

*First Edition*

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MORIJA PRINTING WORKS  
MORIJA - BASUTOLAND

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IN the years 1930 to 1933, there was considerable economic distress in Basutoland; the Union was still on the gold standard, which meant that only a limited amount of native labour was required for the Rand, crops were poor and it all culminated in the terrible drought of 1933.

During this period, many Basuto, who were in the habit of eking out their livelihood by the manufacture of sundry native crafts, intensified their efforts and others turned to it as a means of earning a few shillings. They hawked their wares in the various camps in the territory and the townships across the border, some even going further afield than this and travelling by train to reach their markets. As a general rule the men produced grass baskets and hats and the women manufactured various types of clay pottery.

I had always been interested in their arts and crafts and made several efforts to find an outlet for them in the Union, either to businesses which dealt in native curios or by contacting private people who were interested; likewise the visitors to Maseru provided a limited market for these wares. This met with a certain amount of success but it was never possible to develop it into a major business.

As mentioned, it was usually the woman who worked in clay, but among the few exceptions to this, was a young man named Samuel Makoanyane who lived

in the village of Koalabata which is about four or five miles from Maseru, but in the Teyateyaneng district. He began by making various animals, using illustrations from school and other books as his models. These animals were about 6 to 9 inches high and weighed about four or five pounds each. He, too, travelled about the country and across the border, finding a market, and from the very beginning he was successful, as, even at the beginning of his career, his models were so true to life and carefully made, that they found a ready sale, wherever he went. He turned out a great variety of these animals such as baboons, bucks, tigers, lions and several kinds of birds, but the most popular models he made at that time were frogs and it would not be an exaggeration to say that, at one time or another, more than half the European residents in Maseru purchased one. Later on, still using illustrations that he found in books, he produced figures of children.

It must be remembered that at this time money was scarce, consequently there was a limit to the prices he could charge and, as far as I can remember, his prices were about 3s. or 4s. per model. In due time also, the market in his immediate vicinity reached saturation point, and so it came about that Samuel came to me with a consignment for sale.

In the meantime, my "curio department" as I termed it, had been fairly well established and become known; it was hardly a business proposition, but it was an interesting hobby and served to assist the various makers of pots and grass ware in disposing of their goods, although I was never able to take over everything that was offered to me. In the case of Samuel, however, I saw that his work was so novel and out of the ordinary, that I took the whole consignment, knowing that there

would be no difficulty in finding purchasers for it. And I suggested that he should bring more at a later date.

For some time, however, Samuel did not fall in with the suggestion and continued his travels, whenever he thought he could do better. Of course, I had no quarrel with this as my object was simply to find markets for these wares, whether sold through me or whether the makers sold direct. At this stage, perhaps, I should pay some tribute to my employers Messers Frasers Ltd; as I have said, the handling of native craft work has never been of sufficient volume or carried enough profit to be regarded as a practical business proposition, but they never, at any time, called me to task for the time spent on handling this work or for devoting a corner of the shop to its display.

And so it happened that as time went on, Samuel brought all his out-put to me for disposal, thus beginning a personal association which continued without a break until his death. I had, by this time, got in touch with dealers as far afield as Cape Town, Johannesburg and even Rhodesia and, in a comparatively short time, they were showing a good deal of interest in his work. But there were certain disadvantages about the models he produced at this time and, in particular, they were so heavy that they were difficult to pack and cost a good deal in railage. So, my first suggestion to Samuel was that he should reduce the size of his models. I must say he was always open to suggestions, but he was a little dubious as to whether he could produce true likenesses in smaller sizes. However, there was no reason for doubt; his work was just as good on the smaller scale. He, too, was always coming to me for suggestions and new ideas and I was constantly looking around for books with illustrations suitable for him to

copy. A certain volume of Arthur Mee's *Children's Encyclopoedia*, belonging to my two small daughters, was invaluable as it contained many pictures of animals.

I lent this to him and told him to do anything he fancied. He was particularly successful with one illustration, which was that of a jaguar standing over a deer it had just killed; the picture was what is known as a "woodcut" and was rather lifeless. But the model that Samuel produced was vibrant with life and it is still in the collection of Samuel's models which my wife accumulated over the passage of years. As far as I remember, he made her a present of it; unfortunately, with the passing of time, the horns of the deer became broken, but it still remains, and always will remain, a monument to Samuel's early work.

By now, Samuel was turning his attention more and more to the human figure, although he was producing animals as the occasion demanded. Especial mention must be made of the model of the crocodile which he turned out in scores; he never satisfied the demand for this, as visitors to the camp speedily snapped up what they soon learned to be the "totem" of the majority of the inhabitants of Basutoland. It is a beautifully life-like piece of work. About this time, Pagels' Circus came to Maseru and as a result of his visit to the show, Samuel began making elephants. This, to the best of my knowledge, is when he first began to model from life.

His first human figures were taken from school books, being drawings made by the early P.E.M.S. missionaries of Chief Moshesh and one of his chiefs warriors named Makoanyane who, it happened, was a great-grand-father of Samuel himself. These drawings, having been made from life were correct in every detail, thus enabling Samuel to produce models that were

historically accurate. The knobkerrie and feather which were part of the equipment of Moshesh and Makoanyane's weapons, consisting of a *sekola*, assegai, shield *mokhele* and battle axe, presented some difficulties to Samuel, as it was impossible to model these in clay, until I made the suggestion that he should make these items out of material similar as far as possible, to the original. It only needed this suggestion for him to act on it and in a very short time he was making perfect little reproductions, that were works of art in themselves. He never told me, but he must have obtained his feathers from small birds; the knobkerrie was beautifully carved from wood, the shield cut from skin, I fancy rat or mouse skins. The *sekola* and *mokhele* were arrangements of feathers. Samuel was never expansive in explaining his methods and I never felt like forcing his confidence in this respect.

This would be the place, I think, to quote a description of Makoanyane, which my friend Major Geoffrey Tylden, wrote for me, from historical books in his library. Major Tylden was always a great admirer of Samuel and deeply interested in his work.

"Joshua Makoanyane 'Nau was the son of Ntseke, a Lezizi of the Baphuti clan. He was a lifelong friend of Moshesh and became his chief warrior. In July 1829, he took a leading part in the defeat of the Amangwane under Thaba Bosiu and pursued them as far as Tsuili Tsuili, right across the Berea Plateau, killing ten himself. It was presumably on this famous occasion that the following *lithoko* or chant of praise, was composed:

*Mohale'a Mako, Makoanyane*  
*Mabeli Ma-besa-lerôle,*  
*La tsoa ka mp'a mohlaba.*

It might be paraphrased in English as a couplet :

X  
This is the fierce Makoanyane high upon the hill,  
How his feet fire the dust as he races to kill !

"In 1841 Joshua became a Christian. He seems to have impressed Sir Harry Smith very favourably and was presented by him with a double barrelled gun, a rarity in those days. There are many references to him in Casalis, Ellenberger and *Basutoland Records*.

"Headdress, *sekola*, a ball of feathers, usually black, tied under the chin. The neck protection, a copper gorget, *khau*. In right hand, a stabbing assegai, *lerumo*. In left hand, the light shield, *thebe*, smaller and of a different shape to those of other tribes. The great plume *mokhele*, often thrust through loops on shield, made of bamboo and feathers or fur; used to show the position of a chief in action. The light battle axe, the national weapon, in its most usual shape, *koakoa*, *chaka* or *tseka*."

X  
Unfortunately, I never kept records of his work which passed through my hands, but I should say at a conservative estimate that he produced some one hundred and fifty models of Moshesh, while of Makoanyane the total would be nearer two hundred and fifty. It is interesting to note that while his presentation of the warrior was correct in every detail, Samuel always modelled him in a running attitude, whereas the picture depicted him as standing. Furthermore the facial features of his model differed quite considerably from the picture; it was only after a considerable number of the figures passed through my hands, that I realized what Samuel had done. One day, his father happened to come into the shop, and I found that the clay model was a speaking likeness of him. I judged it wise to main-

tain a discreet silence about my discovery, as I was certain that the father would not have relished the knowledge that he was being made use of as a model!

Y  
About this time he produced a few figures modelled from Europeans of his acquaintance; they were as far as I know, fathers of the Roman Catholic Mission. They excited some interest because the likenesses were very good, but I felt constrained to advise Samuel against this type of work, pointing out to him that, to really establish himself, he should produce models of his own people, in their various daily occupations. By this time, I saw that he was quite capable of modelling from life and I lectured him continually on the desirability of turning out likenesses of the men and women he saw about him, in his village and in the fields. I was certain that there would be a constant and growing demand for this and I was proved entirely correct. Samuel saw the point and followed the advice; he ceased to make any more European figures and settled down to making the various types of Basuto, for which he became known far and wide.

His work showed a steady sustained improvement, and, if anything proved that he was a true artist, it was that he was never satisfied with his creations; he was always striving after something better. I can recall several occasions when he came in with consignments in a positive state of depression, because they were not up to the standard he had set himself. Perfection was his aim, a perfection that he knew, as an artist, he would never realize. It mattered nothing to him that his work was the subject of great enthusiasm by all who saw it—indeed he was often present when people were admiring the figures he had brought in, but only he knew what they should have been.

He was now so well known that he was being requested to execute special commissions. I did not always encourage this for the reason that the modelling of a new type of figure took up a long time. Much of it was taken up in experimenting before he produced a figure that satisfied him; obviously it was not to his benefit financially, because the purchaser expected to pay the same price as for the ordinary models. However, where I considered that it was to his advantage in the form of an advertisement to his work, I agreed wholeheartedly. His first commission of this nature came from Professor Kirby of the Witwatersrand University, the noted authority on native musical instruments. This was in 1936, the year of the British Empire Exhibition. The commission necessitated a certain amount of research work, in which I was able to assist Samuel. First of all we were given Professor Kirby's book on Bantu musical instruments, in which there were photographs of the instruments peculiar to Basutoland. From these, I made rough sketches of the eight required and it was for Samuel to decide who the players were; in one case at least he had to consult the older Basuto about this, as the instrument was so old that it was not played any more. It was a work that took a considerable time to complete; actually the request was made in October 1935 and it was not until February 1936 that I was able to advise Professor Kirby that the models were ready for dispatch. Of the eight players called for, Samuel completed seven, namely the "MOROPA", "LEKOPPE", "LESIBA", "SETOLOLO", "THOMO", "LEKOLILO" and "SEKETARI". Regarding the eighth, he said that this was beyond him—to which the Professor made this comment: "Needless to say, I was amused at the absence of the 'lekhitlane' player. Was it due to the fact

8

whistle



down  
stringed  
instrument  
of Spanish  
breed &  
Siberian  
(women)



Perceval R Kirby:  
The Musical Instruments  
of the Native Races  
of S.A.



that it is used in the '*lebollo* ceremony'?" This was a query I was never able to answer, because Samuel was quite uncommunicative about it.

Because this was a very special order and also because the little figures were really beautifully done, I advised Samuel to charge more for them, and they cost Professor Kirby 8s. 6d. each, which was considerably more than the ordinary figures were selling at, namely 5s. each. To illustrate how the demand grew for his work in the following years, I quote the price of 21s. per figure which was what they were selling at, when Samuel died. This is another extract from the Professor's letter, acknowledging receipt of the figures, dated the 4th of March 1936:

"I was very glad to receive the little clay figures which arrived safely. I think they are very good indeed and I again thank you for getting them for me." Samuel's workmanship never failed to elicit many enthusiastic comments, but they were nearly all vocal, and I have very few recorded on paper. In 1935, Mrs. A. Mac Intyre sent a model of the warrior to a friend of hers in Kingwilliamstown, Mr. John Innes Brownlee; I think he was a doctor. The following extract is from a letter written by him to Mrs. Mac Intyre, after he had received the model: "...the work is far in advance of any native clay work I have yet seen. From not only an artist's, but a doctor's point of view, the anatomy was remarkable, from the larger contours of the chest and back, shoulder, arm and leg muscles to the minute details such as ears, eyelids and nostrils; then the naturally drooping of the beaded kilt, the delicately fashioned weapons, quite wonderful."

In August 1936, I received a request from Professor Beukes, the ethnologist of the Transvaal Museum, for

three models, for exhibition at the British Empire Exhibition, which was held at the end of the year. I urged Samuel to put his best work into this order, because it was obvious that it would be an excellent advertisement for him. They were duly made and despatched—a warrior and two women, with babies on their backs, and were well received, but both Samuel and I were somewhat dissatisfied with the completed article. These figures were about twelve to fourteen inches high, whereas his ordinary ones were six to eight inches and I think this enlargement upset his perspective to a certain degree. However, this resulted in enquiries for his work from many parts of the Union for months after. I attended the Exhibition in January 1937 but unfortunately did not have the time to locate the figures and to see the conditions under which they were exhibited.

In April 1938, I was invited to send exhibits of native work to a Bantu Arts and Crafts Exhibition which was to be held in Grahamstown in August of the same year. I responded by sending the work of a native basket maker with that of a woman who specialized in making clay heads and one of Samuel's crocodiles. All the articles sent won prizes, but curiously enough the crocodile was not sold and was returned to me. By this time, the demand for Samuel's figures was such that there were none available to send to this exhibition and I am sure that if we could have done so, a great deal more interest would have been shown than was in the case of the crocodile. However, by this time, as I have indicated, there was no necessity to advertize his wares; the problem was to execute all the orders and as time went on, this became a sheer impossibility. It simply became a matter of "first come, first served."

I next find a letter from the High Commissioner's Office acknowledging receipt of some models which had been sent to Sir Edward Harding who had displayed great interest in them when on a visit to Maseru, some time previously.

Going back to 1935, I have a copy of a letter written to the Government Secretary in April of that year in connection with Samuel in which I mention that his work has been exhibited in New York and Paris. Unfortunately, I have no record of what exhibitions these were or what was sent, but it is of interest to note how far afield his work was sent. About this time, I recall selling some figures to a lady visitor from Chicago. At the time, there were no figures for sale and I was showing her the collection which my wife had already begun to accumulate. Her entreaties were so insistent that it was impossible to refuse to allow her to take over two or three figures, but needless to say I had to replace them from the very next consignment that Samuel brought in.

By 1938, Samuel's name was well established. Besides America, England, Ireland, Scotland and France, his models had been sent or taken to all the most important towns of the Union. In Rhodesia, a curio dealer, at the Victoria Falls, had ordered many figures for sale to the tourists. While on a holiday in East London, about this time, I came across one of his clay birds in the Museum there. I should think that other museums in the Union have one or two figures; I know that there are several in the Africana Museum in Johannesburg, while there is a figure of Moshesh in the Duggan-Cronin Bantu Gallery in Kimberley. Also, at least one figure was sent to the collection of Bantu Arts and Crafts at Fort Hare. A number of people were

beginning to follow my wife's example in accumulating a collection of his models. Mr. Rhodes-Harrison of Bloemfontein was one of these and he took a colour film of them with his cine camera, which was quite impressive, as by a clever manipulation of the table on which the figures were made to stand, they looked almost life-like when the film was shown.

With this growing demand, it was evident that the models were now worth more, and I saw to it that Samuel got a better price as time went on. He, too, suggested, from time to time, that there be an increase. We brought the price up gradually because in the days before the war, money was not very plentiful and it was not wise to spoil the market by going too high.

It can well be asked what Samuel's work was thought of amongst his own people. Owing to the demand, models were seldom placed on show, but on the few occasions the Basuto saw them, they marvelled at the cleverness of their country-man, and some, I am inclined to think, regarded them with a superstitious eye, as if they thought that Samuel's powers were not altogether human. There was the time when a big *pitso*, in honour of a new High Commissioner, was about to be held, and I, having about ten or twelve figures in stock, grouped them artistically in one of the shop windows a couple of days before the event. I was quite pleased to observe a chattering crowd of Basuto women before the window for most of the time but Samuel came to me after the *pitso* and begged me not to repeat the exhibition! He said that he had been accused by many women in his village and the vicinity of reproducing their features, which was quite possible, even if he had done it subconsciously.

However, amongst his own people there were two

who admired his work greatly and purchased the models, whenever they had an opportunity. Their admiration was genuine and unstinted. One was Chief Theko Makhala of Qacha's Nek and the other Chief Jeremiah Moshesh of Mpharane in Matatiele, East Griqualand. The latter is a grandson of Moshesh and is head of the Basuto living in that district. He is, of course, under the Union Government and is one of their most important chiefs. Some years ago, he was presented with a medal, on behalf of the Union Government, by Colonel Deneys Reitz, and, in 1947, he took a prominent part in the celebrations at Umtata on the occasion of the Royal Visit. As a descendant of Moshesh, he is naturally deeply interested in the affairs of Basutoland, and it was on one of his visits to Maseru that Samuel's work first came to his notice. He immediately became a keen collector of these models and he placed what was more or less a standing order for all new ones that Samuel brought out, in addition to which he was continually reordering models of Moshesh and the warrior Makoanyane. In one of his letters to me, he informed me that he had presented Field Marshal Smuts with a number of figures.

In 1936, Mr. H. V. Meyerowitz was commissioned by the Basutoland Government to report on the possibilities of the development of village crafts in Basutoland, and in the pamphlet which summed up the results of his tour, lasting several months, he referred to Samuel and his work as follows:

"Samuel Makoanyane (one of the very few instances of a young man doing clay modelling) lives in Chief Majara's village, Koalabata, Maseru district. He is undoubtedly talented and has evolved a personal style of

(100-45)

work. He makes crocodiles, the totem of the Bakuena clan, frogs, lions etc. and small statuettes."

Samuel's work improved immeasurably after this passage was written and I am certain that had Mr. Meyerowitz written another report some four or five years later, he would have written much more eulogistically about him.

Although he seemed to work steadily, I do not think Samuel ever concentrated very heavily at any time, but this, of course, is only surmise, as, strange as it may seem, I never saw him at work, or visited his village, although it is only a few miles from Maseru. I did indeed suggest going out two or three times, but Samuel discouraged the idea, always saying that his "office" was very untidy and that he would let me know when it was in a fit state to be seen. That time never came and I often wondered what was at the back of his mind, in being rather reluctant to welcome me to his home. It was not entirely idle curiosity on my part in wishing to see the conditions under which he worked, for I thought that possibly I could assist him with one or two practical suggestions for improving his output.

For instance, he complained on many occasions that he suffered a number of losses through the figures breaking in the firing, particularly during one cold winter. About that time, there was a visitor in Maseru from Durban who knew a lot about the firing of clay work; he was very interested in Samuel's work and when I told him of these breakages he told me that in all probability it was due to the fact that Samuel was putting the figures in the firing kiln before a sufficient period had elapsed to allow for the moisture to dry out. In winter, naturally a longer period would be required than in summer. In technical circles, I under-

stand that before the finished clay product is put in the firing kiln, it is known as "biscuit" ware, and that it is essential that it must stand for a prescribed period to allow the moisture to dry out. I had learned this much when I visited a china factory in Wales in 1919 and it was borne out by what the gentleman from Durban told me. I brought this to Samuel's knowledge and found that it was common knowledge to all workers in clay pottery, but quite firmly embedded in his mind was the idea that his clay pits had been bewitched by someone with the evil eye, who was envious of his growing prosperity, hence the continual breakages! At first, I tried to laugh him to scorn for holding to such an idea, but I soon found that I must take the matter seriously. Accordingly, I practised a small subterfuge on him, with the idea that the end justified the means. From my wife, who was teaching at the local European school, I obtained a number of pieces of chalk in various colours; these, ground together, resulted in a very mysterious looking powder and, one day, I handed a quantity of this to Samuel, with solemn instructions to sprinkle a little on his clay pits and—I stressed this as just as important as the sprinkling—not to fire any piece until at least three weeks had elapsed. Samuel accepted my instructions just as solemnly as I had imparted them, but I never knew how seriously he regarded them. However, from then on, I heard very little about breakages. Samuel was a Christian, but there is no doubt that he was very superstitious at the same time and I often wondered how much of it was due to his ancestry which I have reason to assume was not pure Bantu. My friend, Major Tylden, was convinced that he had a strain of Bushman blood in him, dating from the day of his ancestor Makoanyane, the

warrior. At that time, there were still Bushmen in the land, and it seems to be an established fact that on occasion the women became the wives of some Basuto. It is, of course, impossible to prove it, but in Samuel's case there were many indications that tended to support the suggestion of Bushman ancestry in some degree. His light skin, high cheek bones and finely tapered fingers were all indications of this nature, but, to my mind, the most outstanding one was his artistry. It could not be called Bantu in character and in its fineness of technique it was very reminiscent of the rock paintings left behind by those mysterious and little known people.

It is a fascinating subject to reflect on and I am sure that if Samuel could have taken up painting, he would in time have produced work of an exceptional nature. At one time, a suggestion was made that he be sent to a school of sculpture in the Cape Province, but he was not keen on the idea and I never pressed it. In any case, there was little that he could have been taught in his own work—at least that was my own opinion and also of several other people—so, perhaps, it was just as well nothing happened about it, as it might only have confused him and possibly spoilt his work.

Although Samuel never encouraged European visitors to his village, as witness my own case and, to the best of my knowledge, never had any, he was seen at his work by one or two Europeans, Government Officials, in the course of their duties. One of these told me that he asked him, one day, who taught him to do his work. Samuel's reply was very simple and in keeping with his character, as I knew him :

"It was God who taught me !"

During the course of our association over the years, Samuel had occasion to write to me many times ; I was





always impressed by the extraordinary neatness of his hand-writing. It was quite outstanding. He always wrote in Sesuto and when it was necessary for me to reply, I used the same language, but neither my writing nor my construction were, I fear, up to his standard. About the only criticism I could make about his letters was that his idea of punctuation was somewhat faulty: he tended to make more use of full stops and capital letters than was correct or necessary. He seldom, if ever, made use of a European expression. The only one I can call to mind was when he sometimes ended his letters as "your boy, Samuele Makoanyane". Note the vowel he invariably used at the end of his Christian name. I remember very well one phrase he was very fond of using at the conclusion of his letters—to me it was most original: "*Ke liha pene*" (I lay down my pen).

The subject matter of his letters was always in connection with his work, usually explaining why he had delayed in bringing in a consignment of models, due very often to breakages and latterly in connection with his health.

There was a time when he resented being called upon for *letsema*, i.e. for work in the chief's lands and he asked me for a certificate stating that he was in my service and could not be spared from his work. At one time, it apparently took up so much of his time that he considered a suggestion of mine that he come into Maseru and carry on his work in the camp. I offered to provide him with quarters, but it never came to pass. I gave him the certificate he asked for and presumably it had some effect as I did not hear anything more about him being called upon for work for the chief.

When the war came upon us and subsequently the recruiting drive in Basutoland for the Pioneer Corps,

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Samuel was very perturbed lest he should be called upon to sign on and I well remember the expression he used in one of his letters in which he asked me to do something about it. He said "*Morena*, the pick-up van is coming to my village and I do not want to go with it."

By this time, it was obvious that he was suffering from a fairly serious chest complaint, and I had no hesitation in giving him a letter to the District Commissioner of Teyateyaneng, explaining that he was physically unfit for the Army, which, I think, had its effect. It was shortly after this he went to Johannesburg and entered the Non-European Hospital for treatment. I have a letter from him, written in September 1942, from Orlando Township, in which he describes how X-ray photos were taken of his chest and how he learnt definitely that he was suffering from the malady that he died from two years later. His letter concluded in this typical fashion: "*Ea hao*, Boy, Samuele Makoanyane. No answer." The last phrase indicated that he was coming home and that he did not expect a reply from me.

The following month he wrote to me again, this time from Koalabata, a letter of two pages. He began by referring to his state of health and it was obvious that he now realized he was suffering from a serious chest complaint. He wrote "I can see that it will kill me", but neither he nor I realized that he would be taken in two short years.

He wrote in a very depressed fashion, both on account of this and because he had just made sixteen figures which had all broken in the firing; these figures, he said, were very good and it was a grievous loss to him. On this occasion he apparently considered the clay was at fault, because, later in the letter, he mentioned that he was going to try another clay pit. He then went on

to suggest that the price of the models be increased, pointing out the time and trouble he expended on them.

At this time he was getting 10s. per figure, which represented a big increase on what they started at originally, 2s. 6d. each. The price had, of course, gone up by stages as the demand increased and Samuel now suggested that he should get 15s. each. I may mention that before he died he was getting that figure, but just at this time, the circumstances were entirely against an increase. It will be remembered that in 1942 the war position was very serious and the tourist traffic to Basutoland had practically ceased, while outside orders were becoming increasingly difficult to obtain, owing to the fact that people were giving more and more money to the war effort.

I wrote to Samuel at length, explaining this and told him that when circumstances were more favourable, I would not have the slightest objection to arranging a higher price, but as I saw things then, I did not see any possibility of it until after the war. I reminded him that, in order to keep a market going for his models, I had to spend a good deal of time in correspondence and packing the figures. This packing was the great problem. The local market was never anything but very limited and by far the greatest proportion of the models were sent outside Basutoland. To send them by post was quite out of the question as, no matter how carefully they were packed, they were too fragile to survive the handling they would receive when being thrown about inside mail bags. So, they were sent by train, the containers being liberally plastered with "Fragile—With Care" notices and even then the packing had to be carefully done. However, I evolved a technique which proved to be about 90 per cent successful as far as

breakages were concerned. I packed each figure into a cardboard box, well filled with either wheaten or mealie bran; this was carefully tied up in brown paper to prevent the bran leaking out. Then, say there was a consignment of six models being sent away, I would pack the six boxes in a suitable carton, "insulating" them well with wood wool, if available, or paper cuttings, such as crockery is usually packed in. The carton was then firmly tied up, addressed and labelled with notices, as I have mentioned. As may be imagined, all this took a lot of time and material, and from a strictly business point of view was hardly worth it, unless a high rate of profit was made. However, it was my hobby and I limited the profit to a purely nominal figure; perhaps I should explain that all the models were taken over by the firm and became part of the shop stock. It will thus be seen that, without the aid of contacting outside customers, providing packing material and so on, Samuel could hardly have established a market of any dimensions, and I felt it necessary to remind him of it, to prevent his getting an idea that he was being exploited.

Not so long after this, conditions changed unexpectedly and my surmise that we would have to wait until after the war proved incorrect. The recruiting for the African Pioneer Corps started and in comparatively short time the European population of Maseru was considerably increased by the influx of officers and NCOS for the purpose of training the thousands of Basuto recruits. In all, some six to seven hundred officers passed through the camp and amongst them were many who were on the look out for souvenirs of the country. Here, then, was an unexpected opportunity to increase the price of Samuel's work, and I did so at once, because I honestly felt that his figures were worth more.

It was now a simple matter to dispose of his work, for the reason that most of the time there was a waiting list from the officers of the Pioneer Corps and the execution of their orders was also a simple matter, as it involved the minimum of packing. If at any time there happened to be a surplus of the figures on hand, I had the addresses of a few people in the Union who were always ready to take over anything at any time. I began to visualize a time when Samuel would really begin to reap the benefit of his work in the shape of increased financial returns, as his name was now well established—but, the war would first have to be won before we could devote ourselves to this object. I, personally, was very occupied as I had a great deal to do with the rationing of the Pioneer Corps and like everybody else I tried to take my part in the various war efforts. All this, plus my ordinary work, made me a very busy man indeed and Samuel's affairs were, willy nilly, relegated into the background, but only temporarily, I hoped. About this time, I went down with an illness, brought on by overwork, which curtailed my activities.

So, it happened that I was not aware that, for Samuel, the sands of time were running out and that our plans for after the war would never mature. I knew, of course, that he was a sick man but I had known many Basuto who had lived on for years suffering from similar ailments, and I never dreamt that the end was near. I was shocked, therefore, when the news was brought to me that he had passed away on the 24th of October 1944. I felt that I had lost a friend, for over the passage of years that relationship had developed between us. It was a friendship with respect, because Samuel had never presumed on it, and he had many qualities that I had learned to admire. He was about 39 years old

when he died and on the face of it, it would seem a tragedy that he was cut off so early in life but, on reflection, one came to the conclusion that his life's work was finished and it is not for us to question the inscrutable ways of Providence in that he was given only a comparatively few years in which to complete it. Sufficient to say that he had been given a talent by his Maker and he had utilized it to the full—or so it seemed to me, who knew him, though I must admit, never intimately.

There was little more I could do, except to utter a few words of comfort to his father who came to see me twice after that. The first time was to give me the news of his passing and on the second occasion he brought in the last few models that Samuel had made, to sell them to pay for the expenses of the funeral.

Once again, I was impressed by the African attitude to death—some people may call it just fatalism—but, to my mind, it is a deeper faith in the after life than we Europeans are apt to evince at times. I remember an occasion many years ago when a well-known member of a village community had passed on and his friends had come to the station which I was managing at the time to purchase the necessary timber for the coffin. They were discussing the death amongst themselves and the final summing up was: "*Molino o moholo*" (God is Great).

I wrote at once to Chief Jeremiah Moshesh to acquaint him with the sad news, because of the deep interest he had always taken in Samuel and his work and, in return, I received a very appreciative and sorrowful letter. It was in this letter, he mentioned that he had sent General Smuts some of Samuel's models. It is interesting to note, too, that in this letter he refers to Samuel as his relative; I have never thought to ask him about this.

Brief accounts of his death and his life work appeared in the *Friend* and in the *Basutoland News* and Major Tylden also wrote an account of his work for the monthly periodical *Libertas* which was illustrated by two pictures of his models.

The following is a description of the models in the possession of my wife; they are housed in a cabinet with three glass shelves, on which the figures stand, which is enclosed by a door of small panes of leaded glass. The first shelf contains the figures of chiefs and men, the second and third women and children; as will be seen, these latter preponderate considerably. Samuel seemed to find much more scope in depicting the female sex. At the bottom of the cabinet are some of the animals he produced, but there are not many of these, as my wife did not begin collecting in earnest until he had concentrated on human figures.

1. *Chief Moshesh according to Tylden*: "Moshesh is seated on his chair of state, his features resemble the well-known picture by Schroeder, done when the chief was over fifty." He is dressed only in a blanket, presumably of skin, which is draped loosely about his waist. Around his neck is an ornament, probably of some tribal significance, on both arms, well up towards the shoulders are two armlets and around the top of his head is a band, through which a feather is stuck. In his right hand he holds a wooden knobkerrie. On the side of the "chair" is printed in neat white letters the words: "MOSHESH IN 1833". Many of the models are neatly inscribed in this way; apparently Samuel used a sharp pointed instrument to scratch the letters in the clay, but what method he used to get the white effect I cannot say.

2. *Chief Lerotholi*. I cannot say whether this is a good likeness or where it was taken from. He is seated on a square block and is dressed in a European made blanket (about his shoulders), trousers, boots and hat. In his right hand he is holding a beautifully made little walking stick. The inscription is just "CHIEF LEROTHOLI."

3. *Chief Masupha*. This is not a very good figure as the legs look somewhat artificial but I should imagine that it is a good likeness from what I have seen of pictures of the chief. He is dressed in a tunic, with epaulettes, trousers and boots and is standing, holding a knobkerrie in his left hand. Inscribed "C. MASUPHA".

4. *Makoanyane*. A description of this figure has already been given; this figure was one of his earlier efforts and later ones that passed through my hands were greatly improved, although the weapons described were perfect from the beginning. Every time I look at this figure I see Samuel's father! The weapons, with the exception of the shield, can be detached from the figure, which was very necessary when it was being packed. It is inscribed "MAKOANYANE.1833".

5. *Figure of a man in the act of throwing a spear*. He is naked, except for a loin-cloth. There is no inscription on this model and I do not know where Samuel got his inspiration for it.

6. "MOSUTO SMOKING DAGGA—UNDER THE INFLUENCE." This is the inscription and is a man seated, holding a dagga pipe in his hand. The pipe, unfortunately has been lost. He is dressed in a blanket, trousers and hat, and the bemused expression on his face is typical of a confirmed dagga smoker.





7. "MOSUTO SMOKING DAGGA." This is an older man, seated, dressed in a skin blanket and loin-cloth. He evidently belonged to an older generation and has been smoking dagga for a very long time, judging by the even more bemused expression on his face. In this case, too, the pipe has been lost.

8. *Warrior*. This is a warrior of a later day than Ma-koanyane, say about 1880, or even later, because he wears a blanket, trousers and boots, although on his head he wears the *sekola*. He is standing and in his right hand he flourishes a battle axe, while in his left he carries a knobkerrie. No inscription.

9. *Witch doctor*. This man is standing and is dressed in a blanket (European) and trousers; on his head he wears the witch doctor skin cap (in this case it is modelled in the clay); around his shoulders is draped a ring of bones (also in clay) while in his left hand he carries a sharp spear. The somewhat aloof expression on his face is very typical of the doctor who is filled with a sense of his own importance. This figure which is simply inscribed "DOCTOR-BASUTOLAND" is quite probably modelled from life.



10. *Witch doctor*. This figure was made from a snapshot of a witch doctor who actually lived on Major Tylden's farm, near Don Don in the Orange Free State. Major Tylden sent me the snapshot with a request to Samuel to model one. He only turned out three or four of these, as it was in the nature of a special order. This doctor is dressed in the full paraphernalia of his calling, namely a skin apron, monkey skin cap, strings of beads around his shoulders and over his breast, with a fly switch in

his right hand and a knobkerrie in his left. There is no inscription and it is quite possible that this man is not a typical Basuto witch doctor.

11. *Figure of a man seated.* There is no inscription on this, which was one of Samuel's early attempts to model his fellow men. It is a very life-like model of a man sitting in a reflective attitude; he is dressed in a blanket, trousers, hat and boots and the impression it gives is of a man fairly well satisfied with things in general.

12. *Woman winnowing grain.* She is dressed in the conventional blanket, skirt and head dress ("doek") and is standing with a *seroto* held in her hands, tilted so that the grain is pouring out. This is one of Samuel's earliest models of the human figure, but even in this the air of concentration on her work is well brought out, while the folds of the blanket and skirt emphasize his natural ability in modelling. No inscription.

13. *Woman walking, with a clay pot on her head.* This is a later working and reflects the improvement he had gained by experience. The little pot is exquisitely designed. No inscription.

14. *Woman standing, holding a clay pot in her right hand.* This is again a later model and the woman is standing exactly as if she was having her photograph taken. No inscription.

15. *"Bale" girl.* Samuel produced many models of these girls, undergoing their initiation rites. They were all dressed in the usual manner i.e. skin skirt or kilt, grass girdles, (reproduced in clay) holding a forked stick in the right hand and a folded blanket in the crook of the

left arm. This particular one is one of his earliest figures and the later ones were considerably improved. No inscription.

16. *Woman standing, with a baby on her back.* The mother, who is dressed in a "doek", blanket and skirt, surveys the scene somewhat apathetically, while the baby looks on with a mild curiosity. No inscription.

17. *Woman seated, with her right hand resting on a clay pot.* This is an excellent figure and the woman looks as she would have done if she were posing for Samuel.

In passing, I am quite sure that Samuel never had anyone to pose for him and all his work was done from observation and memory. I should have mentioned before that, with very few exceptions, all these figures are standing or sitting on small round (or square) platforms or bases and it is on this that Samuel made his inscriptions.

18. *Woman standing, holding a partially rolled reed mat.* This is inscribed: "BASUTO GIRL, BED CONSISTS OF A RUSH MAT, WHICH SHE ROLLS IN THE MORNING—MAKING HER BED." This too, is a very good model; in all the figures where they are doing something, Samuel has contrived to bring out the concentration they are showing in their work.

19. *Woman kneeling, washing her blanket.* She is clad only in a short skirt, which actually means that she is an unmarried girl. She is intent on her task and anyone can see at once what it is. The inscription reads: "LAUNDRY DAY. BASUTO GIRLS ARE FREQUENTLY TO BE SEEN WASHING THEMSELVES AND THEIR CLOTHES IN THE RUNNING WATER."

20. *Woman kneeling, grinding grain with a stone.* She is clad in vest and long skirt, which indicates that she is a married woman. There is no inscription on this figure.

21. *Little girl, standing holding a sweet in her hands.* She is wearing only the girdle or *thethana*.

One day my wife happened to observe a small girl on the side walk near our house, clad in this fashion. Bribing the child with a sweet she took a snapshot of her with our little 60X camera. The resulting photograph was so satisfactory that I gave it to Samuel to model from and he produced a number of models from it. His child is a little older than the one in the photograph but is nevertheless an excellent reproduction.

22. *Woman standing, holding her child in her arms.* This is one of his earliest works, but the look of affection and pride on the mother's face, as she looks at her child, is marvellous. This woman is wearing a tiny pair of ear-rings which are a little larger than a pin's head, and Samuel's eyesight must have been very good indeed, when one considers that he did not use glasses to produce work on such a small scale.

23. *Woman bending, over a clay pot which she is touching with her right hand.* On her back is a child. This is one of his later works and the modelling is perfect.

24. *Woman standing, with a seroto, (grass basket) on her head.* She is wearing a skirt and blanket, the latter having a simple design.

25. *Woman standing, with a bundle of wood on her head.* She also, is clad in a skirt and a blanket, and has tiny

ear-rings, so small that they are hardly noticeable at first sight.

26. *Woman hoeing.* She is clad only in a vest and skirt and Samuel has been remarkably successful in reproducing the look of concentration on her work, on her face. The miniature hoe is a gem in itself.

27. *Woman standing, with her head bent, speaking to her child.* She has evidently been busy on some domestic task, because she is wearing only a skirt. The child is quite naked and from the manner in which it is clutching its mother's dress, has not been walking for very long. The inscription on the base reads: "U RATA HO NYALA."

28. *Woman seated, in the act of thrashing grain with a stick.* She is also in working attire, namely a skirt and a vest.

29. *Woman, wearing a skirt, blanket and doek (head dress), with her child (naked) seated in her lap.* They look just as if they had been posed for their model, as they have the immobile expressions which many Basuto have when their photographs are taken.

30. *Woman seated, wearing a skirt and blanket, feeding her baby from her breast.* We always refer to this model as "THE MADONNA"; it happened once that a priest who was staying with us enquired if Samuel could, or would, make a figure representing a Bantu Madonna. I was not very keen on giving him any special commissions, as it was not in his interest, because of the great demand for his ordinary work, but as it happened, with the very next batch of figures which he brought in,

this one was amongst them, and it could not have been more suitable for the purpose.

31. *Elephant*. This was a result of a visit to a circus and the animal is very faithfully reproduced. One can see at a glance that it is a trained, not a wild elephant.

32. *Baboon*. The legs are somewhat thicker than actual life, but otherwise it is a very good likeness of this animal, conveying the aggressive attitude which baboons seem to have to the world in general. The base has this inscription, whether copied from a school book, or whether it is Samuel's own composition, I cannot say: "THE BABOON IS ONE OF THE LARGEST MONKEYS THAT WE HAVE IN SOUTH AFRICA."

33. *Owl, perched on the stump of a tree*. This is a beautiful model, and the bird has such bright eyes that it looks alive. Samuel had a secret recipe of his own for making the eyes in his models and all I know of it is that linseed oil was one of the ingredients. It was remarkably effective, particularly in the animals and the effect seems to be everlasting. Some years ago, I saw one of these models occupying a place of honour in the East London Museum.

34. *Crocodile*. This was one of his most popular pieces and it was always in demand. Although he produced a great number of them, they were always perfect in detail and most life-like, so much so that I have seen Basuto hesitate to touch them, for fear they were alive.

35. *Jaguar, standing over the dead body of an antelope which it has just killed*. Samuel took this from a picture

in one of the volumes of Arthur Mee's Children Annual; the picture itself was of the type known as a woodcut, the scene being somewhere in South America and it was rather lifeless, but the jaguar in the model is vibrant with life and it seems to be defying all comers to deprive it of its prey. Unfortunately, at some time or other the horns of the antelope were broken. The inscription, which I imagine was from Samuel's fertile brain and not from the book, reads: "THE HUNGRY TIGER POUNCES ON ITS PREY."

36. *Native hut*. This, in some respects, could well be called the outstanding piece of the collection. It was made to order for my wife and I am fairly certain that he only made one other. It stands about eight inches high and is about five or six inches in diameter. The only criticism that could be made is that the walls and door are not strictly in proportion, but otherwise it is a fine piece of work. The thatched roof, indeed, with its doubly constructed rafters inside, is exquisite.

Finally, standing on top of the cabinet, for the reason that it is so large that it would take up too much room inside, is a model of a leopard. This belongs to Samuel's earliest period, before we had much to do with each other; it weighs some three to four pounds and is about six to eight inches high, while from nose tip to tail end the length would be fourteen inches. It will be seen that models of this size were very cumbersome and heavy to transport anywhere. For all this, the figure has life in it, like all the work he produced and this one conveys the atmosphere of the animal stalking its prey very well. It is a tribute to Samuel that its life-like appearance has caused a dog to bark at it!

On an afternoon in December 1948, I was at last

able to fulfil my desire to visit the village of Koalabata, to see where Samuel lived and worked, during his short lifetime.

Koalabata is about four or five miles from Maseru, just beyond Lancer's Gap and lies at the foot of the Berea plateau. It can be seen from the main road to Teyateyaneng; at the nearest point it is about a mile from the road. It is a large village, in fact, I was told it is one of the largest in the district and it is even larger than it appears from the road as it extends around a spur of the plateau into a secluded valley, which is very beautiful.

It was interesting to learn that, in the 1820's, this village came under Matuoane, the ruler of a once-powerful tribe called the Amangwane. This chief was an enemy of Moshesh who, in order to exist on his stronghold of Thaba Bosiu, which is on the other side of Berea, had to pay him continual tribute in the form of cattle. Eventually, it culminated in a great battle in the valley below Thaba Bosiu, when Matuoane attacked Moshesh. Although outnumbered, the battle resulted in a signal victory for Moshesh and the Amangwane were driven across the plateau with great loss. Joshua Makoanyane took a prominent part in this fight and, as related, killed many of the enemy with his own hands. Although I have not come across any printed record of the fact, I was told by men of that village that Koalabata was given to Joshua as a reward for his services on this occasion and the family has lived there ever since, a period of over 100 years.

I was shown around by Lysinias Tikoe Makoanyane who would be according to his explanation, a second cousin of Samuel's. According to Lysinias, his father was of the chief house, while Samuel's was of the second.

Like many of the younger sons, Samuel's father went to work in the Free State, in the vicinity of Parys and it was while he was working there that Samuel was born, about 1909. About 1913, the family returned to Koalabata where Samuel lived for the rest of his life.

There are no immediate relations left in Koalabata, as his mother and only brother now live in Johannesburg.

I saw the collection of huts where Samuel lived with his father and the little garden in front, where Samuel must have played as a child. A few yards from here and standing by itself is a well built square stonehut, which is now dismantled; this is where Samuel did his work and kept his models, until they were ready for marketing. He never lived in it, but, presumably, he would have used it as a residence if he had ever married. I was also shown a length of sheet metal, about four feet long by one foot wide, which he used for a table or platform on which to mould his clay.

I was curious to know how much estate Samuel had left and what had been done with it, for he had certainly received a considerable amount of money for his work over a period of about 10 years, and I was somewhat surprised to learn that he left practically nothing. I had expected that he would have acquired a herd of cattle, but was told that he never invested in livestock at any time.

He liked treating himself to little luxuries in food at times and he was always appearing in new clothes; and even his clothes indicated his artistic nature, as he liked colour and originality. He never spent his money in drink and I was told that Samuel seldom if ever touched beer. He occasionally tried to procure a little brandy but I am sure that this was from a child-like idea, shared by others, that it is good for chest troubles.

It would seem that a great deal of Samuel's money was spent on doctors and their medicines, not only for himself but also for his father, Joele, who was a sick man for a number of years.

I was told, too, that although Samuel never married himself, nor ever expressed a desire to do so, he provided all the marriage expenses when his younger brother married and this must have cost him quite a large sum, because, for one thing, according to Sesuto custom, the bridegroom must purchase the bride's trousseau, quite an expensive item.

According to my informants, Samuel was of a very reserved nature and was not given to mixing a great deal with his fellow men; I had gained this impression, too, in my dealings with him. He was fond of playing football, when the occasion offered, which, of course, was not very frequent in Koalabata, but he often kicked a ball of sorts about even when alone.

He did not like people watching him at work, which I could understand as he was always reluctant even to discuss his methods.

He was a fairly regular attendant of a French Protestant Church somewhere near Berea; from what I knew of him, I think Samuel was a quietly religious man. It was interesting to learn that his father, Joele, was at one time, a catechist in the Dutch Reformed Church.

The little cemetery lies on the outskirts of the village, a few yards from the huts where Samuel lived and worked. It is not usual to see headstones in a Sesuto cemetery but both Samuel's and Joele's graves are marked by simple uncut stones, inscribed with their names. Joele died a year or two after Samuel.

Here, then, in this little plot rests one who felt the urge to create, an urge which is felt by most of us at

one time or other, but unlike most of us, Samuel obeyed that urge and in doing so, by the beauty of his work and the constant striving for perfection, can we not say that he glorified his Maker? And, now, his work being finished he rests in peace. Standing there in the lengthening shadows of the late afternoon and looking across the beauty of the valley, I felt that this view must often have been an inspiration to Samuel Makoanyane.