

Living on edge: New perspectives on anxiety, refuge, and colonialism in southern Africa

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Abstract Archaeologies of colonialism have called for exploring the culturally dynamic entanglements of people and objects while acknowledging the violence that accompanied these entanglements. Heeding these calls requires attention to how the state and state power were materialised, particularly in settler colonies where state apparatuses advanced unevenly, insidiously, and clumsily. Here, I explore how the (mis)understandings and (mis)apprehensions of people and places that accompanied the halting expansion of colonial frontiers were materialised. Focusing on southern Africa's Highveld and Maloti-Drakensberg Mountains, I offer anxiety as a framework for conceiving of colonialisms as epistemic encounters: processes of 'making sense' of new people, things, and places based on material practices, empirical experience, and desire. Through a narrative of the nineteenth-century Maloti-Drakensberg told with archival, archaeological, and ethnographic materials, I re-visit a longstanding trope of southern African archaeology and historiography: refugia from social distress. I argue that refuge can be taken as a sense-making practice rather than as reaction to stress. I close with thoughts on what an anxiety framework can offer the still-developing field of African historical archaeology.

Keywords anxiety, resistance, southern Africa, colonialism, Maloti-Drakensberg

Author's biographical note

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1. Introduction

Imperatives to recover archaeological perspectives on colonialism have spurred the formation of a vast array of methodological and theoretical toolkits, tailored to the conflicted terrain of what are today sensitive post-colonial contexts (Voss & Casella 2012). I say ‘imperatives’ because in these contexts – especially in Africa – archaeological treatments of colonialism do not just provide another body of evidence for an already heavily researched topic: they shape discourse about a past and present situated amidst the lingering impacts of hegemonic projects (Giblin *et al.* 2014; Lane 2011; Shepherd 2004). Care and precision with our methodologies and vocabulary is therefore key. Studies of culture contact and colonialism have provided us with an extensive lexicon of terms for discussing the dynamics of these encounters: resistance, accommodation, acculturation, entanglement, and on seemingly *ad infinitum*. Archaeological conceptions of colonialism as different sorts of entanglements – in which objects enter new regimes of value as they circulate through new encounters – offer views of cultural creativity, resilience, and means of rectifying silences and discrepancies between written and material records (e.g. Thomas 1991; Stahl 2001; Gosden 2004; Silliman 2005; cf. Voss 2015).

Recently, some have advocated approaches that acknowledge more explicitly the violence and trauma that accompanied colonial expansion (cf. Haber 2009). Alfredo González-Ruibal (2014) has offered a compelling reading of the historical experiences of egalitarian societies in the Horn of Africa and Sudan that foregrounds the perceptions of peoples oppressed by the state. González-Ruibal’s discussion articulates the ‘ontologies of resistance’ developed through these societies’ sustained marginalisation. Archaeologies of subjugated peoples living ‘in the face of the state’ invite us to re-consider or make space within colonialism-as-entanglement for acknowledging that ‘colonialism was as much a creation of rogues and independent agents as it was the product of imperial states’ (Dawdy 2008, 19). Writing from the perspective of French colonial New Orleans, Shannon Lee Dawdy (*ibid.*) has cogently observed that “colonial power” has become too abstracted and overstated – a hegemonic juggernaut that in some archaeological interpretations may appear overdetermined or omnipresent. Dawdy encourages archaeologists and historians alike to re-focus attention on the individuals and, importantly, the *kinds* of individuals – engineers, *creoles*, smugglers – that manipulated the state to re-fashion and re-interpret colonialism at a local level (see also Voss 2005).

These observations also encourage us to examine more closely what we mean by the colonial state and its apparatuses: how these manifested and were experienced or manipulated in different contexts by different actors (cf. M. Hall 2000; Voss 2008). In settler colonial situations such as South Africa, there existed a plurality of colonialisms – Christianisation, cadastralisation, forced labour and migration, tribalisation, Indigenous colonialisms – that were felt profoundly but whose infrastructures were unevenly distributed (Landau 2010; Braun 2015). In places, trade networks and settlement penetrated to a limited degree, such that the material record does not disclose the entry of new objects into circulation. This forces us to interpret responses to these colonialisms through the reconfiguration or redeployment of objects and behaviours situated in the longer past. We are prompted to ask how to discern the tipping point where quotidian behaviours begin to acknowledge colonial orders and upheavals. Without a clear ‘Before and After’ picture, achieving this view becomes a challenging exercise in finding patterns in the *longue durée*

using multiple strands of evidence without resorting to essentialisation, or reliance on a hard-and-fast baseline against which to measure change.

Here, I am interested in nuancing the archaeology of colonialisms to allow space for the multi-faceted, often clumsy, piecemeal, and confused nature of state expansion and experiences thereof. Particularly in settler colonies, violence and aggression paralleled exercises in bureaucracy and banality (Stoler & Cooper 1997). The imposition of settler authority did not proceed apace in all places: outside of major settlements the impacts of European presence could be felt potently, but sometimes more as ripples than as waves. The above-mentioned lexicon is teeming with tools for addressing aspects of these concerns, and so new vocabulary should not be proposed lightly. However, many of these tools still leave me feeling dissatisfied: dissatisfied with their abilities to account for how the misunderstandings and creative re-configurations that accompanied encounters between people and objects related to the unwieldy advance of colonial frontiers; and how places and people that remained largely outside the networks that brought new commodities to the frontier may have imagined themselves as part of other, subtler changes.

In what follows, I want to offer anxiety as a framework for thinking about some of these questions, focusing on south-eastern Africa, particularly the Maloti-Drakensberg Mountains and what would become the British protectorate of Basutoland in 1871, and the independent country of Lesotho in 1966 (Figure 1). To explore the potentials for an anxiety framework, I examine one longstanding archaeological trope of responses to colonialism in southern Africa, namely the twinned ideas of refuge and distress. Amidst the upheavals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the southern African interior saw an efflorescence of behaviours and settlements often construed as refugia from conflict caused by British governments, Afrikaans-speaking Boer settlers, mixed-race pastoralist-raiders, and internecine aggressions among African chiefdoms. I use the Maloti-Drakensberg situation to interrogate ideas about what constitutes stress and shelter therefrom. These questions imply an interconnection between landscape and stress or, I suggest, anxiety: refugia are places characterised by environmental and physical features as much as by strategy. Thus, my exploration involves re-visiting the Maloti-Drakensberg landscape and its capacity to inspire and challenge certain encounters and lifeways; James Scott's (2009) concept of 'friction' serves as my point of departure. Through a narrative told with historical and archaeological materials (adduced through a similarly hybrid investigative strategy), I explore how anxious encounters related to material practices – including the construction of refugia for colonised and colonisers – and the interpretations or misinterpretations of those practices.

It is worth noting that 'anxiety' features heavily in a different series of discussions related to archaeologies of emotion, elaborated upon in a recent edited volume by Jeffrey Fleisher and Neil Norman (2015) and presaged by Sarah Tarlow (2012). Fleisher and Norman's collection addresses both why and how archaeologists should 'take emotions seriously', especially worry and anxiety in the past. Their introduction and essays within the volume deal with topics such as risk, the 'sensuousness of the state', and archaeologies of 'stressful times'. These are all fascinating and welcome additions to a burgeoning body of literature, and relate to many themes discussed in this essay. The major difference between their conception of anxiety and the framework I outline here is that I do not treat anxiety primarily as an emotion, but rather as something closer to an epistemology (following Stoler 2009): a set of habits of thinking about and within the world that can manifest themselves in

affect and behaviour. The degree of difference between these two definitions of anxiety is perhaps small and worth further exploration in a different venue (King forthcoming c). My hope here is that this essay will contribute to what is appearing as a stimulating archaeological field of enquiry.

2. Tensions and topographies

The thrust of the theoretical position advanced here is twofold: anxiety describes a state of being derived from the tension between peoples' experiences, visions for the future, and uncertainties stemming from epistemic encounters with new people, objects, and behaviours; friction describes how the landscape can limit the intrusion of colonial authority and thereby affects how that authority is encountered.

2.1. Anxiety and uncertain encounters

Anxiety is most commonly thought of – when it is thought of at all – as an emotion. Put another way, anxiety has come to represent an introspective experience, a preoccupation with a 'unique self' accessible through psychotherapeutic confession (Freud 1952; Bourke 2003, 129). However, Freud's original formulation of anxiety was concerned with the tensions between the self and the instabilities or uncertainties of modernity. Freud (1930, 63) was particularly concerned with anxiety as it related to the sublimation of human instinct as a response to the evolution of civilisation and modern society. In articulating this, he was concerned to distinguish anxiety from fear: fear was more immediate and focused on a distinct object, while anxiety lacked a specific object and instead directed attention to the condition itself (Freud 1952, 103). Rationality and irrationality were not part of the equation; the distinguishing characteristic between the two states was the degree to which a person or persons believed themselves capable of coping with uncertainty and/or danger. Existential philosophers, including Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Heidegger further emphasised the creative potential inhering in anxiety, as anxiety prompted people to recognise the instability of meaning and thus become more 'real' (cf. Jackson & Everts 2010).

Work by anthropologists such as Bronislaw Malinowski and – most significantly here – Mary Douglas was foundational in bringing anxiety into contemporary social anthropology via structuralist frameworks. In *Purity and Danger* (1966), Douglas famously defined anxiety as relating to 'matter out of place': anxiety described the consequences (symbolic, material, practical) that occur when the classificatory systems that people use to comprehend society and the world are transgressed. This sort of anxiety was unavoidable, as it was impossible to have such a classificatory system (and all societies do) without also having aberrations from that system: 'where there is dirt there is a system', and *vice versa* (Douglas 1966, 35). Anxiety both allows people to identify these aberrations and instabilities, and to find recourse to the mechanisms necessary for righting the system. In invoking these corrective measures, however, anxiety also entails discerning whether transgressive anomalies are limited to an individual's experience or indicators of a larger social problem. If the latter, the anomaly takes on the status 'danger', and thus demands collective action against it (Douglas 1966, 149-51). Here, it is important to underscore one specific feature of Douglas's work: that anxiety relates to the process of making sense of the world as an epistemological practice.

Ann Laura Stoler (2008, 2009) offers a means of relating these sorts of 'epistemic anxieties' to the practices and power dynamics at work in the colonial state – in particular the settler

colonial state with its patchily distributed authority. Stoler's work examines how colonial ways of thinking about race were developed, enacted in policy, and sometimes concealed within the Netherlands East Indies. This project constituted epistemic work, and in carrying it out colonial agents relied on their sensibilities and assumptions more than on scientific or dependable observations. Epistemologies were 'what people did' (Stoler 2008, 351), and this unstable information became the basis for predicting subversion and revolt among colonial subjects. Stoler's conclusions apply beyond the government office: this sort of 'making sense' or 'making up' of people was an everyday part of the colonial *milieu*. These epistemologies were embodied anxieties – they exerted an invisible force that guided how people experienced colonial encounters and moved through the world, animating and nuancing the practical resources they employed to cope with this uncertainty.

If the power dynamics here are not underlined clearly enough, Joanna Bourke's (2003, 127) historical study of anxiety and fear clarifies that power resides in the options available for managing these uncertainties. The Dutch officials described in Stoler's study could address their racial anxieties by legislating, moving, or spatially constraining colonised bodies and practices. Colonial subjects were not without resources of their own – the modes of resistance and responses to entanglement described above – but they were of a different nature than the colonisers' and lacking the same force of apparatus.

With respect to the ways in which these actions have been treated in the archaeological literature on culture contact, of particular significance here is the distinction that Andrew Martindale – drawing on the work of Anthony Giddens, Ann Stahl, and Michael Dietler – has drawn between discursive and non-discursive experiences of power. Martindale (2009, 64) describes the former as 'intentional actions' deliberately addressing colonial impositions, and the latter as 'symbolic gestures of aesthetics, taste, and appropriateness' that emphasise the more casual, less deliberate use of objects circulating in a colonial *milieu*. Discursive and non-discursive opportunities were both available in situations of culture-contact. Of significance for my argument is that both Martindale and Stahl (2002) emphasise that we should understand actors in colonial situations as being aware of their historical position; that is, discursive and non-discursive practices draw on peoples' empirical experiences and concerns about the future.

Enter anxiety, as a way of tying this historical awareness and future concerns with the uncertainty of epistemic encounters, and how these are embodied in the resources people brought to bear on making sense of these encounters.

2.2. *Frictional landscapes*

Landscapes can be both resources and actors here. James Scott's (2009) work on landscape friction offers a means of relating the uncertainties of colonial experiences to the character of certain kinds of landscape. Writing of southeast Asian communities wishing to remain independent of government control, Scott emphasises that mountains present a means for local people to negotiate their identities in the face of state authorities. He locates the trans-border region of 'Zomia' (a neologism describing a borderless 'ungovernable' zone) within a global historical trend of peoples resisting the cultural and economic standardisation accompanying colonialism (Braudel 1995, 34; Gellner 1969); rejecting sedentary agriculture, moving to the mountainous periphery, adopting nomadism and raiding, all with a pronounced degree of cultural heterogeneity (Scott 2009, x, 12, 22).

Scott proposes ‘friction’ as the topographical and environmental constraints that a landscape places on the intrusion of state, political, economic, and cultural influences. For my purposes, it is significant that in Scott’s formulation mountains (and their inhabitants) impede not only the large-scale settlement of colonial and agriculturist states, but also the more piecemeal establishment of infrastructure such as roads and trading posts. Mountains present rugged, broken terrain often at great distances from centres of governance, which inhibits or prevents centralising efforts such as large-scale crop cultivation, transport systems, and communication.¹

By introducing friction into his larger study on ‘the art of not being governed’, Scott emphasises how friction limits the degree to which people can be co-opted into state systems, and the force that the state can exert to compel such participation. I wish to focus instead on how friction shapes the nature of encounters that occurred in the context of colonial expansion. These encounters initially took the form of forays made by administrators and colonial representatives tasked with specific aims. As the Maloti-Drakensberg came to be associated with escape for cattle thieves and sanctuary for the last independent Bushmen, the tone shifted to one of exploration and law enforcement, despite the overwhelming inability of Europeans to achieve this second directive. This historical context is elaborated upon below.

3. Refugia on southern African frontiers

I want to proceed by examining considerations of refugia as reactions to colonial expansion and internal socio-political turmoil in southern Africa. This has been a persistent theme in archaeologies of the last 500 years, with ‘refuge’ being used both in its Latin sense of ‘hideaway’ and in its anthropological sense connoting habitable pockets or reservoirs amidst increasingly harsh socio-environmental conditions. In reviewing this literature, I seek to draw out a series of inferences about why people take refuge. Describing something as a refuge requires that we think carefully about what it is a refuge from. Earlier studies have dealt mainly in terms of stress, either ambient or as a direct threat. In some instances refuge was a reaction to imminent violence, a redoubt from which to defend against immediate harm. Refuge has also been interpreted as a response to more amorphous changes in political, climatic, and socioeconomic orders. The implication is that when such changes occurred, people (sometimes aggregated into homesteads, sometimes into larger communities) removed themselves to strategic, defensive, and temporary locations to await the abatement of these detrimental circumstances. In this, refugia constituted relief: these people did not survive or recover *just* because they moved, but because they moved to places that were inaccessible to or protected from whomever or whatever was perceived as the aggressor. Put another way, refugia appeared as a response to particular stressors, some of which conform to the ideas of anxiety as an experience of ‘making sense’ that I elaborate upon below.

The latter half of the second millennium AD witnessed large-scale demographic change, internal political crisis, and violence in the interior Highveld (Figure 2) – changes that lack a single cause but rather speak to chain reactions implicating the rise of ambitious African leaders and, eventually, the expansion of British and Afrikaner settlement (Etherington 2001; S. Hall 2012; Landau 2010; see also papers in Hamilton 1995). Beginning perhaps as early as the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries (Parsons 1995) but coming more sharply into (historical) focus from the late eighteenth century, this period is characterised by the

consolidation of numerous Highveld chieftaincies, competition for cattle and followers, and raids for cattle and captives by Griqua and Korana pastoralists. The early nineteenth century saw intense fission and re-alignments among chieftaincies and widespread population relocation as new chiefly centres were established. This period from the early to mid-nineteenth century is often referred to as the *lifaqane* ('time of troubles'), describing the complex political manoeuvres of African chiefs and their cascading consequences, including massive population movements and a (supposed) uptick in cattle raiding (King forthcoming b). Throughout the *lifaqane* and the rest of the nineteenth century, British and Afrikaner settlement steadily expanding into the interior accompanied the penetration of trade networks, land speculation, mineral extraction, and violent confrontations with African chiefs and hunter-pastoralists. Practically, the *lifaqane* and its long 'prelude' were felt through ever-intensifying cattle raids that diminished or depleted perhaps the single most powerful form of political currency available (*ibid.*).²

The efflorescence of settlements located atop steep-sided, easily defensible *kopjes* within the last 500 years has been attributed to people seeking a reprieve from this prolonged period of demographic unrest and spates of violent raiding. In the Waterberg region, large population influxes (perhaps from the south-east, see competing theories in Maggs 1976, 142 and Huffman 2004, 2007) during the seventeenth century may have provoked already established residents to retreat to easily fortified positions (Huffman 1990; S. Hall 1995, 309–10). At fortress-type sites such as Rooikrans (S. Hall 1985), the use of space emphasised expediency, with small stock enclosures and food and bone waste showing a very small quantity of livestock remains, in contrast to more robust contemporary settlements such as Rhenosterkloof.

Other sites from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries such as Malore Hill (Huffman 2004, 93) and Moor Park (P. Mitchell & Whitelaw 2005, 227; Whitelaw 2008, 2009, 2015) are similarly characterised by positions on fairly inaccessible rises, defensive walling, and expedient or temporary construction. Huffman (2004, 89) and Whitelaw (2009) have suggested that, particularly in the south-eastern subcontinent where Moor Park is located, constructing these sorts of sites may initially have been a response to the effects of the Little Ice Age, which caused a decline in agricultural productivity and spurred tensions among agropastoralists. The consequences of these tensions may have been an increase in cattle raiding, which motivated people to re-locate to more strategic and defensible locations. In combination with the political re-alignments occurring within this region's emergent polities (M. Hall 1981; M. Hall and Mack 1983; M. Hall and Maggs 1979; Whitelaw 2008), Moor Park appears as a refuge site disclosing concern over security in food, livestock, and people.

Moving into the early nineteenth century, the site of Lepalong cave (occupied c. 1827) shows archaeological indicators of social stress directly attributable to the onset of the *lifaqane*. These include a number of small animal enclosures and the lack of a coherent settlement layout, perhaps reflecting the deterioration of socially unifying architectural patterns and homestead constructions (S. Hall 1995, 314–9; cf. Whitelaw 2013, 219–21).

Significantly, these instances of refugia are not attributed directly to colonial intrusions, but rather to internal turmoil among African polities eventually exacerbated by the actions of the colony and its agents elsewhere in the subcontinent.

These refugia stand in stark contrast to the Great Places or agglomerated towns that defined settled chieftaincies in southern Africa during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Unlike Rooikrans and Rhenosterkloof, late eighteenth-/early nineteenth-century Tswana agglomerated towns in the western Highveld disclose the rise of a handful of dominant chieftaincies that supported elaborate spatial planning, architectural styles, and diverse ceramic assemblages. Large populations deployed a range of ceramic, metallurgical, and building technologies to address the boundaries between family and community through time (S. Hall 1998, 2012; S. Hall *et al.* 2008). Farther to the south-east amidst the ascendant Zulu chiefdom, early to mid-nineteenth-century chiefly centres such as Mgungundlovu and oNdini contain extensive deposits attesting to large quantities of goods such as cattle and grain arriving from tributaries (Parkington & Cronin 1979, Plug & Roodt 1990). Settlement layouts describe the organisation of Zulu society into strictly demarcated spaces based on social status and age-set (Watson & Watson 1990). While they have yet to be excavated, the Great Places of Xhosa chiefs at the Cape dating to the same period appear – through historical sources – to have displayed similar spatial elaboration (Peires 1981).

Gavin Whitelaw and Simon Hall (2016) have re-visited features of the *lifaqane* as part of a broader, long-term series of frontier dynamics rather than as primarily reflecting distress. They draw on archaeological and oral historical evidence to build a view of the interior as overlapping ‘layered landscapes’. Utilising Kopytoff’s (1987) ‘internal African frontier’ model, Whitelaw and Hall illustrate how, for the past four or five centuries, successive interactions of populations moving through the interior have resulted in identities accreting and being expressed in material cultures such as ceramic production and architecture. In this interpretation, population movement was commonplace. Despite producing extensive stone-walled settlements, communities in the interior relocated *en masse* on a relatively frequent basis (at least once within a generation), with no indication that such migration was a reaction to crisis or stress. This prompts a re-consideration of the refuge sites described above: if population movement was relatively common, might these apparently expedient sites reference some aspect of this pattern rather than a break with ‘normal’, sedentary lifeways?

This is not to say that we cannot confidently describe some archaeological sites as ‘refugia’ from more readily discernible causes, sometimes articulating fear of a specific, direct threat. Amanda Esterhuysen’s (2006, 2012) study of Historic Cave describes the 1854 siege of the Kekana Ndebele chief Mugombane. Boer forces besieged Mugombane, with his family and followers, in the cave for a month before entering, killing the men, and ‘dispersing’ the women and children among Boers. Archaeologically, the result is a wealth of material culture, including mummified individuals and flora and fauna suggesting calculated provisioning strategies that kept certain high-status individuals nourished at the expense of others. The 1879 siege of the BaPhuthi chief Moorosi and his rebels by British forces and BaSotho auxiliaries is another similar example. Moorosi’s story is described in greater detail below, but his fortified mountain Thaba Moorosi (‘Mount Moorosi’) was besieged for eight months before it fell to an invading force armed with ladders, cannon, and guns.

In these cases, refugia were responses to a particular set of stressors, some amorphous and some desperately clear. In what follows, I want to focus in greater detail on how to conceive of refuge in the context of anxieties, especially anxieties that referenced particular uncertainties about ‘making sense’ of people and landscape. In the Maloti-Drakensberg, it becomes apparent that refugia were one of many material (and archaeological) ways of negotiating anxieties, and that refugia were resources accessed in different forms by both colonisers and colonised.

4. Friction at work in the Maloti-Drakensberg

Historians and archaeologists have long characterised the Maloti-Drakensberg Mountains as refugia. John Wright (1971) and Patricia Vinnicombe (2009) described the region as a stronghold of Bushman raiders escaping colonial encroachment. Peter Mitchell (2009a, b) has drawn attention to these mountains as the last best option for Bushmen³ wishing to lead independent lifeways in the face of growing European and Bantu-speaker settlement. In this, Mitchell – along with several historians – voices the position of refugia as relief: the Maloti-Drakensberg offered a sanctuary for mobile hunter-gatherers because the landscape challenged the encroachment of farming lifeways and state infrastructure.

These depictions of landscape drew on its rugged topographic and climatic aspects. The Maloti-Drakensberg are southern Africa's highest mountains (Figure 3), rising 3,482 metres above sea level at their maximum and creating a profound rain shadow effect to the west. Salient features of the region include: extreme temperature variation (over 30°C in the summer and below freezing in the winter); heavily dissected and eroded terrain; vegetal zones transitioning from palatable grasslands to unpalatable alpine veld; and an abundance of microclimates at varying elevations (Mucina *et al.* 2006, 390; Rutherford *et al.* 2011, 44-5, 48; Showers 2005). The landscape further consists of a tremendous number of steep-sided *kopjes* (*liqhobosheane* in Sesotho) that mirror the defensive hilltop positions described by Huffman, Hall, and others to the north; I return to these in the following section.

Given this portrait, it is perhaps unsurprising that archaeological evidence suggests that agriculturists only settled in the highlands in the late nineteenth century, as part of a political strategy by the BaSotho royal house (King *et al.* 2014, 59-60; *Leselinyana* 1909; Mitchell & Whitelaw 2005, 232-3; Thorp 2000). These areas were attractive primarily to those leading hunter-gatherer lifeways, which had persisted for millennia and from c. 1,800 BP speak to contact with agropastoralists (Mitchell 2009a, b). These lifeways continued even after colonial settlement and administrative oversight encroached around the base of the mountains. This encroachment constricted hunter-gatherers' range of movement and hunting opportunities, and prompted many to see stock theft as both economic recourse and political resistance (Challis 2008, 2012; Mitchell 2010; Mitchell & Challis 2008; Vinnicombe 2009; Wright 1971).

The Maloti-Drakensberg thus presented difficulties for peoples wishing to practice sedentary agriculture or, after the western Maloti-Drakensberg's 1871 annexation to the Cape as Basutoland, establish centres of government administration (Figure 4). In 1869, the British official James Bowker undertook an exploratory trek from the southern Drakensberg over the Escarpment and down the Senqu River. His notes from the journey include phrases such as: 'with reference to the story of available ground, it is all a mistake'; 'there is not one acre of ground fit for anything but a baboon or a Bushman'; 'we were often for a whole day without even a footpath' (Theal, V, 126-8). Four years later, James Murray Grant of the Frontier Armed Mounted Police observed that the far-upland region was almost devoid of settlement except for the lone trading post at a lower-lying mountain pass (Mitchell & Challis 2008). The upper reaches of the Maloti-Drakensberg were deemed untameable, inaccessible, and generally beyond the reach of British government and its infrastructure (Ayliff 1879). Consequently, magistracies – the main apparatus for administering Britain's system of indirect rule – as well as post offices and all but a few traders joined the longer tradition of mission stations being concentrated in the lowlands.

Recalling Scott's formulation, the Maloti-Drakensberg was a frictional landscape. As such, it became a locus of anxiety: its unknowability and untameability frustrated and worried those wishing to bring order to the region; that same unknowability afforded opportunities for those wishing to observe and avoid such authority. Here we see one association between refugia and anxiety: one man's refuge is another man's 'nest of thieves' (Theal, V, 209). While the highlands made an unfavourable impression on Bowker, Grant, and others (King 2015), the region's topographic and microlimatic variation generated a mosaic of environments that proved attractive for people undertaking mobile lifeways (Mitchell 2009a). Indeed, in the nineteenth century, the inaccessible upper reaches of the mountains became a hub for communities of raiders who stole cattle, guns, and horses from one another and from colonists. Detailed below, here it is worth noting that these practices were so widespread and cohesive that Rachel King and Sam Challis (forthcoming) have referred to the Maloti-Drakensberg as an 'interior world' (*pace* Zappia 2014) in which such 'outlaw' activities were the norm rather than the exception.

Magistracies, police stations, and mission stations at the edges of the mountains served colonists as refugia in their own right, as nodes of control and intelligibility that helped manage anxiety over the friction of the mountains. Viewed from the 'interior world' of the Maloti-Drakensberg, these institutions were the source of another sort of anxiety, about the intent, movement, and potential for violence that colonists represented. The following section explores this in greater detail, with emphasis on the recursive relationship between refuge and anxiety.

5. Close encounters of the cattle-raiding kind

The Maloti-Drakensberg thus appears as a landscape characterised by refugia. Physically, this is clear with respect to the many *lighobosheane* that contain evidence of settlement for varying durations and which – following the above-described linkage between stress and defensive settlement – may initially appear as temporary shelters. However, I want to illustrate here, both through historical narrative and the archaeological record, that refuge and anxiety were not linked in a strictly causative sense: refuge was not simply a defensive posture responding to stressors. Refugia fit into broader processes, practices, and habits of 'making sense' on this frontier. Further, refugia were not just resources of Africans but also of Europeans, albeit in different forms but still acting as places that embodied certain anxieties to do with – in this case – theft and rebellion.

Investigating these aspects of the Maloti-Drakensberg demands a hybrid archaeological, historical, and ethnographic approach sensitive to the contingencies that shaped decisions about settlement, mobility, and landscape use.⁴ It is also necessary to account for the fact that owing to the heavily eroded nature of the region, the sustained impacts of homestead-building, farming, and grazing has made preserved open air sites a rarity (Mitchell 2013). A systematic survey of 20 km² was launched as an exploratory exercise to ascertain whether and how accurately ephemeral or deflated sites could be detected in an area of the southern Maloti-Drakensberg with relatively favourable preservation conditions. The survey revealed 62 sites (Figure 5), including occupation on hillslopes that reflected small-scale terracing and household 'keyhole' gardens. On hilltops themselves, the survey detected deflated middens associated with the remains of a series of structures identified (based on the presence/absence of dwelling platforms) as storage and dwellings. Middens yielded samples of decorated and undecorated ceramics, including examples of manufacturing and

decorative traditions characteristic of the southern Highveld from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Huffman 2007, 179–81). However, perhaps one of the most striking features of these sites is their distance from a water source, although the potential to harvest rainwater from the numerous naturally-occurring cupules in the sandstone should not be discounted. This feature alone puts one in mind of temporary shelter: whether such places served as a relief or redoubt, they initially appear consistent with the model developed farther to the north connoting a means of coping with stress.

Historical considerations suggest other interpretations, however, and encourage us to consider the many ways that anxiety may have been experienced. As there were no comparative ‘micro-historical’ studies of the southern Maloti-Drakensberg’s recent past prior to this research, new archival and ethnographic work proceeded alongside archaeological investigations, and made it possible to tack between these three strands of evidence (cf. Stahl 2001).

The picture that emerged was one of varying interpretations of chieftaincy, settlement, and landscape use, illegal or illicit economies (cf. Hartnett & Dawdy 2013), and anxieties attendant thereupon. From roughly 1820 the area south of the Senqu River was under the authority of a chiefdom known as BaPhuthi, under the successive leadership of chiefs Mokuoane and Moorosi. BaPhuthi served as tributaries of the BaSotho leader Moshoeshoe I in the area bounded by the Senqu, Escarpment, Stormberg, and Wittebergen Mountain ranges. However, Mokuoane, Moorosi, and their polity functioned relatively autonomously. By the 1820s, BaPhuthi had built considerable reputations as cattle raiders throughout the southern Maloti-Drakensberg. Raiding cattle was a common practice among southern Bantu-speaking chiefdoms, and was a way for men to demonstrate leadership, skill in riding and combat, and to obtain cattle with which to make marriage and political alliances (King forthcoming b).

Mokuoane and Moorosi appear to have treated cattle raiding – of both European farmers and other chiefdoms – as an artform (cf. Morton 2009). They rejected the idea of a chiefly Great Place as described above, instead developing a peripatetic form of chieftainship that involved circulating through a series of settlements on *liqhobosheane* scattered along the Senqu. The reasons for these movements seem to have been diverse – finding a strategic location for raiding cattle, attending to political matters – and involved anywhere from a handful of raiders to the entire polity. Careful reading of archives made it possible to identify these settlements (Figure 6), whose locations facilitated both stock acquisition across a wider area and also opportunities for concealment and misdirection should victims of stock theft seek retribution (King 2014, 129–31; cf. Theal, I, 153). Subsistence appears to have emphasised garden agriculture rather than field cultivation, which facilitated BaPhuthi mobility and meant that movements were unconstrained by the seasonal schedule of larger-scale crop agriculture.

Mokuoane’s and Moorosi’s peripatetic strategy helped keep the boundaries of their chiefdom flexible, which highlights one aspect of anxiety: the process of managing uncertainty surrounding the changing activities and desires of British authorities. This was particularly intense because conflicts between Moshoeshoe’s BaSotho and Boers in the Orange Free State Republic (Figure 2) along with British expansion into the interior meant that the borders of Moshoeshoe’s (and by extension Moorosi’s) territories were in a near-constant state of flux. While maintaining their string of settlements at the heart of their chiefdom, BaPhuthi could adjust their movements as needed to affect raids, retreat

therefrom, and avoid retribution. In doing so they took advantage of the landscape's friction, which limited opportunities for pursuit and surveillance, especially by colonial officials and militia (King 2014, 145-7); about this, further below.

This is an especially necessary and significant feature because of the widespread nature of raiding and, by extension, the intensifying efforts to punish it. A vast body of scholarship in the last four decades has detailed the phenomenon of 'Bushman raiding' throughout the mountains. As mentioned above, these raiders were initially described as ethnic San fighting for a dying way of life (Vinnicombe 2009; Wright 1971). However, rock art studies by Geoff Blundell (2004), Lara Mallen (2008), and Challis (2008; 2012; 2016) have revealed that these raiding bands were in fact culturally heterogeneous mixtures of Bantu-speakers, Bushmen, and former slaves. These raiders operated throughout the Maloti-Drakensberg and on both sides of the Escarpment, tracing many of the same routes as BaPhuthi – and often raiding alongside them and other chiefdoms (King & Challis forthcoming).

British authorities were so acutely aware of the attractiveness of both the BaPhuthi chiefdom and the landscape (especially given the latter's fluctuating borders) for raiders that Basutoland Governor's Agent James Bowker wrote of how the lands south of the Senqu would 'if not arranged in some way, become a nest for thieves and vagrants from all the adjoining tribes' (Theal, V, 208). This was not just fear and foreboding of events in the distant future, but anxiety stemming from observations of groups of Thembu coming from the south-east to settle in Moorosi's lands; of militia from Natal encountering raiders and stolen cattle in the upper reaches of the Senqu; and of fears that from 1859 Moorosi had consolidated his followers in the highlands and 'let loose his thieves upon the [Tele River] border, and [...] taken to himself the position of the head of a Banditti of robbers' (Theal, IV, 449). Anxiety about a mass southern African uprising was widespread, and a singular preoccupation of many officials was to ascertain the plans and inner workings of certain chiefdoms, and determine if these posed a threat (Eldredge 2007, 48-9; Etherington 2004, 207).

The concern to 'arrange' the southern Maloti-Drakensberg brings us to colonial anxieties about BaPhuthi and the mountains. British attempts to mitigate and respond to these fears were expressed both through retaliation by militia, and also the creation of institutions such as gaols, magistracies, police stations, and 'native reserves' to control raiders and potential raiders. Such institutions served (as has been discussed elsewhere, Bradford 2000; Braun 2015) as extensions of colonial power and, equally significantly, as refugia for colonial authorities. The 1850 establishment of the Wittebergen Native Reserve effectively closed off the western end of Moorosi's raiding ambit. The Reserve further implemented a twinned programme of Christianisation (administered through the Wesleyan mission station housed there) and subsidised agriculture to produce a class of peasant labourers, thus discouraging people from joining raiding bands to make a profit (Bundy 1987; King forthcoming a). Moorosi was expelled from the Reserve in 1859 to safeguard the Reserve's mission and inhabitants (Theal, III, 106). The establishment of magistracies equipped with gaols within Moorosi's territories from 1877 were efforts to monitor and constrain BaPhuthi activity while affording magistrates a measure of security and the physical, symbolic support of the colony's infrastructure. In 1878, when the magistrate deemed his lodgings in Basutoland unsafe in the face of what he saw as mounting rebellion among BaPhuthi, he retreated with his family to the police station across the Tele (Eldredge 2007, 57-9). While the magistrate maintained that he did so out of an immediate and credible fear for his life (Austen 1879,

1880), his actions serve as a useful illustration that gaols and the trappings of the law were no longer deemed sufficient means of addressing his anxiety over Moorosi's chiefdom; only an armed military force would do.

Moorosi and his BaPhuthi observed the construction of these elements of colonial control and refuge with their own anxieties; changes in raiding patterns and occupation of BaPhuthi *liqhobosheane* disclose how these were experienced. When the Reserve curtailed BaPhuthi raids at the western end of Moorosi's ambit, BaPhuthi shifted from Lefika la bo Khiba to Bolepeletsa and re-oriented their raiding focus to the south and east (Wright 1971, 170). As Basutoland's borders were codified between 1868-71, and the magistracy at Quthing established next to Bolepeletsa in 1877, BaPhuthi raiding attentions shifted yet again. Concentrating more heavily on Natal and eastern Nomansland, BaPhuthi increasingly relied upon rockshelters and settlements higher into the mountains around the Tsoelike and upper Senqu Rivers for sheltering people and livestock (King 2014, 183-4; Mitchell 2010).

While Moorosi's *liqhobosheane* were places that kept colonial authorities at arm's length during these reconfigurations, it would be a mistake to assume that they were a form of refuge implying disconnection from the rest of the frontier. Excavations at the base of Bolepeletsa demonstrate that despite the increased surveillance and concomitant modifications of BaPhuthi movements in the 1860s and 70s, manufactured goods (nails, tacks, beads) continued to make their way onto or around Bolepeletsa. Disruptions to trade, the consumption and production of goods, and other ways of life could and very likely did happen as a result of BaPhuthi institutionalised cattle raiding and reprisals from farmers and government officials; but they did not manifest themselves in a restriction of goods available through virtually all regional traders.

Indeed, there appears to have been a delicate balance between remaining far enough from the events, laws, apparatuses, and activities of colonists on the frontier, and staying close enough to 'make sense' of the people, motivations, and events there. Particularly once magistrates arrived in Basutoland, Moorosi spent a great deal of time and energy exploring how he could provoke, enrage, impress, and placate them (Eldredge 2007). He did the same with his missionary, D.F. Ellenberger (1879).

From the perspective of British officials and missionaries, it becomes apparent that many of their anxieties concerned efforts to 'make sense' of Moorosi and his chiefdom: could they be compelled to adopt agriculture, as other southern African chiefs had (Beinart 1982; Stapleton 2001; Thompson 1975)? Was their mobility a permanent condition as with Bushmen or could they be induced to become sedentary? Could they be treated with as Moshoeshoe was or were they more a consortium of rogues than a chieftaincy?

In 1844, the French missionary Christian Schrumpf established the Bethesda station among BaPhuthi at their Maphutšeng settlement, in the hope of bringing Christianity and sedentary agriculture to Moorosi's people. Schrumpf was shocked and appalled when, only a year later, Moorosi announced that his people would move to another settlement at Maphutšeng. Schrumpf (1847) and his brethren raged that Moorosi did not understand the purpose of a mission station, while such sedentism was not compatible with (or desirable for) BaPhuthi lifeways. Later, at the Wittebergen Reserve, superintendent John Austen sought to curtail BaPhuthi mobility in the Reserve (which Austen perceived as a threat) by closing off roads they were known to have used (Theal, IV, 271). The mobilisation of Frontier Armed Mounted Police stations near the Tele River and in between the Reserve and

Moorosi's settlements at Bolepeletsa partly aimed at providing additional surveillance and policing of raiders (Griffith 1879; Mitchell & Challis 2008). Similarly, the establishment of magistracies within Moorosi's territories were efforts to monitor BaPhuthi activities. New magisterial powers were aimed at parsing and enervating Moorosi's chieftaincy by undermining his abilities to, for example, allocate land for grazing and settlement and fine people for selling beer without his permission (Eldredge 2007, 42-6).

What becomes clear in this discussion is how BaPhuthi and colonial authorities attempted to 'make sense' of one another, and how their material gestures and movements through the landscape were part of this process. BaPhuthi raiding and settlement strategies were part of an understanding of colonial surveillance, control, political demarcation – and sometimes refuge from these. Colonial strategies of policing and the infrastructure that these entailed changed based on the unknowability of the terrain, and assumptions or beliefs about how BaPhuthi (and Moorosi in particular) were behaving. These were fundamentally anxious encounters, with all parties drawing on their sensibilities and experiences to manage uncertainty surrounding their security in a landscape characterised by friction and political flux.

6. Conclusion

At the heart of this essay lies the questions, does exploring the natures and manifestations of anxieties over time change our perspective on what constitutes refuge, especially in a colonial context? And in light of these many anxieties, is it still useful to think in terms of refuge and stress? To summarise and drive home the value of this perspectival shift, it is worth re-visiting Moorosi's 1879 rebellion mentioned above and contextualised in the preceding section. Whether one views the siege of his mountain holdfast from an archaeological or historical perspective, it is unquestionably a refuge in the face of a direct, immediate, and sometimes terrifying threat; one British soldier eventually took to lining up the skulls of dead rebels atop the barricades 'as a warning to the [Africans]' (Start 1879). However, the use of landscape to keep colonial forces at bay (at least temporarily) was not, as we have seen, a radical departure from longstanding BaPhuthi practices. Although the mountain proved to be a last redoubt, the strategies Moorosi used to provision it (drawing upon cattle kept with allies in the highlands) and harry troops (sending auxiliary forces to *liqhobosheane* around the area) were in keeping with longer-term understandings of the landscape and of the men and institutions attempting to control it (King 2014, 204-6).

Speaking of refuge demands that we ask, 'refuge from what?', and interrogate the nature of the stressors that refuge implicates: why do we believe these to be stressors? What is the basis for assuming how people experienced and perceived these stressors? These are questions we can ask of the pre-colonial past as well as the colonial, especially as recent work on the southern African Iron Age has explored how settlement and mobility were significant constituents of social identity (Ashley et al. 2016).

For the present, it is worth referring back to Dawdy's caution at the beginning of this paper, that we be careful lest we endow the march of the colonial frontier with too much presence and too much power. While contests among African chiefdoms and the encroachment of settler colonists into the interior undoubtedly had profound impacts on peoples' lives, these were not felt the same in all places. The story of the southern Maloti-Drakensberg illustrates that the use of easily defensible, water-scarce *liqhobosheane* was not so pernicious or calamitous a response to the frontier as some uses of 'refuge' would suggest, but part of a

more complex and sustained series of engagements. BaPhuthi and other raiders were capable of ‘making sense’ of, contesting, and shaping mechanisms of colonial expansion – processes manifested through the use of *liqhobosheane* (King & Challis forthcoming). Similarly, officials charged with ‘arranging’ BaPhuthi territories and activities were preoccupied with their own sense-making endeavours and efforts to translate these into programmes of security and control. Some of these projects achieved their aims, some didn’t.

What I have foregrounded here is how anxiety – encompassing both uncertainty and how it is managed – affords opportunities for expressing human agency, desire, and understanding. Anxiety’s emphasis on empirical experiences and concerns about the future allow us to see how institutions such as peripatetic settlement, use of *liqhobosheane*, and cattle raiding inform and inflect engagements with colonial projects. Inasmuch as settler colonialism was characterised by processes of transformation perhaps more than conquest (Stoler & Cooper 1997), that transformation betrays apprehensions and misapprehensions of land and people, which in turn directs our attention to the state’s failures as much as its successes.

This approach lends itself to other settler colonial contexts, both within southern Africa (e.g. the Middle Orange River and northern Cape frontier, Legassick 2010; McGranaghan 2016; Penn 2005) and elsewhere such as Australia and North America (Hämäläinen 2008; Hyde 2011; White 1991; Zappia 2014). While critiques of colonialism as shared or entangled *milieu* have concerned a lack of attention to violent confrontation and exploitation (González-Ruibal 2014, 17–8), anxiety creates space to explore the trauma of these situations. Conceiving of colonialism as a series of epistemic encounters invites explorations of how ‘making sense’ processes have consequences that could be both creative and catastrophic. Anxiety allows us to address the fallibility of the state in the same frame as the very real impacts of its material apparatuses.

It also contributes to the on-going conversation around how to develop historical archaeologies of and in Africa. One of the leading preoccupations of African historical archaeologies has been treatments of modern and pre-modern worlds on the continent (Hall 2000; Reid & Lane 2004; Schmidt & Walz 2007; Stahl 2001, 2009). This division has been heavily critiqued as Eurocentric, de-privileging African voices, and over-privileging state power; with good reason. Yet there is still a need to pay attention to how experts, politicians, and publics use the past to narrate and assert a place for Africa in the modern, globalised world. These conversations often fall under the purview of heritage, but ‘the politics of the past’ have real implications for historical archaeological methodologies. I mean this in a very particular sense: in post-independence and heavily globalised Africa, the ‘stuff’ of the *longue durée* and the experiences they disclose have literally become the ‘stuff’ of which national and cultural identities have been forged and disputed. One need only look as far as the South Africa’s #RhodesMustFall movement to see this in action at a large scale.

However, Andrew Reid (2016) has recently emphasised that the materiality of the past often works in the service of these and other projects at a lower key. Reid refers to this sort of past as ‘obvious truisms’: nuances of (for instance) landscape and architecture that are laden with memory and power *precisely because* they are mundane and taken-for-granted rather than monumental. Reid (2016, 202) argues that exploring these features offers a window onto ‘present day mindsets and psychoses’. An archaeology of anxiety takes such material ‘truisms’ – like refuge and stress – as its specific focus. Viewing these as the ken of historical archaeology allows us to see how these materials continue to be contested, narrated, and

negotiated through time, thus defining historical archaeology through the convergence of material, written, and oral perspectives rather than temporal delineations (Lane 2016, 174–5). Perhaps, then, it's useful for African historical archaeologists to be a bit anxious.

7. Notes

¹ It is worth noting that in the Kalahari – arguably another sort of frictional landscape – hunter-gatherer lifeways persisted even after these state apparatuses manifested themselves.

² Whether or to what degree we can think of cattle raids as analogs for warfare is a question that has split southern African historians. See King forthcoming b.

³ Debates over the ethnicised content of ‘San’ and ‘Bushmen’ defy summary here. Here I use ‘Bushman’ *specifically* for eighteenth- and nineteenth-century hunter-raider-pastoralist communities described in the Maloti-Drakensberg and, arguably, in the northern and eastern Cape (McGranaghan 2016).

⁴ Details of the survey and excavation data presented here, as well as the research design and methodologies through which they were generated, can be found in King 2014, ch. 7 and 8, Appendices D and E.

8. Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this research was funded by grants from a Tweedie Exploration Fellowship for Students from the University of Edinburgh and a Clarendon Scholarship from the University of Oxford. This paper was written during my tenure as Smuts Research Fellow in African Studies and with generous support from the Smuts Memorial Fund. I thank Mark McGanaghan, Peter Mitchell, and two reviewers for comments on earlier versions of this paper.

9. Figure captions

Figure 1 Map of southern Africa and Maloti-Drakensberg.

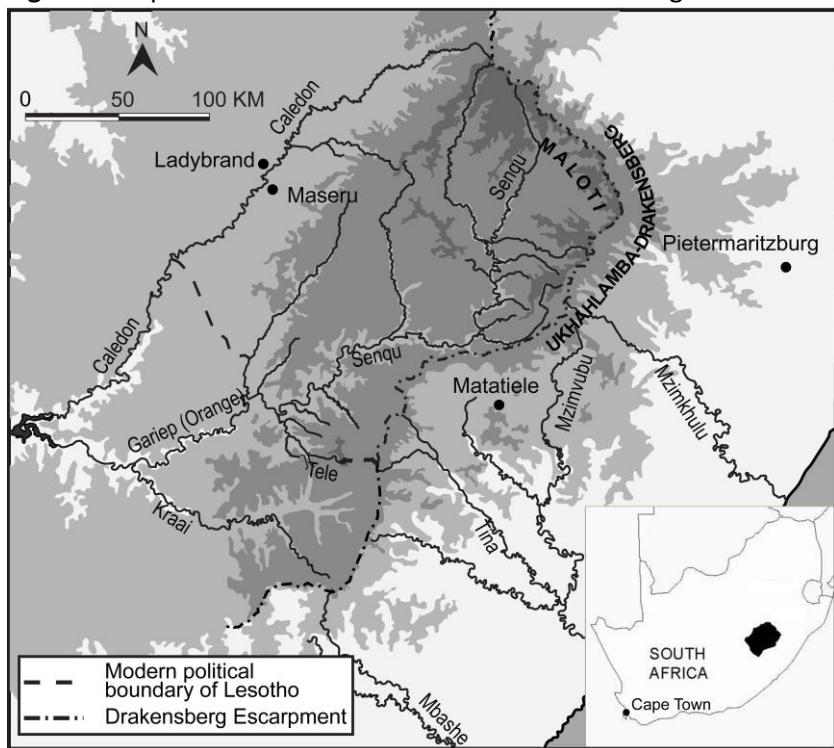


Figure 2 Map of the southern African interior showing places mentioned in the text.

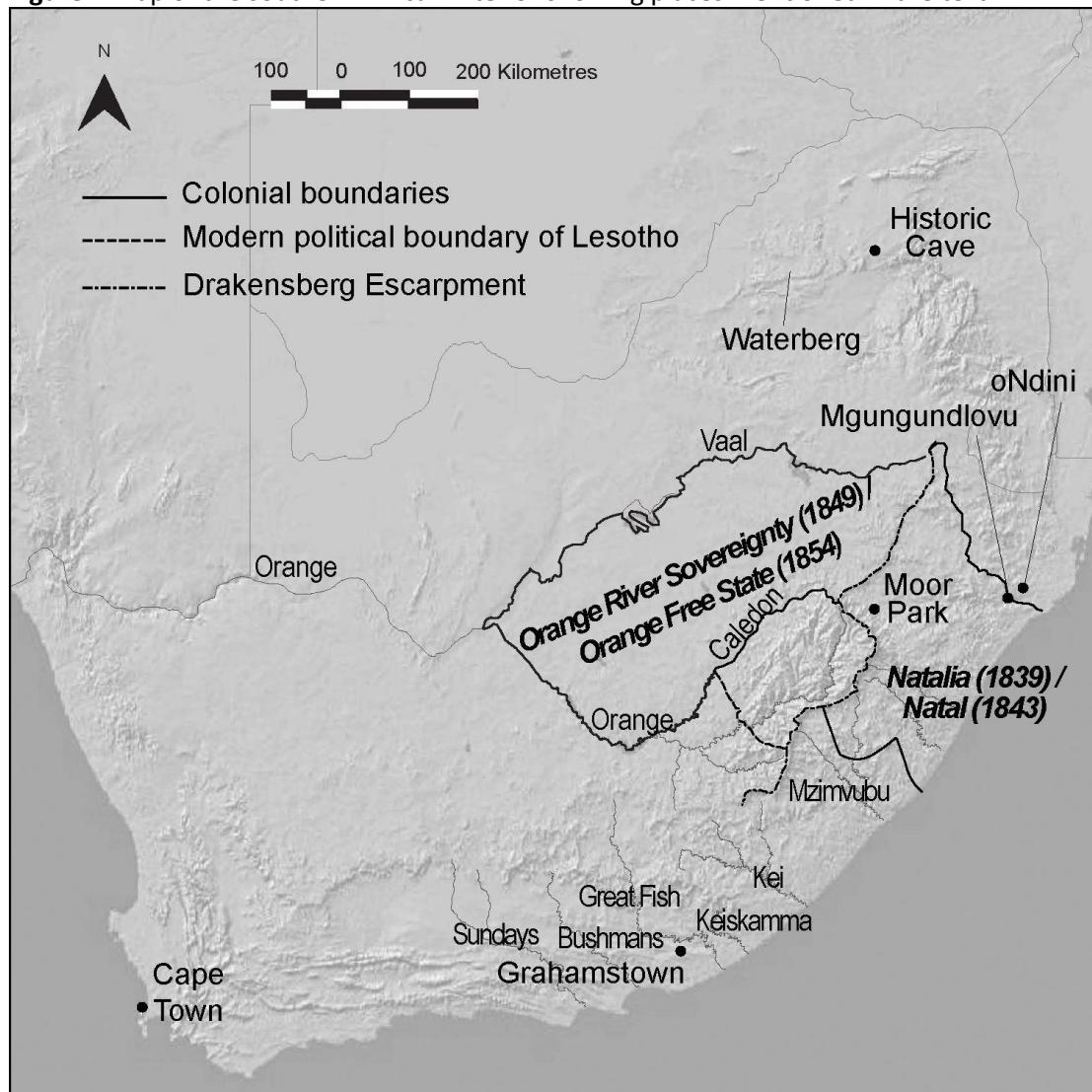


Figure 3 Digital elevation model of the Maloti-Drakensberg Mountains.

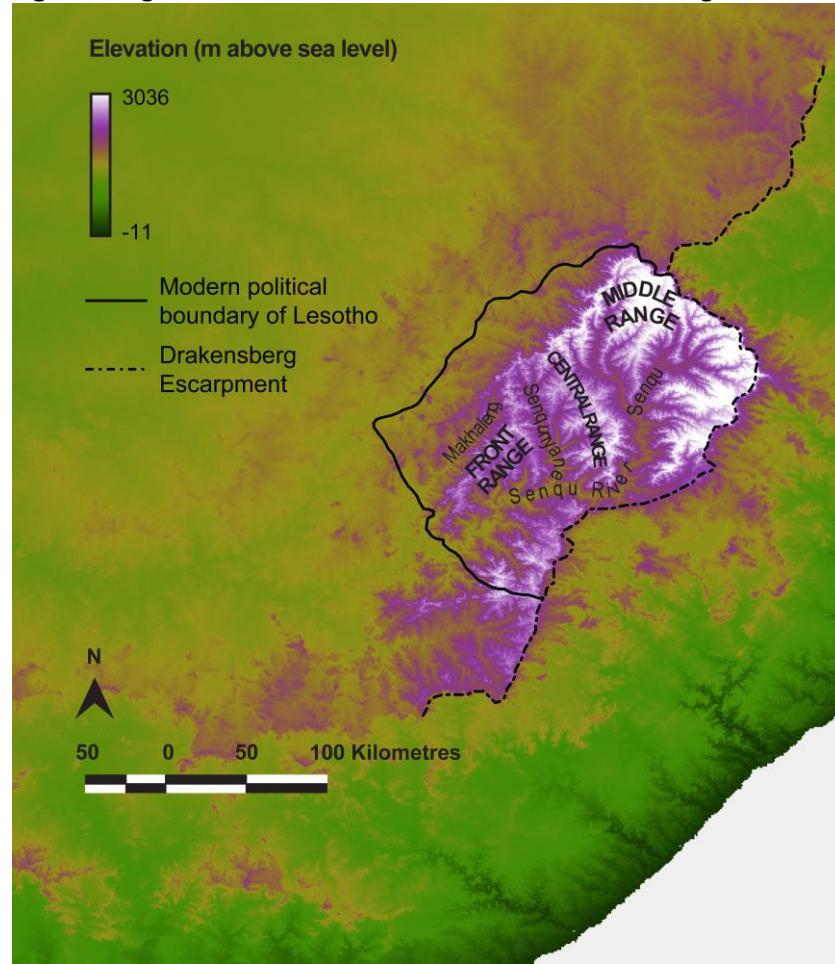


Figure 4 Map of the Maloti-Drakensberg showing places mentioned in the text: 1 Thaba Bosiu (Moshoeshoe's Great Place), 2 Bethesda, 3 Wittebergen Native Reserve, 4 Palmietfontein police station, 5 Quthing magistracy, 6 Bolepeletsa, 7 Masitise Mission

Station, 8 Mt Moorosi, 9 Qacha's Nek, 10. Sehonghong.

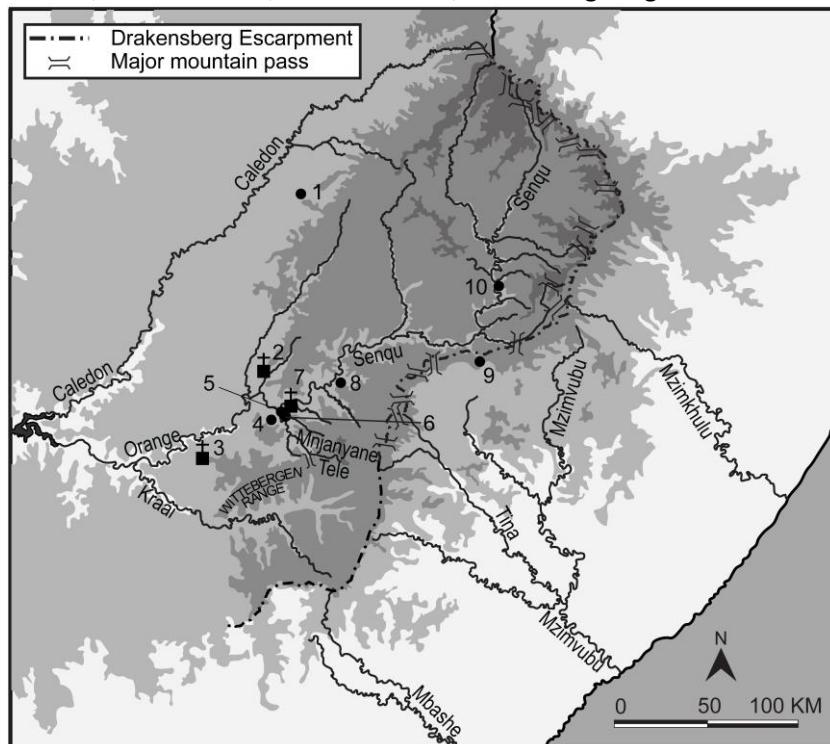


Figure 5 Map showing sites identified in Mnjanyane Valley survey.

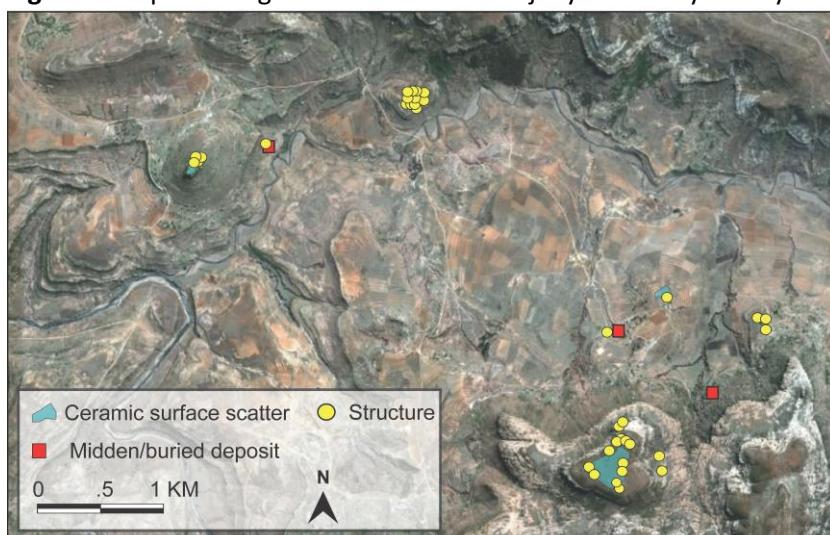


Figure 6 Map showing BaPhuthi settlements: 1 Bethesda, 2 Maphutšeng, 3 Tulumaneng, 4 Lefika la bo Khiba, 5 Wittebergen Mission Station, 6 Litapoleng, 7 Bolepeletsa, 8 Thabana

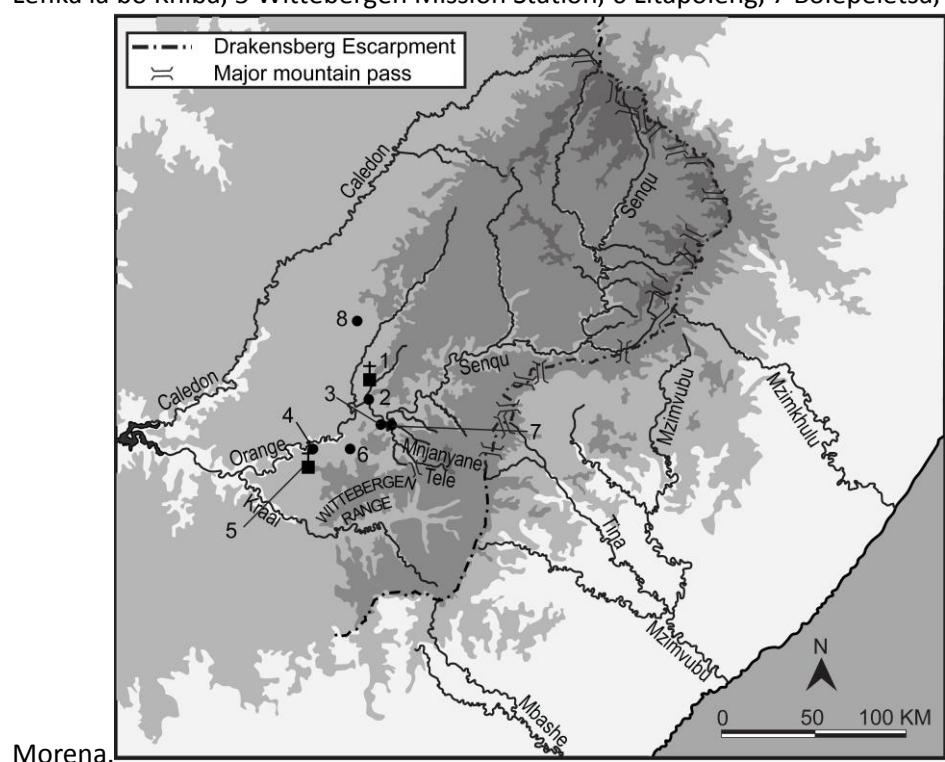
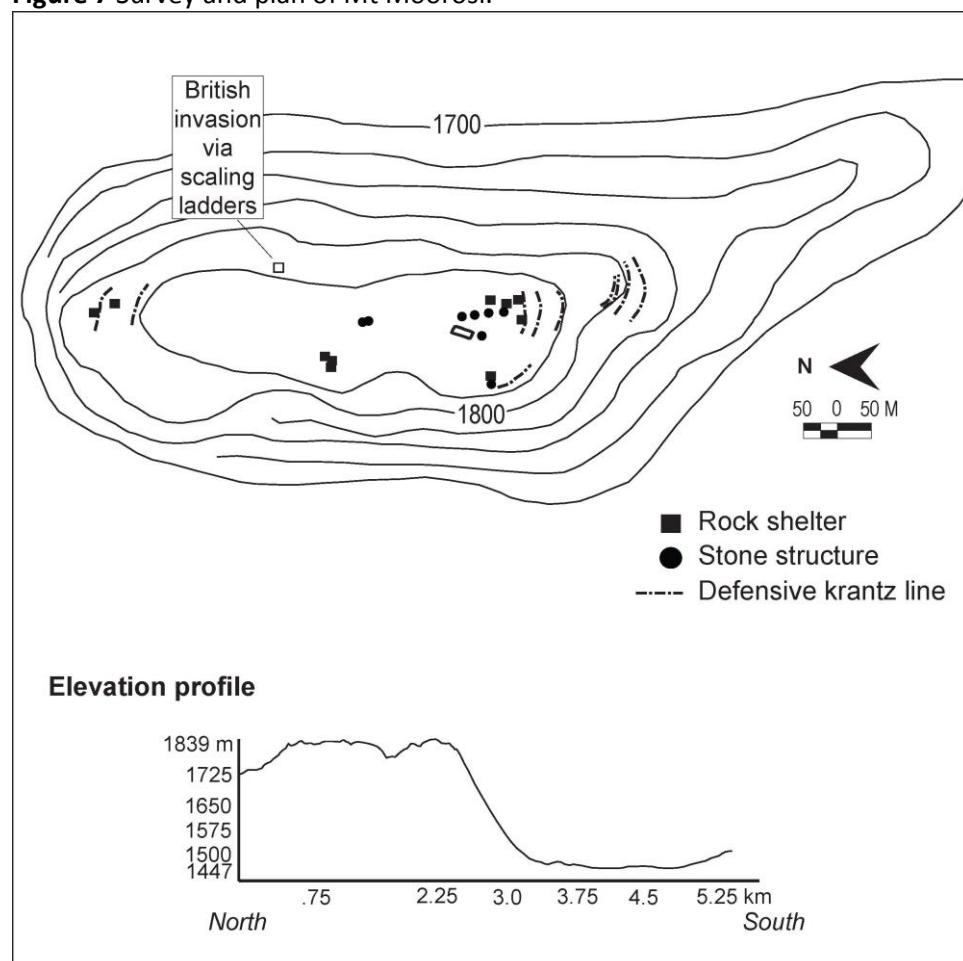


Figure 7 Survey and plan of Mt Moorosi.



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