is like a panel beater).

**Q) Ka mantswe a mang ho toulda hona ke ha motho a lokiswa, jwale mathuhela wona ha a tidinye meropa kahara lehaha (In other words, this act of drum beating is when a person is fixed up. What about the drum beating of trainee traditional healers who are supposed beat the drums repeatedly)?**

A) Mathuela a tshwanetse ho otlala meropa, ho tobeketsa hore sebaka sena ke sa Motouleng moo Modimo le Badimo ba fodisang ba kulang, moo Modimo le Badimo ba etsang mathuela dingaka (Is it trainee traditional healers' duty to beat the drums in order to emphasise that the Motouleng is where God and the Ancestors heal those who are sick. Furthermore it is a place where trainee traditional healers (sangomas become qualified sangomas through God and the Ancestors).

**Q) Hobaneng o hatella Modimo pela Badimo mona Motouleng (Why do you emphasise God before you mention the Ancestors here at Motouleng)?**

A) Monghadi lehaha lena le tswa ho Ntate Modimo, mme Modimo a ntoo mema Badimo hoba karolo ya lehaha lena (Sir, this cave comes from God and then he invited the Ancestors to be part of this cave).

**Q) O hlalosa ka polelo ena, ke kopa hlakisetso hobane re ntse re nahana hore ke sebaka sa Badimo (What do you mean by this explanation, the impression we had was that the Ancestors had the total oversight of the cave)?**

A) Ke kopa hore o utlwisise hore Badimo ha ba hahle Lehaha lena, ena ke ketso ya Modimo (I want you to understand that the Ancestors did not build this cave, God did).

**Q) Ho wena Modimo ke ena ka sehlohong lehaheng lena (According to you no one is above God in this cave)?**

A) Ho jwalo, ha hona motho ya ka hahang tulo e tshwanang le ena (It is like that no human being can build a cave like this one).

**Q) Ntate o re o fihlile mona ka 1986, pela 1986 ho ne ho etsahalang mona (My Father, you say you arrived here in 1986, what happened here prior to 1986)?**

A) Pale ya tulo ena e re dilemong tsa bo 1930 ho ya hodimo, sebaka sena se ne se chakelwa ke dingaka feela tsa bo ntate ntoo ba etsa mosebetsi wa setso ba kgutlela metseng ya bona (The story of this place is that during the 1930s, this place was only visited by male traditional healers. After the cultural work had been completed inside the cave they would go back home).

**Q) Ka mantswe a mang ho ne ho sena motho ya dulang kahara lehaha (In other words, no person stayed inside the cave)?**

A) Dingaka tsa setso di ne di kena hoseng pele letsatsi le dikela ebe di tswile (Traditional healers would come in the morning and before sunset they are out of the cave).

**Q) Hoya ka chadimo yaka eka maemo a fetohile, hona le dingaka tse dulang kahara lehaha le batho ba dulang ba entse lehaha lena lehae (I observe that the standing orders have changed, there are traditional healers and other people who permanently stay in the cave)?**

A) Ke nnete maemo a lehaha a fetohile, boholo ba batho ba se ba dula kahara lehaha (That is true, too many people stay in the cave).

**Q) Maemo a fetohile ke nnete, le lehaha ha le sa kenwa ke dingaka tsa setso feela (The conditions of the cave have changed; furthermore, it is not only the traditional healers who enter the cave)?**

A) Maemo a lehaha a qadile ho fetoha ka 1966, ha moruti e mong ka lebitso la John Mphuti ya neng a hlaha Qwa-Qwa a tsamaya le phuteho ya hae, ba kena lehaha ba tshwarela ditsebeletso

tsa kereke mono (The conditions of the cave changed in 1966 when a certain Rev John Mphuti from QwaQwa came with his church members to the cave and conducted church services inside the cave).

**Q) Ho re batho le dingaka tsa setso ba dule kahara lehaha o re ke ka baka la Moruti Mphuti (You say for people and traditional healers to stay inside the cave is because of Rev Mphuti)?**

A) Tjee ha ke re jwalo, se ke lehang ho se hlalosa ke hore Moruti Mphuti o ile a tisa tsebetso enngwe kahara lehaha e ileng ya hohela batho haholo kahara lehaha (What I am trying to explain is that the coming of Rev Mphuti attracted many people to the cave).

**Q) Sethatong tsebetso kahara lehaha ene e le ya dingaka tsa setso, empa hotla ha Moruti Mphuti haeba le tsebetso ya sedumedi sa bokreste (At the beginning the only cultural practise inside the cave was that of the traditional healers, but the coming of Rev Mphuti saw a Christian worship service being conducted there. Is that so)?**

A) Ho jwalo monghadi ha Moruti Mphuti a fihla Motouleng ho bile le ditsebetso tse pedi (It is true, Sir, with the advent of Rev Mphuti coming to the cave, the cave offered two services).

**Q) Kereke ya Moruti Mphuti e ne e kena neng kahara lehaha (This church service of Rev Mphuti, when did it take place inside the cave)?**

A) Ha ke hopole hantle, ho re ditsebetso di ne di kena ha kae kahara lehaha (I do not precisely remember when the services were held in the cave).

**Q) Ditsebetso tsena di pedi kahara lehaha enngwe ke ya setso enngwe ke ya sekreste, ho ya ka wena ntate ke efe ho tsona e neng e hohela batho (These services inside the cave, which of the two had a greater impact on the people)?**

A) Ditsebetso tsena di bohlokwa di le pedi, enngwe ke e tsepameng haholo sedimong, enngwe ke e tsepameng haholo ho Modimo kasebele (The two services are important, the one is based on the Ancestors and the other one is based on God himself).

**Q) Tsebetso ena ya bokreste, ke bokreste jwalo ka bo hlahella kahara bebele (This Christian service, is it Christianity as appearing in the bible)?**

A) Bokreste bona, ke bona bo hlahellang kahara bebele, mme bo ikamahantse le ditlwaelo tsa setho, ha bo qelele setso ka thoko (This Christianity comes from the Bible; furthermore, it is related to our belief systems, this Christianity does not disregard our cultures and traditions).

**Q) Ana bokreste bona, bona le setso sa bo Afrika (Does this Christianity contain African belief systems in it)?**



A) Ho jwalo, ha o bala bebele ka kelohloko testamente ya kgale le e ncha o tla elellwa hore e toboketsa tsebetso ya sedumedi mona (It is like that, when you carefully read the Old and New Testaments, you will realise it emphasises the Christian work here).

**Q) Hona le mohlala kapo mehlala e o kae etsang mabapi le taba ena (Do you perhaps have examples you can cite about this matter)?**

A) Meetlo ya hlatsuo kahara bebele (2 Marena, 5:1ff) phodiso ya lepera la Namane lewatleng la Jordane. Kolobetso ya Morena Jesu ka Johanne Mokolobetsi lewatleng la Jordane (Mattheu, 3:13ff) ke ditsebetso tse etsuwang mona lehaheng (The customs of human cleansing of Naman's leprosy in (2 Kings 5:1ff) The baptism of the lord Jesus by John the Baptist in (Matthew 3:13ff).

**Q) Meetlo ya Se Afrika ditemaneng tsena tse o di badileng ya hlahella (Do we come across African traditional beliefs in these passages you cited)?**

A) E hlahella haholo, hobane sebakeng sena seo re leng ho sona, re sebetsa batho, ntoo re ba hlatswa nokeng ya Phofu e mabapi le lehaha, re phekola meya e mebe, ntoo re sebeletsa phofu nokeng, tsebeletsong tsa dikolobetso mona lehaheng di phethelwa nokeng, ena ketsahalo e tobane hantle le diketsahalo tse kahara bebele (There is evidence from the Bible that supports an argument for African traditional beliefs, because in this place we cleanse sick people at the nearby river called Phofong. We exorcise evil spirits, we baptise people at this river during church services. These actions therefore confirm our allegiance to the bible).

**Q) Ha o fihla mona ka 1966 lehaha lena la Motouleng le ne le ena le eng kahara lona (When you arrived here in 1966, what did you find inside the cave)?**

A) Hone ho ena le seka aletare mane monyakong wa lehaha o bitswang Maseeng (When I arrived here there was some kind of an altar at the entrance of the cave called Maseeng).

**Q) Hobaneng e ne e bitswa Maseeng kahara lehaha (Why was it called Maseeng inside the cave)?**

A) Ba tlileng ka pelaka ba re Motouleng ene e le sebaka sa Bo-Mme ba neng ba batla bana hobane e le dinyopa (Those who came before me in this place, say that Motouleng was a fertility site, specifically for barren women).

**Q) Le hona jwale entse e le sebaka se thusang dinyopa (Is it even now still a site that helps with fertility problems)?**

A) Ho jwalo empa meaho e se e le mengata kahara lehaha (It is like that, but there are too many structures in the cave).

**Q) Ka mantswe a mang o bolela hore meaho ena e bile teng kamamorao ho Maseeng, mme yona e phetha mesebetsi e meng e fapaneng (In other words, are you saying that there are other structures which were built after Maseeng for a different purpose)?**

**A)** Ho jwalo, ka mantswe a mang sebopeho le sepheyo sa lehaha lena di le tsa fetoha (It is true, the identity and purpose of the cave changed).

**Q) Meaho ena Ntate, ke e amanang le tsebetso ya setso le bongaka ba setso (These structures, my Father, are they earmarked for cultural work and indigenous traditional healers)?**

**A)** Ke dibaka tse makatsang, ke dibaka tsa Modimo le Badimo (These structures or places are mystical; they belong to God and the Ancestors).

**Q) Ke tlo kopa hore dibaka tsena kapo meaho ena re e tadime bong ka bong ha re qeta puisano ena e amanang le Motouleng, ho tla lokela Ntate ha ke etsa jwalo (I am going to request my father that we examine the places or structures one by one, if it is okay with my father)?**

**A)** Ho tla be ho nepahetse hobane jwale ke tla hlalosa ka ho teba mosebetsi wa sebaka se seng le se seng kahara lehaha (This will be quite in order because I will be able to explain each structure's work in the cave in-depth).

**Q) Pele reya meahong ena re bua ka yona, wa mo tseba Nkgono Betty Nhlapo wa Clarens (Before we expound on the individual structures of the cave, do you know Grandmother Betty Nhlapo of Clarens)?**

**A)** Ke ya mo utlwela ho re ke bona batho ba tsebang lehaha lena hantle (I have learnt of her that she is very knowledgeable about this cave).

***L. Interview with Betty Nomaxhosa Nhlapo by Stefanie Cawood: September 2009***

**Q) Ntate Ditaba Tsa Badimo, ha o ntumella ke ne ke rata ho hlahisa puo ya Stephanie Cawood le Nkgono Betty Nhlapo wa Clarens mabapi le lehaha la Motouleng, ke nna ya neng a toloka puisano ya bona, ho lokile nka e hlahisa (My Father, "Wise words of Ancestors", I want you to give me permission to shed light on the interview Stephanie Cawood had with Grandmother Betty Nhlapo of Clarens in regard to the Motouleng cave. I was the interpreter in that interview; can I shed light on it)?**

**A)** Ke tla mamela puisano ena, mme ke tla tshwaela mo ke tshwaelang (I will listen to this interview and I will give a comment if needs be).

**Q) Dumela Nkgono, ke tlo kopa ho ho botsa dipotso di se kae ka lehaha la Motouleng, Nkgono a kare thusa (Good day, Grandmother, I am here to request you to grant me permission to interview you about the Motouleng cave, will that suit my mother)?**

A) Ho lokile, pele ke araba, le hlaha kae? Le bo mang? (It is fine, before I answer your questions, where do you people come from? Who are you?).

**Q) Nkgono mosebetsi hantle wa lehaha lena ke ofe (Grandmother, what is the actual work of this cave)?**

A) Lehaha lena ke la Modimo le Badimo ba rona, mosebetsi wa lona ha o hlalosehe habobebe (This cave belongs to God and our Ancestors; its function is not easy to narrate).

**Q) Empa Nkgono ho tshwanetse ha bo ho le ntho ya bohlokwa e amanang le lehaha lena eo o ka re tsebisang yona (Grandmother, I am sure there must be something very important that you can share with us in regard to the cave)?**

A) Motouleng ke tulo e hlohonolofaditsweng, moo motho a ka fumanang lehlohonolo, le tswellopele le kgotso (Motouleng is a highly blessed place where a person can find luck, success and lasting peace).

**Q) Ka mantswe a mang ha motho a ne a ka hata mabala kahara lehaha o ne a tswa mono a fetohile (In other words if a person enters the cave and steps on its ground, he/she comes out a different person)?**

A) Ho jwalo, empa ho ne ho sa kenwe feela, melao e ne beilwe ke batswadi ba rona hore batho ba Bo-Mme haholo bananyana ba ne ba sa tshwanela ho kena ka lehaha, feela ho ne hona le Bo-Mme ba baholo ba neng ba kgethwa ke baholo ba lehaha ho ka kena ho tla phethisa mosebetsi o itseng ( It is like that, but not everyone was allowed to enter the cave, regulations where put in place by our parents that young girls where not supposed to come to the cave, however, there where elderly women who were chosen by the traditional leadership of the cave to come into the cave and conduct certain work).

**Q) Ka mantswe a mang, hantle hantle lehaha lena e ne e le la bo Ntate (In other words, this cave belonged to male persons)?**

A) Ho ne ho kena dingaka tsa Bontate tsa setso tse kgolo, e seng Ntate e mong le e mong feela (Only male traditional healers of good standing were permitted to enter the cave, not just any male person).

**Q) Dingaka tsena tsa Bontate di ne di sebetse bakodi kahara lehaha (Did these traditional healers help sick people inside the cave)?**

A) Lehaha lena le ne le thusa Bomme ba sa fumaneng bana, dinyopa mme boholo ba dingaka tsena ba ne ba tlo thusa dinyopa (This was a fertility cave, it helped those women who were barren, the traditional healers who came to the cave were to help these women).

**Q) Nkgono ho re nyopa e fumane e be moimana o ne a tshwanetse ho etsang lehaheng (Grandmother, for a barren woman to conceive a child, what should she do in the cave)?**

A) Ho tshwanetswe ha etswa moetlo o tadimaneng le tshebetso ena, mme one o etsiwa ke dingaka tse kgolo tsa lehaha (A fertility ritual was firstly supposed to be performed by the most senior traditional healer, indigenous protocol played a very important role in the fertility ritual).

**Q) Ka mantswe a mang ngaka ena e kgolo e tla laela nyopa ho re e etseng ho ya ka tshebetso e tlabeng e hlaha badimong (In other words, this senior traditional healer would instruct the barren woman what to do when the Ancestors have instructed him)?**

A) Boholo ba nako lehlabathe kahara lehaha le tla nkuwa ebe ho botjwa ngwana ho tswa lehlabatheng lena le tswakantswe le metsi (At all times when the fertility ritual is performed, clay would be taken and softened to form a baby from the clay).

**Q) Ebe ho etsahalang Nkgono morao ha hore ngwana enwa wa lehlabathe a botjwe (Then what happens after the clay baby has been created)?**

A) Ngwana enwa wa lehlabathe o tla fuwa moholo kapa ngaka e kgolo ya lehaha, ntoo ngaka ena aya sekgutlwaneng a le mong ho bua le Modimo le Badimo ho re nyopa e fumantshwe ngwana (The clay baby would be given to the principal traditional healer in the cave, who would then would invoke the spirit of the Ancestors on behalf of the woman so that the Ancestors can make her conceive a child).

**Q) Nkgono morao ha mekutu ena kaofela nyopa e ne e ima e be e fumane ngwana (Grandmother, after all the hard work was completed, would the barren woman eventually conceive and give birth to a child)?**

A) Ho jwalo, mosadi enwa ha e se e le mo imana o tla be antse a le hae, mohlang a fumanang ngwana o tshwanetse ho mo tlisa lehaheng hore ngwana enwa a hlohonolofatswe ke Modimo le Badimo (It is like that, when this woman is pregnant, she will still be at home. The day she gives birth to the baby, she is obliged to bring the baby to the cave for a blessing by God and the Ancestors).

**Q) Ke kamoo Nkgono o reng lehaha lena ke la bomme ba batlang bana hobane e le dinyopa (Is that the reason why this is a fertility cave, nothing else)?**

A) Motouleng ke sepetlele sa lehodimo, ke sepetlele sa Badimo hobane ha hona motho wa Mme eo e leng nyopa a ka tswang mona entse e le nyopa ekaba lehodimo ha le sebetse (Motouleng is a hospital of heaven; you cannot enter the cave a barren woman and go out a barren woman, then it means that heaven does not work).

**Q) Nkgono diketsahalo tsena o di bone ka mahlo a hao, dinyopa di fumana bana (Grandmother, did you see all these happenings with your own eyes, barren women bearing children)?**

A) Ho jwalo, lehaha lena la Motouleng ke la bophelo, Modimo le Badimo ba teng ho lona (It is like that, Motouleng is a cave of life giving, God and the Ancestors are present in it).

**Q) Nkgono, ana hona le diketsahalo tse ding tse makatsang tsa lehaha lena (Grandmother, are there any mysterious happenings at this cave apart from the fertility rites)?**

A) Ho jwalo, lehlwa le ne rata ho ba teng kahara lehaha, mme ena e ne e le tshupo ya ho re Modimo le badimo ba hlohonolofaditse lehaha (It is like that, at Motouleng snow used to fall and this was an indication that God and the Ancestors have blessed the cave).

**Q) Mme lehlwa lena le ne qetheha lehang feela kapa le kante ho lehaha (Would this snow only fall at the cave or also outside the cave)?**

A) Le tla qetheha feela Motouleng (The snow will only fall at Motouleng).

**Q) Jwale Nkgono ha lehlwa lena le feela, e be ho etsahalang Motouleng (Now, Grandmother, when the snow subsides, what will then happen at the cave)?**

A) E tla ba jwale Modimo le Badimo ba hlahisa dirurubele tse tshweu di fofa kahara lehaha, e le tshupo ya hore ho tla le katleho le bokamoso bo botle ditshebetsong tsa lehaha (It is then that God and the Ancestors would bring about white butterflies flying in the cave as a sign of prosperity and bright future in the services of the cave)?

**Q) Diketsahalo tsena tse ntle tsa lehaha la Motouleng, o nahana di sa ntsane di le teng matsatsing ana (All these happenings at the cave; could they still be experienced to this day)?**

A) Motouleng o fetohile, bohloko ba batho ba tsebang bohaleledi ba lehaha lena ba re bo senyehile, bo sengwa ke batho ba seng ba dula kahara lona (Motouleng has changed, the majority of the people who know the sacrality of this cave say there is a lot of profanity at the cave because of the people who now stay inside the cave).

**Q) Re ile mono makgetlho a mararo hoya ho bone ha ra bona lehlwa le dirurubele (We've been to the cave three to four times, we have not seen the snow no the butterflies)?**

A) Jwale ka ha ke boletse, sebe se se ngata kahara lehaha, lehaha lena le sentse ke batho, nakong tsa batswadi ba rona ho ne ho sena motho ya dulang kahara lehaha, hobane ke sebaka sa Badimo (As I have explained, there are lots of sins at the cave. This cave has been messed up by the people who stay here. During the time of our parents, no persons were allowed to stay inside the cave).

*M. The comments of Ntate Ditaba Tsa Badimo about Betty Nhlapo: October 2009*

**Q) Ntate o utlwile puisano ya Stephanie Cawood le Nkgono Betty Nhlapo, tshwaelo ya hao e reng (My Father, you heard the interview of Grandmother Betty Nhlapo by Stephanie Cawood; do you have any comments about it)?**

A) Ke dumellana le Nkgono Betty ha le kgolo, hobane o fana ka pale e nepahetseng ya lehaha lena (I agree fully with Betty, because she gives the correct story of the cave).

**Q) Nkgono Betty o re lehaha lena ho ne ho sa dule motho ho lona nakong tsa kgale, hobane e le la Modimo le Badimo (Grandmother Betty says that during olden times no people stayed at the cave, because the cave belonged to God and Ancestors)?**

A) Ke dumela ka botlalo, hobane lehaha lena ha le tshwane le mahaha a mang (I fully agree, because this cave is not like any other cave).

**Q) Ntate o dumela ka botlalo, empa boholo ba lona le dula kahara lehaha, ho tla jwang (Father, you agree, but most of you stay at the cave, why)?**

A) Ke nnete boholo ba rona re dula kahara lehaha, ke kamoo nna ke ileng ka bitswa ho tla ho hlokomela lehaha le neng le sengwa ke batho, ke tlisitswemona ke Modimo le Badimo ba lehaha lena (It is true, most of us stay in the cave. That is why I was called by God and the Ancestors of this cave to look after the cave, because the people were desecrating the cave).

**Q) Karolo e o e bapalang ke ya ho hlokomela boleng le bohalaledi ba lehaha (Is your role here to uphold the sanctity and sacrality of the cave)?**

A) Modimo le Badimo bang latile ko Mautse, ba mpoella hore lehaha lena la Motouleng la senyeha (God and the Ancestors fetched me from Mautse and told me that Motouleng had been desacralized).

**Q) Lehaha lena la Motouleng le karolo tse pedi ha jwale, hona le karolo e hlokometsweng ke wena le karolo e hlokometsweng ke Ntate Samuel Radebe, hobaneng dikarolo tsena tse pedi (This cave is divided into two parts. The one side is looked after by yourself and the other side is looked after by Mr Samuel Radebe. Why do you have a divided cave)?**

A) Lehaha lena le karolo tse pedi ke nnete, batho ba tseka maemo kahara lehaha, mme maemo ana hana pitso ya Modimo le Badimo, ke yona ntho e senyang lehaha lena (It is true this is a divided cave, because people want to claim status in this cave; these are the things that mess up the cave).

**Q) Jwale Ntate, Modimo le Badimo ba reng ka lehaha le karolo tse pedi (Now, my Father, what does God and the Ancestors say about the divided cave)?**

A) Modimo le Badimo ha ba thaba, empa karolo e ke e neilweng ho e hlokomela e sebetsa hantle, hoyla ka melao ya Ntate Modimo le Badimo ba lehaha lena (God and the Ancestors are unhappy about the condition of the cave, but the side that is managed by me is well taken care of, because I follow the laws of God and of the Ancestors of this cave).

**Q) Nkgono Betty o re ha Modimo le Badimo ba thabile ho ne ho bonahala lehlwa le latelwe ke dirurubele mona Motouleng, ha ho sa le jwalo ka mehleng ya kgale (Grandmother Betty says when God and the Ancestors were happy, snow, followed by butterflies would be seen here at Motouleng, is it still like that)?**

A) Diphethoho di di ngata kahara lehaha, mme diketsahalo tsena tsa mohlolo tsa kgale ha di sa bonahala, empa re ntse re rapela Modimo a matlafatse ditshebeletso tsa lehaha lena (There are many changes in the cave; however, these miraculous happenings of the olden days are no longer present, but we always pray to God to bless and strengthen the work of this cave).

**Q) Ntate ha o shebile, lehaha lena le ka kgutlela maamong a bohalaledi ba lona ba pele (My Father, do you think this cave can assume its former holy status)?**

A) Lona le ka kgutlela ha feela re ka qeqa Modimo le Badimo (The cave can regain its holy status only if we plead with God and the Ancestors).

**Q) Ntate o bolela ho re, batho bana ba kahara lehaha ba ka tswa mona ba kgutlela moo ba tswang teng, mme la tshwana jwaloka ka pele moo ho neng ho sa kene mang le mang (My Father, are you implying that these people who stay in the cave could vacate the cave and go back to where they come from, so that it should be like the old times where a selected few could enter the cave)?**

A) Batho bana ba kahara lehaha boholo ba bona ba rometswe ke Badimo ba bona, mme o kekebe wa phehisa pitso ya motho, ho tlo ba boima hore batho batswe ba tlohele lehaha (The majority of these people in this cave are sent by their Ancestors; therefore, it is difficult to debate a person's calling to the cave. It will be difficult for them to leave the cave).

**Q) Ke tshepa hore hona le dinako tseo le di behetsweng ke Badimo ba lona hore le kena neneng Motouleng ebilane le tswa neneng, wena o tswa neng Ntate (I trust that there are times that have**

**been set by your Ancestors of the period you should stay in the cave and when you should leave the cave. Father, when do you actually come out of the cave)?**

A) Ena ke taba e amanang le Badimo haholo, ke bona ba laelang motho lehaheng ebile ke bona hape ba mo neang nako ya ho tswa, nna nkabe ke tswile selemong se fetileng ka October, empa Badimo ba itse ke eme hape, ke dule selemo se seng kahara lehaha, ho tswa ke tshwanetse ho tswa (This matter belong to the Ancestors; they are the ones who bring a person to the cave again. It is they who determine when a person will leave the cave. As for , I was supposed to leave last year October, but my Ancestors stopped me and asked me to stay another year, but I had to move out of the cave).

**Q) Ntate ha a tswa, o tswela ho kae, o kgutlela Lesotho (When my father moves out of the cave, where does he go, back to Lesotho)?**

A) Ha ke tswa mona ke tshwanetse ho etsa mokete wa hotswa, mme ke tla le mema, empa ha ke kgutlele lesotho, ke tla be ke ntse ke le Freistata (When I come out of the cave, I have to slaughter and prepare a feast. I would invite you, but I am not going back to Lesotho, I will still be in the Free State).

#### *N. Interview on Maseeng at Motouleng with Ntate Ditaba Tsa Badimo: October 2009*

**Q) Ntate, ke kopa o hlalose hore Lentswe lena Maseeng le bolelang (Would my Father please explain the meaning of the name Maseeng)?**

A) Lebitso lena Maseeng, le bolela sebaka seo hosona motho a ka fumantshwang lesea (This name *Maseeng* explains a place where a person can be given a child).

**Q) Lentswe lena Maseeng ka sengesemane le hlalosa bana ba ba nyenyane (Could the word Maseeng in English be translated as infants)?**

A) Ke nnete, moelelo mona lehaheng, ke hore Maseeng ke sebaka se ikgethileng haholo, hape ke moo Modimo le Badimo ba thusang bo mme ba senang pelehi (It is true, the understanding in this cave is that Maseeng is a highly sacred place where God and the Ancestors could be of help to barren women).

**Q) Jwale lebitso lena Maseeng le tobane le bomme ba senang pelehehi, ka mantswe a mang ba sa imeng (Now, this name Maseeng is related to women who are barren, in other words, those who do not conceive)?**

A) Ho jwalo, sebaka sena ke sa batho ba batlang bana mme ho pala, mme mona he bothata ba batho bana bo tla lokiswa (It is like that, this place is for people who have been trying to have a child but to no avail, now, at this sacred place this problem will be solved).



**Q) Ntate ke bona seka aletare le dikerese tse tukang bakeng sena se bitswang Maseeng, ena ketso e hlalosang (My Father, I see that there is some altar with burning candles here at Maseeng, what does it mean)?**

A) Ha Ntate le Mme ba batla ngwana, ba tla kgantsa kerese hodima aletare ntooo ba phahla badimo ba bona le badimo ba lehaha ba ikopela ngwana (When the man and the woman request to have a baby, they will bring a candle to the altar and burn it upon the altar. They will invoke the spirit of the Ancestors of the cave and their Ancestors).

**Q) Ketsahalo ena moetlong wa Basotho o bolelang (What does this event mean in terms of the culture of the Basotho people)?**

A) E bolela hore ha ho letho le hlolang Modimo le Badimo, haholo lebakeng lena la ho thusa basadi ba sa imeng (This mystery means that there is nothing that beats God and the Ancestors, specifically with regard to this problem of infertility).

**Q) Ntate ke karolo efe e o e bapalang, ha Monna le Mosadi ba batla ngwana mona Maseeng (My Father, what role do you play in the life of a couple in search of a child here at Maseeng)?**

A) Karolo yaka ke ho ba kopanya le sedimo sa mona Motouleng le ho kopa Modimo o moholo ho arabela dithapelo tsa bona, ho re ba fumantshwe ngwana (My role is to intercede on the couples' behalf with the Ancestors of Motouleng and to plead with the Almighty to give them a child).

**Q) Hoya ka tsebo ya hao basadi bana eba baimana babe ba fumana bana (According to your knowledge, do these women conceive and ultimately bear children)?**

A) Ba ba ngata ba kena mona, morao ha kgwedi di se kae ba kgutla e le baimana, bopaki bo bo ngata (The majority of these women who come to the cave; after a couple months they come back pregnant. There is a lot of evidence proving this fact).

**Q) A kere pele kwana lehaha lena le ne le sebeletsa dinyopa, ene e le mosebetsi wa lona, jwale karolo ena ya lehaha ke yona e leng Maseeng, hobaneng (Primordially this cave used to be of service primarily to barren women, the whole cave. Now I see that only this small part is called Maseeng, why)?**

A) Ke nnete, empa jwale boholo ba mahloko a batho ba rona a phekolwa mona e seng, bothata ba dinyopa feela (Yes, that is true, but you must be mindful of the fact that the cave heals a variety of ailments, not only barren women).

**Q) Ntate ha Mme le Ntate ba kopa ngwana mona Maseeng, a ho a etsahala hore ba kope ngwana wa ngwanana kapo wa moshimane (My Father, when the man and the woman look for help to**

**have a child here at Maseeng, is it possible they can request that the Ancestors give them a child of their choice with respect to gender)?**

A) Ha ngata batho ba na ba batlang ngwana ba tla etsa kopo ya mofuta oo ha ba phahla badimo (Most of the times the couples who request to have a child, will appease and invoke ancestral spirits and communicate to the Ancestors the specific gender they want for the child).

**Q) Ntate mme ho tla etsahala fela jwalo ka ba kopile (Will their request be granted, My Father)?**

A) Badimo ha ba arabetse ho tla etsuwa hoya ka kopo ya bona (When the Ancestors have conceded to their request, their wishes will be granted).

**Q) Hona le meetlo e itseng e amanang le hore ngwana e be moshemane kapo ngwanana (Are there any special rituals connected to a particular gender of the child)?**

A) Ditshebetso tsa ho kopa ngwana ha di fapane, empa ha ho kopiwa ngwana wa ngwanana batswadi ba tshwanetse ho tla ka seaparo sa lesea se kang se pinki, haele moshemane seaparo se be talana (For rituals requesting a particular gender of the child, the couple must bring infant clothing with them. For a female it must be pink; for a male it must be blue).

**Q) Ebe ho etsuwang ka diaparo tsena (Then what happens to this clothes)?**

A) Batho bana ba tla laelwa ke ngaka e ba tlisitseng Maseeng hore bayo lata lehlabathe la diwashong, mme ngaka etla bopa seka ngwana ka lehlabathe lena a ntoo le apesa seaparo sa ngwana o motshehadi kapo o motona (The couple will be instructed by the traditional healer to go and bring clay in the cave, and the traditional healer will begin to create a baby out of the softened clay and dress it with the colour of the required gender).

**Q) Ebe jwale ho etsahalang hamamorao, ha se ngwana wa lehlabathe a apesitswe (What happens now when the clay child is dressed)?**

A) Mosadi ya batlang ngwana otlala mo fuwa, a mo tshware jwalo eka ke ngwana wa nnete, nakong tse ding otlala mo pepa a ntse a kopa ho badimo ho mofa ngwana (The woman who wants a child will take the clay child into her hands and pretend as though this is a living baby. At times, she can place the clay baby on her back and ask the Ancestors to give her a child).

**Q) Ngwana enwa o mo tshwara le ho mo pepa nako e kae (What length of period does the woman have to hold the child with her hand or place it on her back)?**

A) Eka ba letsatsi, kapo dihora tse itseng, mme nako e laolwa haholo ke badimo (It can be a day or hours, but the time span is under the control of the Ancestors).

**Q) Jwale badimo ba bua le yena ka nako ya ho tshwara ngwana enwa wa lehlabathe (Now, do the Ancestors converse with the woman about the time span of the clay baby)?**

A) Ngaka ya hae ke yona e buang le badimo mohlomong ka ditaola, mme ditaelo tse nepahetseng di tla tswa ho ngaka (The traditional healer is the one who converses with the Ancestors; all the instructions will come from him).

**Q) Ntate jwale ho etsahalang ka ngwana enwa wa lehlabathe, mohlomong ha mosadi e se e le moimana (My Father, what then happens to this child of clay, maybe when this woman has conceived)?**

A) Ha mosadi a qeta ho pepa, ngaka e chwatla ngwana wa lehlabathe e ntoo lahla (After the woman has given birth to a child, the traditional healer will destroy this clay child and throw it away).

**Q) Lebitso la ngwana o le fuwa ke mang? Ke boletsa tabeng ya hore, ngwana o bile teng ka baka la badimo ba lehaha lena (Who gives the name of the child? I am asking because the child came because of the Ancestors of the cave)?**

A) Batswadi ba iphela ngwana lebitso, rona ha re kene mono (The child will be named by the parents, we don't get involved in name giving).

**Q) Karolo eo badimo ba e bapalang ke efe ha ngwana a tla a hola, jwale ka ele ngwana ya fumanweng ka baka la matla a badimo (What role does the Ancestors play when the child is growing up in regard to the fact that the child came through the power of Ancestors)?**

A) Ha ngwana a kile fumanwa ka tsela ya badimo wa nne a tliswe lehaheng, ha ntse a hola, e le hore batswadi ba tlisa diteboho bakeng sa ngwana (When the child is found through the Ancestors, the child will come to the cave and then the parents will offer a thanksgiving sacrifice on behalf of the child).

**Q) Ke rata ho qetela ke botsa hore, matla a tshebetso ya Maseeng ya ho thusa dinyopa e ntse e ananelwa ke merabe e tlang lehaheng (What I would like to know in the end is, is the work here at Maseeng that deals directly with the barren women appreciated by different tribes coming to the cave)?**

A) Merabe yotlhe e tlang lehaheng, haholo mona Maseeng, e ananela mosebetsi wa ho thusa dinyopa ka nako tsohle (All the tribes that come to the cave, particularly here at Maseeng, appreciate the assistance rendered to the barren woman).

*O. Interview of Tafale ya Lehodimo with Ditaba Tsa Badimo: October 2010*

**Q) Ntate Ditaba Tsa Badimo lejwe le na le leholo le bitswang (My Father, “wise words of Ancestors”; what is the name of this huge stone)?**

A) Lejwe le na ke tafole ya lehodimo (This stone is the table of heaven).

**Q) Hobaneng lejwe le na le bitswa tafole ya lehodimo (Why is the stone called the table of heaven)?**

A) Ntate, ke amohetse taelo ho tswa ho Modimo le Badimo hore lejwe lena e be feela la dicheso (Sir, I received an instruction from God and the Ancestors to preserve the rock solely for burnt offerings in the cave).

**Q) Jwale lebitso le na lona “tafole ya lehodimo” le hlaha kae (Now, this name “table of heaven”; where does it come from)?**

A) Mohlang ke ne ke amohela taelo mabapi le lejwe lena, lentswe le itse ke tafole ya lehodimo (The day when I received the instruction in relation to this rock, a voice came out, saying this is a “table of heaven”).

**Q) Mabaka ke afe a entseng hore lejwe lena le bitswe “tafole ya lehodimo” (What were the reasons that this rock be called “table of heaven”)?**

A) Ke hobane bohoto ba batho kahara lehaha ba ne ba rathela patsi hodima lejwe lena, jwale Modimo le Badimo ba ne ba batla ena ntho e fele (It is because many people in the cave chopped wood on the rock; that is why God and the Ancestors directed that wood should not be chopped there any more).

**Q) Jwale, lejwe lena kapa lefika lena le kgethilwe ke Modimo le Badimo hore dihlabelo di etsetswa hodima lejwe lena (Now, has this rock been chosen by God and the Ancestors so that the burnt offering could be offered on it)?**

A) Ho jwalo, ha ho na nnete e fetang eno, hobane badimo ba sebaka sena ba shebile ntho efe kapa efe e etahalang mona, mme ho re ba emise batho ho rathela patsi hodima lefika e ne e le ketsahalo ya ho hlwekisa sebaka seo (That is true, because the Ancestors of this cave look upon everything that happens here. Now, they had to stop people who were chopping wood on the stone in order to stop the profanity of the location).

**Q) Puo ena “tafole ya lehodimo” eka e itshetlehile haholo ho Modimo e seng Badimo (This reference “table of heaven” is leaning strongly towards God, not the Ancestors)?**

A) Ntate ho ka ba jwalo ho ka se be jwalo, hobane bo nneteng badimo ba nka ditaelo ho modimo, sebaka sena sa Motouleng se bopilwe ke modimo, mme ka kutlisiso yaka sebaka sena “tafole ya lehodimo” ke sa modimo a ntoo mema badimo ho sona (Sir, it could be like that. On

the other hand, it could not be like that for the reason that the Ancestors receive instructions from God. Now, this cave Motouleng was created by God; therefore, according to my understanding, this place called “table of heaven” belongs to God; this very God invites the Ancestors to come to the table of heaven).

**Q) Jwale lefika lena ke karolo enngwe ya bohlokwa mosebetsing wa lehaha ka kakaretso (Now, is this rock in some part an important role player in the work of the cave in a general sense)?**

A) Mona lehaheng lena ngaka e eteleletseng pele tshebetso ya secheso ke yona e hlwekising lefika, lena la lehodimo (Inside this cave, the traditional healer who is responsible for the burnt offering is the one responsible for the cleansing of the stone).

**Q) Ha lejwe lena le sa hlwekiswa ho tla etsahalang (Should this stone not be cleansed, what will happen)?**

A) Modimo le Badimo ba tla halefa ngaka e nyatsang melao ya bona, a ka fumana kotlo e tshabehang (God and the Ancestors can be very angry with a traditional healer that undermines their laws, this traditional healer can be given a heavy sanction).

**Q) Ka mantswe a mang boleng ba lejwe lena ke bo hodimo tshebetso ya setso (In other words, the significance of this stone in relation to indigenous traditional work is very sacred)?**

A) Ho jwalo lejwe lena le ikhethile hobane le kgethilwe ke Modimo le Badimo (It is true, this stone has been set aside by God and the Ancestors because it is significant).

**Q) Mme batho ba kenang ka lehaheng ba rutwa ka bohlokwa ba lejwe lena (Are people who enter the cave taught about the importance of this stone)?**

A) Motho o mong le o mong wa tsebiswa hore dibaka tsa lehaha tse kgethehileng di tshwantswe ho hlomphuwa, e seng fela lejwe lena le bitswang “tafole ya lehodimo” (Every person, when entering the cave, is told about the importance of the sacred stations of the cave, not only the importance of the “table of heaven” is told).

**Q) Ntate Tafole ena ya lehodimo ke sebaka se halalelang (My Father, are you saying this table of heaven is a sacred place)?**

A) Sebaka sena se ikgethile, jwaloka ke ile ka bolela sethatong (This is a highly sacred place, just as I explained at the beginning).

**Q) Se ikgethile ho re motho a se ke a se ama le ka letsoho (Is this stone so sacred that no person is allowed to touch it with the hand)?**

A) Lena ha se lejwe le amiwang ke lejwe le ho sebeletswang ho lona ka tsela e nepahetseng (This stone is not meant to be touched; it is a stone upon which sacrificial work is carried out in a proper way).

*P. Interview of Aletare E Kgethehileng (Grand Altar) with Ditaba Tsa Badimo: October 2010*

**Q) Ntate Ditaba tsa Badimo sebaka sena sa dikerese tse ngata tse kgantshitsweng hodima sona se bitswang (My Father, wise words of the Ancestors, this place with so many candles lit on it, what is its name)?**

A) Sebaka sena se bitswa aletare e kgethehileng (This place is called the Grand Altar).

**Q) Hobaneng ha sebaka sena se bitswa Aletare e kgethehlieng (Why should this place be called the Grand Altar)?**

A) Hobane ke aletare ya mofuta wa ona e le nngwe (Because it is unique, it is only one of its kind).

**Q) Ha hona dialetare tse ding kahara lehaha kahara lehaha kante ho ena (Are there no other altars in the cave besides this one)?**

A) Tjee, ena ke yona aletare e e leng sebaka se se halelang sa ntate Modimo (No, this is the only altar that is holy that belongs to God).

**Q) Ntate, mosebetsi wa aletare ena ke ofe kahara lehaha (My Father, what is the main function of the Grand Altar in the cave)?**

A) Aletare ena ke moo batho ba rapelang teng pele ba ka kena ka lehaha, mme ha ba tle ba le feela, ba beya dikerese tsa bona hodima aletare ena (It is at this altar is where people pray before they can tour the cave).

**Q) Aletare ena e bopehile ka tsela e fapaneng ho dialetare tse ding tse re hlola re di bona hobaneng (This altar is constructed in a different way from other the altars we normally see, why)?**

A) E fapane haholo le tse ding, hobane moetso wa yona o mo tsullope (This altar is different from the others, because it is formed in a pyramid-like fashion).

**Q) Ke mang ya bopileng aletare ena kapo ya e entseng (Who actually built this altar, or who constructed it)?**

A) Bo nneteng nna ke se fumane se se le teng ha ke fihla lehaeng (To tell the truth, I found this altar already here when I first arrived in the cave).

**Q) Moetso wa sona eka se entswe ka matsoho a batho (The appearance of this altar seems to be made with human hands)?**

A) Mono ha kena ho tshwaela, feela lehaha lena le tsotlhe tse kahara lona ke tsa Ntate Modimo ka sebale, ka mantswe a mang ha hona letsoho la motho le ke bopang aletare ya mofuta ona (I cannot comment on this, but as far as I know, everything in this cave belongs to God. In other words, there is no human being who can build such an altar).

**Q) Badimo bona ha o bue ka bona bakeng sa aletare e kgethehileng(Are you not talking about the Ancestors in regard to the altar)?**

A) Badimo ba lehaha lena ba teng, batho ba batlang thuso ba qala aletareng ebe ba kgantsha dikerese tsa bona ba kopa badimo ba bona ho ba thusa, empa ke tshwanetse ho toboketsa ntlha ena badimo ba utlwa ka modimo (The Ancestors of this cave are present and those people who seek help in the cave start at the altar and burn their candles, requesting their Ancestors for help. However, I must emphasise that at this point the Ancestors take instructions from God).

**Q) Hobaneng aletare ena e le ntsho tjee (why is the Grand Altar so black)?**

A) Ke hobane musi wa dikerese o kgomaretse aletare (It is because the smoke of the candles has made the altar to be pitch black).

**Q) Makgetlho a mangata re tla Aletareng ena, ke bona e le wena wela rapelang, ana batho ba batlang thuso ba ithapella aletareng (Many times when we come to the Altar, I discover that you are the only person praying; is it possible for people who look for help to pray for themselves at the altar)?**

A) Ke tsela eo ho sebetswang ka yona mona, jwalo ka moholo wa sebaka sena ke tshwanetse ho kopela batho ba kenang ka lehaha lena tokelo ho Modimo le Badimo (This is the way things are done here, as an elder of the cave I must ensure that I have prayed on behalf of the people who come to the cave so that permission is obtained from God and the Ancestors).

**Q) Empa le ha o se o rapetse, batho ba ka ithapella aletareng (Even if you have already prayed, can people still make their prayers at the altar)?**

A) Ha hona kgang tabeng motho o lokolohile ho ya ithapella nako efe kapa efe ha ke se ke buile le le hodimo (There is no debate here, every person is free to go the altar and pray as long as I have spoken to heaven in this regard)?

**Q) Ntate motho ya qalang ho chakela lehaha o tlamelehile ho re a qale altareng ho rapela, kapo a ka tsamaya kahara lehaha aya dibakeng tse ding a sa feta aletareng (My Father, a person who visits the**

cave for the first time; is it a must that this person must pray at the altar or that he/she must visit other locations of the cave without first starting at the altar)?

A) O kekebe wa kena ntlung ya motho o sa dumellwa ho kena ho yona, ho jwalo le mona lehaheng o tshwanetse ho itsibisa ho Modimo le Badimo ba sebaka sena, haholo ke hlomphele to beketsang dintho tsena kaofela (You cannot enter someone's house without the owner's agreement. It is also like that here at the cave, you must introduce yourself to God and the Ancestors of this place, respect is the pinnacle of all this).

**Q) Ha motho a kena lehaheng a sa feta aletareng ho ka etsahalang mothong enwa (If a person enters the cave and does not pass at the altar, what would happen to the person)?**

A) Ha o kena tlung ya motho wa laelwa hore ditsamaiso ke dife, mme ha o sa ananele ditsamaiso ha hona lotho le ka lokang, ho jwalo le lehaheng mona ha ke dumele hore motho a ka loka kapo a fola ha a sa ananele tsamaiso ya mona, e tla ba bomadimabe feela (When you enter somebody's house you are told about the regulations of the house. If you don't accept these regulations, nothing will be okay, it is just like that here at the cave. If you don't act according to laws of the cave, one cannot be healed, it will only be bad luck).

**Q) Ntate aletare ena e sebediswa e sebediswa ke dingaka tsa setso le batho ba sebetsang ka moya, ka mantswe a mang ha e kgethe tshebetso (My Father, is this altar only used by indigenous traditional healers or can the faith healers can also use it? In other words it does not discriminate against a particular tradition of healing)?**

A) Aletare ena ke ya thapelo ebile ha e kgethe tshebetso (This is an altar of prayer, it does not choose any particular service rendered in the cave, it caters for all services).

#### *Q. Interview of Dingakeng with Ditaba Tsa Badimo: October 2009*

**Q) Ntate Ditaba Tsa Badimo, ke utlwa o bitsa sebaka sena Makhosini kapo dingakeng hobaneng (My Father, I hear you referring to "Wise words of Ancestors" as a domain of Dingakeng, in other words healers)?**

A) Ee mona ke dingakeng tsa setso, dingaka tse kgolo tsa lehaha lena (That is true, this is a place where the traditional healers of the cave reside).

**Q) Empa ha o tsamaya kahara lehaha o kopana le dingaka ka mofuta ya tsona, a hona le phapang pakeng tsa dingaka tsena le tsane tlasa lehaha (When you walk around the cave you meet various**



**traditional healers; is there such a difference between these and those in a secluded place in the cave)?**

A) Hona le phapang e kgolo pakeng tsa dingaka tsena, e kgolo ha haholo (There is a big difference between these traditional healers; the difference is wide).

**Q) Phapang ke efe hobane dingaka tsa setso di ya tshwana (What is the difference, because traditional healers are the same)?**

A) Ke rata ha o ka hlokomela hore ke bua ka sebaka sa dingaka tsa kgale tsa lehaha lena tse sa bonweng ke batho ba pitso e sa tsitsang (I wish you could understand that I am talking about a place of traditional healers that no ordinary eye can see).

**Q) Jwale ba sebetsa jwang dingaka tsena tse sa bonweng habobebe (And how does these traditional healers work)?**

A) Wa bona dingaka tsena ha di bonwe, empa di ya sebetsa, ke bona banang le maqhama le Modimo le Badimo, mme dingaka tsohle tse mona di katlasa bona (You see these healers they are not seen, but they are always at work, they are the only ones with direct communication between themselves with God and Ancestors).

**Q) Ke bona batho ba ntse ba kena ka di kerese tse kgantsitsweng, ba bang ba di siya kamono hobaneng (I see people coming into this place with lit candles; others leave the candles lit inside that place. Why)?**

A) Molao o mong feela sebakeng sena sa dingaka o kgantsa kerese ya hao ho ya kopa thuso mme ha o siye kerese e kgantshitswe ena ke tlolo ya molao (There is only one law in this sacred place of the healers. You only light your candle when you are looking for help and you do not leave your candle when you depart; it is against the law).

**Q) Ke utlwa boholo ba batho ba re re saya sekolong sa bongaka, sebakeng sa dingaka tsa setso kahara lehaha ana ke sona sebaka sena (I hear a lot of people saying they are going to the school of healers at a place of healers inside the cave. Is this the place)?**

A) Ee ke sona sebaka sena, se okametse lehaha ditabeng tsa bongaka, bongaka ba mona bo tebile (It is true, this area of the cave is the core centre of the issues connected to healers, healing here is very critical and deep).

**Q) Sena sebaka ke tshepa hore ke sa kgale jwaloka Maseeng, se ikgethile ka bo sona (This place I want to believe is very old like the Maseeng location; is it very sacred)?**

A) Sebaka sa Dingakeng, se ikgethile haholo, lebitso le tlwalehileng la sebaka sena ke makhosini, ha hona ya dumeletsweng ho dula pela sona, otlala fela ha o rometswe ke badimo

(This place of traditional healers is very holy and sacred. The popular name of the place is “Makhosini”. No single person is allowed to stay at this place or near it. You can only come to it when you are sent by the Ancestors).

**Q) Ke tshepa hore lebitso lena “Makhosini” ka sesotho ke Dingakeng, mme hahona phapang pakeng tsa mantswe ana (I trust that this name Makhosini means *traditional healers* in the Sesotho language; is there no notable difference)?**

A) Boholo ba batho batlang lehaheng, ba rata lebitso Makhosini, empa ha hona phapang pakeng tsa Mahosini le Dingakeng (The majority of people coming to the cave like the name Makhosini, but there is no difference between Makhosini and Dingakeng).

**Q) Ntate ha ke ntse ke mametse puo ya hao eka sebaka sena ke lona lehae la badimo, moo mathuela a fumanang thupelo ho badimo ka bohlokwa ba bongaka ba setso (My Father, when I listen to you I come to realise that this is the place of the Ancestors where trainee healers are trained about the importance of indigenous traditional healing).**

A) Thupelo ya bongaka ba mona bo tswa badimong ka sebele, mona lethuela le rutwa ka ditsela tse fapaneng tsa ho laola, le mekgwa e fapaneng ya bongaka, sebakeng sena pitso ya lethuela ho nkela bongaka ya matlafatswa ke badimo ba lehaha (The training of trainee traditional healers is done by the Ancestors themselves. Here the trainee is taught different ways of divination and different streams of traditional healing and is fortified at this place).

**Q) Ke nnete hore Modimo ka sebele ke ena ya romelang badimo mona Makhosini ho thusa ba batlang thuso ka tsela ya setso (Is it true that God himself sends the Ancestors to this place for people who are looking for help traditionally)?**

A) Modimo o okametse sebaka sena, e seng sona feela, le lehaha ka bophara, ke Modimo ya fanang ka matla a phekolo ho badimo le dingaka, ntho enngwe le enngwe e atlehang ho tswa lehaheng ke ka baka la Modimo (God has complete control over this and the entire cave. It is only God who gives the power of healing to the Ancestors and traditional healers; anything that is of success here at the cave comes from God).

**Q) Ntate o ka tlasa taelo ya Modimo kapa Badimo, hobane lebitso la hao ke “Ditaba Tsa Badimo” (To whom does my Father account, God or the Ancestors, because your name is the “wise words of the Ancestors”)?**

A) Ke katlasa Modimo ebe Badimo ba mpha ditaelo tse hlahang ho Modimo kasebele, lebitso lena laka la setso ke la tshebetso e ke e bileditsweng (I am accountable to God, the Ancestors give me the instructions from God, my name is strictly related to the nature of the work I do).

*R. Interview about Mabitleng with Ditaba Tsa Badimo: March 2011*

**Q) Ntate Ditaba Tsa Badimo sebaka sena se kamorao ho Aletare e Kgethehileng, se majwe a mangata sona se bitswang (Wise words of the Ancestors, this stony area behind the Grand Altar, what is it called)?**

**A)** Sebaka sena ntate se bitswa mabitla (Sir, this stony area is called the Graveyard).

**Q) Hobaneng se bitswa mabitla, hona le batho ba patetsweng moo (Why do you call it a graveyard; are there people buried there)?**

**A)** Ha hona batho ba patilweng moo, feela sebaka sena se bitswa mabintleng hobane dingaka tse kgolo tsa lehaha lena di le tsa amohela pono e reng ba tlose majwe ana mangata kamorao ho Aletare, ho hlwekiswe hore sebaka sena e be mabitla (There are no physical graveyards per se, but I must emphasise that senior traditional healers of the cave received a vision that they had to clear the rocks behind the grand altar so that this area could become a graveyard).

**Q) Ntate potso ke hore hobaneng ho tshwanetse hoba le mabitla kahara Lehaha, kutlisiso yaka ke hore batho ba shweleng ba patelwa Mabintleng, jwale ana mabitla a hlalosang (My father, the question is why should there be a graveyard in the cave, my understanding of a graveyard is where dead people are buried, now what is the meaning of this graveyard)?**

**A)** Mabitla ana ke sebaka seo ho sona batho ba merabe yotlhe ba ka tlang ho batlisisa hore batho ba bona sa leng ba lahleha kgale ba ho kae, mme haeba ba shwele ba tla fumana karabo sebakeng sena sa mabitla (This graveyard is an area where people of all tribes can come and seek the truth as to what has happened to their lost loved ones and those assumed to have died; therefore, the answer will come from the graveyard).

**Q) Ntate ho etsuwang mabintleng mona hore batho bana ba fumanwe, hamannete ntho e the eka etsahala majweng mona (My Father, what is done at this graveyard that this lost people should be found, including the tracing of the dead ones? Is it really true that anything can come out of these rocks)?**

**A)** Ntate meetlo ya ho batlisisa batho ba lahlehileng le batho ba shwetseng moo ho sa tsejweng e eletswa mona mabintlen (The rituals pertaining to tracing lost people and those who have died is done here at the graveyard).

**Q) Meetlo ke efe e phethiwa, mme potso ke hore batho bana ba fumanwa morao ha hore meetlo e etsuwe, le bafu ba hlokaletseng hole le bahabobona ba fumanwa na (Which rituals are followed at the graveyard? In terms of finding the lost people, have the dead also been traced successfully where they are buried)?**

A) Ke rata hore ke totobatse taba ena, badimo ba batho ba lahlehileng, le ba shweleng ba arabela morao ha meetlo e entswe, ke paki ya ditaba tsena (I would like to emphasise this story of the lost and the departed. The Ancestors do respond after the rituals have been performed, I am a witness to these stories).

**Q) Ke bona mabitla a ka mefuta, mme ke rata ho botsa hore ha ho batluwa motho ya lahlehileng le motho ya hlokahele, ho sebediswa mabitla a fapaneng kapo ho sebediswa lebitlwa lele leng (I see different kind of graves; may I ask that, when a lost person and a dead person is sought, do you use the same grave or different kinds of graves)?**

A) Mona he re laelwa ke badimo, empa nakong tse ngata ho sebediswa mabitla a fapaneng, haele motho ya saleng a lahleha ho sebediswa lebitla la batho ba lahlehileng, ha e le motho ya shweleng ho sebediswa lebitla la batho ba shweleng (You see, here we are instructed by the Ancestors, but most of the time we use different gravesites. If it's a person who has been missing for a long time we use the grave of a missing person for the dead. We also use the graveside for the dead).

**Q) Jwale ntate o tla tseba jwang hore lena ke lebitla la ba lahehileng, lena ke lebitla la ba shweleng (Now, my Father, how would you know this is a grave for the lost and the dead)?**

A) Nakong tse ngata Badimo ba ka hlalosa lebitla leo ho tshwanetseng ho sebeletswa ho lona, mme ho tla phethiswa kamoo Badimo ba laetseng ka teng (Many times, Ancestors can point to a gravesite where the rituals are supposed to be carried out. Then we follow the instruction of the Ancestors).

**Q) Athe mabitla ana ha ana matshwao hore mona ho ka phethuwa tshebetso efe (Here at the gravesite there are no signs as to whether which kind of ritual can be performed where)?**

A) Tjee, ha ho jwalo re taelong ya Badimo sebakeng sena, mme mabitla ana ha ana matshwao hore lena ke la bafu lena ke la ba lahlehileng (No, it is not like that, we act directly under the instruction of the Ancestors. Now, these graves have no signs that this one is for the lost and the dead).

**Q) Akere Ntate lehaha lena sethatong ke la basadi ba neng ba sa be baimana, mme ba ne ba fumana thuso mona, jwale potso ke hore nakopng tseno mabitla a ne a le teng (Is it not true, my Father, that this cave initially was a fertility cave? The infertile women found help here. Now the question is, was the graveyard present when the entire cave was a fertility site)?**

A) Ke itse dingaka tsa sebaka sena di fumane taelo ya hore sebaka sena ebe mabitla, se bolelang hore lehaha le ne le hola ka tshebetso ya Modimo le Badimo, se hlalosing hore lehaha lena la dula le phethahatsa mosebetsi wa lona (Initially I said traditional healers received instructions

to turn the area into a graveyard. This explains that this cave will always be honest to its mission).

**Q) Ntate ka chadimo ya hao ana phapang e teng pakeng tsa mabitla ana le mabitla a metseng kantle ho lehaha (My Father, in terms of your observation, do you see any difference between the graveyard here in the cave and the graveyards at the locations)?**

A) Phapang e kgolo, ana mabitla ke mosupatsela hore mofu wa lona o patuwe ho kae le hore molahlehi o ho kae (This graveyard is a signpost telling you where your loved ones are buried and where the lost ones are located).

**Q) Mabitla ana ke a badimo, mme ho ya ka wena a ikgethile (This graveyard, I suppose it belongs to the Ancestors. In your own assessment, do you think it is sacred)?**

A) Ntate sebaka sena se ikgethile haholo (This place is highly sacred).

#### *S. Interview at Mokgorong with Ditaba Tsa Badimo: March 2010*

**Q) Ntate Ditaba Tsa Badimo, ke ne ke kopa hore o mphe monyetla wa ho ho botsa dipotso ka sebaka sena se bitswang Mokgorong (My Father, wise words of Ancestors; I want to request you to give me an opportunity to interview you about this place called Mokgorong).**

A) Ntate a ka botsa (Sir, you can ask).

**Q) Hobaneng sebaka sena se bitswa Mokgorong (Why do you call this place Mokgorong)?**

A) Sebaka sena se bitswa Mokgorong hobane, ke moo meya yotlhe ya Badimo ba sebaka sena a leng teng, ka mantswa a mang sebaka sena ke leitho la lehaha lena (This place is called Mokgorong because it is a place where all the spirits of the Ancestors of the cave are located. In other words, this location is the eye of the cave).

**Q) Jwale lebitso lena Mokgorong le bolelang (Now. what is the meaning of the word Mokgorong)?**

A) Ke Mokgorong hobane ho kenwa hosona o kgasa ka mangwele, hape ke moo o bonang marangrang a badimo (It is Mokgorong. because you can only enter this place crawling on your knees and again this is the main television site of the Ancestors of the cave).

**Q) Ntate o bolela hore Mokgorong ke sebaka sa televisione ya ya Badimo (My Father. are you saying Mokgorong is a television site of the Ancestors)?**

A) Ho jwalo, mona he ke sebaka seo ho sona television ya badimo e leng teng (It is true, this is the place where the television of the Ancestors is located).

**Q) Empa lentswe lena Mokgorong moelelo wa lona ha o bue lotho ka television, ka mantswe a mang Mokgorong le Televisioneng ke ntho tse pedi tse fapaneng (But this word *Mokgorong*, its meaning does not say anything about television. In other words, these are two sets of different things)?**

A) E re ke hlalose tjena Mokgorong ke ka morao ho lehaha, mme kamorao ho lehaha mona Mokgorong ke sebaka sa marang-rang a Badimo ba lehaha lena (Let me explain like this: Mokgorong is at the back of the cave. Now, here at the back is a television station of the Ancestors of this cave).

**Q) Ka mantswe a mang television ena ya Badimo e sebakeng se bitswang Mokgorong (In other words, this television of the Ancestors is located at a place called Mokgorong)?**

A) Ho jwalo Ntate, sebaka sena se halalela ka tsela e tshabehang, hobane naletsana ya sebaka sena ere pele ene e le marena feela a sebedisang Mokgorong ho buisana le Badimo (It is like that: this is a highly sacred place. Its sacrality is beyond question because, according to tradition, only certain chiefs would enter Mokgorong and consult with the Ancestors).

**Q) Maemo a sebaka sena a lefifi kahare, motho o bona joang ha o se o kene kahara lehaha (It looks dark inside this place; how does a person see inside the cave)?**

A) Hona le tumelo e tebileng hore badimo ke bona ba fanang ka lesedi kahara Mokgorong (There is a strong belief that the Ancestors provide light inside Mokgorong).

**Q) Batho ba dikereke bona ba ya tla sebakeng sena (Do indigenous traditional churches and its members come to Mokgorong)?**

A) Batla haholo, empa ba tshwere molao wane wa kgale, ha ba kene ka dikerese kahara Mokgorong (They come to Mokgorong a lot, but they stick to the old law; they don't bring candles to the site).

**Q) Hona le batho ba tlang ba tshwere dikerese mona Mokgorong (Are there people who come to Mokgorong with candles)?**

A) Ntate batho bana ba roba molao wa Badimo, re hlalositse ka nako tse ngata hore lesedi la sebaka sena ke badimo feela (Sir, we've explained many times that they are breaking the laws of the place and we have explained this place belongs to the Ancestors only).

**Q) Hona le meetlo ya setso e ka latelwang ho hlwekisa Mokgorong (Are there rituals to be followed in order to cleanse Mokgorong)?**

A) Ha re phahlile Badimo ra bua le bona, ke bona ba ka refang hore re sebedisa tsela efe ya hlwekiso ya Mokgorong (When we have invoked the presence of the Ancestors, they are the ones who can instruct what kind of rituals could be used to cleanse the television site).

**Q) Hobaneng lona dingaka le sa hlwekise le sa tsebisa Badimo, hobane le tseba meetlo ya hlwekiso (Why can't the traditional healers cleanse the site without involving the Ancestors because you know the rituals of cleansing)?**

A) Ka makgetlho re etsa jwalo, empa batho ba kgutla, ho tlo tlola molao wa Mokgorong, ha re ya dula feela, hape ha se Mokgorong feela moo ba senyang, le ho hatikella molao (In many instances we do exactly as you say, but these people come back and transgress the laws of the television site. Again, it is not only Mokgorong where they transgress; some of the sacred locations also are affected by this transgression).

**Q) A tshepo e teng hore bothata bona bo tla rarollwa, mohlomong ke lona ka taelo ya Badimo (Is there hope that this problem will ever be solved, maybe by yourself through the involvement of the Ancestors)?**

A) Diphepetso di di ngata kahara lehaha, empa ha re lahlehelwe ke tshepo (There are challenges in the cave, but we will not lose hope).

#### *T. Interview about Khotla with Ditaba Tsa Badimo: April 2010*

**Q) Ntate Ditaba tsa Badimo, ke bona eka sebaka sena ke lesaka la dinku na ho jwalo (My Father, the wise words of Ancestors, I see that place as a kraal for sheep, is it like that)?**

A) Ntate sebaka sena ke khotla e ikhethileng, ha se lesaka la dinku (Sir, this place is called the royal court; it is not a sheep kraal).

**Q) Hobaneng e bitswa khotla e phahameng (Why is it called the royal kraal)?**

A) Sebaka sena ke moo diqoso tsa ditlokotsebe kahara lehaha di mamelwang teng (This is a place where people who break the laws of the cave are summoned to and where their cases are attended to).

**Q) Jwale botlokotsebe bo bo ngata kahara lehaha, Ntate a ka qolla dintho tse pedi hoyla ho tse tharo tse kगतlanong le molao wa lehaha (Now lawlessness is rife in the cave; could my father highlight two to three transgressions against the laws of the cave)?**

A) Mathuela a sa hlompheeng melao ya bothuela, batho ba silafatsang dibaka tse halalelang tsa lehaha, di dingata ditlolo kahara lehaha, mme kahlolo e dihelwa mona khotla e phahameng (Trainee traditional healers who do not respect the laws pertaining to this practice or people

desecrate sacred stations of the cave. It is important to understand that sentencing for these transgressions is carried out in this sacred location).

**Q) Ke mang ya mamelang kgetse tsena tsa tlolo molao wa lehaha (Who adjudicates over these transgressions in the royal court)?**

A) Bannna ba seemo se hlomphehang ba mamelang sedimo sa lehaha lena ke bona ba mamelang le ho ahlola melato yohle e entsweng kahara lehaha (Male persons of sacred standing who listen to Ancestors of this cave, are the ones who adjudicate all the matters of transgressions in the cave).

**Q) Ke mang ya kgethang banna bana ho mamela dikgetse tsena (Who elects these men of sacred standing to preside over matters)?**

A) Banna bana ha ba ikgethe ba kgethwa ke badimo ba lehaha, hape sena ke sephiri se seholo sa kgetho ya banna bana (These men don't elect themselves; they are chosen by the Ancestors of the cave. Again, I must stress that the election of these men is a big secret).

**Q) Banna bana ke dingaka tsa mona lehaheng kapo ke marena a tikoloho ena ya Mohokare (Could these men be traditional healers here at the cave, or are they the local chiefs of the Mohokare Valley)?**

A) Banna bana ke ba hlomphehang ekaeba dingaka kapo marena a sechaba se kahare le kantle (These are respectful men or traditional healers inside or outside the cave).

**Q) Ha lekhotla le qeta ka kgetse ya motho o tlotseng molao wa lehaha, ho etsahalang ka motho enwa (When the case is completed at the royal kraal, what then happens to the accused person)?**

A) Batho ba tlotseng molao wa lehaha le ho silafatsa dibaka tsa lehaha ba ahlolwa ka tsela tse fapaneng, ba bang ba lelekwa lehaheng, ba bang ba fuwa dilemo tse telele ho dula kahara lehaha, dikahlolo ha ditshwane (People who transgressed the laws of the cave and desecrated the sacred stations of the cave can be expelled from the cave; others can be detained in the cave for many years. The sentences are not the same).

**Q) Mona kgotleng, ho ne ho etsuwa eng hape kantle ho dikgetse tsena tsa tlolo molao (What activities took place beside cases of transgressions here at the royal court)?**

A) Ditaba tsa bohlokwa tsa sechaba di ne di ne di qoquwa mona kgotla (Important tribal deliberations were conducted here at the royal court).

**Q) Ke tshepa hore ditaba tsena tse qoquwang kgotleng di ne di tsamaiswa ke marena a tikologo (I trust that these tribal deliberations were handled by the local chiefs)?**



A) Ho jwalo empa ha se marena feela le boetapele ba mona lehangeng bo kenela dipuisano tsa sechaba (It is like that, however it is not only the chiefs who sit for these deliberations, and the traditional leadership of the cave get involved in this deliberations).

**Q) Le matsatsing ana dipuisano tsena di santsane di ba teng mona kgotleng (These days, do the tribal deliberations take place here at the royal court)?**

A) Ho jwalo ha hona le ntho e tobileng sechaba sa mona Mautse le metse e mabapi, lekhlotla la kopana (It is like that, when there is something directly involving the community here even the neighbouring communities living next to the cave the royal kraal convenes).

**Q) Ntate ke bone batho ba kena kahara khotla ba rapela, a enwa ntho e dumeletswe (My Father, I saw people going into the royal kraal to pray, is this allowed)?**

A) Ntate ha hona phoso ka thapelo, empa sepheo sa lekhlotla ke ho lokisa maemo a sa lokang kahara leha, le ho tshwarela dikopano tsa sechaba mona khotla, sena ke sona sepheo (Sir, there is nothing wrong with prayer. The main objective of the royal kraal is to deal with lawlessness and the main objective, the meetings of the communities held at the kraal).

**Q) Sepheo ke sefe sa hore ho rapellwe mona khotleng (What drives some of the people to pray here at the royal kraal)?**

A) Hona le barapelli ba moya ba dumelang hore ha ba rapalletse bakodi khotleng ba leleka meya e mebe mme ba matlafatse moya o motle kahara motho ya rapellwang (There are spiritual leaders who prefer to use the royal kraal to determine the good or bad spirits in the people they pray for. The bad spirit would be exorcised and the good spirit fortified in the person prayed for).

**Q) Ntate eka sepheo sa Khotla ena e phahameng se lahlehile (My Father, it appears the objective of the royal court is completely lost)?**

A) Batho ba sa tsebeng bohlokwa ba khotla ena ba dula ba e silafatsa, ke kamoo ekang e fellwa ke boleng (People who do not know the significance of the royal court will always defile it; that is why it appears as though its sacrality is vanishing).

**Q) Ha ntate a re khotla ya silafatswa, a ka etsa mohlala (When my father says the royal court is defiled, can you give some examples)?**

A) Ha o nyarela kahara khotla, o bona dipatsi, o bona dikupu tsa makoma, o bona dikobo, o bona dikupu tsa metsi o bona dintho tse sa batlahaleng kahara khotla (When you look inside the kraal, you see chopped wood, drums belonging to trainee sangomas, blankets, water pots and all sorts of things unwanted in the kraal).

**Q) A hona le tsela ya ho kgutlisetsa khotla maamong a wona a bohalaledi (Is there a way to reclaim the sacredness of the royal kraal)?**

A) Ha re tshepe jwalo hobane baholo ba rona ba tsebang lehaha lena, Lesotho le Afrika e borwa ba batla lehaha lena le kgutlele maamong a lona (Let's hope for that, because our elders, who are knowledgeable about this cave, yearn for the sacrality of the cave to be seen again).

**Q) A hona le meetlo e itseng eka kgutlisang bohalaledi ba khotla e phahameng (Are there any rituals perhaps that could be performed to bring back the sacrality of the royal kraal)?**

A) Ka molao wa lehaha oo e leng molao wa badimo, banna ba hlomphehileng, ba hlwekileng ke bona ba ka buang le badimo ka ho etsa meetlo e itseng hore bohalaledi ba lekhotla bo kgutle (In terms of the law of the cave, which is the law of the Ancestors, respectable and sacred men communicate with the Ancestors about rituals that could reinstate the sacrality of the kraal).

**Q) Jwale hobaneng banna bao ba sa fumanwe, ha etswa meetlo eo (Now, why can't these men be found and this rituals be performed)?**

A) Ha o ka sheba kahara lehaha lena ha hona banna boholo ke bomme jwale re tshwanetse ho tswela kante ho marena ho kopa thuso, mme pele re ka etsa jwalo ra rapela Modimo le Badimo ho re etella pele lebakeng lena (If you look inside the cave, there are no men compared to the many number of women present in the cave. Now we are supposed to engage the chiefs outside the cave and request the chiefs for help. Before we do that we must pray to God and the Ancestors to lead us in this matter).

**Q) Mosebetsi wa hlwekiso ya lehaha o mongata, hase khotla feela e batlang hlwekiso (There is a lot of work to be done in terms of cleansing the cave; it is not only the royal kraal that needs cleansing)?**

A) Ntate ho jwalo (Sir it is like that).

## **ADDENDUM: U-Y INTERVIEWS ABOUT THE MODDERPOORT SITE**

### *U. Interview about Modderpoort with Johann Friezt: November 2008*

**Q) Why is Modderpoort called a sacred site?**

A) Because of the mysterious things happening here and the harmony of the place.

**Q) I assume the mysterious things are connected to the sacrality of the site?**

A) I was told by those who came before me in this place that the actual name of the site is “Lekgalong la Bo Tau”, which means “The pass of the lions”.

**Q) Was the site associated with lions?**

A) I was made to understand that a certain Basotho tribe called themselves Bataung, meaning their totem is a lion inhabited the site in its original form.

**Q) What happened to this tribe? Are they still part of the site?**

A) No, I do not know what happened to this tribe; I have also heard of it but I have never met them.

**Q) When was this site established?**

A) According to the documentation in the archives, this site was established in 1870 as the St Augustine Priory.

**Q) Does this mean the name Modderpoort was changed to “St Augustine Priory”?**

A) My answer to this question will be detailed, because in 1865 Bishop Twells of the Anglican Church Diocese in Bloemfontein bought two farms in this area, namely Modderpoort and Modderpoortspruit to start mission work in the area.

**Q) Did the St Augustine Priory emerge from these two farms?**

A) The St Augustine Priory is an important historical part of the two farms.

**Q) Was the establishment of the priory a priority for mission work in the area? In other words, was the area turned into a Christian place?**

A) There is information to this effect that, the first missionaries to settle in the area arrived in 1869, led by Henry Becket.

**Q) Is this the reason why the place became Christian?**

A) Yes, the advent of the mission work made it Christian.

**Q) What were the life practices of this area before Christianity came?**

A) When I read some manuscripts I realise that there was a culture of the area that was quite unique.

**Q) What could this culture have been?**

A) The culture of the San people was that of rock art, which is visible on the cave walls, painting and creation of stone stools.

**Q) Who were these San people in relation to the Modderpoort area?**

A) According to the records I have read, the San People were the first inhabitants of this area.

**Q) Were not the Bantu-speaking people the first in the area?**

A) Many people in this area, as well as others in the Bloemfontein diocese attest that the San People lived in the Modderpoort area for centuries prior to the Bantu-speaking people's arrival in the Southern hemisphere.

**Q) So the Stone Age culture defines the first inhabitants of Modderpoort?**

A) According to uncontested information in this regard, yes.

**Q) So, when the missionaries arrived, there was ample evidence that the area had its people who lived there?**

A) Yes, there was archaeological evidence of hunting camps marked with stone stools, prehistoric paintings and rock art.

**Q) So, at Modderpoort we see the entwinement of cultural history in the form of the San people practising their culture and contemporary history represented by the Christian missionaries making Modderpoort a home?**

A) The transition from cultural to contemporary is not convincing in view of the fact there are various belief systems practised here today, not only Christianity, a lot of cultural practices take place here.

**Q) What are these belief systems?**

A) Indigenous traditional beliefs, Pentecostal movement, faith healing churches, and the Zion Christian Church frequent this site.

**Q) Many belief systems are represented here. Does this mean the Anglican Church does not restrict people from exercising what they believe in at the cave?**

A) There are no restrictions to people's religious or cultural beliefs being carried out here.

**Q) The reference to the presence of the Anglican Church here, particularly the St Augustine Priory would give the impression that this is purely a Christian site?**

A) This impression had been made before; however, to the surprise of many the site embraces different traditions and cultures.

**Q) How relevant is the site today in modern South Africa?**

A) The site is relevant, is a unifier of tribes, communities, nations and the various cultures in our midst, it is more than relevant for the spiritual and cultural landscape of our country.

**Q) Do any people stay permanently at the site?**

A) Not at the sacred site; people are not supposed to stay here, they can only visit and explore the nature of the site.

**Q) How often do the people visit the site during a month?**

A) During the course of the week people do come not in big numbers like at the end of the month, public holidays, specifically the Easter holidays and the Cave Sunday attracts thousands of pilgrims to the site.

**Q) Are there any special programmes that the Anglican Church performs at the site?**

A) There are a number of important ministerial functions held here by the Anglican Church; you must remember this is their institution. Apart from the pilgrimages to the site, the church is actively involved in the life of the site.

**Q) There are a number of sandstone buildings at the site what are they for?**

A) Among the buildings you see, are a school and a training college that were established in 1928. They were closed in 1955 after the introduction of the Bantu Education Act of 1953.

**Q) So, the buildings were unused because of this act. What about the sanctuary, how was it affected?**

A) St Augustine played a pivotal role in hosting church conferences and hosting synods of the wider church.

**Q) So, apartheid ensured that the buildings are underutilised and this would lead to underdevelopment of the people who looked to Modderpoort as a beacon of hope?**

A) There was a real struggle, even the buildings that were not used deteriorated.

**Q) I see that some of the buildings are renovated, when did this happen?**

A) The renovation of the buildings coincided with the rehabilitation project, which was funded by the Department of Environmental Affairs.

**Q) Could this have taken place with the abolishment of Apartheid in 1994 or earlier?**

A) I do not have a distinct recollection when did the rehabilitation happen.

**Q) Surely the rehabilitation project had been earmarked to promote the heritage status of the site?**

A) The records of the rehabilitation project are not here. How related is this project to the heritage status of Modderpoort?

**Q) This site is referred to as the Mantsopa site. Why?**

A) I have been made to understand Mantsopa was a great prophetess who lived here a long time ago.

**Q) Is it true that the cultural landscape in this place is influenced by the work of Mantsopa?**

A) Some of the holy areas are associated with her, about a kilometre from here outside the grounds of the St Augustine there's a spring named after her.

**Q) So, the Modderpoort Valley has a number of cultural layers that are attributed to powerful figures like Mantsopa?**

A) Not only cultural layers; the Anglican Church celebrates her work at the site; that is why the Anglicans commemorate Cave Sunday in her honour.

**Q) Do you think Modderpoort is a sacred site, a site of pilgrimage because of Mantsopa?**

A) Mantsopa had a huge influence in relation to the sacrality of the area

**Q) Are there any sacred locations in this area?**

A) Yes, there are four sacred locations here in Modderpoort, which are the Cave Church, Mantsopa's gravesite, the fountain site and the Burial Grounds and Graves.

**Q) Are these sacred locations both cultural and spiritual?**

A) Earlier, I said many traditions and belief systems are represented here, some people who visit the locations are cultural or spiritual.

**Q) What do pilgrims hope to get from these locations?**

A) Most people have different reasons for coming to the locations. Most people are looking for luck; some want to have a spiritual contact with Mantsopa. There are many reasons why people come to the site.

**Q) Do these pilgrims pay to enter the Modderpoort site?**

A) Yes, they do pay about R15.

**Q) What happens to the money?**

A) Is it used for the pressing needs of the site?

**Q) Could I interview you or someone else about the sacred locations?**

A) I will try to assist. There are other people around the site who can be of help.

#### *V. Interview on the San rock paintings with Johann Friez: November 2008*

**Q) Are the San rock paintings an artistic gift of the San people?**

A) I understand they were very good in rock paintings wherever they were staying.

**Q) Is there ample evidence of this in the site?**

A) Yes, there is, the Rose Church or the Cave Church is where you find these paintings on the walls.

**Q) Are these paintings visible enough on the walls of the Rose Church?**

A) The texture of the paintings is unfortunately deteriorating; they are no longer as visible.

**Q) What could your view be about the uniqueness of these paintings before they deteriorated?**

A) I have been informed by my predecessors that these paintings were unique, because iron oxide and ochre were used to produce these paintings.

**Q) Could one assume after the San people's displacement the quality of the paintings was not preserved?**

A) Maybe they were not treated with a sense of urgency by the new ownership of the site.

**Q) Would it be fair to say that the non-preservation of the paintings was the erosion of the San culture?**

A) Well, that could be true in the sense that the cultural history of Modderpoort is anchored on Stone Age period of which the San people were largely part. When they left the site, there was ample archaeological evidence that pointed strictly to their culture.

**Q) When you look at the paintings what do they reveal in relation to their culture?**

A) The San people painted images of their earthly and spiritual worlds.

**Q) Was their spiritual world embedded within their culture?**

A) When you look at their artwork illustrated clearly their belief systems.

**Q) Should this be construed as rock art in an indigenous sense?**

A) Well most of the art is on a rock and again this illustrates the San culture.

**Q) Is it only rock art at Modderpoort that defined the culture of the San people?**

A) The San people were industrious; they created hunting camps, which had stone stools in them. These stools were found in the Cave Church, the San people were hard-working people and this defines them properly.

**Q) Could it be proper to call the Modderpoort of the San people a Stone Age site of rock art?**

A) Well, you must remember that Stone Age sites were not only limited to Modderpoort, Stone Age site and rock art paintings could also be found in the Tandjiesberg caves at Ladybrand. They are famous for their rock paintings and large deposits of Stone Age cultures.

**Q) What is the condition of the rock paintings at Tandjiesberg?**

A) They are also deteriorating; the quality is fading.

**Q) The area of Ladybrand and Modderpoort must have been the domain of San rock paintings in the Free State, when the San people lived in the area?**

A) It could be true because at Tandjiesberg there are more than 200 of the San rock paintings.

**Q) Approximately during which calendar years were these San rock paintings produced?**

A) These are ancient paintings and I am informed the years to be around 1720-1820.

**Q) Are these years confined only to Modderpoort and Tandjiesberg?**



A) These years cover the contexts in which the San people were situated and produced the paintings.

**Q) Apart from Modderpoort and Tandjiesberg, were there other places in South Africa where they stayed and painted?**

A) During these years 1720-1820, the San people resided in the Drakensberg mountain range. Perhaps the production of the San rock paintings could have happened there.

**Q) Did the San People have rituals connected to rock painting?**

A) I am not aware of any rituals of the San People.

**Q) What important cultural lessons are to be learnt from the rock paintings?**

A) Today it is important for us to underline that the San People are the indigenous tribe of Modderpoort and rock painting was their culture and when they left the site they left ample evidence of their unique culture. They did not disappear with their culture; that is an important lesson.

#### *W. Interview on the Cave Church with Father Mekgwe: February 2009*

**Q) Why is this cave called a church?**

A) It is because this is a sandstone rock shelter.

**Q) Who constructed the Cave Church?**

A) My understanding is that this Cave Church could have been constructed by the monks/missionaries under Canon Henry Beckett.

**Q) Is it possible that the cave did not incorporate the church before the arrival of the monks?**

A) It is possible that before the cave was turned into a Church there were people seeking shelter in the cave.

**Q) And how was the cave turned into a Church?**

A) This information is not very clear to me; I would imagine the church in the cave was built by the monks.

**Q) Is it possible that the Cave is associated with Mantsopa and some Basotho tribes who sought refuge in the cave during the colonial wars?**

A) Documentation about the use of the cave by various people and tribes in relation to its history is minimal.

**Q) I thought the site has a rich history that is easily accessible?**

A) The information on its use is contradictory, some people say it was used by Mantsopa, others say it was used by the Monks and by the Basotho tribes.

**Q) Maybe initially it could have been used by tribes and monks. Surely today the cave is visited by many people from countries beyond South Africa?**

A) Many people around our country and neighbouring countries come to the site, the pilgrimages cannot be limited to South Africa only.

**Q) Is it possible that the San people could have used the cave for expanding on their trade?**

A) This is a possibility because their paintings are reflected on the walls and the ceiling of the cave shelter.

**Q) On the walls of the Cave Church roughly how many images of the San rock paintings are detected?**

A) About 20 nearly invisible figures on the cave walls are reflected.

**Q) There appears to be renovations on the cave walls; has this not changed the original face of the cave?**

A) In recent times there has been plastering on some sections of the cave shelter, which unavoidably may have concealed most paintings.

**Q) What about the ritual burnings in the precinct of the cave, including the candle smoke and graffiti? This might have contributed to the poor quality of the paintings.**

A) There are varying factors contributing to the decaying quality of the pictures on the cave walls, among those water flow and people constantly touching the walls.

**Q) Are there no laws in the priory or from the Anglican Church prohibiting this kind of behaviour?**

A) It is not easy to police people who visit the site; therefore, the site is exposed to profanity carried out by people claiming to operate under the instructions of their Ancestors.

**Q) Could you perhaps explain this further?**

A) The Cave Church is vulnerable to people who conduct ritual activities around the cave shelter and this amounts to human destruction of the site.

**Q) Maybe the people outside does not view ritual work as being destructive?**

A) These activities could be viewed as destructive, because some people also dig for soil samples near the Cave Church for ritual and healing purposes.

**Q) Do you say soil refers to medicinal clay used for ritual and healing?**

A) Yes, particularly the independent church members harvest this soil or clay a lot.

**Q) Should protective measures not be put around the Cave Church for the destruction not to take place?**

A) This digging is done in the name of religion and culture; it is not easy to oppose them.

**Q) What about the archaeological deposits that may still be on the surface of the cave?**

A) This is a big problem, the pilgrims and visitors are destroying all that is good about the Cave Church, when the rehabilitation of the cave is underway the floor gets affected and the archaeological record of the site diminishes.

**Q) The problem here is that the authorities of the site are not acting enough to curb the desacralisation of the Cave Church, this goes back to the earlier question of placing protective regimes around these sites?**

A) My suspicion is that this is not a new problem is an old problem that is tied to indigenous belief systems.

**Q) Surely you are not saying indigenous traditional beliefs are responsible for the desacralisation?**

A) No im not saying that, the cave and its environment needs to remain in their natural status, belief status are important but should not be used for undermining the sites environment.

**Q) How significant is the Cave Church for the Anglican Church today?**

A) This is a very significant institution for the Anglican Diocese in Bloemfontein; they have set a date aside in their liturgical calendar to commemorate Cave Sunday.

**Q) So, the Cave Church has a strong Christian background even though its genesis resides within the San cultures?**

A) The Anglican Church respects the Cave Church because mission work was spearheaded from there, regardless of its cultural history.

**Q) The Anglican Church is not against various people coming to the Cave Church, be it for ritual performance or just for praying?**

A) The Church is not against anyone coming to do work be it cultural or religious; however, the shelter is fenced off but the Cave Church is accessible; there are no impediments.

**Q) Is there a time when the Anglican Church or authorities of the site decide to lock the entrance of the cave?**

A) The cave entrance is always locked.

**Q) When do you unlock the entrance to the cave?**

A) Whenever we know pilgrims or visitors are visiting the site and of course on Cave Sunday.

**Q) I see that you have an open area with stone stools on it next to the Cave Church. What does this area signify?**

A) This area is host to Cave Church commemoration services by the Anglican Church. The multitude of congregants, pilgrims and visitors seat in this area.

**Q) Are there special liturgies followed on the Cave Sunday?**

A) What I know is that the Bishop leads the service with other clergy of the Anglican Church.

**Q) On this day Cave Sunday, surely there must be some cultural activity celebrating the life of Mantsopa?**

A) The Cave Church Sunday becomes a hype of activity around the site, after the Bishop has pronounced the benediction on top of the Cave Church people flock to Mantsopa's grave to her spring to pay their respects.

**Q) So, the Cave Church Sunday is a celebration of the Anglican Church's witness in the area and the respect for the cultures of the area?**

A) What most of us know is that the Cave has a cultural history and most of the Basotho people revere the cave. The Anglican Church has not prohibited the Basotho from paying homage to their cultures at the site.

**Q) Finally, I suppose the authority of the Cave Church lies with the Anglican Church, but the cultural authority of the Cave could be Mantsopa. Is this a fair reflection?**

A) Since the Anglican Church bought Modderpoort, there is no doubt about who has oversight over the area. The cave remains a special cultural attachment to the Basotho culture and the prophetess Mantsopa.

*X. Interview on the Mantsopa Grave with Johann Friezt: May 2010*

**Q) How significant is the grave of Mantsopa to the site?**

A) It is significant because Mantsopa was a famous prophet with the Basotho People.

**Q) Why is she buried on the grounds of the priory?**

A) The Basotho people revere Modderpoort as the final resting place of Mantsopa; therefore, it is proper that she is buried here.

**Q) Is the cemetery where she is buried in an Anglican Church cemetery?**

A) The graveyard belongs to the Anglican Church. because most of its clergy are buried here, including the founding fathers of the priory.

**Q) Was she born in this area and died here?**

A) I am told she was born in Lesotho and was related to King Moshoeshoe I.

**Q) Does this mean she was born in Lesotho and relocated to Modderpoort?**

A) Mantsopa was a gifted propheticess; she prophesied that Moshoeshoe would triumph over the troops of a certain Major Warden and the Barolong tribe.

**Q) Did this happen as she had prophesied?**

A) I am made to understand this happened as she prophesied and this made her an icon among many of the Basotho people.

**Q) Was she a Christian because then Modderpoort was a Christian centre?**

A) According to the information I have, when she came here from Lesotho she was not a Christian. However, she was baptised by the Anglican clergy on 13 March 1870; I suppose from this time onwards she became a Christian.

**Q) What could have been the pressing reasons for her to leave Lesotho and stay at Modderpoort?**

A) I was made to understand that because of her prophetic gifts, she had become popular among the Basotho people and King Moshoeshoe feared that she was becoming very influential; therefore, he exiled her to Modderpoort.

**Q) Did her fame and influence follow her to Modderpoort?**

A) Absolutely, too many people call this place the Mantsopa sacred site. They think all the sacred stations of the site are there because of Mantsopa.

**Q) Where did she stay when she arrived at Modderpoort?**

A) I am told she stayed in a cave next to the famous spring named after her.

**Q) Is Mantsopa her original name or is it an ancestral name?**

A) Her name and surname is Mantsopa Makhetha.

**Q) Modderpoort is an Anglican Church property, I am sure she must have come into contact with monks then?**

A) I understand they often met, to the extent that she was eventually baptised in the Christian faith by the monks at Modderpoort on 13 March 1870 and she was given the name Annah.

**Q) She was given this name upon baptism by the monks, because they could not pronounce and understand the name Mantsopa?**

A) I would not tell why they gave her the name Annah; however, it looks as if it was a norm that Africans on farms had to have European names to fit in with the new culture of the place.

**Q) So, she had two names, a traditional name and a Christian name. The Sesotho name was given to her by her parents and the Christian name was given to her by the monks?**

A) All I know is that after her baptism she was called by her new name Annah.

**Q) Does the inscription on her tombstone read with both the names?**

A) Yes, they read Annah Mantsopa Makhetha.

**Q) When she became a Christian, did she still practise as an African prophet?**

A) My understanding is that she never discarded her calling as a prophet, although she worked under a French Protestant Church at Mabilela after her baptism.

**Q) Does this mean she had found a new conviction in being a Christian worker under a Protestant church?**

A) I think Mantsopa was a community worker and her prophetic experiences helped her to grasp the main tenets of the Christian vocation.

**Q) Her Christian experience starts with her baptism at Modderpoort; did she not do some work with the monks or the Anglican Church?**

A) I understand she was always in the company of the monks because of her gifts of prophecy.

**Q) Could this mean there was a point of convergence between Christianity and prophecy as conceptualised in African traditional religions?**

A) There is this understanding that Christianity would do nothing at Modderpoort without the influence of the local religion and cultures.

**Q) If this is so what is the influence of Zionism, or rather, the influence of the Zionist Christian Church and other independent churches at Modderpoort?**

A) Faith-based groupings, independent churches and indigenous traditional practitioners come to Modderpoort, particularly the grave of Mantsopa.

**Q) Do these groupings come to the grave of Mantsopa and perform rituals?**

A) Yes, they do. When people visit the grave, they burn candles, they sprinkle snuff on the grave; they leave coins on the grave. I suppose these people invoke the spirit of Mantsopa for the purposes of luck and fortune.

**Q) Surely too many people come to this grave? What about the other graves in the same graveyard, are they not equally important in the history of the Modderpoort site?**

A) This graveyard was for White clergy who served in the Anglican Ministry and the monks who started the mission work here, I do not think there is so much attention to this end, but the Anglican Church commemorates the founding fathers of the site.

**Q) In this age and time, is the grave of Mantsopa significant for the life of the site and South Africans in general?**

A) Mantsopa cannot move away from the lives of the Basotho people and South Africans in general who believe in her spiritual power. There is special memory attached to her spiritual power.

#### ***Y. Interview on the Mantsopa Spring with Johann Fritetz: September 2011***

**Q) Why is this spring or fountain named after the prophet Mantsopa?**

A) I was informed she performed her ritual and healing work at the spring.

**Q) Is this the only thing she did at the spring?**

A) Again, I was informed she used to bathe a lot at the spring and after bathing she would prophesy about the things that would happen in the future.

**Q) Would it proper to say her prophetic and healing powers may have come from the spring?**

A) No, her prophetic gifts were naturally in her being; she did not need a spring prophesy; the spring was some kind of a hospital.

**Q) Do you mean an indigenous hospital that heals illnesses related to bad luck and others?**

A) I understand she would pray for the spring water, because they have healing powers.

**Q) Do I understand you correctly to say she would bring her patients to the spring and give them water to drink so that they can be healed?**

A) The spring, I understand, was very important to her healing.

**Q) During the service by the Bishop that commemorated the Cave Church, many people left for the spring to get the holy water. Could this mean the spring was more important than the service?**

A) I think thousands of people come to the Cave Sunday. It becomes congested at the spring, so the pilgrims and visitors want to fetch water earlier before the service ends.

**Q) Is the Mantsopa spring the main destination of the Modderpoort site?**

A) I think the spring is ranked equally important with the grave and the Cave Church.

**Q) Why does the Anglican Church contain the spring water in the plastic bottles using the brand Mantsopa?**

A) I think the church saw a greater need in containing the water in bottles.

**Q) Could this be commercial gain on the part of the church to sell this water?**

A) Many people are far from Modderpoort and they hear of the power of this water, so the church might have seen it fit to sell the water to those unable to come to the spring.

**Q) Do people or pilgrims who come to the spring collect water and perform rituals?**

A) I normally do not accompany people who come to the spring, but I have heard of many things that happen next to the spring once the water is collected.

**Q) Is it proper for pilgrims to perform rituals at the spring? Would not this contaminate the spring?**

A) This is a major concern on the part of the management of the site; we always try to educate the pilgrims about the sacredness of the spring.

**Q) I imagine Zion Churches and traditional healers visit the spring frequently; so it is not easy to regulate the visits to the spring?**



A) At times these very groupings you mention do not come to sign the register so that we must know they visit the spring. The biggest problem is that the spring is situated amongst trees of the nearby mountains.

**Q) If the spring is contaminated, does this not minimise the sacrality of the spring?**

A) I think the basis of its sacrality does not depend on what people do at the spring; it is naturally sacred.

**Q) So the entire ground is sacred, regardless of the contamination?**

A) Without any doubt, the spring site is highly sacred, too many people revere it.

**Q) Does the cultural landscape of Modderpoort include the Mantsopa spring alongside other significant sites of pilgrimage?**

A) That is so, because all the sacred locations symbolises Mantsopa's legendary status, so they are important for pilgrimage.

**Q) Is the spring water of religious and cultural value for the South African society?**

A) Very much so, this water is not only collected; it has much to do with the value of water in African traditional beliefs.

**Q) Does this mean the value of the spring water has much to do with spiritual dimensions in a particular culture?**

A) If I understand your question well, some African people believe that the source of healing can come from spring water.

**Q) I could previously have asked you this question regarding the bottling of Mantsopa spring water, namely, is there a purification process of the water before it is bottled?**

A) Yes, it has to be purified before it is bottled. Some chemicals are used to turn it into mineral water.

**Q) Does the water then not lose its original power when purified with chemicals to make it mineral water?**

A) As I said previously, too many things happen at the spring, including ritual performance; therefore, it is possible the water is contaminated. Therefore, they need to be purified before they can be bottled, that does not take away the sacred status of the spring.

**Q) There is alien vegetation consisting of trees planted at the spring. Is this not a major concern to the management and the Anglican Church?**

A) It is a major concern for us because these trees must be watered and this could be detrimental to the spring, it might dry up because of the trees.

**Q) I want to ask whether White people also collect water from the spring like Black people?**

A) Most white people would go to the spring to conduct an interview and others would want to have a taste of the water.

**Q) Do the Anglican Church clergy come to the spring to collect water?**

A) Some come, particularly the Black priests.

### ***Z. Oetsi Cave interviews with Chief David Moloi: October 2012***

**Q) Morena ke lebohela monyetla wa ho ho buisana le wena ka lehaha lena, hobaneng ha le bitswa ka Morena Oetsi? (Chief, thank you for the opportunity for granting me this interview, why is the cave named after Chief Oetsi)?**

A) Monghadi le nna ke ya leboha, lehaha lena ke la Morena Oetsi, ke yena motho wa pele ho beya le nto la hae kahara lehaha lena (Sir I also want to thank you for the interview, this cave belongs to Chief Oetsi. He is the first person to set foot on this cave).

**Q) Hobaneng ha Morena Oetsi e le ena motho wa pele ho kena lehaha lena, ha hona batho ba bang (Why should Chief Oetsi be the first person to enter the cave, were there no other people who could have entered before him)?**

A) Ha hona bopaki bo bong ba hore ho kile haeba motho kantle ho Morena Oetsi ya ileng a kena pele lehaheng (There is no evidence that there was a person who entered the cave before Chief Oetsi).

**Q) Empa Batlokwa le bona ba tseka lehaha lena ba re ke la bona, ebile bare ke bona baahi ba Monontsha moo lehaha lena le leng teng (The tribe of Batlokwa are contesting the ownership of this cave. They further say they are the residents of Monontsha where the cave is situated).**

A) Ha se Batlokwa feela ba tsekang lehaha lena, le Bakwena ba le tseka, empa lehaha lena ke la Morena Oetsi wa sechaba sa Makgolokoe (It is not only the Batlokwa who claim this cave; the Bakwena also claim ownership of the cave, but this cave belongs to Chief Oetsi of the tribe of Makgolokoe).

**Q) Lebaka le totobetseng la hore Morena Oetsi a tle lehaheng lena ke lefe (Is there a compelling reason why Chief Oetsi came to this cave)?**

A) Makhoa a neng a batla ho busa Witsieshoek a batla ho dula teng ba ne ba batla ho mmolaya, empa a balehela Lehaheng lena (The White settlers who wanted to settle in Witsieshoek wanted to kill the chief. He then fled to the cave).

**Q) Hamamorao ha etsahalang ka Morena Oetsi, ha se ale lehaheng (What then happened to Chief Oetsi when he was in the cave)?**

A) Makhoa a ne a mo tsoma ho fihlela ba utlwela hore o Monontsha, ba utlwela hore o balehetse lehaheng, ba mo latela teng yaba ba boma lehaha, athe morena one a se mong one a ena le makholokholo a Makholokoe kahara lehaha boholo ba bona ba shwetse kahara lehaha (The White settlers hunted him until they received information that he was hiding in Monontsha in a cave. The settlers bombed the cave and unfortunately he fled to the cave with hundreds of Makholokoe who died from the bombs).

**Q) Ho etsahetseng ka Morena (What happened to the chief)?**

A) Hoya ka histori ya Makholokoe Morena o ile a phonyoha a balehela lehaheng le leng lesotho (According to the history of Makholokoe, the chief survived and fled to a cave in Lesotho).

**Q) Lehaha lena le tletse mafika a mangata, a mang a dutse hodima mang (There are so many rocks inside the cave, are some lying on top of others)?**

A) Wa wa bona mafika ana a robetse hodima ditopo tsa Makholokoe a bolauweng ka sehloho, sebaka sena ke mabitla feela (You see, these rocks are on top of dead bodies, this place is a graveyard of the Makholokoes who were brutally killed).

**Q) O tiisitse ha o re ke mabitla kahara lehaha lena (Are you certain that there is a graveyard in the cave)?**

A) Ke tiisitse, batho ba shweletse mona ka sehloho (I am certain people were brutally killed here).

**Q) Morena ha ke bone lotho kahara lehaha haese mafika feela, dibaka tsa ho rapela di kae, dibaka tsa ho pheta meetlo di kae, ha ke bone dibaka tse ikhethileng tshebetsong ya setso (Chief, I only see rocks in the cave, but I do not see places of prayer, places where rituals can be performed. I do not see sacred places)?**

A) Ha hona motho ya hanelwang ho rapela kahara lehaha, ha hona motho ya hanelwang ho pheta moetlo kahodimo ha tseo tsohle lehaha lena ke la badimo ba rona (There is no prohibition

against people who want to pray, who want to performs rituals; above all, this cave belongs to our Ancestors).

**Q) Ha o bapisa lehaha lena le Motouleng le Mautse o ka reng bakeng seo (When you compare this cave with the caves of Motouleng and Mautse, what would you say to that)?**

A) Ha ke kgone ho ka bapisa mahaha ana a mabedi le lehaha la Morena Oetsi, ke nnete mahaha ana a tumme ka tshebetso ya tsona e tswileng matsoho (I am unable to compare these two caves just mentioned with the cave of Chief Oetsi, it is true that these two caves are famous for their outstanding work).