

## BACKGROUND ON THE GRAVE OF ADAM KOK III

The Griqua moved from the Cape Colony under the leadership of Adam Kok II and settled around the Phillipolis and gained recognition of their independence and ownership of land. Adam Kok III, the great-grandson of Adam 'Eta' Kok I and the son of Adam Kok II, was born on 16 October 1811 here at, Griquatown and was educated at Phillipolis Mission School.

He was appointed to the Griqua Council at a relatively early age and even acted as chief whilst his father was away. This made him the natural choice to succeed his father instead of his older brother Abraham. His succession as the head of the Kok Clan took place in 1837. He remained chief of the Kok clan of the Griqua and ruled the Eastern Griqua of Phillipolis from 1837 until the early 1860's when he and his people trekked across the Drakensberg.

He received conditional support and protection from the British Missionary, Dr. John Phillip, who recommended that the Cape Governor, Sir George Grey, acknowledge the sovereignty of Adam Kok III in the Treaty of 1843. And as such Adam Kok III was recognized as a sovereign prince by the treaties of 1843, 1846, and 1848. In his reign, he issued individual titles to his burghers for their farms.

Due to pressure from Boers moving into the area and the political tensions between the Boers, British and Griqua, Adam Kok III led the Griqua over the Maloti-Drakensburg mountains in 1862. Sir Grey, Natal Administrator at the time, offered Kok land near Mount Currie as a buffer between the Cape Colony and the Boer-occupied Orange Free State. Here Adam Kok III established New Griqualand and the Griqua Government. In 1869 Reverend William Dower of the London Mission Society informed Adam Kok III that he would only build a church for the Griqua once they had established a proper town. And so in 1872 the town Kokstad was founded and named in honour of their leader.

In 1874 Griqualand East was annexed by the British hence Adam Kok III was disposed of his land and the Griqua suddenly found themselves under British control. The Cape Colony formerly annexed Griqualand East in 1877 after the passing of the Griqualand East Annexation Act (Act 38 of 1877). Although Adam Kok retained a measure of power, he never regained full control of the Griqua.

He died tragically on 30 December 1875 near Rietvlei at a place called "Koki" aged 64 after he fell off the wagon and got entangled in its wheel. After his death Adam Kok III was buried on what today is Hope Street in Kokstad. His wife Margaret also later died and was buried in the same place.

### Brief Statement of significance:

*"The grave Adam Kok III is a testament to the determination of the Griqua Nation's resilience to colonial expansion. His reign faced an increasing Boer presence in the territory under his control. He made several efforts to confront the rising threat to his rule including appealing to the Governor of the Cape Colony, leasing land, and entering into numerous treaties. When the Boer incursion became untenable, Adam Kok III migrated southeast across the Drakensberg Mountains he established the town of Griqualand East with Kokstad (named in honour of Adam Kok III) as its capital. Once settled "Kok III succeeded in establishing a self-governing territory with a Griqua government that raised its own revenue through taxes, traded licenses and fines and in 1867 printed its own currency, backed by livestock and grain. Adam Kok III was a well-loved Griqua leader who defended his dynasty against colonial encroachment in the central western regions of South Africa."*<sup>1</sup>

SAHRA intends to declare the site as a National Heritage Site

<sup>1</sup> Adam Kok III <https://www.longmarchtofreedom.co.za/BronzeStatues/Statue/618aa9f1faf6d2fddee410cc> Online, Available at [www.longmarchtofreedom.co.za](http://www.longmarchtofreedom.co.za) [Accessed 20 June 2023]