AMAQITHI RESEARCH PROJECT

Research Report on the

# Qithi Clan

*Origins, lineages, oral history and open questions of the amaQithi of the abaThembu nation*


Compiled and written by

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*umQithi wasemilanjeni yaseCacadu*



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*From the White Kei, we rise*

# About this report

This report gathers, in one place, everything the amaQithi research project has established, argued, doubted and left open between June and July 2026. It is written for the whole clan, not for one family. The Qwabi line appears in it because that is where the work started and because it is the line the writer can speak to first hand, but the subject of the report is amaQithi as a people, and every house that carries the name has standing in it.

Much of what follows came from clan members who took the time to sit down and tell what their grandmothers and grandfathers told them. Some of it came from books, colonial files, death notices and old newspapers. Some of it is neither, and is only a working idea that still has to be tested. The report keeps these three kinds of knowledge apart on purpose, because collapsing them is the fastest way to lose the trust of the very people whose memory the project depends on.

> **How to read the evidence labels in this report**
>
> **DOCUMENTED** · Written down at the time, or in a published book, thesis or official record. It can be checked by anyone, and a source is given.
>
> **ORAL TRADITION** · What clan members and elders have told us. It is named, dated where possible, and treated with respect. Where two or more unconnected people say the same thing, that is noted, because it matters.
>
> **WORKING HYPOTHESIS** · What we think may be true, and why, and what would prove us wrong. Nothing in this tier should be repeated as settled fact, in conversation or online.
>
> **OPEN QUESTION** · A gap we know about and have not filled. Section 10 collects these in one place.

## A note on names and spelling

Family names in this record are often spelled several ways, because clerks who could not write a click wrote what they heard. Mhlungulwana and Mhlungulwa, Ndeleni and Ndaleni, Ngqela and Ngqele, Sdlwengu and Sihlwengu all appear. Variant spellings are kept rather than tidied away, because the variation is itself evidence. Where the report chooses one form, the alternatives are given beside it.

The clan name is written amaQithi. Individual members are amaQithi or, in the singular, umQithi. The ancestor is Mqithi. The nation is abaThembu, not amaThembu.

## A note on the word San

Earlier drafts of this project said San throughout. The report now says **Khoe-San** in most places. This change was made after discussion with colleagues, and it is not cosmetic. The Korana marriage tradition, the Senqu and Orange river geography, and the sheep-forward ritual grammar found among the amaXhapha houses all point toward a Khoe herder element as well as a San hunter-gatherer one. The genetic marker most often cited in this connection, A-M51, is Khoe-San-wide rather than San-specific. Saying Khoe-San costs the argument nothing and is simply more accurate. Where a source says San, or abaThwa, or Bushman, the source's own word is kept.

## With thanks

To every elder and clan member who answered a question from a stranger on the internet and gave a family's memory in return. To Themba Banisi, Vabantu Silimela, Bunje Nyelezi, Thembalethu Mqithi, Nkosikho Manimani, Amos Gaji, Gcinikhaya Qondani, Nomacule Kwinana, Mphathi Mbukushe Ntayithethwa, Mpho Plata, Hlumelo of Mkapusi, Sorharhoba KA Thembelani, Asavela, Sandile Tukani, Inam Sokoti, Vuyokazi kaGaji, Nkuli Zweni, Nomhle Adoons,

Nontuthuzelo Sylvia Stefaans, Ntobeko Mangqwengqwe, Kay Asikelelwe Ngqele, Zukiswa Gege, Busiswa Ndeleni, Lelwa Bashi Silimela, Thandukwazi, Mr Bokwe of Ezibeleni, and to Nandi Ngcongco Nomava, who has carried much of the coordinating work. To Xurab Hamid and Krauseb Runtu for the Khoe-San side of the conversation, and to Kumkani Ngwenyathi, who declined to invent an answer when he did not have one. That refusal was worth more to this project than an answer would have been.

A full contributor roll appears in Appendix A. If a name has been left out or misspelled, that is an error to be corrected, and corrections are welcome.

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# 1
# Executive Summary

This project set out to find missing members of one family. It became an attempt to answer a much older question: who are the amaQithi, where did we come from, and why does a clan with our numbers and our spread appear in almost no official list of the abaThembu?

## What the research is for

Three things at once. First, to gather and hold the memory of the clan before the people who carry it are gone. Second, to test that memory against whatever written record exists, honestly, including where the record contradicts us. Third, to give amaQithi families a place to find each other, which is why the work is published rather than kept in a drawer.

The project is deliberately open about its own uncertainty. That is a choice, not a weakness. A clan history that admits what it does not know is far harder to dismiss than one that claims everything.

## The main findings

1. **Ntande is real, and the link from Ntande to Mqithi is oral.** Ntande appears in three published Thembu king lists. Five independent sources — Bunje Nyelezi, Sorharhoba KA Thembelani, Sandile Tukani's written paper, and two further reciters — place Mqithi as a son of Ntande. No published source does. The clan has adopted Ntande-to-Mqithi as its working framework, correctly labelled as oral tradition.
2. **A single praise signature runs across the whole clan.** The names Ndinga and Mlebe, and the praise iNkomo ayizali, izala ngozaliswa, were recited independently by seven people in five regions who had no contact with each other, from Hewu to Zastron. Some recited it whole, some in a fused or eroded form. This is the strongest single piece of evidence that the scattered families carrying the name are one people.
3. **Ngcobo is a dispersal point, named by five witnesses independently.** Themba Banisi, Thembalethu, Amos Gaji, Gcinikhaya Qondani and Vuyokazi kaGaji all place their origin at or near Ngcobo. Nobody prompted this. It is now the most repeated geographic claim in the record.
4. **The absence of a Qithi chieftaincy has a documented mechanism.** The 1878 Blue Book on Native Affairs names three leaders in the Tambookie Location rebellion: Umfanta, Gungubele, and Sihlwengu, whose followers and country were both taken. Sihlwengu is a strong name match for Sdlwengu, named in oral tradition as Khethelo's brother. Two of the three defeated houses have since been restored. The third has not.
5. **A Thembu community was settled in Quthing before 1879, and Moorosi fought for them.** A missionary letter of 1 June 1851 in Theal's Basutoland Records describes the Batepu as settled at Moorosi's place since the last frontier war, accused of raiding, and defended by Moorosi and the Baphuthi against a colonial force at Tolomane. This is a contemporary primary source for the Lesotho thread, replacing reliance on secondary work alone.
6. **A precedent exists in the published record.** Peires, writing in 1976, names the isiThathu as a Xhosa clan partly San in origin, on the strength of a 1975 interview. AmaQithi are therefore not making an unprecedented claim about themselves.
7. **Our ancestors' names are beginning to appear in documents.** Death notices recorded as Tembu now exist for Ntuse at Debera, Mhlungulwana at Gubenxa, Tyokolo at Manzana and Qoqodala, Rhadu at Macibini, Nqumama at Ngcuka, and Ngcongolo at Xolobe. The oral record says Ntuse was the father and Mhlungulwana, Tyokolo, Khuzani and Rhotho his sons. The archive is producing the shape of that account without ever having heard it.

## What is still uncertain

A great deal, and the report says so section by section. The three largest holes are these.

- **Khethelo's parentage.** The man remembered as the ancestor of ancestors, whose grave at donga libomvu was opened in 1993 or 1994 and found to contain a spear, a spoon and tanjies, has no known father in any source. Nothing links the houses at the ancestral seat to the trunk genealogy above them. This is the single most important unanswered question in the project, and Section 10 is largely given to it.
- **The order of the trunk.** Ndinga, Mnono and Rhadu are agreed on. Their order is not. Two sources give Mnono before Rhadu; one gives the reverse. Whether Manzi and Ntuse are two men, one man under two names, or one man wrongly split, is open.
- **Khoe-San descent.** This remains a working hypothesis, and the report treats it as one. The supporting evidence is real: the ingqithi custom is described in the published ethnographic literature as very probably of Bushman origin; the rivers of the heartland carry San names; the word Tambookie is itself a San word for abaThembu; the absorption mechanism is described inside Thembu tradition; and there is documented precedent in a neighbouring nation. None of it is proof of descent, and the difference matters.

## Why this matters to the whole clan

Because the clan is scattered from Lady Frere to Zastron to Matatiele to Botswana, and until recently had no way of recognising itself across that distance. Because the elders who hold the oral record are in their seventies and eighties. Because the paper record that would settle several of these questions exists, in archives in Cape Town and Pretoria, and is reachable by anyone willing to write a specific letter.

And because the question of who we are should be answered by amaQithi, with our own names on the work, rather than left to be summarised by others in a footnote.

> **The one thing to take from this report**
>
> The clan is real, one, and traceable. The praise signature proves the first, the Ngcobo convergence supports the second, and the archive has just started proving the third. Everything else in this document is either the evidence for that, or an honest account of what we still do not know.

# 2
# Research Background

The work began small and personal, and grew because the questions kept turning out to be bigger than the family that asked them.

## How it started

It started as a search for relatives. A Qithi man from the rivers of the Cacadu wanted to find the branches of his own family that had scattered — to Steynsburg for work, to Queenstown, to places nobody had a current address for. The obvious way to do that was to write down what was known, put it somewhere findable, and see who came looking.

Two things happened. The first is that the family record turned out to be shorter and stranger than expected. It ran back to Qwabi Joka, born about 1842 near Mkapusi outside Lady Frere, and to two of his sons with names that do not belong in an ordinary Thembu household: Bushman, and Molosi. In isiXhosa there is no r sound, and Molosi is what Moorosi becomes in a Xhosa mouth. A man who named one son for the San and another for a Phuthi chief in Lesotho was saying something, and the family had stopped being able to hear it.

The second is that other Qithi families started answering. Not from Lady Frere only, but from Ngcobo, Cofimvaba, Mthatha, uMzimkhulu, the Free State, the Lesotho borderland, and Botswana. Once there were thirty voices instead of one, the project was no longer about a family. It was about a clan that had been dispersed and had lost the habit of recognising itself.

## The questions that have guided the work

Six questions have organised everything since. They are set out here in the form they actually took, not tidied into research language.

1. Where do amaQithi attach to the abaThembu? Every reciter says we are Thembu. No royal genealogy at Bumbane has us in it. Both of those can be true at once, and the reason they can be true at once is the real question.
2. Who was Mqithi, and who was his father? The oral answer is Ntande. The books do not say so. Why not?
3. Where is the clan's seat, and who are the senior house? The seat is agreed: kwaQithi on the upper White Kei, at the water the families call donga libomvu. The senior house is not agreed at all.
4. Are we of Khoe-San descent, as some inside and outside the clan say, and if so how did that come to be folded into a Thembu identity?
5. Why is there no Qithi chieftaincy, when there are Qithi villages, a Qithi burial ground, and Qithi families in eight districts?
6. What happened in Lesotho, and is the Lesotho connection ancient or is it labour migration from the last hundred years? This one is genuinely contested inside the clan.

## The historical setting

The heartland of this story is a small piece of ground. The villages of Chachu, kwaQithi and eSikhwanqeni sit in a line along the upper White Kei, spread over about six kilometres, inside the district the colonial government called Glen Grey and before that the Tambookie Location. The White Kei on that stretch is called donga libomvu by the families who live there. It is also called the Cacadu. The names matter, and Section 8 sets them out.

This was hard country and it was used as a refuge. In 1878 the Queenstown magistrate described the junction of the White and Black Kei as *a country almost inaccessible*, and explained why people were living in it: after Chief Maphasa was killed in the war of 1851 to 1852, his councillors had taken his twelve-year-old son into that broken ground, and the scattered remnants of the amaTshatshu had slowly gathered there again.

What followed shaped the clan more than any single ancestor did:

- **1852.** Governor Cathcart proclaims that *the name and independence of the tribe of Maphasa will cease*, and that its remnants will be dispersed among others. Over three thousand men and their families are affected.
- **1853.** The Tambookie Location is created as a closed location, holding the broken amaTshatshu together with a number of smaller Thembu groups. AmaQithi houses are among them.
- **1865.** Government offers Xalanga and St Marks in exchange for Glen Grey. The chiefs accept; the people refuse to move. Only five minor chiefs go east. Nonesi, the Thembu queen of the great house, is banished for her part in the refusal.
- **1877 to 1878.** The rebellion in the Tambookie Location. Three leaders are named in the Blue Book: Umfanta, Gungubele and Sihlwengu. Gungubele's great place is burned; Mfanta ends in the Breakwater Prison; his followers flee east into Emigrant Thembuland under Raxoti Matanzima.
- **1935 and 1975.** Two official surveys record the same tribal authority, 11-210, at Cala. Van Warmelo lists it as *abaThembu, chief unknown*. Forty years later Jackson lists it under an elected headman, Wellington Tofile, with the note that *there is no chiefly lineage in its area*.

That sequence is the frame. A clan does not lose its chieftaincy by forgetting it. It loses it when a proclamation abolishes the polity it belonged to, when the survivors are folded into a closed location, when the leaders of the last rising are imprisoned or scattered, and when three generations later an official writes down that nobody can name the chief.

## The cultural setting

Three customs carry most of the weight in this research, and they need introducing before they can be used.

### Izibongo, izinqulo, isiduko

Isiduko is clan identity — the answer to the question ungubani, who are you, at the level of the house rather than the person. Izibongo and izinqulo are the praises through which that identity is recited. A working rule emerged during the group's own discussions and is used throughout this report: **one praises upward, through ancestors, not downward through descendants.** If a clan branches off above a given figure, it should not be calling that figure's name. This rule is a tool, not a law, and Jabavu recorded in 1952 that praises are borrowed across clans, which complicates it. But it lets us tell a descent name from a borrowed one, which is exactly the distinction the research needs.

### Ingqithi

The custom that gives the clan its name: the cutting of a joint from the little finger in childhood. In 1957 the government ethnographer W.D. Hammond-Tooke wrote that the Xhosa had adopted the practice of amputating a joint of the little finger, called ingqithi, and that it was *very probably of Bushman origin*. He connected it to the click sounds in isiXhosa as evidence of long early contact. Two cautions belong beside that. T.B. Soga, writing in the 1930s, said the custom's origin could not be traced clearly, and recorded that it is done as *isiko lakulonina* — the custom of the mother's people. That second detail is quietly important, because it points at descent through mothers rather than fathers, which is exactly what the absorption argument in Section 5 depends on.

### The black cow

Thembu oral history remembers a custom from the old days. When sons were born to mothers who were not royal, black cows were slaughtered for them, and afterwards the nation accepted them as its own. The old accounts describe this happening more than once: first for some of Ndilo's sons, and later for the twins Qithi and Cube, sons of Ntande. The

elders' phrase for it is *bafakwa ngenkomo emnyama oonina* — their mothers were brought in by the black cow. This custom is known only from oral accounts. It cannot carry documented weight, and this report does not give it any.

## From a family project to a clan project

The change happened over about three weeks in July 2026, and it changed the rules of the work. When it was one family's research, the Qwabi line could sit at the centre. Once thirty houses were contributing, that stopped being appropriate. The clan group has since adopted the Ntande-to-Mqithi framework as its shared working position, has asked for a DNA study, and has begun meeting to pool knowledge collectively.

This report follows from that shift. The Qwabi material is here, in Section 5.12, as one case study among several, because that is what it is.

# 3
# Timeline of Research and Ideas

What follows is a record of how the thinking moved, including the places where it moved backwards. Ideas that were dropped are kept in, because a reader who cannot see what was discarded cannot judge what was kept.

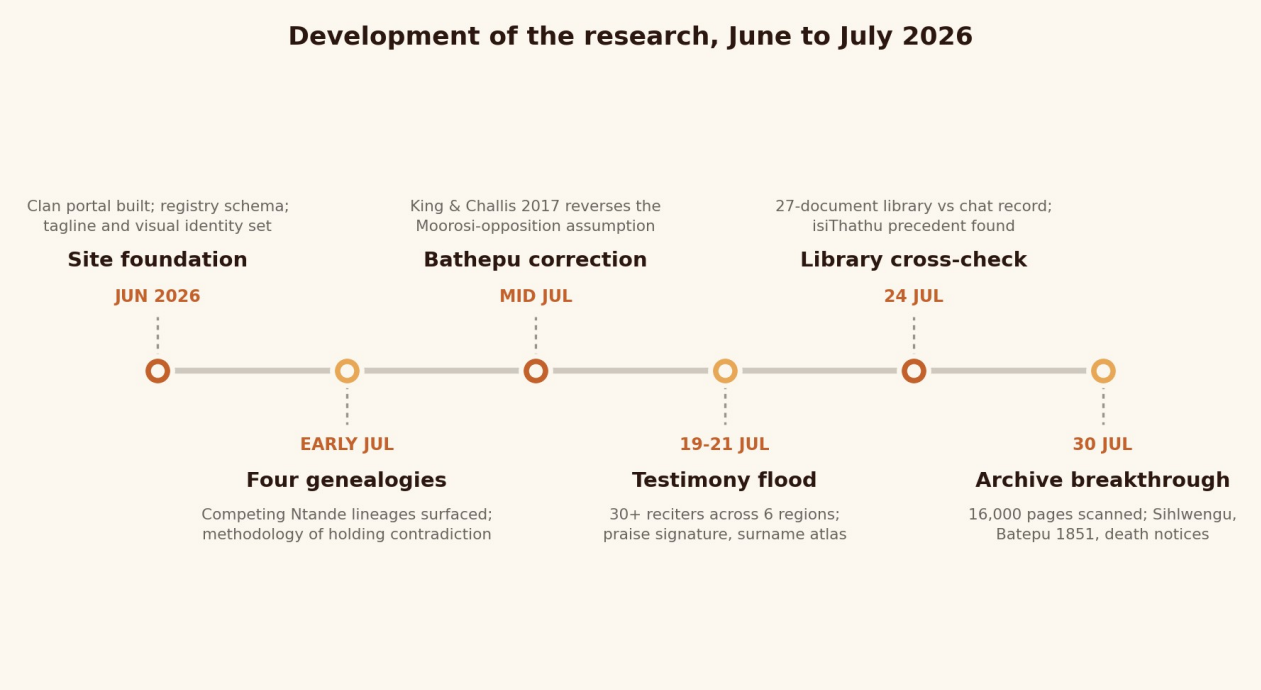



**Figure 1.** The six phases of the work, June to July 2026. Each phase changed the question rather than just adding to the answer.

## The phases in detail

### Phase 1 — June 2026: building the container

Before there was an argument there was a website. The clan portal was built at qithi.co.za on a Next.js stack, with a registry schema for membership applications, help requests, genealogy signups, oral history submissions and directory registrations. The visual identity was set to San cave-painting earth tones. The tagline went through several rejected versions before landing on **From the White Kei, we rise**, chosen because it is geographic and specific rather than abstract.

Two decisions from this phase turned out to matter more than expected. The first was to build a submission pipeline for oral history rather than only publishing findings, which is what made July's testimony flood possible. The second was a writing standard: grade eight to ten reading level, plain voice, every claim carrying its evidence tier. The primary audience was set as rural and young isiXhosa and Thembu speakers, not academics.

### Phase 2 — early July: four genealogies and a method

New source material produced not one Ntande lineage but four, disagreeing about where Qithi and Cube attach and whether Mnguti sits between Ntande and Nxeko. The instinct was to pick the best one. That instinct was rejected, and the alternative became the project's core method: **treat each version as a source with interests, map where they agree and where they diverge, and publish the disagreement.**

This was the most consequential methodological decision in the whole project. It reframed contradiction from a problem to be hidden into a credibility asset. A clan history that shows four versions and says which is which is more trustworthy than one that shows a single clean chart.

### Phase 3 — mid July: the Bathepu correction

An earlier working assumption held that Thembu forces fought against Moorosi in 1879, which made the family tradition of a Qithi ancestor allied to Moorosi look unlikely. That assumption was wrong, and the correction came from peer-reviewed work: King and Challis in the Journal of African History, 2017, showing that the local Thembu of Quthing — the Bathepu — supported Moorosi during the siege, running food up the mountain at night, while the broader Basotho establishment sided with the Colony. Moshoeshoe had allocated Quthing to the Bathepu in the first place.

The correction did not merely rescue the family tradition. It sharpened it into something testable: not a Thembu man who somehow sided with Moorosi, but a Bathepu man, a Quthing Thembu, which would explain the Quthing geography in the etymology work and both sons' names in one stroke. This remains a hypothesis. It is a better one than what it replaced.

### Phase 4 — 19 to 21 July: the testimony sessions

The clan Facebook group and a WhatsApp group produced more material in three days than the previous month. Around thirty reciters gave lineages, praises, village names and surnames across six regions. Several important things happened at once:

- The praise signature was confirmed across seven unconnected reciters.
- Ngcobo emerged as the dispersal hub, named by five people independently.
- The first Lesotho-born member, Nomacule Kwinana, testified, saying *inkaba yam iseLesotho* — my umbilical cord is in Lesotho.
- The amaXhapha split was explained for the first time, by Themba Banisi, as a quarrel over inxaxheba, ritual meat, with distinct practices persisting today.
- The clan animal was named for the first time — imbila, the dassie — by Bunje Nyelezi. It rests on that single mention and is not confirmed.
- Two mistranslations in the project's own notes were caught and fixed: amatshatshu had been rendered as *scythes* rather than as the clan name, and iNciba emhlophe as *white hill* rather than the White Kei. The second error had erased the connection between a founding oral account and the site's own tagline.

A methodological worry also appeared in this phase and has not gone away. To provoke corrections from a silent audience, genealogy charts were published stating contested claims flatly. It worked. It also risks seeding the testimony pool with the project's own guesses. A private key was written logging the true tier of every claim on those images, and a standing provenance question was adopted for every reply: *uyifunde phi le nto, nini* — where did you learn this, and when?

### Phase 5 — 24 July: testing the talk against the library

Five days of group chat were cross-referenced against a library of twenty-seven documents. This is where several oral claims found published support and several found published trouble. The most valuable single find was in Peires' 1976 thesis: the isiThathu named as a Xhosa clan partly San in origin. The most uncomfortable was Peires' own warning that brotherhood in genealogies often encodes political incorporation rather than literal descent — a warning the project decided to publish rather than wait to be confronted with.

A contamination problem also surfaced here: a chain logged as an independent Asavela testimony had been posted under the username Sorharhoba, and the same person is addressed as Asavela elsewhere in the chat. Two claimed independent sources may be one man. This is recorded as an open question rather than quietly resolved.

### Phase 6 — 30 July: the archive opens

Roughly sixteen thousand pages of books and about thirty years of newspapers were extracted and searched with custom scripts. Imvo Zabantsundu 1884 to 1898, Isigidimi samaXosa 1870 to 1888, Izwi Labantu 1901, Theal's Basutoland Records, Van Warmelo's 1935 tribal survey, Jackson's 1975 ethnic composition survey, Kawa, Rubusana, Hammond-Tooke's district surveys, and Cape Blue Books.

This phase produced the project's first genuinely documentary results: Sihlwengu named as a rebel principal in 1878, the Batepu settled at Moorosi's in 1851, death notices carrying the oral genealogy's own names in the right districts, Mkapusi identified as Location No. 4 with its board members and its 1934 population, and the 11-210 tribal authority traced across two surveys forty years apart. It also produced a correction: an earlier claim that the family villages sit at the White and Black Kei confluence was wrong by 36.6 kilometres.

## Conclusions reached, revised, and left open

| Idea | What happened to it | Status now |
|---|---|---|
| Pick the most reliable Ntande genealogy | Rejected in favour of mapping all four and publishing the disagreement | **Revised** — became the project's core method |
| Thembu forces opposed Moorosi, so a Qithi ally is unlikely | Overturned by King and Challis 2017, then strengthened again by Schrumpf's 1851 letter | **Overturned** — reversed direction entirely |
| Qwabi was a Thembu man who sided with Moorosi | Sharpened into: Qwabi was Bathepu, a Quthing Thembu | **Live hypothesis** — more specific and more testable |
| The family villages sit at the White and Black Kei confluence | Wrong by 36.6 km once coordinates were checked. The broader claim, that they sit inside amaTshatshu country, survives | **Corrected** |
| amaQithi lost a chieftaincy in Cala under Matanzima | A documented mechanism found: 11-210 recorded as chief unknown in 1935 and no chiefly lineage in 1975 | **Strengthened**, not yet proven |
| Say San throughout | Changed to Khoe-San after discussion of the Korana element and the A-M51 marker | **Revised** terminology |
| The Lesotho connection is ancient | Directly contested inside the clan by Themba Banisi, who reads it as labour migration from Ngcobo | **Unresolved** — both readings held open |
| Khethelo descends to Sonyethe, Nqumama and Qwabi | Themba's own reading; the writer's uncle disputes the Qwabi Joka identification separately | **Unresolved** — see Section 10 |
| imbila is the clan totem | Named once, by one reciter. Not corroborated | **Single attestation** — not confirmed |
| Mnguti sits between Ntande and Nxeko | Sihele places them in direct father-son succession, agreeing with the oral reciters against Soga | **Contested in the literature itself** |

> **A note on keeping mistakes in**
>
> Four of the items in that table are corrections to the project's own earlier positions. They are printed here rather than removed because a research record that only shows its successes cannot be checked by anyone. If a future reader finds an error in this report, the right response is the one used above: name it, date it, say what replaced it, and keep the old version visible.

# 4
# Summary of All Chats and Discussions

The research has been conducted almost entirely in conversation — in a clan Facebook group, in two WhatsApp groups, in face-to-face visits with elders, and in long working sessions against the documentary library. This section gathers the arguments made in those conversations, grouped by subject rather than by date, so that a reader can see what was actually contested.

## 4.1 Building the site, and the discipline of writing

A recurring argument, and one worth recording because it shaped everything else. On more than one occasion the site's own headline and footer copy drifted into stating Khoe-San descent as settled fact, while the body content beneath it kept the hypothesis label correctly in place. This was flagged repeatedly as a problem, and the reasoning is worth stating plainly: **a headline that overclaims does not just mislead readers, it seeds the testimony pool.** People who read a flat claim and then testify may be repeating the site back to the project. Their testimony then looks like corroboration when it is an echo.

Two related standards came out of the same discussions. First, never refer to a custom, ceremony or historical event as known — show it to the reader first, then build on it. This rule was written after a passage was caught using *the incorporation ritual* as though the reader already knew what it was. Second, the register must stay plain. Sentences like *a royal naming system without leaving a clean paper trail* were rewritten, not because they were wrong but because they were written for the wrong audience.

## 4.2 The four genealogies of Ntande

The central genealogical argument. Four accounts of the Ntande lineage were in play: a YouTube oral historian presenting Thembu royal credentials, a written umnombo account, a face-to-face source, and J.H. Soga's published chart. They agree that Mnguti exists. They disagree about where he sits and about where Qithi and Cube attach.

The two versions that were compared in detail agree on a great deal: the usurpation of the throne by Dlomo from Hlanga, the Mayemane cow, the exclusion of Mphosesebeni, and the incorporation of the amaQwathi. Both name Qithi and Cube as twins born to Ntande — a placement more stable across those two sources than in Soga, who centres Mnguti and does not place the twins there at all. One version adds the black-cow ritual detail and describes the mothers as commoners; the other names the twins without the ritual.

| Point of divergence | Version 1 (oral historian) | Version 2 (written umnombo) |
|---|---|---|
| Qeduma's son | Mnguti | Mgude |
| Ntande's heir | Nxego | Nxeko |
| Qithi and Cube | Commoner mothers; black cows slaughtered | Named as twins, no ritual detail |
| Mgude's drowning | Not mentioned | Included, with Mphosesebeni's exclusion |
| Mawisa to Tshatshu line | Included | Not mentioned |
| Bhomoyi at Qacha's Nek | Won and kept the land | Ultimately lost the land |

A third position then appeared from the library and settled nothing while changing everything. Sihele places Ntande and Nxeko in direct father-son succession with **no Mnguti between them**, agreeing with the living oral reciters against Soga and against the royal chart at Bumbane. So the generational placement of Mnguti is the least stable element in every known version, and the source that removes him is also the source that best fits what the clan's own reciters say.

## 4.3 The twins, the black cow, and absorption

This is the project's central interpretive argument, and it developed in stages.

The observation that started it: the black-cow custom appears **twice** in the tradition, at two separate succession points. Once for some of Ndilo's sons, where Bhomoyi was raised above his brothers Qoma, Jali, Mdlane and Ncotshe. Again in Ntande's generation, where only Mnguti was made important and the others, including the Qithi and Cube line, were ranked below. The elders' phrase attaches the cow directly to the mothers: *bafakwa ngenkomo emnyama oonina*.

The argument made from that: **a practice that recurs at two separate succession points is an institution, not an anomaly.** If the custom is remembered correctly, it may explain a real puzzle — why the oral historians say Qithi and Cube were Ntande's sons while the written family trees do not place them there at all. A ceremony of that kind would make outside boys into Thembu sons in the eyes of the people while leaving nothing behind for a book to record. The memory would live in the telling.

What the argument does not do is prove anything. The black-cow custom is itself known only from oral accounts, which means this is oral tradition explaining oral tradition. The *indlu emnyama* term rests on a single attestation and needs a second, unled source before it anchors anything. And the phrase about the mothers is doing heavy interpretive work, so it needs its own source line and a second attestation of its own.

> **The falsifier that has been set for this argument**
>
> Find amaMncotshe and amaJali families — the two houses demoted in the same list who have no absorption tradition attached to them yet — and ask them openly whether they carry any tradition of coming in from outside. Confirmation from inside those families would be strong evidence. If they carry nothing at all, the synthesis weakens, and that result must be recorded too.

## 4.4 Moorosi, the Bathepu, and the reversal

Covered in Section 3 as a phase; the substance of the argument belongs here. The dispute was about whether a Qithi ancestor could plausibly have been allied to Moorosi in 1879. The initial position was no, on two grounds: Thembu levies fought under colonial command, and Moorosi had old enmity with Ngubengcuka's Thembu, having gone on a joint expedition against them with Moshoeshoe in early 1829.

Both grounds were true and both were beside the point, because they described the broader Thembu polity rather than the local Thembu of Quthing. The distinction that resolves it is the Bathepu: a resident Thembu population in Quthing, allocated the district by Moshoeshoe, whose loyalty in 1879 ran to Moorosi and not to the Colony.

The 1851 Schrumpf letter, found much later, extends this backwards by twenty-eight years and adds the detail that matters most: the Batepu had been settled at Moorosi's place *depuis la dernière guerre cafre* — since the last frontier war. That is a dated, sourced, **reverse-direction migration**: Thembu-identified people moving from the colonial frontier into Quthing. The thesis needs exactly that movement to have happened before 1879, and until this find there was no primary evidence for it.

## 4.5 The July testimony sessions

The largest body of material in the project. Rather than list thirty testimonies here, the arguments that ran through them are grouped.

### On the trunk

Bunje Nyelezi gave Mqithi born of Ntande, with Nxeko in the great house and Mqithi in a junior house alongside an elder brother Maya, and added the phrase read as *uliwele noMcube* — twin of Mcube. His descent below Mqithi runs Ndinga, then Mnono, then Rhadu. Sorharhoba KA Thembelani, independently, gave Ntande to Mqithi to Ndinga to Rhadu to Mnono — the same names in a different order — and placed a man named Khuzani as Mnono's son or grandson. Sandile Tukani's written paper then gave Mqithi to Ndinga to Mnono to Rhadu, putting the tally at two to one for Mnono before Rhadu.

The Khuzani mention created the project's most productive working theory, because Khuzani was already on file as one of four brothers — Khuzani, Mhlungulwana, Rhotho and Tyokolo, sons of Ntuse, son of Manzi — whose apex had been floating with nothing above it. If they are Mnono's sons or grandsons, the floating branch docks onto the main trunk and Thembalethu's ten-generation line hangs directly off it. Asavela's WhatsApp chain then gave Mnono to Manzi to Khuzani, a third source docking Manzi onto the trunk, but omitting Ntuse entirely.

Both readings are held open. Either Mnono and Ntuse are one man under two names, or Ntuse sits between Mnono and the sons. Nothing yet decides it. Asavela's chain also carried names and wife-clans that had never been posted anywhere — Rhasmeni, Tyesi, Damanete, with MamGcina and MamMvulane — and that unpostable specificity is the strongest signal that it is genuine family memory rather than an echo of the project's own charts.

### On the houses at the seat

Themba Banisi, the senior elder on this subject, holds that Khethelo is the senior house, that the Jezile family is the great house of Sdlwengu, Khethelo's brother, and that the houses of Ngcongolo, Mafilika and Mfeketho split from the main house over a dispute about inxaxheba, the ritual portion of meat, and call themselves amaXhapha, from ukuxhapa. He describes their practice as differing to this day: sheep rather than goats, no bone-burning, no blankets. He also describes a reconciliation: a man from the house of Malithi brought the elders a dream at Khethelo's great house, and the houses met to unite.

The Silimela cluster contests this, claiming seniority for Ngcongolo. Vabantu Silimela's own line runs Tsula to Ngcongolo, with a brother Mafilika, then to Mfeketho, Malithi, Masimini and Silimela, and down through four further generations to Vabantu himself. His account is geographically precise and was independently confirmed on two points by the archive: the ancestors buried at the red donga above the White Kei, and the naming of the amaTshatshu.

> **An important internal note**
>
> The amaXhapha material is sensitive inside the clan. It concerns a live division between houses. It is recorded here because a research report that suppressed it would be dishonest, and because both Themba's account and the Silimela account are given as their holders gave them. It is not recorded to settle the dispute, and this report takes no position on which house is senior. At Khethelo's funeral, by Themba's own account, all the houses attended, including the amaXhapha.

### On Lesotho

The one genuinely two-sided dispute in the clan record. On one side: Nomacule Kwinana, born in Lesotho, of the house of Lebese, a Sesotho name, whose umbilical cord is buried there. Nkuli Zweni of Matatiele, whose family remembers being on the Lesotho side when the border was drawn. The Adoons family at Zastron, on the borderland near Mohale's Hoek and the Quthing side. Mr Bokwe of Ezibeleni, who says Mnguti migrated from Lesotho through Herschel to Ngcobo. Thandukwazi of uMzimkhulu, with living kin in Lesotho. Sotho and SePhuthi phonology in names such as Dzube.

On the other side: Themba Banisi, who reads all of it as labour migration outward from Ngcobo rather than ancient origin, and who points to his own line's move to Steynsburg for work as the pattern. His objection is serious and specific and is not dismissed. Nkuli Zweni's border-drawn claim is the sharpest counter to it, because a family that was already there when the line was surveyed is not a family that went for work.

### On research discipline, from a source

Themba Banisi issued a research directive during his second testimony that has been followed: pause the amaNgxongo and amaCube threads, map the internal Qithi connections first, and find Khethelo's parents. He also raised the seniority question and pronounced the family name as *Qhwaphi* — a possible older aspirated form, and a live etymology data point.

A separate request from Nandi Ngcongco, for a Mcube descent line to be produced, was declined. No such chain exists anywhere in the record, and producing one would have put a fabrication into the pool that later testimony might have echoed back as confirmation. The request was redirected to Ngcongco elders instead. This is recorded because it is the kind of decision that has to be made repeatedly in work like this.

## 4.6 Testing the talk against the library

A structured cross-check of five days of group discussion against twenty-seven documents. The results ran in both directions, which is the point of doing it.

| Claim raised in discussion | What the library said |
|---|---|
| Ntande is a real ancestor | **Confirmed.** Appears in three published king lists |
| Maya was Mqithi's elder brother | **Supported.** Kawa, quoting J.H. Soga, has Maya as Ntande's right-hand son. Peires separately records that amaMaya and amaHala do not intermarry, which in his own framework is evidence of blood relation |
| Mnguti sits between Ntande and Nxeko | **Contradicted by Sihele**, who has them father and son directly — agreeing with the clan's reciters against Soga |
| Ntande and Zima went to war | **Confirmed.** Sihele's account matches Thembalethu's oral account almost exactly |
| Zondwa is only a praise name | **Contradicted.** Zondwa is a documented historical king |
| amaQithi praise Dlomo and Madiba | **Problem flagged.** If amaQithi branch at Ntande, these names sit below the branch point. Under the praise-upward rule they should not be recited. Either the rule has exceptions, the praises were adopted later, or the branch point is wrong |
| Mqombothi, Nomsobondwane, Nonjiba, Dlophatyapha, Mlebe | **Absent from every available published source**, including Mlebe, which appears in almost every reciter's izibongo |
| Nxeko's descendants are Hala, Jumba, Qina, Tshatshu, Ndungwana | **Confirmed in Rubusana, 1911** — and contains no Qithi or Cube. This is expected rather than suppressive: the list covers Nxeko's descendants, and Qithi is claimed as Nxeko's brother, not his son |
| The ingqithi custom is San-derived | **Supported in two independent published sources**, Peires and Jolly, both describing it as Thembu-specific and San-derived |
| A San group carried the Thembu name | **Documented.** Jolly's thesis records a 1776 Tambu'ki group near the Tsomo River, with a Thembu faction merging into them after a quarrel. This is the strongest independent corroboration of the origin mechanism found so far |

Two findings from this pass deserve separate mention because they cut against comfort.

**Peires' warning.** In the same thesis that supplies the isiThathu precedent, Peires warns that brotherhood in genealogies frequently encodes political incorporation rather than literal descent, citing Vansina's twenty-five African parallels. Applied to this project that warning cuts both ways: it supports the absorption reading, and it undermines any attempt to treat *Mqithi was Nxeko's brother* as a statement about biology. The decision taken was to publish the warning on the site rather than wait to be confronted with it.

**The cheap decisive test.** Because non-intermarriage is treated in the literature as evidence of blood relation, asking whether amaQithi marry amaHala and amaMaya would discriminate between the two competing origin accounts. This can be answered inside the existing group membership, at no cost, and has not yet been done.

## 4.7 The archive and newspaper scan

The last and most productive phase of discussion was largely technical: extracting and grepping about sixteen thousand pages of books and thirty years of newspapers. The arguments that came out of it are given in Section 5.10 and Section 6. What belongs here is the reasoning about what such a find can and cannot mean.

When death notices appeared for Ntuse at Debera, Mhlungulwana at Gubenxa and Tyokolo at Manzana — a father and two of his sons, by the oral account, as three separate surnames in one district — the temptation was to call it confirmation. It is not. These are descendants, not the men themselves; 1955 is a century after the apex generation; Engcobo is a populous district where unrelated families can carry the same names; and nothing yet links any of the three families to each other or to amaQithi.

What it is, is **the right shape of evidence**. The oral record says a father and his sons each headed a house. In Xhosa practice a surname descends from an ancestor, so separate surnames in one district for a father and two sons is precisely what that account predicts. The archive produced the structure of the oral account without anyone in the archive having heard it. And the test that settles it needs no archive at all: ask those three families their isiduko.

## 4.8 Repeated themes, contradictions, and unresolved issues

| Theme | How often and where | State |
|---|---|---|
| Ndinga in the izibongo | Every single reciter, all regions | **Settled** |
| nkomo ayizali, izala ngozaliswa | Seven reciters, five regions, some fused | **Settled** |
| Mlebe or Mamlebe | Most reciters; absent from all published sources | **Strong oral, no documentary trace** |
| Ngcobo as origin | Five independent testimonies | **Strong** |
| Lesotho connection | Six sources for, one senior source against | **Contested** |
| Ntande as father of Mqithi | Five sources including one written paper | **Strong oral, no documentary trace** |
| Mnono / Rhadu order | Two sources one way, one the other | **Contradiction, unresolved** |
| Manzi and Ntuse | One source has both, one omits Ntuse | **Contradiction, unresolved** |
| House seniority at the seat | Themba for Khethelo, Silimela cluster for Ngcongolo | **Contradiction, unresolved** |
| Royal descent from Qeduma | Accepted by most; explicitly denied by Mphathi Mbukushe Ntayithethwa of the Khethelo house | **Live dissent, recorded** |
| imbila as clan animal | One reciter only | **Single attestation** |
| Khethelo's parents | No source names them | **Open, priority one** |
| Qwabi Joka's identification | Family record for; Hlumelo of Mkapusi says the local Joka family is amaNgxongo; the writer's own uncle disputes it | **Open** |
| Twins in the tradition | In the origin account; twin categories recur in family genealogies; a thunder rite involving a twin recorded in Jabavu | **Suggestive pattern, not evidence** |

# 5
# Topics Explored

This section sets out each major research topic in turn, with what is known, what is claimed, and what is unresolved in each. It is the longest part of the report and is meant to be read in pieces rather than at one sitting.

## 5.1 Where amaQithi attach to the abaThembu

Every reciter in the record says the same thing in some form: **thina singabaThembu**, we are Thembu. Bunje Nyelezi puts it as a conclusion — *thus we are Thembu*. Every death notice found in the archive carrying a name from the oral genealogy is registered as Tembu. No colonial or state survey ever records amaQithi as a separate tribe.

At the same time, the clan does not appear in the royal genealogy kept at Bumbane. According to Kumkani Ngwenyathi, the amaQoma chiefs put the equivalent question to the sitting Thembu king Zwelibanzi directly and were told that amaQoma do not appear in the royal family tree, with a photograph reportedly taken as record. That report is second-hand and the photograph has not been produced.

Two statements need to be kept rigorously apart here, and collapsing them has been the project's most persistent temptation:

> **The distinction the whole argument turns on**
>
> **Fact:** amaQithi are absent from the royal genealogy at Bumbane.
>
> **One explanation among several:** amaQithi were absorbed into the nation from outside, possibly from a Khoe-San background.
>
> These are not the same sentence and must never be written as one. Absence from a royal genealogy is what you would expect of any commoner clan, of any junior house, of any group incorporated at any point, and of any clan whose records were simply never taken.

What the archive adds is a genuinely useful reframing. AmaNtande is recorded as a real clan of Thembu commoners in 1895, again in 1911, and again in 1957, living in Willowvale. Ntande himself is in three king lists. If amaMaya, amaNtande and amaQithi are brother clans rather than one under another, then being Thembu in every record while never appearing as a tribe is exactly what you would expect. That reading is consistent with everything currently known and is offered as the most economical explanation, not as a finding.

## 5.2 The trunk genealogy

The clan's descent line below Mqithi, as far as it can be reconstructed, together with every point at which the sources disagree.

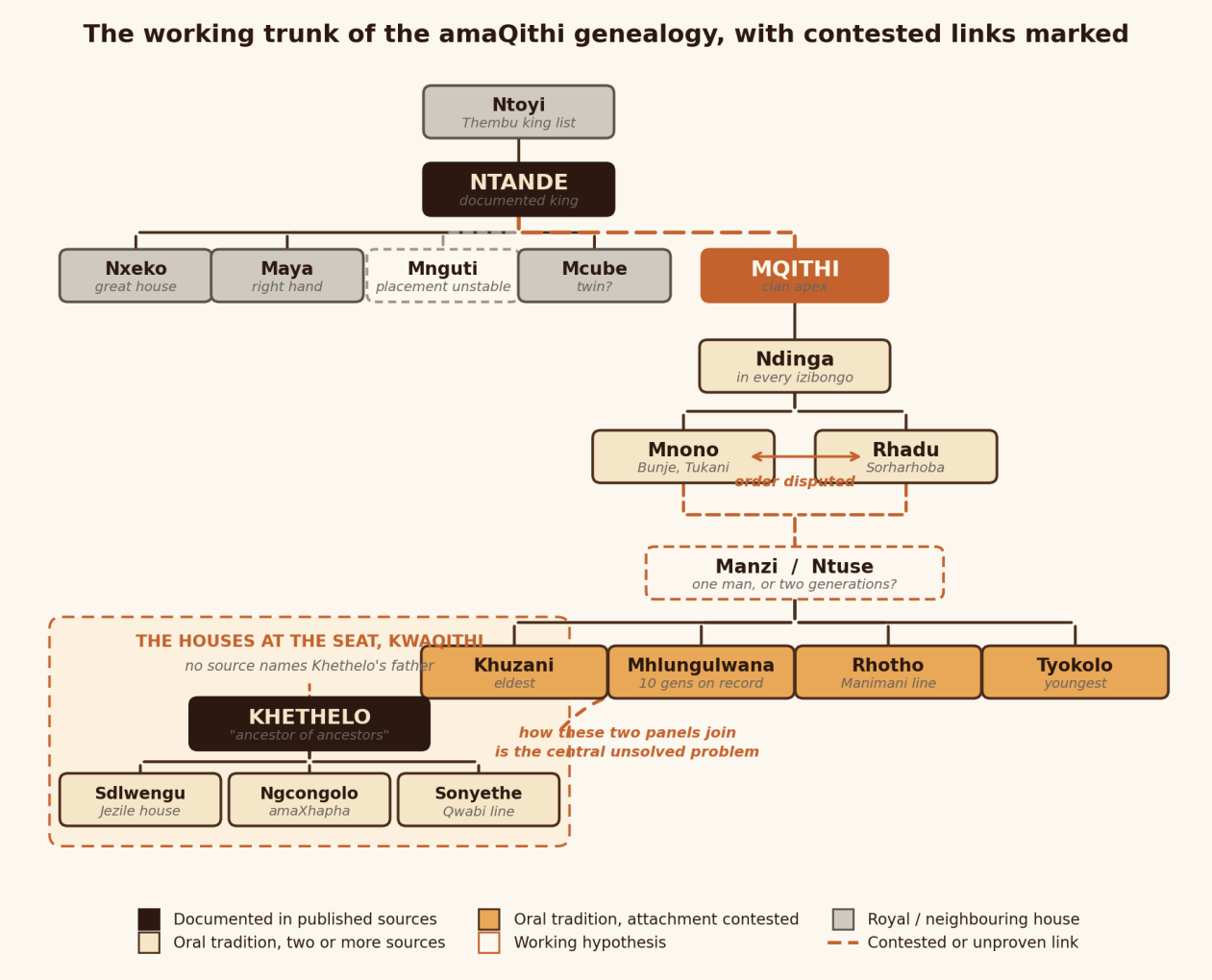



**Figure 2.** The working trunk. Solid boxes are supported by two or more independent sources; dashed outlines and dashed links are contested or hypothetical. Note that the panel on the left — the houses at the ancestral seat — has no established connection to the trunk on the right. That gap is the central unsolved problem in the genealogy.

## What is agreed

- **Ntande** is documented in three published king lists.
- **Mqithi as Ntande's son** is given by five independent sources, none of them published.
- **Ndinga** follows Mqithi in every account, and appears in every reciter's izibongo.
- **Mnono and Rhadu** both belong on the trunk below Ndinga.
- **Four brothers** — Khuzani, Mhlungulwana, Rhotho and Tyokolo — form a generation, with Khuzani eldest and Tyokolo youngest.
- **Thembalethu's ten generations** run Mhlungulwana, Mtseku, Mtyhala, Lawana, Mheshe, Magula, Ngani, Makhobeni, Tutu, Thembalethu. This is one testimony, unverified by a second source, and it is the longest continuous chain in the archive.

## What is disputed

| Question | Position A | Position B | Who holds each |
|---|---|---|---|
| Order below Ndinga | Mnono, then Rhadu | Rhadu, then Mnono | A: Bunje Nyelezi, Sandile Tukani<br>B: Sorharhoba |
| Manzi and Ntuse | Manzi → Ntuse → four sons | Mnono → Manzi → Khuzani, no | A: earlier oral record |

| Question | Position A | Position B | Who holds each |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Ntuse | B: Asavela |
| Khuzani's relation to Mnono | Son | Grandson | Sorharhoba gives both as possible; Asavela's chain implies grandson |
| Mqithi's brothers | Nxeko, Maya, Mcube | Maya only, with Nxeko in the great house | Bunje gives Maya as elder brother and Nxeko as the great house |
| Branch B of the Tukani paper | Descent names | Praise terms misread as descent | Nonjiba and Mdlophatyaba appear elsewhere in the group's izibongo, not as ancestors |

The Tukani paper contributed two branches descending from Mqithi as iqadi, the left-hand or secondary house. Branch A runs Mqithi, Ndinga, Mnono, Rhadu. Branch B runs Mqithi, Nonjiba, Nonose, Mdlophatyaba, Dondi, Lane. Branch B is flagged rather than accepted, because Nonjiba and Mdlophatyaba appear in the clan's praises rather than in any descent account, and a praise term promoted to an ancestor is a specific and common way for genealogies to go wrong.

> **The working theory, stated as a theory**
>
> If Khuzani, Mhlungulwana, Rhotho and Tyokolo are Mnono's sons or grandsons, then the whole unified trunk reads: **Ntande → Mqithi → Ndinga → Rhadu → Mnono → the four brothers**, with Thembalethu's ten generations hanging directly off Mhlungulwana. Three independent sources now dock the previously floating Manzi and Mhlungulwana apex onto the Mnono trunk.
>
> **The falsifier:** if Thembalethu's house denies the brothers, or names a different father for Mhlungulwana, the theory drops. That test has been set and the answer is still awaited.
>
> This must not be published anywhere in flat register. It is a hypothesis with a named test.

## 5.3 The houses at the ancestral seat

At kwaQithi village, on the White Kei, sits the clan's ancestral seat and its burial ground. The house names recorded there — some of which are now surnames in their own right — include Khethelo, Sdlwengu, Mbukushe, Sinoko, Ntayithethwa, Malithi, Mhlungulwana, Ngcongolo, Silimela, Mafilika, Mfeketho, Thoba and Tomsana.

Khethelo is the central figure and the central problem. He is remembered as the ancestor of ancestors. His grave at donga libomvu was opened in 1993 or 1994 and found to contain a spear, a spoon and tanjies. The Jezile family are the custodians of the site, though their own clan identity is not confirmed. Nobody knows who his father was. Section 10 is devoted to him.

### The amaXhapha division

Themba Banisi's account, given directly: the houses of Ngcongolo, Mafilika and Mfeketho split from the main Qithi house over a dispute about inxaxheba, the ritual portion of meat, and took the name amaXhapha, from ukuxhapa. Their ritual practice differs from the main house to this day — sheep rather than goats, no burning of bones, no blankets. The Jezile family, as the great house of Sdlwengu, also keeps apart.

Two things are worth saying about this. The first is that the ritual differences are evidence, not just colour. Sheep-forward ritual grammar is one of the specific reasons the project moved from saying San to saying Khoe-San, because sheep belong to herders. The second is that the division is not permanent: a man of the house of Malithi brought the elders a dream at Khethelo's great house, and the houses met to unite. At Khethelo's funeral, all houses attended, amaXhapha included.

The seniority question sits inside this and is unresolved. Themba holds Khethelo senior. The Silimela cluster claims Ngcongolo. Themba states only that Ngcongolo is younger than Khethelo; whether they were full brothers is not stated by him and has been inferred elsewhere, which is an error the project has made and now flags.

## 5.4 The Khoe-San descent question

The most public and most contested part of the project. It is a working hypothesis. Set out below is the case for it, the case against it, and what would settle it.

### The supporting evidence, by tier

| Evidence | Tier | What it does and does not show |
|---|---|---|
| The ingqithi custom | Documented | Hammond-Tooke, 1957: very probably of Bushman origin, and Xhosa clicks show long early contact. Peires and Jolly both describe it as Thembu-specific and San-derived. Shows cultural transmission. Does not by itself show descent |
| T.B. Soga on the same custom | Documented | Origins cannot be traced clearly, and it is done as isiko lakulonina, the custom of the mother's people. The second half points at descent through mothers, which is what the absorption argument needs |
| San names on the home rivers | Documented | The Cacadu is the White Kei. Tsomo and Kei are San names too. The country between the White Kei and the Stormberg was Windvogel country, named for a San leader. Shows who lived there first. Everyone in Glen Grey lives on that land |
| Tambookie is a San word | Documented | From Tam'bou'ci, the name San near the Tsomo gave to abaThembu. The government's own name for the people was a San word for them |
| The 1776 Tambu'ki record | Documented | Jolly's thesis: a San group carrying the Thembu name near the Tsomo, with a Thembu faction merging into them after a quarrel. The closest thing in the literature to the mechanism the clan claims |
| The isiThathu precedent | Documented | Peires, 1976, from a 1975 interview: at least one Xhosa clan is partly San in origin. AmaQithi are not making an unprecedented claim |
| Bathepu at Moorosi's | Documented | Schrumpf, 1851, and King and Challis, 2017. Thembu settled in Quthing among Baphuthi and San, defended by Moorosi. Establishes the world, not the bloodline |
| The black-cow ritual | Oral tradition | An institution of incorporation described inside Thembu tradition itself, recurring at two succession points. Oral tradition explaining oral tradition |
| Adoons and Jantjie | Hypothesis | Adonis-type surnames are strongly associated with Khoe-San-descended families. Also live proof that surnames change: one grandfather changed Adoons to Jantjie on arrival in the Free State |
| Phenotype praise | Hypothesis | The Kwinana family's praise, amaQithi amhlophe anzipho zintle — light-skinned with beautiful nails. One family, one attestation. Interesting, weak |
| The Qithi and Quthing etymology | Hypothesis | The click and the toponym set, including the Mgudu and Mgude lead. Suggestive; not established by any linguist yet |

### The case against, stated fairly

- **Cultural borrowing is not descent.** A custom can travel between neighbours without a single ancestor moving. The ingqithi evidence is genuinely strong for contact and genuinely weak for descent.
- **Living on San-named land proves nothing about ancestry.** Every family in Glen Grey lives on that land.

- **Absence from a royal genealogy has many explanations**, of which absorption from outside is only one.
- **Peires' warning applies with full force.** If brotherhood in genealogies encodes political incorporation, then a tradition of being folded in is exactly what an ordinary junior Thembu house might also carry.
- **Source clustering.** Four of the external sources who support a Khoe-San reading — Xurab Hamid, Krauseb Runtu, Sandile Tukani and Kumkani Ngwenyathi — all stand in or near the live Khoe-San revivalist current. Correlated testimony is possible without anyone copying anyone. The project's response has been to track each source's vector: how they learned what they know and how they reached the project. Ngwenyathi's commentary predates the site by three years or more, which means it cannot have been contaminated by it.
- **Internal dissent.** Mphathi Mbukushe Ntayithethwa, of the Khethelo house itself, denies the royal connection outright: he had never heard of Qeduma in this context. That is dissent against the royal graft rather than against San substrate, and the two must be classified separately, but it is a house at the seat saying the framework is not theirs.

> **What would actually settle it**
>
> **DNA.** A clan-level study is the stated next step and the group has asked for it to be led. The caution recorded during the discussion is that the A-M51 marker is Khoe-San-wide rather than San-specific, so a positive result would need careful interpretation rather than a headline.
>
> **The intermarriage test.** Because non-intermarriage is treated in the literature as evidence of blood relation, asking whether amaQithi marry amaHala and amaMaya would discriminate between the competing accounts. Free, quick, and not yet done.
>
> **The amaMncotshe and amaJali test.** Set out in Section 4.3.

## 5.5 Etymology, the click, and place names

The oldest thread in the project, and the one most in need of a linguist.

The core observation is that the Q in Qithi is a click, and clicks in Nguni languages are generally understood to have entered from Khoe and San languages through long contact. Hammond-Tooke says exactly this in 1957, connecting the clicks to early contact in the same passage where he discusses ingqithi. The further step — that Qithi and Quthing in Lesotho are related forms — is the project's own and remains unverified.

Supporting place-name observations, all at hypothesis tier and all needing a specialist:

- **Mgudu and Zabasa, in Ngcobo.** Gcinikhaya Qondani gives his family's origin as eZabasa eMgudu. The king list has Mgude, son of Qeduma, also given as Mnguti. A toponym matching a king-list name in the district five witnesses call the dispersal point is worth a field visit. It is not worth a claim yet.
- **KuManzimdaka, in Ngcobo.** Vuyokazi kaGaji's family origin. Whether the place is named for a man called Manzimdaka, and whether that echoes the apex ancestor Manzi, is an open question and a weak one.
- **Qhwaphi.** Themba Banisi pronounces the family name with aspiration. If that is an older form, it is a real data point about how the name has moved.
- **Dzube.** In Nkuli Zweni's line. The phonology is Sotho or SePhuthi rather than Xhosa, which is a hybridity marker in a family that claims deep-time presence on the Lesotho side.

A better model for this whole thread came out of the library, and it is worth adopting. Rubusana, in 1911, explains a Xhosa idiom about the gecko by noting that it can only date from after amaXhosa already knew abaThwa well, because the animal was known to be edible only from having seen San people eat it — and he then records their method in detail. That is San practice, preserved inside a Xhosa figure of speech, written down by a Xhosa compiler. It is a worked example of the exact thing the etymology argument claims, and the transmission is explicit because Rubusana names it himself. It is a stronger opening illustration than any click-consonant material.

## 5.6 Izibongo and the praise signature

The single most persuasive body of evidence in the project that the scattered families are one people.

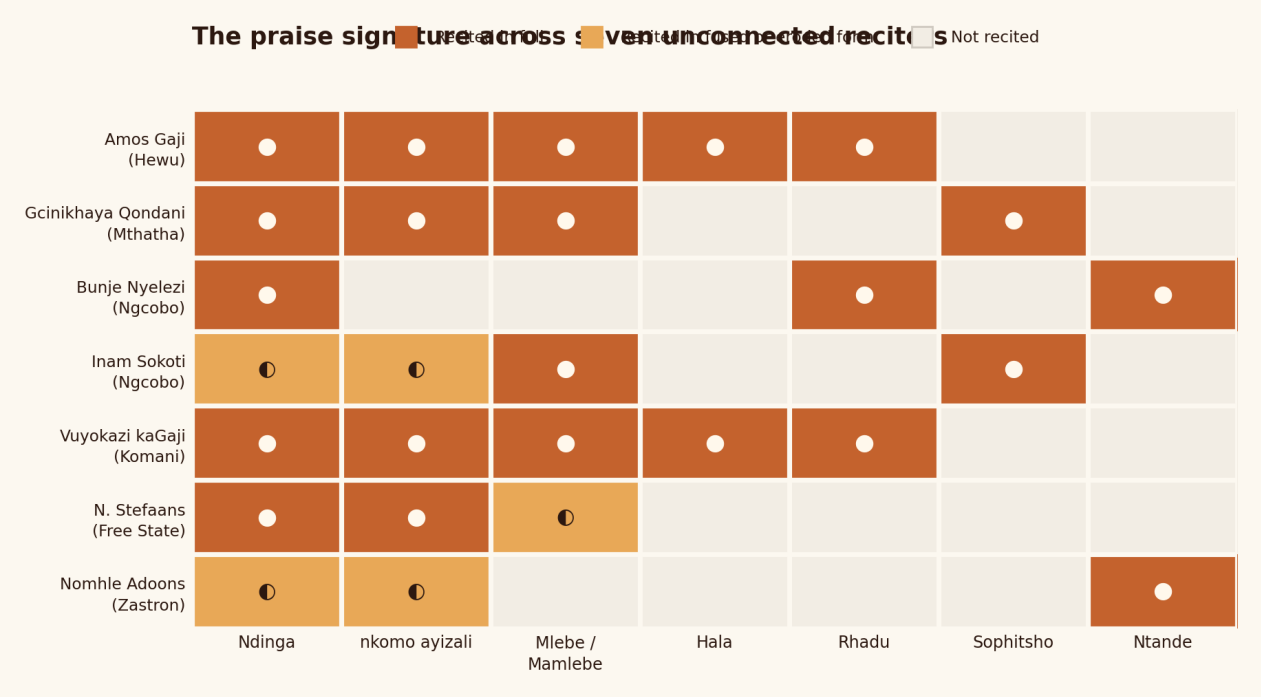



**Figure 3.** Seven reciters from five regions, none in contact with each other, and the praise terms each gave. Ndinga and the nkomo praise recur almost everywhere. Some reciters carry them whole; others carry them fused or eroded, which is itself evidence of long independent transmission rather than recent copying.

The signature is: **Ndinga**, **Mlebe** or **Mamlebe**, and the full praise **iNkomo ayizali, izala ngozaliswa** — the cow does not conceive, it conceives by being made to conceive. Amos Gaji of Oxton in Hewu gave the fullest version: Mqithi, Hala, Mlebe, Mthembu, Rhadu, Zondwa, Ndinga, iNkomo ayizali izala ngozaliswa. Inam Sokoti of eMgwalana in Ngcobo gave a fused fragment: uNding'ayizali, Mamlebe, Sophitsho, Ngqolomsila. Nomhle Adoons at Zastron gave a similar fusion, and was the first reciter to name Ntande explicitly.

Two analytical points follow. The first is that erosion helps the argument rather than hurting it. A fragment where Ndinga and ayizali have fused into one word is a fragment that has been passed mouth to mouth for a long time without a written text to correct it. A reciter who had just read the praises online would give them clean.

The second is a real problem, and it is flagged rather than solved. Several reciters — Gcinikhaya Qondani most fully — interleave the Qithi-specific praises with the full royal Dlomo isiduko: Dlomo, Madiba, Yem Yem, Sophitsho, Ngqolomsila, Vela bembhentsele, and the ozondwa-ziintshaba phrase. Under the praise-upward rule, a clan that branches at Ntande should not be calling Dlomo or Madiba, who sit below the branch point. Either the praises were adopted later, or the branch point is wrong, or the rule has exceptions. Jabavu's 1952 note that izinqulo are borrowed across clans supports the first reading. The question is open.

It should also be recorded that four of the reciters are women, and that Inam Sokoti asked to be taught ukuzithutha — how to recite herself. In a tradition usually transmitted through men, that is worth noting as a fact about the clan's present rather than its past.

## 5.7 Migration, dispersal, and the Ngcobo question

Five people, independently and without prompting, gave Ngcobo or its immediate district as their family's place of origin: Themba Banisi, Thembalethu, Amos Gaji, Gcinikhaya Qondani and Vuyokazi kaGaji. Themba states it as a direction of travel: amaQithi dispersed **from** Ngcobo. Nkosikho Manimani gives a specific move, from Rhodana near Lady Frere to eMaqwathini.

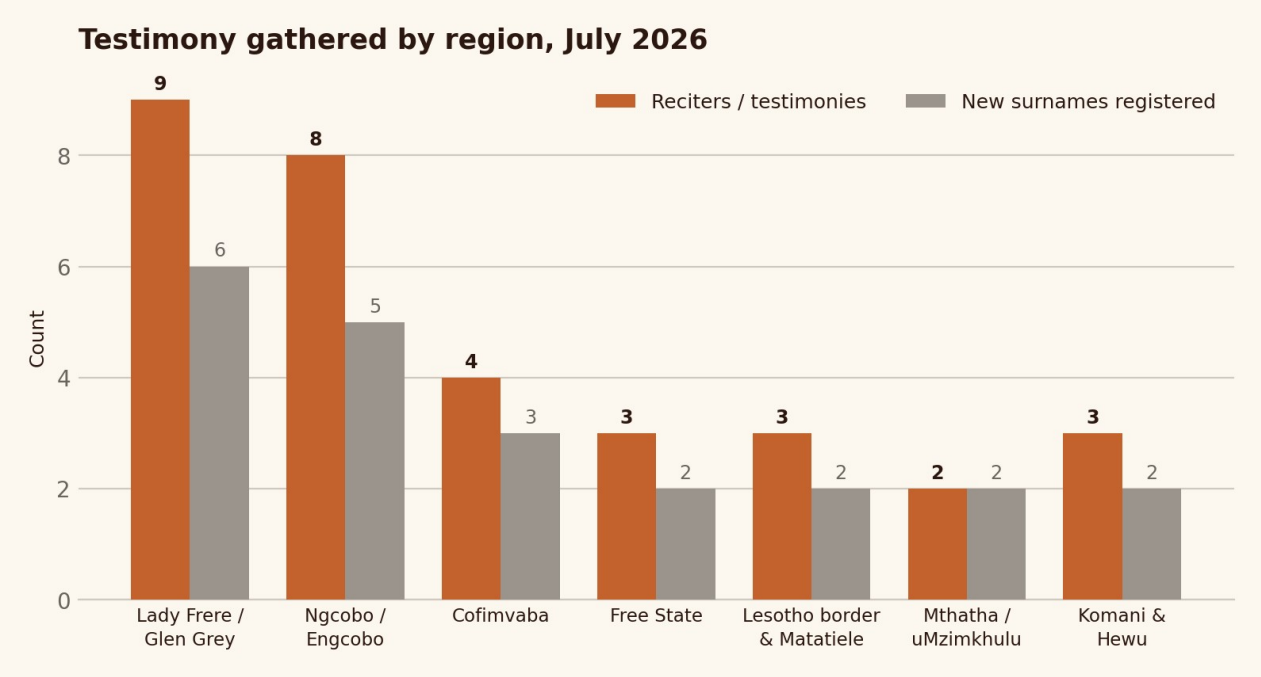



**Figure 4.** Testimonies gathered and surnames registered, by region. The Lady Frere and Ngcobo clusters dominate the record, which reflects both the settlement history and who happened to be reachable in July 2026.

Two Qithi settlements exist about sixty kilometres apart: one in Glen Grey on the upper White Kei, one near Ngcobo. That is exactly the pattern a dispersal from Ngcobo would produce. It is also, it must be said, the pattern any two-way movement would produce.

### The faction model

The most useful framework to come out of the archive work, and it replaces a simpler picture that was not working. The earlier assumption was one migration with branches. The evidence does not support that. What it supports is **several houses, several allegiances, several destinations** — a clan whose houses held separate political standing and whose loyalties dispersed across the Tambookie Location, Emigrant Thembuland at Cala, and Ngcobo.

This model does real explanatory work. It accounts for the amaXhapha split and the ritual differences, because houses with different political histories and different overlords diverge in practice. It accounts for the spread of families to the Free State at Bholoto and Zastron. And it accounts for the hardest thing of all: why there is no single Qithi chieftaincy to find. There was not one to lose. There were houses.

## 5.8 Surnames and the registry

Building a surname register by district has turned out to be one of the most practically useful parts of the work, because it is how scattered families actually recognise each other. The full register is at Appendix B. What matters analytically is the mechanism it reveals and its limits.

**The mechanism.** In Xhosa practice a surname descends from an ancestor. So the appearance of Tyokolo as a surname in Ngcobo, and Roto or Rhotho on the wall of remembrance, and Mhlungulwana in the Lady Frere list, alongside an oral genealogy that names four brothers Khuzani, Mhlungulwana, Rhotho and Tyokolo, is a convergence between two bodies of evidence that did not know about each other. That is the kind of corroboration this project treats as valuable.

**The limits.** Surnames are not stable. One grandfather changed Adoons to Jantjie on arrival in the Free State, and both branches are now in the register as separate surnames. Some surnames are shared across clans: Maseti families are found among both amaQithi and amaQwathi. And some names in the register are recorded as prominent community members rather than as confirmed Qithi houses, which is a distinction the site has not always kept clean.

Names added or corrected during the July sessions include Jikumlambo, Mkoti, Banisi, Jezile, Gege, Gaji, Fulumeni, Xhokomfu, Ntayithethwa, Zweni, Qondani, Nyelezi, Maseti, Nkewu, Kwinana, Lebese, Mangqwengqwe, Ndeleni and Adoons with Jantjie. Villages added include eMgwalana, eMthonjeni, kuBengu, eMtshanyane, KuManzimdaka, Tsakane, Zabasa or Mgudu, Marhambeni in uMzimkhulu, and Zastron.

**Two registry problems to fix**

**Spelling splits.** Mhlungulwa and Mhlungulwana, Ndeleni and Ndaleni, Skampula and Skhampula appear as separate entries. Where they are one name, the register should say so while keeping both spellings visible.

**A reversed line.** The Manimani lineage on the site has its generational arrows the wrong way round: Dolo is the oldest ancestor, not the youngest. This was identified in July and should be checked as fixed.

## 5.9 Historical claims: 1878, Sihlwengu, and the missing chieftaincy

The most substantial documentary work in the project, and the closest it has come to explaining a family tradition with an official record.

The Cape of Good Hope Blue Book on Native Affairs for 1878 names three leaders in the Tambookie Location rising: Umfanta, Gungubele, and **Sihlwengu**, whose followers and whose country were both taken. Mfanta and Gungubele are well documented — Gungubele's great place was burned, he lost at least a hundred men, and sixty horses including his white riding horse were captured; Mfanta ended in the Breakwater Prison, and his followers were forced into Emigrant Thembuland under Raxoti Matanzima.

What follows from that, laid out in order:

1. Emigrant Thembuland is Xalanga and St Marks — Cala. So the followers of the defeated rebels arrived in Cala in 1878 as refugees under someone else's protection, with their leader imprisoned or scattered.
2. In Van Warmelo's 1935 register, tribal authority 11-210 at Cala is listed as *abaThembu*, *chief unknown*, inside a block introduced as miscellaneous abaThembu about whose chiefs nothing is known.
3. In Jackson's 1975 survey, the same 11-210, now under the district name Xalanga, is headed by an elected headman, Wellington Tofile, with the footnote that *there is no chiefly lineage in its area*.
4. Kaizer Matanzima's jurisdiction as paramount chief of the Emigrant Thembu covered exactly Xalanga and St Marks. Neighbouring amaHala entries in the same table were formerly part of his tribe, and one chieftaincy there was created as late as 1 September 1971 as a logical step given the new chief's genealogical position.
5. The family tradition is that Matanzima removed a Qithi chieftaincy in Cala, and that the surname involved was Stofile.

A body of Thembu in Cala with no chiefly lineage is precisely what a defeated faction arriving as refugees produces. Three generations later an official writes *chief unknown*. Forty years after that, *no chiefly lineage in its area*, and an elected headman instead of a chief. That headman is Tofile.

Two of the three houses defeated in 1878 have since been restored: Mfanta's in 1974, through the Zilingwenya Hala Tribal Authority, with a ceremony at the old Breakwater Prison in 2011 asking for his spiritual return; and the amaTshatshu after 1994, Cathcart's ban revoked and the house recognised as ubuzwe bamaTshatshu. The third has not been restored.

**The weak link, named**

**The Blue Book does not say Sihlwengu was a Qithi man.** It names him, gives him followers and a country, and records that both were taken. It says nothing about his clan. The identification rests entirely on the name matching Sdlwengu in Themba Banisi's testimony — Khethelo's brother, whose great house is the Jezile family.

That is an identification by name alone. It is a good one, because Sihlwengu is not a common name. But it is a single

link, and the whole reading hangs from it. Section 12 lists the three records that could secure or break it.

## 5.10 The Lesotho and Quthing thread

Set out in Section 4.4 and Section 4.5 as argument. Here is what the evidence amounts to.

**Documented.** A Thembu community, called Batepu or Bathepu, was settled at Moorosi's place in Quthing by 1851, having come there since the last frontier war. They were accused of raiding into the Colony, made the target of a punitive expedition, and defended by the Baphuthi and by a chief who took up their cause. On 22 February 1851 at Tolomane, some ninety mounted English and Boers were driven back by a force of roughly five hundred Baphuthi, Thembu and Basotho, with the loss of ten men. Moshoeshoe had allocated Quthing to the Bathepu. In 1879, when the mountain fell, local Quthing Thembu ran food up to Moorosi's people during the siege.

**Oral tradition.** Six sources connect Qithi families to Lesotho: a Lesotho-born member whose umbilical cord is buried there, a family that remembers being on the Lesotho side when the border was drawn, a family at Zastron on the Mohale's Hoek and Quthing borderland, a family at uMzimkhulu with living kin in Lesotho, a Matatiele family with Sotho phonology in its lineage names, and Mr Bokwe's account of Mnguti migrating from Lesotho through Herschel to Ngcobo. Nandi Ngcongco separately places the origin of amaNgxongo in Quthing.

**The counter-reading.** Themba Banisi holds that these connections are labour migration outward from Ngcobo in the recent past, not ancient origin. His own line went to Steynsburg for work, and he offers it as the pattern. This report treats his objection as live.

**The hypothesis.** That Qwabi was Bathepu — a Quthing Thembu — which would explain his loyalty to Moorosi, the Quthing geography in the etymology work, and the naming of his two sons Bushman and Molosi as a single coherent statement. Quthing sits across the Telle from the old Glen Grey and Emigrant Thembuland country, so after November 1879 the Cape Thembu districts are exactly where displaced allies would go. This is a family hypothesis and is labelled as one throughout.

## 5.11 The Qwabi line, as one case study among several

This line is included because it is where the project started and because it is documented in more detail than most, not because it is more important than any other house.

The recorded chain, at oral-tradition tier: **Sonyethe → Nqumama → Qwabi**. Qwabi Joka was born about 1842 near Mkapusi outside Lady Frere and died about 1915. His sons include Bushman, Halile Jonas, and Molosi; Molosi's son George married Jessie Jikumlambo at Lesseyton. Themba Banisi descends from Gudu, described as a brother of Qwabi, and Gudu's son was Bhanisi.

Three complications, all unresolved:

- **The Joka identification is disputed.** Hlumelo of Mkapusi says the local Joka family is amaNgxongo, not amaQithi. The writer's own uncle disputes the Qwabi Joka identification separately. Nandi Ngcongco independently places amaNgxongo origins in Quthing, which complicates matters further rather than resolving them.
- **The name may be two names.** Themba Banisi's advice was to find Qwabi's siblings. The Silimela genealogy shows the relevant pattern clearly: within one remembered line, Makhaya is also Faloni, Mnqayi is also Daloni, Tomsana is also Ntamenkunzi. One man, two names, routinely. That does not prove Joka and Nqumama are the same man, but it shows the family's own tradition does this.
- **The marriage at Lesseyton.** Jessie Jikumlambo married George Qwabi, and Jikumlambo is now in the register as a Qithi surname through Hlumelo of Mkapusi. If both families were already Qithi, that raises a question. The honest and useful reading is that the marriage suggests these families did not at that time share one clan identity. There is no claim to make here yet, and the matter is handled with care.

Two archival results now touch this line directly. **Nqumama** appears in a death notice — Nonkala Nqumama, Ngcuka, Glen Grey, 1914, recorded as Tembu. In thirty years of newspapers and sixteen thousand pages of books, not one Qwabi, Joka, Sonyethe or Nqumama had appeared before. And **Mkapusi** is identified as Location No. 4, with its board members named for 1894 through 1898 and a recorded population of 923 in March 1934.

## 5.12 The website, the registry, and the archive as instruments

A short section, but the work would not exist without it. The site at qithi.co.za is not only a publication. It is the collection mechanism. The oral history submission pipeline, the family registry, and the surname atlas are how families find the project and how the project finds families.

Three lessons have been learned the hard way and are recorded for anyone doing similar work.

- **Tier drift is the main quality risk.** Hypothesis-tier claims written in the flat register of documented fact is the most common failure mode, and it happens most often when AI tools generate or edit prose. Every content change now gets reviewed specifically for it.
- **Baked-in text in generated images is a credibility risk.** Illustrations produced with garbled ancestor names and mangled labels undermine a project grounded in real lineage. Assets are now generated without embedded text, and the site's own typography carries the words.
- **Provoking corrections works, and carries a cost.** Publishing confident charts to draw out disagreement produced far more engagement than asking open questions did. It also risks putting the project's own guesses into the pool. The mitigation is a private key logging every claim's true tier, plus the standing provenance question asked of every reply.

# 6
# Evidence and Source Analysis

What each body of evidence is, what it has contributed, and what it can and cannot be asked to carry.

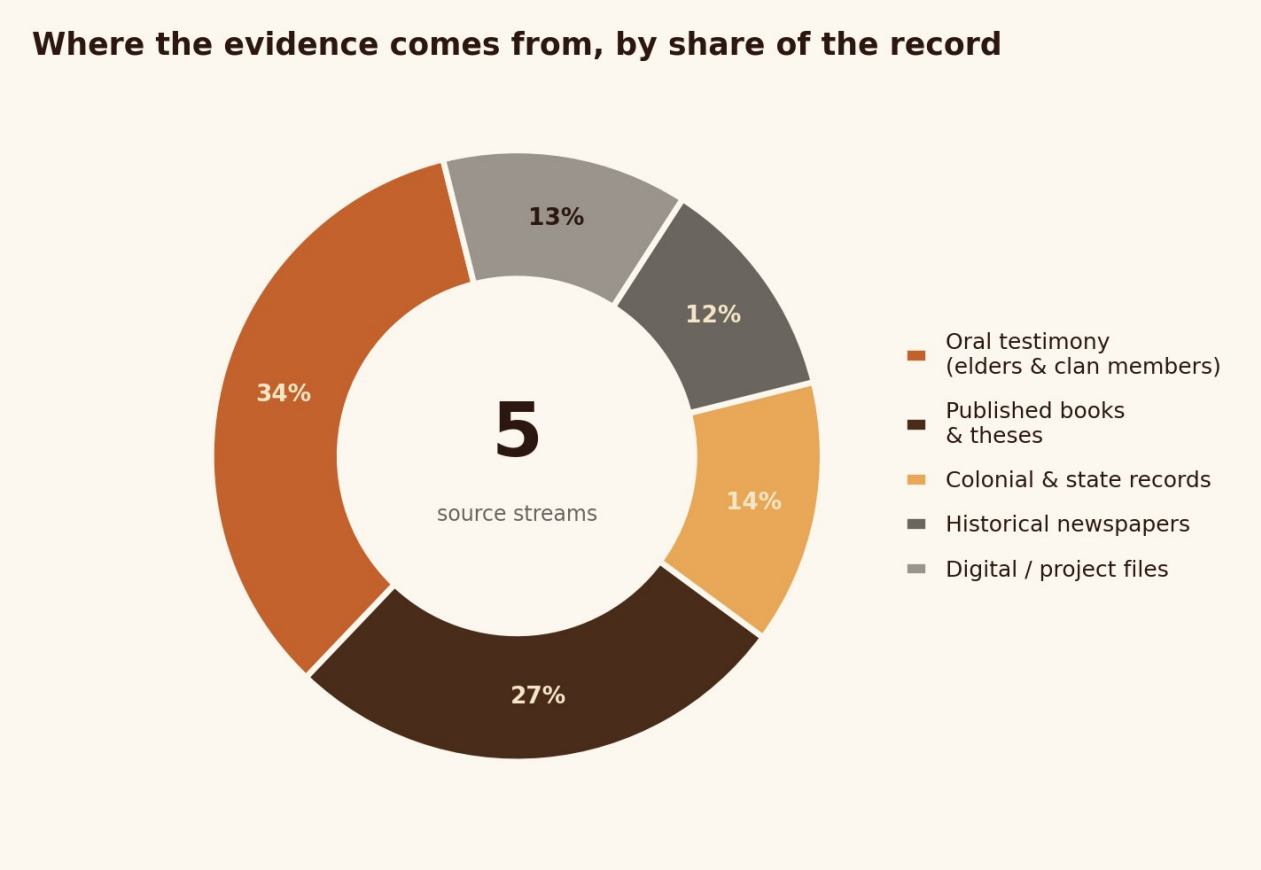



**Figure 5.** The five streams feeding the research, by share of the material. Oral testimony is the largest single stream and the most perishable.

## 6.1 Published books and theses

The project library runs to twenty-seven documents and has been searched as a corpus rather than read as separate works, which is what made the cross-checking in Section 4.6 possible.

| Source | What it contributed |
|---|---|
| Cingo, Ibali labaThembu, 1927 | Thembu king lists. Dedesi placed at the source of the Orange, reached in 1814 by a Hala-line Thembu chief |
| Soga, The South-Eastern Bantu, 1930 | The published genealogical chart the clan's reciters disagree with. Places Mnguti between Ntande and Nxego. Also, via Kawa, Maya as Ntande's right-hand son |
| Jabavu, Imbumba yamaNyama, 1952 | The amaNtande praise set as distinct from the amaZima set. The explicit statement that izinqulo are borrowed across clans. A thunder rite in which a twin or firstborn stands in the rain. abaThembu baseQhudeni listed among the abaMbo |
| Rubusana, Zemk'inkomo Magwalandini, 1911 | Five clans descending from Nxeko, with no Qithi or Cube. San culinary practice preserved inside a Xhosa idiom — the best available model for the etymology argument |

| Source | What it contributed |
|---|---|
| Sihele / Mbekeni Thembu history | Ntande and Nxeko in direct succession with no Mnguti, agreeing with the reciters against Soga. The Ntande and Zima war, matching Thembalethu's oral account. The 1857 Gubenxa massacre |
| Peires, 1976 thesis, and The House of Phalo | The isiThathu named as partly San in origin. amaMaya and amaHala do not intermarry. The warning that brotherhood encodes incorporation, citing Vansina |
| Jolly, 1994 thesis | The 1776 Tambu'ki record. The Gubenxa massacre independently. The ingqithi custom as Thembu-specific and San-derived |
| Hammond-Tooke, district surveys, 1957 | ingqithi as very probably of Bushman origin. Clicks as evidence of early contact |
| T.B. Soga, 1930s | ingqithi origins untraceable, and performed as isiko lakulonina, the mother's people's custom |
| King and Challis, Journal of African History, 2017 | The Bathepu of Quthing supporting Moorosi. Peer-reviewed, and the correction that reversed the project's position |
| Mager, The House of Tshatshu | The amaTshatshu territory, the 1878 rising, and the Cacadu described as the White Kei |
| Thompson, African Societies in Southern Africa, 1969 | Regional context for Thembu and Sotho relations |
| Sandile Tukani, lineage paper | Two branches below Mqithi. Ntande above Mqithi in writing. Contributor rather than independent published source |

## 6.2 Colonial and state records

| Record | What it contributed |
|---|---|
| Blue Book on Native Affairs, 1878 | Sihlwengu named as one of three rebel leaders, his followers and country taken. The Queenstown magistrate on the Kei junction as almost inaccessible, and the amaTshatshu regathering after Maphasa's death |
| Cathcart proclamation, 1852 | The abolition of the tribe of Maphasa by name, and the dispersal of its remnants |
| Van Warmelo, tribal survey, 1935 | 11-210 as abaThembu, chief unknown, Cala. All of Glen Grey registered as abaThembu with no sub-tribal structure |
| Jackson, Ethnic Composition, 1975 | 11-210 under elected headman Wellington Tofile, no chiefly lineage. Sikwenqeni as a ward of Cacadu 17. Matanzima's jurisdiction limited to Xalanga and St Marks |
| Theal, Basutoland Records, vol. 3 | Schrumpf's letter of 1 June 1851 on the Batepu settled at Moorosi's, and the battle at Tolomane. Nonesi identified as Faku's daughter and Vusani's great wife |
| Location board records and death notices | Mkapusi as Location No. 4, board members 1894 to 1898, population 923 in 1934. Death notices for Ntuse, Mhlungulwana, Tyokolo, Rhadu, Nqumama and Ngcongolo, all recorded as Tembu |

> **What death notices can and cannot prove**
>
> A death notice records a descendant, not the ancestor. Nosinodi Ntsue died at Debera in 1955, roughly a century after the apex generation. Engcobo is populous and unrelated families can share a name. Nothing in the notices links these

families to each other or to amaQithi.

What makes them valuable is different: **they point at people who can be phoned this week.** Nosinodi's brother Kekana Ntuse very likely has living children and grandchildren at Debera. A 1955 notice names parents, so her father's name is the single field worth pulling, and the full estate file should carry an heirs' declaration naming every sibling and child.

## 6.3 Historical newspapers

Roughly thirty years of the isiXhosa press was scanned page by page: **Imvo Zabantsundu** 1884 to 1898, **Isigidimi samaXosa** 1870 to 1888, and **Izwi Labantu** 1901, which carries a serialised study of the San. The negative result is worth recording as clearly as the positive ones: across all of it, not one Qwabi, Joka, Sonyethe or Nqumama appeared. The Nqumama death notice, found separately, is the first document in the project with any name from that direct line on it.

## 6.4 Oral testimony

The largest and most perishable stream. About thirty reciters across six regions and three countries, gathered mostly through a clan Facebook group and two WhatsApp groups, with some material from face-to-face visits.

The project assesses each source on four things: **what they said**, **where they are**, **how they learned it**, and **whether they could have read it here first**. That last question is the contamination check, and it is the reason the standing provenance question is asked of every reply. Sources whose statements predate the site cannot have been influenced by it, which is why Kumkani Ngwenyathi's commentary — public three or more years before the site existed — carries particular weight despite his position inside a revivalist current.

One identity problem is recorded rather than resolved: a chain logged as an independent Asavela testimony was posted under the username Sorharhoba, and the same person is addressed as Asavela elsewhere in the group. Two claimed independent sources may be one man, which would reduce the tally supporting one reading of the trunk order. This has not been checked.

## 6.5 What each tier can carry

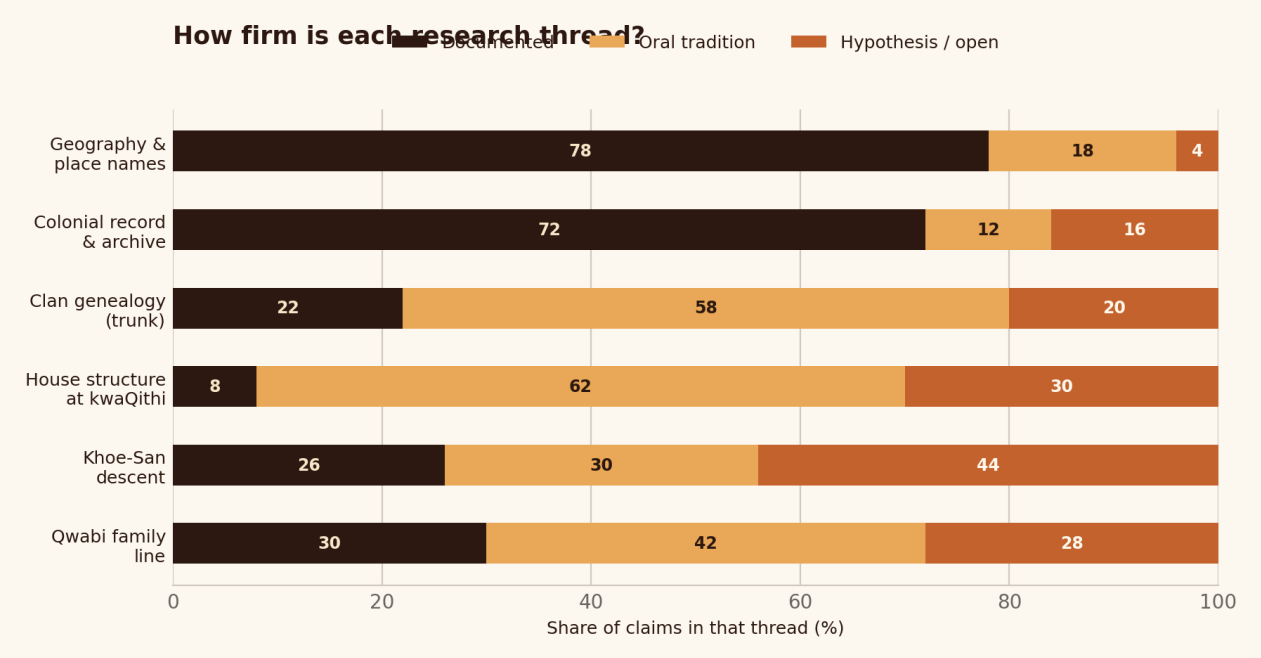



**Figure 6.** How firm each research thread is, by the share of its claims at each evidence tier. Geography and the colonial record are on solid ground; the genealogy and the descent question are not, and the report does not pretend otherwise.

| Tier | Can support | Cannot support |
|---|---|---|
| **Documented** | Dates, place names, official decisions, published positions, the existence of named individuals in specific districts | Descent from a named ancestor, unless the document says so; the internal meaning of a custom |
| **Oral tradition** | Descent as the family holds it, house structure, ritual practice, the location of graves and seats, praise sets | Dates; anything about generations more than roughly six back without corroboration; biological claims |
| **Working hypothesis** | Directing the next piece of research; framing a question; being argued for in public as an argument | Anything at all, in flat register, anywhere. Including in a headline, a footer, a meta description or a social post |

# 7
# Facebook and WhatsApp Evidence

Almost all the oral material in this project arrived as typed messages in a clan Facebook group or in WhatsApp. That is unusual for oral history and it has real consequences, both good and bad. The good is that the words arrive already written down, in the speaker's own phrasing, timestamped. The bad is that people type shorter than they speak, phone autocorrect mangles isiXhosa, and a reader can see what everyone else has already said.

> **Handling and attribution**
>
> Statements below are attributed to the person who made them, because they gave them openly in a clan forum for exactly this purpose and because unattributed testimony is worthless as evidence. Quotations are kept short and are given in the speaker's own words where the wording itself matters. Where a statement needs checking, that is said plainly.
>
> If any contributor would prefer their material anonymised or removed, that request will be honoured without argument.

## 7.1 The grave at donga libomvu

> *Legend says he is ancestor of ancestors.*
>
> **— Themba Banisi, on Khethelo**
>
> **Significance:** This is the strongest statement of seniority in the archive, and it comes from the senior elder on the subject. It also, importantly, is a statement about status rather than genealogy — it tells us how Khethelo is regarded, not who his father was.

The same testimony supplies the material detail that makes Khethelo more than a name. Qithi families from Mcambalaleni and Tsakane consulted a diviner, who told them of an ancestor named Khethelo who had died at donga libomvu. That sending led to an exhumation in 1993 or 1994 at the Jezile family's place in kwaQithi village. A spear, a spoon and tanjies were found. Themba Banisi confirms the exhumation from the kwaQithi side.

**Why this matters as evidence:** two elders converge on one physical place. Vabantu Silimela, independently, places the ancestors' burial at the red donga above the White Kei and names the amaTshatshu. Themba places Khethelo's grave at donga libomvu at the Jezile site. That is the strongest cross-verification in the archive, and it is anchored to ground that can be stood on and photographed.

**Needs verification:** the reported three to eight wives, which Themba himself flags as unconfirmed. The current location and condition of the grave goods. Whether the 1993 or 1994 exhumation was recorded, photographed, or authorised, and by whom.

## 7.2 The reciters and the praise signature

> *Mqithi, Hala, Mlebe, Mthembu, Rhadu, Zondwa, Ndinga, iNkomo ayizali izala ngozaliswa.*
>
> **— Amos Gaji, of Oxton in Hewu**
>
> **Significance:** the fullest recitation in the archive. It interleaves ancestor names (Ndinga, Rhadu) with royal Thembu praises (Hala, Mthembu, Zondwa) and the clan's own cow praise. Bunje Nyelezi's separate testimony later sequenced Ndinga and Rhadu as descent

names, which means part of this recitation is a genealogy in praise form.

*uNding'ayizali, Mamlebe, Sophitsho, Ngqolomsila.*

**— Inam Sokoti, of eMgwalana village, Ngcobo**

**Significance:** the same signature in fused and eroded form — Ndinga and ayizali have run together into one word. Erosion of this kind is evidence of long transmission by mouth without a written text to correct it. She is also the first woman reciter in the archive, and she asked to be taught ukuzithutha.

*uliwele noMcube.*

**— Bunje Nyelezi**

**Significance:** read as *twin of Mcube*. This makes Bunje the fifth source carrying the Ntande-twins tradition, aligning with the cluster of king-list versions that name Qithi and Cube as twins. He also gave the only mention of a clan animal — imbila, the dassie — which rests on this single attestation and is **not confirmed**.

## 7.3 Lesotho, and the argument about it

*inkaba yam iseLesotho.*

**— Nomacule Kwinana**

**Significance:** my umbilical cord is in Lesotho. The first Lesotho-born member in the archive, of the house of Lebese, a Sesotho name. The burial of the inkaba is a statement of belonging to a place, not merely of having been born there.

*amaQithi amhlophe, anzipho zintle.*

**— the Kwinana family praise, as given by Nomacule Kwinana**

**Significance:** light-skinned amaQithi, with beautiful nails. The first phenotype tradition in the archive, and relevant to the Khoe-San hypothesis. **Needs verification:** one family, one attestation. It should not be cited as evidence of anything until a second, unconnected family gives something comparable.

Nkuli Zweni of Matatiele gave the sharpest claim on this thread: her family remembers being on the Lesotho side when the border was drawn. Her line runs Zweni, Dzube, Khwaza, Bhubhani, her father, then herself, and Dzube carries Sotho or SePhuthi phonology rather than Xhosa. She addressed the group as **Hala**, which is a second independent praise-name convergence with Amos Gaji's recitation.

Against all of this stands Themba Banisi's counter-reading, and it is recorded here at equal weight: that the Lesotho connections reflect labour migration outward from Ngcobo rather than ancient origin, on the pattern of his own line's move to Steynsburg for work. This is the one genuine two-sided dispute in the record, and this report does not resolve it.

## 7.4 Dissent from inside the clan

Two statements are recorded here specifically because they cut against the project's own working framework. A report that quoted only its supporters would not be worth reading.

*Asidibenanga noCedima — first I'm hearing it.*

**— Mphathi Mbukushe Ntayithethwa, of the Khethelo house**

**Significance:** an explicit denial of the graft onto the royal line at Qeduma. A member of a house at the ancestral seat is saying his

house carries no king-list connection at all. This must be classified carefully: he disputes descent from the royals, which is not the same as disputing a Khoe-San substrate. In fact his position is **consistent** with the absorption reading. It is logged as significant open disagreement, not as an error to be corrected.

*The local Joka family are amaNgxongo, not amaQithi.*

**— Hlumelo, of Mkapusi (paraphrased)**

**Significance:** a direct challenge to the Qwabi Joka identification at the heart of the writer's own family line, from someone living at the place in question. Nandi Ngcongco independently places amaNgxongo origins in Quthing, which complicates rather than resolves it. **Status: open.**

## 7.5 The Free State branch and the surname evidence

*Myekeni Nkewu! … Camagu, Maqithi.*

**— Mpho Plata, Free State**

**Significance:** the opening invocation and closing of the first firsthand testimony from the Free State cluster. His grandmother places the family's origin at eMcambalala. His line runs Nkewu, then Libele, Zongezile, Thamsanqa, and himself, with Nkewu's full house of sons and daughters attached — including twins and the imfusi born after them.

**The connection worth chasing:** Themba Banisi's account has Qithi families from Mcambalaleni consulting a diviner and being sent to Khethelo's grave. Mpho Plata is a Qithi man whose family comes from Mcambalala and left for the Free State. If the Platas are that family, then the most distant branch on the map is connected to Khethelo not by a chart but by a pilgrimage his own relatives made thirty years ago, and two testimonies would describe one event from opposite ends. One question settles it, and it has not yet been asked.

The Free State cluster also supplies the clearest documented proof in the whole project that **surnames change**. Nontuthuzelo Sylvia Stefaans states that her grandfather changed the family surname from **Adoons** to **Jantjie** on arrival in the Free State. Nomhle Adoons at Zastron keeps the original. The two are almost certainly kin and should be put in touch. Adoons, as a form of Adonis, is a surname strongly associated with Khoe-San-descended families in the historical record — which is a hypothesis-tier lead, and a live demonstration that a name in a document is not a fixed thing.

## 7.6 Working method visible in the messages

Two phrases used routinely in the group chats are worth recording, because they are the project's method in practice rather than in theory.

*Uyifunde phi le nto, nini?*

**— the standing provenance question**

Where did you learn this, and when? Asked of every reply, so that independent testimony can be told apart from an echo of something the project itself published.

*Ukuba ndiphosisile — ndilungise ezantsi.*

**— the engagement line on the published charts**

If I have got it wrong, correct me below. This is the deliberate invitation that made the provocation strategy work — and the reason the provenance question above is necessary.

## 7.7 Summary of social-media derived evidence

| Contributor | Channel | Contribution | Verification status |
|---|---|---|---|
| Themba Banisi | Face to face, WhatsApp | House seniority; the donga libomvu burial and exhumation; the amaXhapha split and its ritual differences; the Lesotho counter-reading; the Qhwaphi pronunciation | **Senior source.** Wives count unconfirmed; district for Khethelo given inconsistently |
| Vabantu Silimela | Facebook | The Ngcongolo and Mafilika line over six generations; the red donga above the White Kei; displacement by the amaTshatshu from Gwatyu | **Two details independently confirmed** by the 1878 record |
| Bunje Nyelezi | Facebook | Mqithi born of Ntande; Maya as elder brother; the Mcube twin phrase; Ndinga to Mnono to Rhadu; imbila as clan animal | Trunk names corroborated; **imbila is single attestation** |
| Sorharhoba KA Thembelani | Facebook | Ntande to Mqithi to Ndinga to Rhadu to Mnono; Khuzani as Mnono's son or grandson | **Possible identity overlap with Asavela** — unchecked |
| Asavela | WhatsApp | Mnono to Manzi to Khuzani to Rhasmeni to Tyesi to Damanete, with wife-clans MamGcina and MamMvulane | Hedged by the speaker himself. **Unpostable specifics suggest genuine memory** |
| Thembalethu Mqithi | WhatsApp | Ten generations from Mhlungulwana to himself | **Single testimony.** The pending falsifier for the trunk theory |
| Amos Gaji | Facebook | The fullest izibongo; the Hewu surname set; Ngcobo origin | Praise set corroborated by five others |
| Gcinikhaya Qondani | Facebook | Origin at eZabasa eMgudu, Ngcobo; full royal isiduko interleaved with Qithi praises | Ngcobo origin corroborated. **The royal praises raise the praise-upward problem** |
| Nkosikho Manimani | Facebook | Seven generations; the move from Rhodana to eMaqwathini; addressed the group as boNdinga | **Site has this line reversed** — needs fixing |
| Mphathi Mbukushe Ntayithethwa | Facebook | Denies any king-list connection for the Khethelo house | **Logged as live dissent** |
| Nomacule Kwinana | Facebook | First Lesotho-born member; the house of Lebese; the phenotype praise | **Phenotype praise is single attestation** |
| Nkuli Zweni | Facebook | Matatiele; family present when the border was drawn; Sotho phonology in the line | Deep-time claim; **counters the work-migration reading** |
| Nomhle Adoons & N.S. Stefaans | Facebook | Zastron and Bholoto; the Adoons to Jantjie surname change; Ntande named explicitly in izibongo | **Almost certainly kin** — should be introduced to each other |
| Mpho Plata | WhatsApp | The Free State line from Nkewu; origin at eMcambalala; twins and imfusi in the house | **Possible link to the Khethelo pilgrimage** — unasked |
| Hlumelo of Mkapusi | Facebook | The local Joka family is amaNgxongo; the Jikumlambo surname | **Direct challenge to the Qwabi Joka identification** |
| Nandi Ngcongco Nomava | WhatsApp | Coordination; amaNgxongo origin in Quthing; the amaGqunukhwebe and Togu comparative cases; the San versus Khoe genetics question | Comparative cases are documented; the Quthing placement needs a source line |

| Contributor | Channel | Contribution | Verification status |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sandile Tukani | Written paper | Two branches below Mqithi; Ntande above Mqithi in writing | **Provenance of the paper still to be established** |
| Kumkani Ngwenyathi | Facebook, WhatsApp | The position that amaQithi, amaCube, amaNcotshe and amaQoma are all San groups; the referral to bawo Mqadi; his own sources named | **Predates the site by three years or more**, so cannot be contaminated by it. Declined to answer on amaQithi specifically |

# 8
# Locations and Maps

Place is doing more work in this research than any other kind of evidence, because elders describe ground rather than dates. When Vabantu Silimela says the ancestors are buried at the red donga above the White Kei, he is not speaking in pictures. He is giving a map reference.

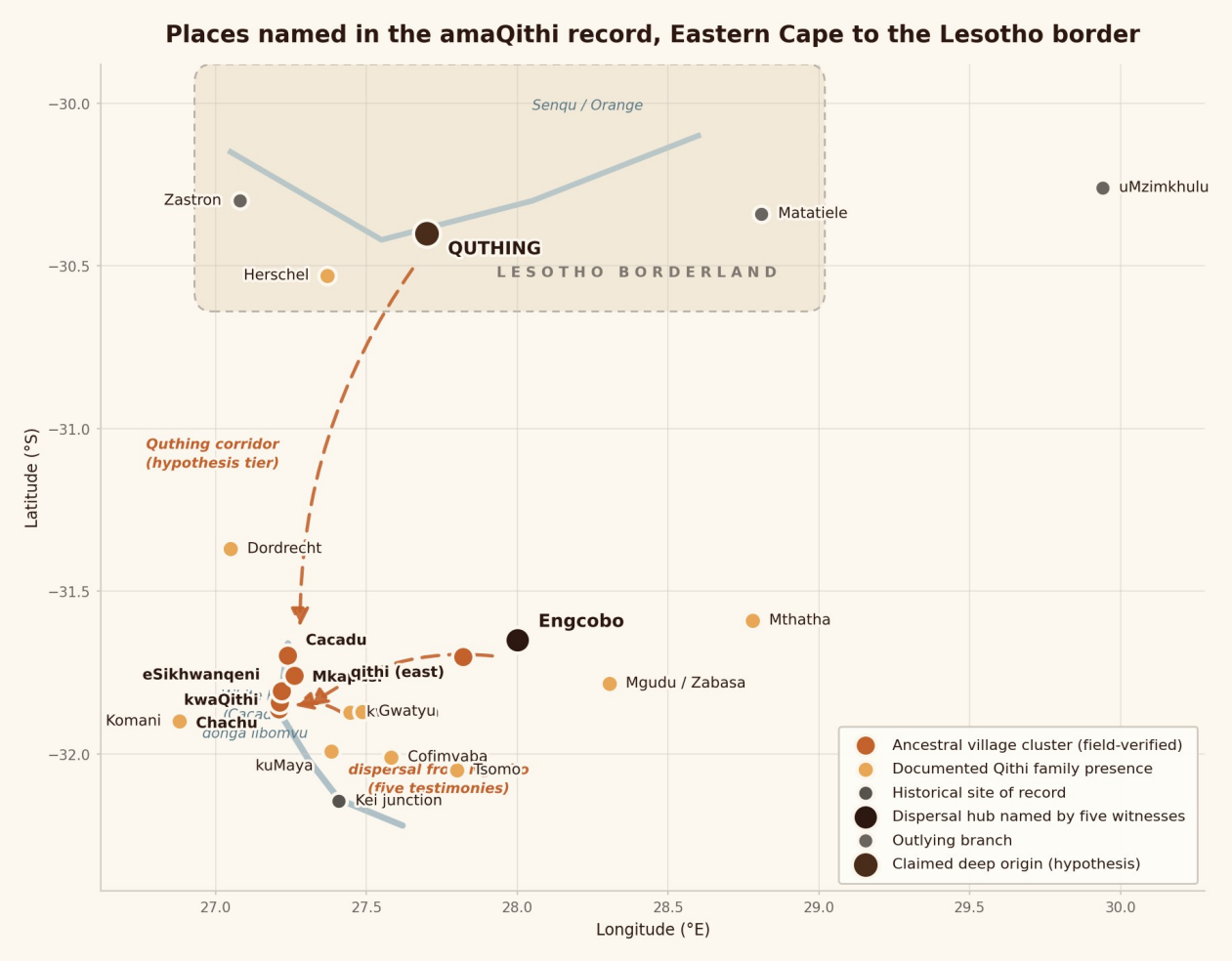



**Figure 7.** Places named in the amaQithi record, from the Glen Grey heartland to the Lesotho borderland. The village cluster on the upper White Kei is field-verified by coordinate. Regional markers are indicative and locate districts rather than exact homesteads. The dashed arrows are hypothesis-tier movements, not established routes.

## 8.1 The heartland

The clan's seat is a remarkably small piece of ground. Three villages — Chachu, kwaQithi and eSikhwanqeni — lie strung north along almost exactly the same meridian, within six kilometres end to end.

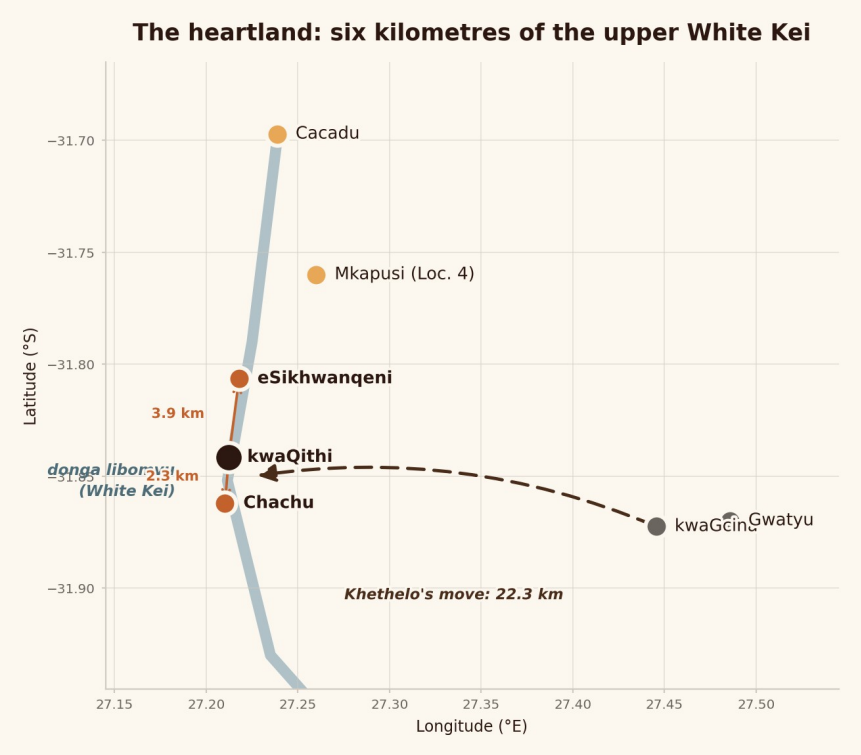



**Figure 8.** The heartland at closer scale. Chachu to kwaQithi is 2.3 km; kwaQithi to eSikhwanqeni is 3.9 km. The river between them is the one the families call donga libomvu. The dashed arrow shows Khethelo's remembered move from the Mcambalala country at kwaGcina, a distance of 22.3 km.

### The single most useful geographic correction in the project

**donga libomvu is a river, not a gully.** It is the local name for the White Kei on the stretch that divides Chachu from kwaQithi. This changes how the oral testimony reads: *the ancestors are buried at the red donga above the White Kei* is not two landmarks, it is a name and its translation in one breath. And *Khethelo is buried at donga libomvu* means buried at the river between the two villages.

It also makes the project's tagline more literal than intended. From the White Kei, we rise — and donga libomvu is what the people there call it.

## 8.2 The locations, and why each matters

| Place | District | Why it matters |
|---|---|---|
| kwaQithi | Glen Grey / Lady Frere | The ancestral seat and burial ground. Khethelo's grave. The Jezile family are custodians. Where the houses of the seat carry their names from |
| donga libomvu | Glen Grey | The White Kei on the Chachu to kwaQithi stretch. The burial ground of the ancestors in two independent testimonies |
| Chachu | Glen Grey | 2.3 km south of kwaQithi. Part of the three-village line on the upper White Kei |
| eSikhwanqeni | Glen Grey | 3.9 km north of kwaQithi, and 12.3 km from Cacadu — which confirms Jackson's placement of Sikwenqeni as a ward of Cacadu 17 |
| Cacadu / the Cacadu river | Glen Grey | The clan's self-identification is from the Cacadu rivers. The Cacadu is the White Kei, and the name is San. Madolo's San people lived on its banks in the 1820s |

| Place | District | Why it matters |
|---|---|---|
| Mkapusi | Glen Grey | Qwabi Joka's birthplace, about 1842. Identified in the archive as Location No. 4, with board members recorded 1894 to 1898 and 923 people in March 1934 |
| kwaGcina | Cofimvaba side | 800 m from the Mcambalala river and 20 km from Cofimvaba town, so fairly called Cofimvaba territory. 22.3 km from the Qithi villages. The most likely place Khethelo left |
| Mcambalala / Mcambalaleni | Contested: Luxeni or Cofimvaba | Where the diviner's Qithi families came from, and where the Free State Plata line places its origin. The district is still ambiguous and one question would settle it |
| Tsakane | Cofimvaba | Named in the diviner account alongside Mcambalaleni. Also given by Busiswa Ndeleni as her family's origin |
| Gwatyu | Glen Grey | Where the amaTshatshu were dispossessed from, and from where, in Silimela's account, they displaced Ngcongolo. Gives a rough dating anchor for Ngcongolo's arrival |
| The White and Black Kei junction | Glen Grey | Gungubele's last stronghold, attacked with 1,200 men on 4 February 1878. 36.6 km south-south-east of Chachu — not where the Qithi villages are, contrary to an earlier claim by this project |
| qithi and kwaQithi, near Ngcobo | Engcobo | A second Qithi settlement about 60 km east of the first. Exactly what a dispersal from Ngcobo would produce |
| Zabasa / Mgudu | Engcobo | Gcinikhaya Qondani's family origin. The place name may echo the king-list figure Mgude or Mnguti. High-priority field visit |
| Debera, Gubenxa, Manzana | Engcobo | Where death notices place Ntuse, Mhlungulwana and Tyokolo — a father and two sons by the oral account, as three surnames in one district |
| Rhodana | Lady Frere | Queen Nonesi's great place, and where Manimani left from. Also the setting for the Thembu and San relationship in the project's earlier notes |
| Quthing | Lesotho | Moorosi's district, allocated to the Bathepu by Moshoeshoe. Where a Thembu community was settled by 1851. The claimed deep origin, at hypothesis tier |
| Tolomane | Lesotho | Where Moorosi and the Baphuthi, with Thembu and Basotho, drove back a colonial force on 22 February 1851 |
| Zastron | Free State | The Adoons family. On the borderland near Mohale's Hoek and the Quthing side |
| Bholoto | Lady Frere | The Stefaans and Jantjie family's grandfathers' home before the Free State |
| Herschel / Sterkspruit | Eastern Cape | The Lesotho borderland corridor. Mr Bokwe's route for Mnguti: Lesotho, Herschel, Ngcobo |
| Matatiele, uMzimkhulu, Marhambeni | KZN border | The eastern outliers. Nkuli Zweni and Thandukwazi, both with living kin in Lesotho |
| Cala / Xalanga | Emigrant Thembuland | Where the defeated 1878 factions fled. Tribal authority 11-210, chief unknown in 1935 and no chiefly lineage in 1975 |

## 8.3 What the geography argues

Three arguments come out of the map rather than out of any document.

**The heartland is a refuge, and the record says so.** The 1878 magistrate's description of the Kei country as almost inaccessible, and his explanation that the amaTshatshu regathered there after Maphasa was killed, tells us what kind of place this is. People do not settle broken ground by preference. AmaQithi houses were among the smaller groups held in the closed Tambookie Location from 1853.

**The two Qithi settlements are the shape of a dispersal.** Sixty kilometres apart, one in Glen Grey and one near Ngcobo, in a clan where five witnesses independently name Ngcobo as the origin. The geography and the testimony agree without either being adjusted to fit.

**The Lesotho geography is real even where the descent claim is not proven.** Quthing sits across the Telle from the old Glen Grey and Emigrant Thembuland country. Zastron is on the same borderland. Herschel is the corridor between them. A Thembu community was documented at Moorosi's place in 1851. Whatever the truth about descent, this is one connected world rather than two unrelated ones, and the distances involved are small.

> **Geographic work still needed**
>
> **Pin the exact grave.** Khethelo's burial site at the Jezile place should be recorded by GPS and photographed, with the family's permission.
>
> **Resolve Cacadu and White Kei.** One published source treats them as one river; local knowledge says two rivers meet in that area. The likely answer is that the Cacadu is a tributary and the names separate upstream. This matters, because the clan's own self-description rests on it.
>
> **Settle the Mcambalala district.** Luxeni in Lady Frere, or Cofimvaba. One question to one grandmother.
>
> **Visit Zabasa and Mgudu** near Ngcobo and ask locally where the name comes from.

# 9
# Charts and Visuals

The figures in this report are placed with the argument they belong to rather than gathered at the back. This section adds the one chart that belongs nowhere else, and lists all of them for reference.

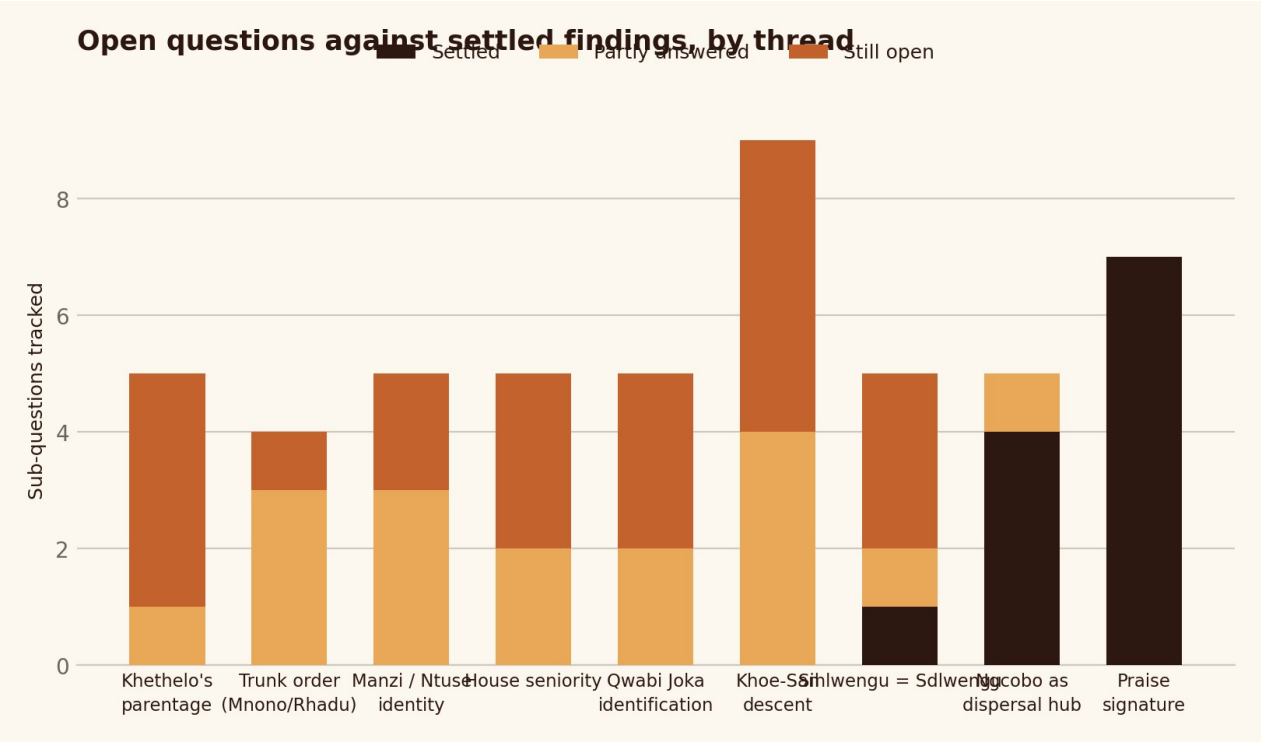



**Figure 9.** Open questions against settled findings, thread by thread. Only the praise signature and the Ngcobo convergence are substantially settled. The Khoe-San descent question and Khethelo's parentage are where the open questions concentrate.

Two things are worth reading off that chart. The first is that the project's most public claim — Khoe-San descent — is also its least settled, which is exactly the mismatch that makes tier discipline necessary. The second is that the two genuinely settled findings are both about **cohesion** rather than origin: that the scattered families share one praise signature, and that they point back to one district. Those are the findings the clan can act on now.

## A note on how these charts were made

The genealogy chart is drawn from the attestation ledger rather than from any single source, and every contested link on it is drawn dashed. The counts in the tier and open-question charts are the writer's own classification of claims in the ledger, not measurements — they show proportions and priorities, and a different researcher would place some of them differently. The maps use field-verified coordinates for the heartland cluster and district-level positions elsewhere, and the migration arrows are hypotheses drawn as hypotheses.

A separate visual asset not reproduced here is the **surname atlas**, a poster-format map of all known Qithi surnames by district. It is maintained alongside the site and is a better working tool for family recognition than anything in this report. House names from the ancestral seat appear on it as surnames without amaXhapha framing, which was a deliberate choice given the sensitivity described in Section 5.3, and Jezile is marked clan-unconfirmed.

# 10
# Open Questions, and the Khethelo Problem

This section exists because a clan history is more useful as a list of live questions than as a list of conclusions. Every item here is something the project knows it does not know. Most of them are answerable by someone reading this.

## 10.1 The Khethelo problem

Khethelo is the most important figure in the amaQithi record and the least known. He is remembered as the ancestor of ancestors. His grave is the one place the whole clan can point to. His name heads a house at the ancestral seat, and other house names — Sdlwengu, Mbukushe, Ntayithethwa, Sonyethe — are attached to him in one account or another.

And nothing about him is established. Not his father. Not his generation. Not his status. Not which district he came from. Not how many wives he had or which houses descend from which. Not whether his own house accepts the genealogical framework the rest of the clan is working with.

> **Why this is question number one**
>
> The trunk genealogy runs from Ntande down to four brothers and stops. The houses at the seat run from Khethelo down to the present and stop going up. **Nothing joins them.** Until Khethelo is placed, the clan has two genealogies that do not touch, and every question about seniority, descent and origin is being argued across a gap.
>
> Themba Banisi's own research directive was exactly this: pause the amaNgxongo and amaCube threads, map the internal Qithi connections first, and find Khethelo's parents.

### What is known about Khethelo

| Claim | Source | Tier |
|---|---|---|
| Remembered as the ancestor of ancestors | Themba Banisi | **Oral tradition** |
| Buried at donga libomvu, kwaQithi village, at the Jezile family's place | Themba Banisi; corroborated in substance by Vabantu Silimela's independent placement of the ancestors' burial | **Oral tradition, two sources** |
| Grave opened in 1993 or 1994; a spear, a spoon and tanjies found | Themba Banisi, confirming from the kwaQithi side an approach that began with a diviner consulted by Qithi families from Mcambalaleni and Tsakane | **Oral tradition, material evidence reported** |
| Came from the Mcambalala country, most plausibly kwaGcina, and moved 22.3 km west | Themba Banisi, with the geography checked by coordinate | **Oral tradition, geographically consistent** |
| The senior house of the clan | Themba Banisi | **Contested** — the Silimela cluster claims Ngcongolo |
| Sdlwengu was his brother; the Jezile family is Sdlwengu's great house | Themba Banisi | **Oral tradition, single source** |
| Ngcongolo is younger than Khethelo | Themba Banisi | **Oral tradition.** Note: Themba says younger, not brother. Brotherhood |

| Claim | Source | Tier |
|---|---|---|
| | | has been inferred elsewhere, including by this project, and that inference is an error |
| Had between three and eight wives | Reported to Themba Banisi; he flags it as unconfirmed himself | **Unverified** |
| His line runs Khethelo → Sonyethe → Nqumama → Qwabi | Themba Banisi's reading | **Speculation.** The writer's own uncle disputes the Qwabi Joka identification separately |
| Sonyethe or Nqumama might be Khethelo's own children | Themba Banisi, speculating aloud | **Speculation**, flagged as such by the speaker |
| At his funeral all the houses attended, including the amaXhapha | Themba Banisi | **Oral tradition** |

### The open questions on Khethelo, in priority order

1. **Who was his father?** No source in the archive names him. This is the single highest-value unanswered question in the project. Ask it of every house at the seat separately, and record who says they do not know as carefully as who offers an answer.
2. **Where does he sit relative to the trunk?** Above the four brothers, below them, or on a parallel branch? Nothing currently decides this. Testing it means asking the houses at the seat whether the names Mnono, Rhadu, Ndinga, Manzi or Ntuse mean anything to them at all.
3. **What generation was he?** There is no dating anchor of any kind. If he was buried with a spear and pliers, the goods themselves may narrow it. If any descendant's birth date is known, counting back gives a range.
4. **How many wives, and which houses descend from which?** In Nguni succession the ranking of houses follows the ranking of wives, so this question is not a detail. It is probably the key to the seniority dispute, and it is currently unanswered.
5. **Was he senior, and to whom?** Themba holds Khethelo senior; the Silimela cluster holds Ngcongolo. Both accounts should be recorded in full and left standing until something external settles it. The report takes no position.
6. **What was his status — chief, headman, or head of a household?** *Ancestor of ancestors* is a statement about reverence, not about office. If he held any recognised position, a location record or a magistrate's list might carry his name.
7. **Is his brother Sdlwengu the Sihlwengu of the 1878 Blue Book?** If yes, the whole faction model in Section 5.9 is anchored and Khethelo's generation is dated to within a lifetime of 1878. If no, that model loses its only link. This is the highest-leverage archival question in the project.
8. **Which district did he come from?** Themba said Cofimvaba in one telling and Ngcobo in another. kwaGcina reconciles them geographically, but the discrepancy should be put back to him directly rather than resolved by inference.
9. **Where are the grave goods now, and was the exhumation recorded?** Who authorised it, who was present, was there a ritual, was he reburied, and did anyone photograph the spear, the spoon and the tanjies? Burial goods are datable and culturally diagnostic. How a man is buried, with what, in what posture, speaks to which tradition buried him.
10. **Are the Free State Platas the diviner's family?** Ask Mpho Plata whether his family carries the story of consulting a diviner and being sent to Khethelo's grave. A yes connects the most distant branch on the map to the ancestral grave by a remembered pilgrimage, and closes the loop with Themba's account from the other end.

11. **Do the Jezile family carry Qithi isiduko?** They are custodians of the burial site. Their clan identity is listed as unconfirmed. This should be asked directly and respectfully, and the answer recorded whatever it is.
12. **Is Khethelo a personal name, a praise name, or a house name?** The project has assumed a person throughout. Given how routinely one man carries two names in these genealogies, the assumption is worth testing.
13. **Does his own house carry any Ntande tradition?** Mphathi Mbukushe Ntayithethwa, of the Khethelo house, says his house has no king-list connection. If that is the house position rather than one man's, it is a significant finding in its own right and changes how the Ntande framework should be presented.

## 10.2 Open questions on the trunk

- **Mnono or Rhadu first?** Two sources against one. Not settled by a majority.
- **Manzi and Ntuse:** one man under two names, two generations, or a name wrongly inserted? Ask any reciter who can place either in izibongo.
- **Does Thembalethu's house know Mnono, Rhadu or Ndinga above Mhlungulwana**, and does his Mhlungulwana have brothers Khuzani, Rhotho and Tyokolo? This is the standing falsifier for the whole unified-trunk theory and the answer has been awaited since 21 July.
- **Does Sorharhoba's Khuzani have those same three brothers**, and does he recognise the names Ntuse or Manzi?
- **Are Sorharhoba and Asavela the same man?** If so, one of the three sources docking Manzi onto the trunk disappears.
- **Are the Tukani paper's Branch B names ancestors or praise terms?** Nonjiba and Mdlophatyaba appear in the group's izibongo, not in any descent account.
- **What is the provenance of the Tukani paper?** Who wrote it, from what, and when. Also his own clan and seat, and whether Nxeko appears on the same page.
- **Where is Khuzani in the documents?** Three of the four brothers now appear as surnames in death notices. Khuzani and Rhotho do not.

## 10.3 Open questions on the houses and the seat

- **Which house is senior?** Unresolved and likely to stay unresolved without something external.
- **What exactly was the inxaxheba dispute**, and when? A quarrel over ritual meat that split houses permanently should have a story attached to it that someone still knows.
- **Do the amaXhapha houses tell the same story of the split**, or a different one? Only the main house's version is on record. This must be asked carefully and with respect.
- **Whose dream was it**, in the reconciliation Themba describes, and when did the houses meet?
- **Are the ritual differences — sheep not goats, no bone-burning, no blankets — recorded anywhere else?** Sheep-forward ritual grammar is one of the specific reasons this project says Khoe-San rather than San, so a second attestation would matter.
- **Where does Thoba sit** in the Ngcongolo and Silimela cluster? A name added in July with no placement.

## 10.4 Open questions on origins and descent

- **Do amaQithi marry amaHala and amaMaya?** The cheapest and most decisive test available. Answerable inside the existing group membership today.
- **Do amaMncotshe and amaJali families carry any absorption tradition?** The named falsifier for the black-cow synthesis.
- **Can the black-cow phrase be attested a second time?** *Bafakwa ngenkomo emnyama oonina* is carrying heavy interpretive weight on one attestation, and the elders who say it should be named and located.

- **Can indlu emnyama be attested a second time?** Same problem, same requirement.
- **Is the Qithi and Quthing etymology sound?** This needs a linguist, not more enthusiasm. The same goes for whether Qoma means bee, checked against documented N|uu and Khoe lexicons.
- **Does the Bumbane genealogy omit amaCube, amaQoma, amaNcotshe and amaQithi?** And can the photograph Ngwenyathi describes be produced?
- **Who were Nqweniso and Zima**, and which king list do the sources who name them use? One stream has amaQithi expelled after a king was killed while helping Nqweniso; another has Zima killed at Ntande's kraal. If these orbit the same crisis, the expulsion gets a datable slot in the king list.
- **What does bawo Mqadi know?** Ngwenyathi named him as the person most likely to hold Qithi-specific knowledge. He has not been reached.
- **Is imbila really the clan animal?** One reciter, one mention.

## 10.5 Open questions on the Qwabi line

- **Are Joka and Nqumama one man under two names?** The family's own tradition does this routinely, but that is a possibility, not evidence.
- **Who were Qwabi's siblings?** Themba Banisi's specific advice, and still the best single lead on the line.
- **Is the local Joka family of Mkapusi amaNgxongo or amaQithi?** Hlumelo says amaNgxongo. This is unresolved and should not be argued past.
- **What are the clan implications of the Jessie Jikumlambo marriage at Lesseyton?** Handled with care; no claim to be made yet.
- **What does the Nqumama 1914 death notice contain in full?** Ngcuka, Glen Grey, recorded as Tembu. It is the first document with any name from the direct line.

## 10.6 Open questions on method and record-keeping

- **Date the project's own formation.** When did the writer first encounter Xurab Hamid's or Ngwenyathi's material, relative to starting the etymology work? The answer should be written down whatever it is, because it determines whether the project's own thesis is independent of the revivalist current or downstream of it.
- **Archive the external sources' dated public posts** before they disappear. Once they are gone, the fact that they predate the site becomes unprovable.
- **How did the WhatsApp contact with Krauseb Runtu happen**, and was it independent of Xurab Hamid?
- **Audit the site for tier drift**, specifically headline, footer and meta copy against body content.

## 10.7 All open questions by priority

| Question | Who or what can answer it | Priority |
|---|---|---|
| Khethelo's father | The houses at the seat, asked separately | 1 |
| Is Sdlwengu the 1878 Sihlwengu? | Cape Archives criminal records; the Merriman digest; the amaTshatshu council | 1 |
| Thembalethu's answer on Mnono and the brothers | Thembalethu Mqithi | 1 |
| Do amaQithi marry amaHala and amaMaya? | The existing group, today | 1 |
| Nosinodi Ntsue's father's name, 1955 estate file | National Archives, Pretoria; deceased estates | 1 |

| Question | Who or what can answer it | Priority |
|---|---|---|
| Isiduko of the Ntuse, Mhlungulwana and Tyokolo families | Field visit to Debera, Gubenxa, Manzana | 1 |
| Are the Free State Platas the diviner's family? | Mpho Plata | 2 |
| Khethelo's wives and the ranking of houses | Elders at the seat | 2 |
| Jezile family isiduko | The Jezile family, asked directly | 2 |
| Grave goods location and any record of the exhumation | Whoever was present in 1993 or 1994 | 2 |
| amaMncotshe and amaJali absorption traditions | Those families | 2 |
| Second attestation of the black-cow phrase | Named elders, located | 2 |
| Zabasa and Mgudu place-name origin | Field visit near Ngcobo | 2 |
| Mcambalala district: Luxeni or Cofimvaba | Mpho Plata's grandmother; Themba Banisi | 2 |
| Sorharhoba and Asavela: one man or two? | Ask them | 2 |
| Tukani paper provenance | Sandile Tukani | 2 |
| Adoons and Jantjie kinship | Introduce the two families | 3 |
| Qithi and Quthing etymology | A historical linguist | 3 |
| Bumbane genealogy and the photograph | Bawu Bhokwe as intermediary; Ngwenyathi | 3 |
| bawo Mqadi's knowledge | Contact details from Ngwenyathi | 3 |
| Nqweniso and Zima identities | The sources who named them | 3 |
| imbila as clan animal | Any second reciter | 3 |
| Cacadu and White Kei relationship | 1:50,000 topographic sheets; local knowledge | 3 |
| The project's own formation timeline | The writer's own records | 3 |

# 11
# Resources Used

Every source consulted, with an honest assessment of how far it can be trusted. Reliability here means reliability **for the specific purpose this project puts it to**, which is not the same as scholarly quality in general.

| Resource | Type | Author or source | Relevance | Reliability | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ibali labaThembu, 1927 | Book | W.D. Cingo | Thembu king lists; Dedesi at the Orange source | High for the tradition it records | In project library |
| The South-Eastern Bantu, 1930 | Book | J.H. Soga | The published genealogy the reciters dispute | High as a published chart, contested as a record | Places Mnguti between Ntande and Nxego |
| Imbumba yamaNyama, 1952 | Book | D.D.T. Jabavu | Praise sets; izinqulo borrowed across clans; the twin thunder rite | High | Key for the praise-upward rule |
| Zemk'inkomo Magwalandini, 1911 | Compilation | W.B. Rubusana | Nxeko's five clans; San practice inside a Xhosa idiom | High | Best model for the etymology thread |
| Sihele / Mbekeni Thembu history | Manuscript | Sihele | Ntande to Nxeko direct; the Ntande and Zima war; Gubenxa 1857 | Medium to high; reliability now a live issue in the project's favour | Agrees with the reciters against Soga |
| 1976 MA thesis; The House of Phalo | Thesis and book | J.B. Peires | isiThathu partly San; non-intermarriage as evidence; the Vansina warning | High | The single most useful scholarly source |
| 1994 doctoral thesis | Thesis | P. Jolly | The 1776 Tambu'ki record; ingqithi; Gubenxa | High | Strongest independent corroboration of the mechanism |
| District surveys, 1957 | Ethnography | W.D. Hammond-Tooke | ingqithi very probably of Bushman origin; clicks | High | The published position for nearly seventy years |
| Writings of the 1930s | Book | T.B. Soga | ingqithi origins untraceable; isiko lakulonina | High | The honest counterweight, and useful for the mother's-line reading |
| Journal of African History, 2017 | Peer-reviewed article | R. King and S. Challis | Bathepu and San support for Moorosi | Very high | Overturned the project's earlier position |
| Basutoland Records, vol. 3 | Document collection | G.M. Theal, ed. | Schrumpf's 1851 letter on the Batepu at Moorosi's; Nonesi | Very high — contemporary primary | The strongest documentary find in |

| Resource | Type | Author or source | Relevance | Reliability | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | identified | source | the project |
| Blue Book on Native Affairs, 1878 | Official record | Cape of Good Hope | Sihlwengu named; the Kei country described | Very high as to what officials recorded | Says nothing about Sihlwengu's clan |
| Tribal survey, 1935 | Official survey | N.J. van Warmelo | 11-210 as chief unknown; Glen Grey with no sub-tribal structure | High | Administrative categories, not self-description |
| Ethnic Composition, 1975 | Official survey | A.O. Jackson | 11-210 under Tofile, no chiefly lineage; Sikwenqeni ward | High | The footnotes carry the argument |
| The House of Tshatshu | Book | A. Mager | amaTshatshu territory; 1878; the Cacadu as the White Kei | High | Author is contactable and worth writing to |
| African Societies in Southern Africa, 1969 | Edited volume | L. Thompson | Regional Thembu and Sotho context | High | In project library |
| IBali lamaMfengu | Book | R.T. Kawa | Maya as Ntande's right-hand son, quoting Soga | Medium to high | Corroborates Bunje Nyelezi |
| Imvo Zabantsundu, 1884–1898 | Newspaper | isiXhosa press | Thirty years searched for clan and family names | High for what it prints | **Negative result:** no Qwabi, Joka, Sonyethe or Nqumama |
| Isigidimi samaXosa, 1870–1888 | Newspaper | isiXhosa press | Same search | High | Same negative result |
| Izwi Labantu, 1901 | Newspaper | isiXhosa press | Carries a serialised study of the San | High | Worth reading in full, not only grepping |
| Death notices and estate files | Archival records | Various archives | Ntuse, Mhlungulwana, Tyokolo, Rhadu, Nqumama, Ngcongolo, all as Tembu | High for the individual recorded | Records descendants, not the ancestors |
| Location board records | Official record | Glen Grey administration | Mkapusi as Location No. 4; board members; 923 people in 1934 | High | First administrative record of the birthplace |
| Oral testimony, ~30 reciters | Oral history | Clan members, named in Appendix A | Genealogies, praises, villages, surnames, ritual practice | Variable; assessed individually | The largest and most perishable stream |
| Themba Banisi's testimony | Oral history | Themba Banisi | House seniority; the burial site; the amaXhapha split; the Lesotho counter-reading | High as a senior source; some internal inconsistency on district | The single most important living source |
| Sandile Tukani lineage paper | Written contributio n | Sandile Tukani | Two branches below Mqithi; Ntande in writing | Medium — provenance unestablished | Contributor, not an independent publication |

| Resource | Type | Author or source | Relevance | Reliability | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kumkani Ngwenyathi's commentary | Public posts and correspondence | Kumkani Ngwenyathi | The San-origin position for four Thembu clans; referral to bawo Mqadi | Medium; maximalist on some clans | **Predates the site by three years or more**, so uncontaminated |
| Xurab Hamid and Krauseb Runtu | Oral history and correspondence | Named elders | Khoe-San side of the question | Medium; stand within a revivalist current | Vector for one of them still unestablished |
| qithi.co.za and its registry | Website and database | This project | Publication and collection instrument; six-table registry | N/A — instrument | **Watch for tier drift in headline copy** |
| The attestation ledger | Working document | This project | Every claim with source, tier, dissent and open questions | N/A — instrument | The spine of this report |
| Newspaper and book scanning scripts | Software | This project | ~16,000 pages of books and 30 years of newspapers made searchable | N/A — instrument | Custom Python, run locally |
| NotebookLM | Software | Third party | Source synthesis for drafting | N/A — instrument | Output always checked against the underlying sources |
| Facebook and WhatsApp groups | Platform | Clan members | Where almost all oral material arrived | N/A — channel | Timestamped, but participants see each other's posts |

# 12
# Resources and Items Still Needed

What the project does not have, and where it might be found. This table is the practical core of the report. Any clan member who obtains one row of it moves the whole research forward.

| Item needed | Why it is needed | Where it might be found | Priority | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Khethelo's parentage, from the houses at the seat | The single missing link between the trunk genealogy and the houses | Elders at kwaQithi, Chachu and eSikhwanqeni; every house asked separately | Critical | Record who says they do not know, as carefully as who answers |
| Queenstown circuit court criminal records, 1878 | To establish whether Sihlwengu was tried, and where his location lay | Western Cape Archives, Cape Town; ask for the series holding Queenstown circuit criminal records for 1878 | Critical | Search all four spellings: Sihlwengu, Sdlwengu, Sihlwenga, Silwangu |
| Breakwater Prison convict registers, 1878 | To establish whether Sihlwengu was imprisoned as Mfanta was | Western Cape Archives | Critical | The Mfanta descendants already worked these records and can advise which registers |
| Digest of Evidence against Gungubele | The prosecution's own summary. If Sihlwengu is named as co-accused it will be here | UCT Special Collections, Merriman Papers, MSC 13 | Critical | Also holds Driver's Queenstown correspondence of December 1877 |
| The 1955 Nosinodi Ntsue estate file | A 1955 notice names parents. Her father's name may be Manzi or Mnono, which would decide the Manzi and Ntuse question | National Archives, Pretoria; deceased estates for Engcobo district | Critical | Ask for the full estate file, not just the death notice — the heirs' declaration should name every sibling and child |
| Isiduko of the Ntuse, Mhlungulwana and Tyokolo families | Settles in one afternoon what no archive can: whether these are amaQithi houses | Field visits to Debera, Gubenxa and Manzana in Engcobo | Critical | Kekana Ntuse's children and grandchildren are very likely alive at Debera |
| Hemming's own account of the 1878 affair | The magistrate speaking off the record about the rising he prosecuted | Cory Library, Rhodes University — request the interview pages by reference | High | Email request; specify event, person and year |
| Judge Papers and Stanford Papers | Colonial Secretary correspondence and the memoranda on Gungubele's case | UCT Special Collections, BC 500 and BC 293 | High | Stanford Papers include a memorandum specifically on the case of Gungubele |
| Queenstown Free Press, 7 June and 26 July 1878 | Trial reporting from the rising, including evidence given in the circuit court | National Library of South Africa; eGGSA volunteers transcribe extracts and will look up specific dates | High | Not digitised. A dated, specific request works best |
| A DNA study of the clan | The only thing that can settle the descent question, and the | A commercial or academic laboratory; funding to be | High | Interpret carefully: A-M51 is Khoe-San-wide, not San- |

| Item needed | Why it is needed | Where it might be found | Priority | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | group has asked for it | raised | | specific. Plan the interpretation before collecting samples |
| The Bumbane royal genealogy, or a photograph of it | To establish as fact whether amaQithi, amaCube, amaQoma and amaNcotshe are absent | The Thembu royal house at Bumbane, through Bawu Bhokwe as intermediary | High | Absence is a fact worth having. It is not an explanation |
| bawo Mqadi's knowledge, and his contact details | Named by Ngwenyathi as the person most likely to hold Qithi-specific knowledge | Kumkani Ngwenyathi | High | Requested; not yet received |
| The written work of Prof V. Dlova and the late Vukile Phambo | Ngwenyathi's own named sources for the four-clan San position | Ngwenyathi; university libraries; Phambo's family | High | Phambo was born amaNdlane. Find the work while it can still speak for itself |
| A historical linguist on the Qithi and Quthing question | The etymology thread cannot advance further without one | Rhodes, UCT, Walter Sisulu University; Dr Mvenene as a starting contact | High | Also worth asking: does Qoma mean bee in any documented N\|uu or Khoe lexicon? |
| Thembalethu's answer on Mnono and the four brothers | The standing falsifier for the unified-trunk theory | Thembalethu Mqithi | High | Promised on 21 July; still outstanding |
| Ngcongco family mnombo | Promised before the Heritage Day gathering | Nandi Ngcongco Nomava | Medium | Incoming source |
| A correspondence with Anne Mager | She read the 1878 files. One question: did she encounter the name Sihlwengu, and in which file? | University of Cape Town | Medium | Academics answer specific letters |
| A correspondence with the amaTshatshu traditional council | They compiled historical evidence for recognition and will know who Sihlwengu was | amaTshatshu traditional council; Aubrey Somana as a family historian | Medium | A descendant of a house defeated in the same war is likely to be answered generously |
| The Mfanta descendants' method | They traced an ancestor through Breakwater records and know exactly how | Manzezulu Mtirara's house, through the Zilingwenya Hala Tribal Authority | Medium | Ask how they did it, not for their records |
| GPS fix and photographs of Khethelo's grave | The one physical anchor the whole clan shares, currently unrecorded | kwaQithi village, at the Jezile family's place, with permission | Medium | Photograph the ground, not the remains |
| Whatever record exists of the 1993–94 exhumation | Grave goods are datable and culturally diagnostic | Whoever was present; the families from Mcambalaleni and Tsakane | Medium | Ask where the spear, spoon and tanjies are now |
| 1:50,000 topographic sheets for the upper White Kei | To settle the Cacadu and White Kei relationship the clan's self-description rests on | Chief Directorate: National Geospatial Information | Medium | Also useful for fixing village boundaries |
| Glen Grey location | Mkapusi as Location No. 4 was | Cape Archives; Native Affairs | Medium | Eighteen locations. At least |

| Item needed | Why it is needed | Where it might be found | Priority | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| records beyond Mkapusi | found this way. The other locations should hold similar material | location files | | one, Nonesi, is named for a Thembu queen |
| Archived copies of the external sources' dated public posts | Once deleted, the fact that they predate the site becomes unprovable | Web archives; screenshots with dates | Medium | This should have been done already |
| Recorded audio or video of the senior elders | The oral stream is the most perishable evidence in the project | Visits to Themba Banisi, Vabantu Silimela and the elders at the seat | Medium | With consent, and with a copy given to the family |
| amaMncotshe and amaJali families | The named falsifier for the black-cow synthesis | Open enquiry through Thembu clan networks | Medium | Ask open-endedly. A negative result must be recorded too |
| A second attestation of the black-cow phrase | One attestation is carrying heavy interpretive weight | Named elders, with location recorded | Medium | Same requirement for indlu emnyama |
| The full Izwi Labantu San series, 1901 | A contemporary isiXhosa study of the San, read rather than grepped | Already scanned; needs reading | Low to medium | May carry contemporary Thembu and San material nobody has looked at |
| A dedicated Lesotho Connection page on the site | The Schrumpf material is the strongest find in the project and is not yet published | Internal work | Low to medium | One paragraph on the 1851 letter is the highest-value writing available |
| The /directory feature | Families cannot yet find each other on the site. It remains a stub | Internal work | Low to medium | The registry data already exists behind it |

# 13 Conclusions

Set out in three groups: what the research can now state with confidence, what it holds as a reasonable but unproven reading, and what remains genuinely unknown.

## 13.1 Strong conclusions

1. **AmaQithi are one people, and the praises prove it.** Seven reciters in five regions, with no contact between them, gave the same praise signature — Ndinga, Mlebe, and iNkomo ayizali, izala ngozaliswa. Some gave it whole, some in fused and eroded forms that only long transmission by mouth produces. Whatever else is unresolved, the families carrying this name from Hewu to Zastron to Matatiele are one clan.
2. **AmaQithi are Thembu in every record that mentions them.** Every reciter says so. Every death notice found in the archive registers the name as Tembu. This is not in question and the report treats it as settled.
3. **AmaQithi are not recorded as a tribe in any state survey, and there is a documented reason.** The clan's country was folded into a closed location in 1853 after the polity it belonged to was abolished by proclamation in 1852. All of Glen Grey was later registered as abaThembu with no sub-tribal structure at all. Absence from the lists reflects colonial administration, not absence from history.
4. **The heartland is precisely locatable, and the oral testimony about it is accurate.** Three villages within six kilometres on the upper White Kei, in what the 1878 magistrate called an almost inaccessible country and which the record shows was used as a refuge. Two specific details in Vabantu Silimela's testimony — the burial ground at the red donga above the White Kei, and the naming of the amaTshatshu — were independently confirmed from the colonial record. The elders are describing real ground.
5. **Ngcobo is the clan's remembered dispersal point.** Five independent testimonies, unprompted, and two Qithi settlements sixty kilometres apart, which is the pattern that claim predicts.
6. **A Thembu community was settled in Quthing well before 1879, and Moorosi fought for them.** Documented in a missionary letter of 1851 and in peer-reviewed work on 1879. The Lesotho world in this research is real, whatever turns out to be true about descent.
7. **The ingqithi custom is described in the published literature as very probably of Bushman origin.** That has been the position for nearly seventy years and it is not this project's claim. The honest counterweight is also on record: T.B. Soga could not trace the origin clearly, and noted it is performed as the custom of the mother's people.
8. **A clan partly San in origin exists in the published record of a neighbouring nation.** Peires names the isiThathu, from a 1975 interview. AmaQithi are not making an unprecedented claim about themselves.

## 13.2 Tentative conclusions

Each of these is a reasonable reading of the evidence, and none should be repeated as settled fact.

1. **Mqithi was a son of Ntande.** Five independent sources including one written paper. No published source. The clan has adopted this as its working framework, which is the right decision, and the framework should keep its label.
2. **AmaMaya, amaNtande and amaQithi are probably brother clans rather than one under another.** This reading explains, more economically than any alternative, how the clan can be Thembu in every record while never appearing as a tribe.

3. **There was never a single Qithi chieftaincy to lose.** The faction model — several houses, several allegiances, several destinations — fits the evidence better than one migration with branches, and it explains the amaXhapha split, the ritual divergence, and the spread of families to the Free State.
4. **A Qithi house was among the factions defeated in 1878 and scattered into Cala.** The 11-210 tribal authority recorded as chief unknown in 1935 and as having no chiefly lineage in 1975, under an elected headman, is precisely the trace such a defeat leaves. **But this rests on the single identification of Sihlwengu with Sdlwengu**, on a name match alone, and if that link breaks the reading loses its anchor.
5. **An institution of incorporation existed in Thembu practice.** The black-cow custom recurs at two separate succession points, which makes it an institution rather than an anomaly, and the elders' phrase attaches it directly to the mothers. This is oral tradition explaining oral tradition, and the phrase carrying most of the weight has one attestation.
6. **The Qwabi ancestor was plausibly Bathepu, a Quthing Thembu.** It would explain his loyalty to Moorosi, the Quthing geography, and both sons' names in one stroke. It is a family hypothesis and is labelled as one.
7. **The unified trunk — Ntande, Mqithi, Ndinga, Rhadu, Mnono, then four brothers — is the best current reading.** Three sources dock the previously floating apex onto it. A named falsifier is outstanding.

## 13.3 What remains unknown

1. **Khoe-San descent is not established.** The supporting evidence is real and is assembled in Section 5.4. None of it is proof of descent. Cultural transmission, shared geography, an absorption tradition and a documented precedent in a neighbouring nation together make the hypothesis worth testing. They do not make it true. Only DNA, or something as decisive, will settle it — and the interpretation of a DNA result needs planning before samples are taken, not after.
2. **Khethelo's place in the genealogy is unknown**, and with it the connection between the houses at the ancestral seat and the trunk above them. This is the largest hole in the research.
3. **House seniority at the seat is unresolved**, and may stay unresolved. This report takes no position, and no future version of it should.
4. **The order of the trunk below Ndinga is unresolved**, as is whether Manzi and Ntuse are one man or two.
5. **Whether the Lesotho connection is ancient or recent labour migration is unresolved.** Six sources point one way; one senior source points the other, with a specific and plausible mechanism. Both readings stand.
6. **The Qwabi Joka identification is disputed** by someone living at Mkapusi and by the writer's own uncle.
7. **The praise-upward problem is unsolved.** Reciters call Dlomo and Madiba, who sit below the claimed branch point at Ntande. Either the praises were adopted later, the branch point is wrong, or the rule has exceptions.
8. **The clan animal is unconfirmed.** imbila rests on one mention by one reciter.

> **The honest overall position**
>
> The clan is real, one, and traceable, and that is now demonstrated rather than asserted. The origin question is open, and the project's own most public claim is its least settled one. Both of those sentences belong in the same paragraph, and a version of this research that printed only the first would deserve the scepticism it received.

# 14
# Recommendations and Next Steps

What should happen next, in the order it should happen, and who can do it. Most of this does not require money or credentials. It requires someone to make a phone call or write a specific letter.

## 14.1 Immediately, and without cost

1. **Ask the intermarriage question.** Do amaQithi marry amaHala and amaMaya? Because the literature treats non-intermarriage as evidence of blood relation, the answer discriminates between the two competing origin accounts. It can be asked in the existing group this week.
2. **Put Khethelo's father to every house at the seat, separately.** Not in a group thread, where the first answer shapes the rest. House by house, and record who says they do not know.
3. **Chase Thembalethu's answer.** The falsifier for the trunk theory has been outstanding since 21 July. Until it comes, the theory should not be advanced further.
4. **Ask Mpho Plata one question.** Does his family carry the story of consulting a diviner and being sent to Khethelo's grave? A yes closes a loop between the Free State and the ancestral grave.
5. **Introduce the Adoons and Jantjie families to each other.** They are almost certainly kin, separated by one grandfather's decision, and neither knows the other exists.
6. **Settle the Mcambalala district.** Luxeni in Lady Frere, or Cofimvaba. One question to Mpho Plata's grandmother, one to Themba Banisi.
7. **Check whether Sorharhoba and Asavela are the same man.** Simply ask.
8. **Audit the site for tier drift.** Headline, footer and meta copy against body content. This has been flagged repeatedly and should be closed out.

## 14.2 People to visit and record

The oral stream is the most perishable evidence in the project. Recording should not wait for a research plan.

- **Themba Banisi** — the single most important living source. Record him properly, on audio or video, with a copy given to his family. Put the district discrepancy on Khethelo back to him, ask about the wives, ask what happened in the inxaxheba dispute, and ask what he knows about Sdlwengu.
- **Vabantu Silimela and the Silimela cluster** — the other side of the seniority question, and the source whose geography checked out. Record the full line and the displacement story.
- **The elders at kwaQithi, Chachu and eSikhwanqeni** — house by house, on Khethelo.
- **The Jezile family** — custodians of the burial ground. Ask their isiduko directly and respectfully. Ask permission before photographing or recording the site.
- **Mphathi Mbukushe Ntayithethwa** — ask whether his denial of the king-list connection is his own or his house's position. If it is the house's, that is a finding.
- **The amaXhapha houses** — only the main house's version of the split is on record. This requires care, and it requires going as a listener rather than as a researcher with a thesis.
- **The families at Debera, Gubenxa and Manzana** in Engcobo. Kekana Ntuse's descendants are the most likely living people in the whole archive to be phoned this week. Ask their isiduko and ask them to recite.
- **bawo Mqadi**, once contact details arrive. Named by Ngwenyathi as most likely to hold Qithi-specific knowledge.

## 14.3 Records to request

Archivists answer specific questions and ignore vague ones. The pattern that works is: name the event, name the person, name the year, ask one question.

| Where | What to ask for |
|---|---|
| Western Cape Archives, Cape Town | The series holding Queenstown circuit court criminal records for 1878, and the Breakwater Prison convict registers for that year. Searching for Sihlwengu, named in the 1878 Blue Book alongside Umfanta and Gungubele. Try all four spellings |
| National Archives, Pretoria | The full estate file for Nosinodi Ntsue, died 1955, Debera location, Engcobo district. The father's name, and the heirs' declaration |
| UCT Special Collections | Merriman Papers MSC 13, specifically the Digest of Evidence against Gungubele and Driver's December 1877 correspondence. Judge Papers BC 500. Stanford Papers BC 293, the memorandum on the case of Gungubele |
| Cory Library, Rhodes University | Hemming's own account of the 1878 affair — request the interview pages by reference |
| National Library of South Africa | Queenstown Free Press, 7 June and 26 July 1878. Not digitised; eGGSA volunteers will look up specific dates |
| Cape Archives, Native Affairs files | Glen Grey location records for the locations other than Mkapusi. Location No. 4 was found this way |
| Chief Directorate: National Geospatial Information | 1:50,000 sheets for the upper White Kei, to settle the Cacadu and White Kei question |

## 14.4 Letters to write

- **Anne Mager**, University of Cape Town. One question: did she encounter the name Sihlwengu in the 1878 files, and in which file? A short letter from a descendant of a Qithi house in the Tambookie Location.
- **The amaTshatshu traditional council**, and **Aubrey Somana** as a family historian of the house the ancestors fought beside. They went through a recognition process requiring historical evidence and will have compiled material on 1878.
- **The Mfanta descendants**, through Manzezulu Mtirara's house and the Zilingwenya Hala Tribal Authority. Ask how they traced their ancestor through the Breakwater records. A descendant of another house defeated in the same war is likely to be answered generously.
- **Kumkani Ngwenyathi**, following up on contact details for bawo Mqadi, the written work of Prof V. Dlova and the late Vukile Phambo, the Bumbane photograph, and the Sihele manuscript. Following the established protocol for formal messages to elders.
- **A historical linguist**, at Rhodes, UCT or Walter Sisulu University, with Dr Mvenene as a starting contact. Two questions: the Qithi and Quthing form, and whether Qoma means bee in any documented N|uu or Khoe lexicon.
- **J.B. Peires**, if he can be reached, on the isiThathu material and on whether he encountered anything comparable for Thembu clans.

## 14.5 Publishing and writing

1. **Write the Lesotho Connection page, starting with the 1851 letter.** The Schrumpf material is the strongest documentary find in the project and it is not yet published anywhere. One paragraph on the Batepu settled at Moorosi's since the last frontier war is the highest-value writing currently available to this project.

2. **Publish Peires' warning rather than waiting to be confronted with it.** That brotherhood in genealogies often encodes political incorporation is a challenge to the project's own framing. Meeting it openly is stronger than being caught by it.
3. **Publish the disagreements as disagreements.** The four Ntande genealogies, the seniority dispute, the Lesotho argument, and Mphathi Mbukushe's dissent. This is the project's established method and it should be visible on the site, not only in the ledger.
4. **Build the /directory.** It remains a stub and the registry data behind it already exists. Families finding each other is the most immediately useful thing the site can do.
5. **Keep the surname atlas current.** It is a better working tool for recognition than anything in this report, and every new testimony adds to it.
6. **Fix the known errors.** The reversed Manimani line. The spelling splits in the register. The distinction between confirmed Qithi houses and prominent community members.

## 14.6 How this benefits the whole clan

Four ways, stated plainly.

**Recognition.** A clan scattered across eight districts and three countries now has a shared praise signature it can be recognised by, a register of surnames by district, and a place where a person who suspects they are amaQithi can find out. That is the immediate practical good, and it does not depend on the origin question being settled.

**Standing.** Two of the three houses defeated in 1878 have been restored. The evidence assembled in Section 5.9 is the kind of evidence a restoration process requires. Whether the clan chooses to pursue anything of that sort is not this report's business, but the material should exist and should be in the clan's own hands.

**Memory.** The elders who hold the oral record are in their seventies and eighties. Every testimony recorded is a piece of the clan's memory that survives the person who holds it. This is the most urgent work in the project and the least glamorous.

**Self-authorship.** The question of who amaQithi are is being answered by amaQithi, in our own names, with our own uncertainties visible. That is worth more than a settled answer written by somebody else.

> **A closing note on method**
>
> This report will be wrong about some things. That is expected, and it is why every claim in it carries a tier, a source, and where possible a named test that would prove it false.
>
> If you are reading this and you know something it gets wrong, the project wants to hear it. The correction is worth more than the original.
>
> **Ukuba ndiphosisile — ndilungise.**

A

# Appendix A · Contributor Roll

Everyone whose knowledge is in this report. Where a contribution is a named house's own tradition, it belongs to that house and not to this project.

| Name | Place | Contribution |
|---|---|---|
| Themba Banisi | kwaQithi, Glen Grey | Senior source on house seniority, the burial site at donga libomvu, the amaXhapha split, the Lesotho counter-reading, and research direction |
| Vabantu Silimela | Glen Grey | The Ngcongolo and Mafilika line; the red donga; the amaTshatshu displacement |
| Bunje Nyelezi | Engcobo | Mqithi born of Ntande; Maya as elder brother; the Mcube twin phrase; the trunk below Mqithi; imbila |
| Thembalethu Mqithi | Engcobo, Lesotho orientation | Ten generations from Mhlungulwana |
| Sorharhoba KA Thembelani | — | The trunk chain and Khuzani |
| Asavela | — | The Manzi chain with wife-clans |
| Nkosikho Manimani | Engcobo | Seven generations; the move from Rhodana |
| Amos Gaji | Oxton, Hewu | The fullest izibongo; the Hewu surname set |
| Vuyokazi kaGaji | Komani | izibongo; KuManzimdaka origin; the Gaji spread |
| Gcinikhaya Qondani | Centule, Mthatha | eZabasa eMgudu origin; the interleaved izibongo |
| Mphathi Mbukushe Ntayithethwa | kwaQithi | Dissent on the king-list connection |
| Nomacule Kwinana | Lesotho | First Lesotho-born member; the house of Lebese; the phenotype praise |
| Nkuli Zweni | Matatiele | The border-drawn claim; the Zweni line |
| Nomhle Adoons | Zastron, Free State | The Adoons line; Ntande named in izibongo |
| Nontuthuzelo Sylvia Stefaans | Free State, from Bholoto | The Adoons to Jantjie surname change |
| Mpho Plata | Free State | The Nkewu line; eMcambalala origin |
| Hlumelo | Mkapusi | The amaNgxongo challenge; the Jikumlambo surname |
| Inam Sokoti | eMgwalana, Engcobo | The fused praise fragment; first woman reciter |
| Ntobeko Mangqwengqwe | eMthonjeni, kuBengu | Six generations; the Bhanisi name link |
| Kay Asikelelwe Ngqele | eMtshanyane, Cofimvaba | Independent confirmation of five Cofimvaba surnames |

| Name | Place | Contribution |
|---|---|---|
| Zukiswa Gege | Komani, from Mkapusi | The Gege surname; a second Mkapusi family |
| Busiswa Ndeleni | Dordrecht, from Tsakane | The Ndeleni and Ndaleni variant resolved |
| Lelwa Bashi Silimela | — | The Thoba name |
| Thandukwazi | Marhambeni, uMzimkhulu | Bhomoyi people; Lesotho kin; the nkomo praise |
| Mr Bokwe | Ezibeleni | Mnguti's route: Lesotho, Herschel, Ngcobo |
| Nandi Ngcongco Nomava | Botswana | Coordination; comparative Xhosa-side cases; the Khoe and San terminology question |
| Sandile Tukani | — | The written lineage paper |
| Kumkani Ngwenyathi | — | The four-clan San position; the referral to bawo Mqadi; his own named sources |
| Xurab Hamid | — | Oral history; the Khoe-San side |
| Krauseb Runtu | — | Oral history; the Khoe-San side |
| Bawu Bhokwe | — | Intermediary to the Bumbane royal house |
| Dr Mvenene | Walter Sisulu University | Academic contact |
| The Qwabi elders | Glen Grey and beyond | The family record on which the project started |

B

# Appendix B · Surname Register by Region

As at 30 July 2026. Names marked with a dagger are recorded as prominent community members rather than as confirmed Qithi houses, and should be checked with elders before being treated as clan surnames. Names marked with an asterisk are shared with other clans.

| Region | Surnames | Villages and places |
|---|---|---|
| Lady Frere / Glen Grey / Cacadu — the heartland | Qwabi, Tshabe, Mbaba, Ngubo, Shumana, Khethelo, Mhlungulwa / Mhlungulwana, Sokoti, Mangqwengqwe, Fulumeni, Xhokomfu, Gege, Maseti*, Ntshongwana†, Ngqawuza†, Phithi†, Roto / Rhotho, Mthabathi†, Nobhakade† | kwaQithi, Chachu, eSikhwanqeni, Mkapusi, Agnes, Hala 2, Skhwanqeni, Lower Seplan, Qugqwaru, Bholoto, Tsembeyi, Ngcuka, eMthonjeni, kuBengu, Rhodana |
| House names at the ancestral seat | Khethelo, Sdlwengu, Mbukushe, Sinoko, Ntayithethwa, Malithi, Mhlungulwana, Ngcongolo, Silimela, Mafilika, Mfeketho, Thoba, Tomsana, Jezile† | kwaQithi village and the donga libomvu burial ground |
| Ngcobo / Engcobo | Manimani, Mgengwana, Ntulo, Limba, Gobelo, Titi, Kula, Msebe, Skampula / Skhampula, Matho, Tyhokolo / Tyokolo, Fanakho, Nyelezi, Sokoti, Gaji, Qondani, Mkoti | Gubenxa, Lucwecwe, Lahlangubo, eMadladleni, Gqutyini, Zadungeni, Qumanco, Maqwathini, eMgwalana, KuManzimdaka, Zabasa / Mgudu, Debera, Manzana, qithi and kwaQithi (east) |
| Cofimvaba | Ngqela / Ngqele, Bambatha, Mtshabe, Skeyi, Sokutapa, Ndeleni / Ndaleni, Mkoti, Jikumlambo, Banisi | Shobeni / eSkhobeni, eMtshanyane, Tsakane, kwaGcina, Mcambalaleni |
| Cala / Xalanga / Lower Seplan | Qwabi, Tshabe, Tofile / Stofile† | Cala, Lower Seplan |
| Komani, Hewu and Dordrecht | Gaji, Ndeleni, Nkabi, Ngunuza, Sjeku, Peter, Ngcongca, Gege | Oxton, kwaMlungisi, Ntabethemba, Dordrecht, Ezibeleni |
| Free State | Plata, Mfumba, Adoons, Jantjie, Nkewu | Zastron, and the Mcambalala-origin cluster |
| Lesotho borderland and the east | Kwinana, Lebese, Zweni, Mnguti | Lesotho, Herschel / Sterkspruit, Matatiele, Marhambeni in uMzimkhulu |
| Mthatha | Qondani | Centule |

### A standing request

This register is incomplete and will stay incomplete without help. If your family carries the Qithi isiduko and your surname or village is not on this list, or is spelled wrongly, please say so. The register is the most immediately useful thing in this whole report, because it is how families find each other.

C

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*From the White Kei, we rise.*