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THE HISTORY OF ABAKWAMTHETHWA

by

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A Research Project Submitted  
in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements  
for the B.A. (Hons)  
Degree  
in the Department of History  
at the  
University of Zululand

SUPERVISOR:

Professor : A. E. Cubbin

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ABOVE: The historians: Muzi Mthethwa - author  
C N Mthethwa - local authority

BELOW: oYengweni, Dingiswayo's umuzi from the  
road the heartland of KwaMthethwa.  
Euphorbia tree in the background.



FOREWORD

The motivation for the study has developed as a result of the love of my own Mthethwa people and encouragement of my supervisor. I am very aware that what I have written is not the final work.

It is my intention to develop this study into a higher degree and, in any case, this subject will be the study of my lifetime. Therefore, if any readers of this study have any suggestions, criticisms, extra sources and ideas to present the author, they will indeed be greatly appreciated.

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(ii)

DECLARATION

Unless specifically stated to the contrary in the text, this project is my own original work. Mistakes that may have occurred in this project are my sole responsibility.



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A. M. MTHETHWA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following persons and institutions for their assistance and support during my research and the writing of this project:

- \* Professor A.E. Cubbin, my supervisor, for his valuable insight, his constructive criticisms and patience. I also thank him for his valuable time he spent with me when we undertook the field trip around KwaMthethwa right up to where the second oYengweni was situated. A number of photos were also shot by Professor Cubbin which are available in this project.
  
- \* I also would like to thank dearly my great uncle, Christian Nkosini Mthethwa, who, in spite of his old age, contributed greatly to the success of this project.
  
- \* My sincere thanks also goes to the Killie Campbell Africana Library staff members for their willingness to help in making their sources available during my research.
  
- \* Lastly my appreciation goes to Uzulu Collection Archives of the University of Zululand for their assistance and co-operation.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife Reginah, our daughter Lungeloletu and our two sons Mbusiwezizwe and Mpumelelo for their encouragement and patience while I was working on this project, depriving them of all the love and care that they needed from me as a husband and father.

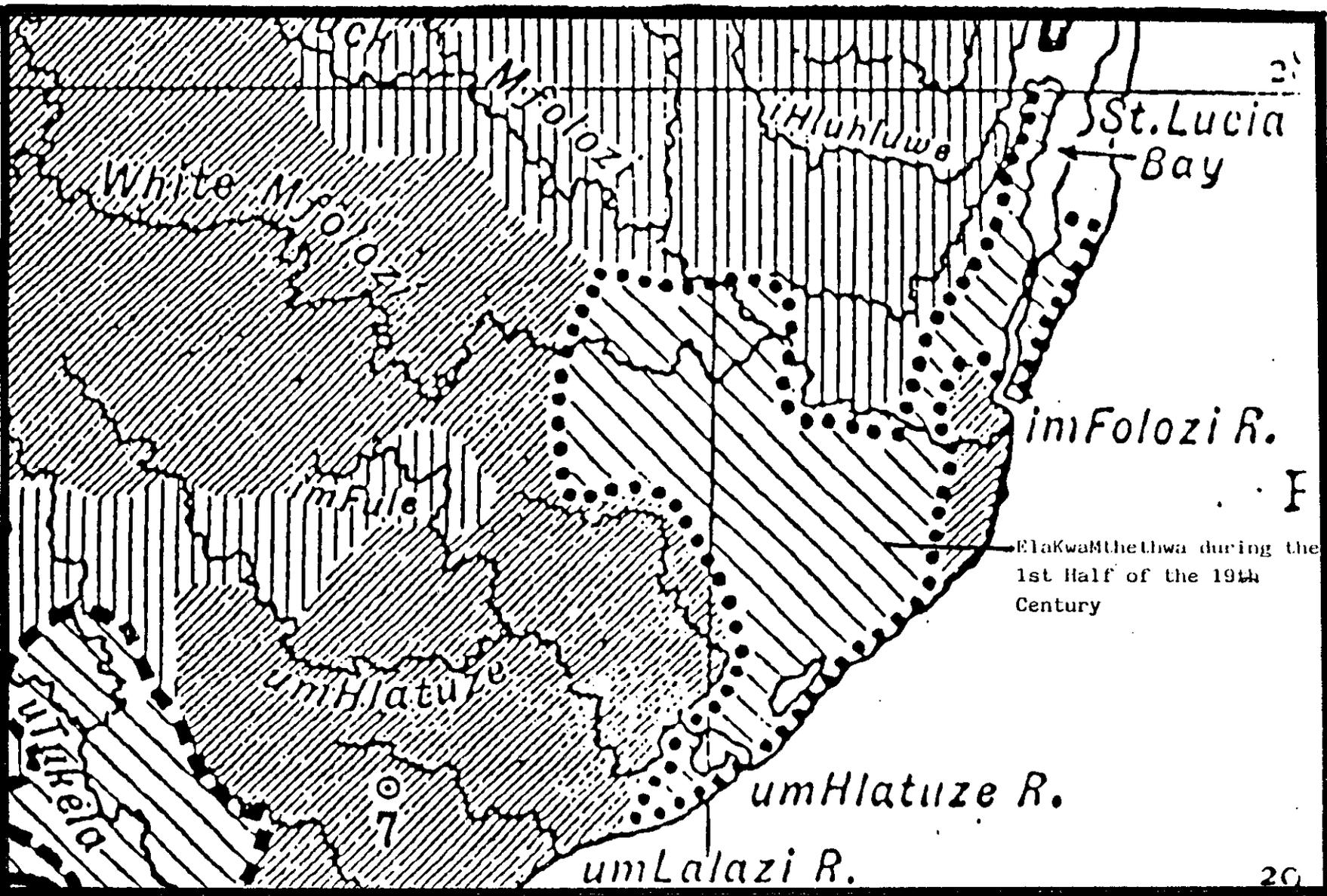
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Professor: A E Cubbin (Supervisor)

Definition of isiZulu terms used in the text

|                      |   |  |
|----------------------|---|--|
| ibutho               | : | Member of regiment; age set.   |
| induna               | : | headman; person appointed by inkosi to a position of authority or command.   |
| ikhanda              | : | head umuzi; inkosi's establishment where amabutho were quartered.  |
| isithunzi            | : | dignity.   |
| isithakazelo         | : | clan praises.  |
| iklwa                | : | broad bladed stabbing spear.   |
| impi                 | : | fight or battle; military unit or force; army engaged in war.  |
| isigodlo             | : | girls presented to the king as a tribute or selected from the households of his subjects; part of royal umuzi reserved for king's women. |
| ukukhonza            | : | pay respect to (to give allegiance or subject oneself to inkosi).  |
| umuzi                | : | homestead.   |
| ukujutshwa           | : | to be given permission to marry.   |
| uneso                | : | someone who is generous (who sees to it that people are cared for and given food to eat and beer to drink.                               |
| umlungu              | : | a white person - European.   |
| undlovukayiphendulwa | : | a dictator.  |
| umuthi               | : | concoction.  |
| udwendwe             | : | bridal party.  |
| isigungu             | : | war council  |



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### 1.1. Introduction

AbaKwaMthethwa form a very important component of the Zulu nation as we know it today. They were in fact the vanguards in the implementation of the idea of a confederation of smaller states (clans) under one supreme ruler or a king who become their overlord.

The history of abakwaMthethwa is so wide that one would need volumes to do justice to it. This project is only going to deal with their movement from around uBombo mountains round about AD 1500 to 1818 when king Dingiswyo was assassinated by Zwide, inkosi of the Ndwandwe people.

This project will furthermore concentrate on the life of Dingiswayo from the time he escaped death from his father. The project also seeks to examine the controversy surrounding Dingiswayo's formative journey. It is intended that Dingiswayo's influence and his contribution socially, politically, military and economically to the upliftment of the Mthethwa confederacy will be examined. Finally mention will be made of the royal imizi, some principal imizi not necessarily royal ones, as well as religious imizi that are to be found at KwaMthethwa.

## 1.2 Historical Background

Before delving into the history of abaNkwaMthethwa, it is important to start off with the fact that hardly any society of a people has remained in the same place since creation.<sup>1</sup> Our forefathers tell us that all black people originally came from the north. Unfortunately because no written records were left by those who came before us, all they could do is to point in that northerly direction, upward of the country (enhla nezwe).<sup>2</sup>

From as early as AD 1500 and beyond, there had been a continuous movement of black peoples moving, over the years, from one area to the next. On entering what is the present state of South Africa, they were already divided into two main groups, the Ntungwa and the Nguni.<sup>3</sup> Eventually these groups moved to localities where many of them were still to be found at the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> The

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1. D.D. Phiri: From Nguni to Ngoni, p. 11.

2. M.M. Fuze: The Black People and Whence They Came, p.1.

3. Ibid., p.1.

4. A. Duminy & B. Guest (eds): Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910, p. 50.

groups that went westwards are known as the Ntungwa and those that moved southwards and along the east coast are known as the Nguni.<sup>5</sup>

From the beginning of the nineteenth century there has been less movement. Not many changes have occurred although some people did move - particularly during the reign of king Shaka especially in KwaZulu-Natal.<sup>6</sup>

### 1.3 Who Were The Mthethwa People?

The Mthethwa people are a very important component of and belong to the mighty Nguni family. Immediately after crossing the Limpopo river, the African people dispersed over Southern Africa in different directions.<sup>7</sup>

Bryant claims that the Venda-Karanga type of Africans came over the Limpopo from a northerly-central direction and mixed with the people, the Nguni family they found there. Before the process of

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5. M.M. Fuze: The Black People and Whence They Came, p.1.

6. A. Duminy & B. Guest (eds): Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910, p. 50.

7. K. M. Kilfoil: The Rise of the Zulu Empire: From: Kleio-Bulletin No.2, Vol.III, p. 9.

integration had advanced very far, a portion of the Nguni which was only slightly affected in their language by this mixture, migrated seaward and sub-divided further. These were the Tekela-Nguni and the Mthethwa were part of these.<sup>8</sup>

The Nguni family is to be found, with few exceptions, below the high plateau of the interior, between the escarpment of uKhahlamba mountain barrier and the Indian Ocean, and stretch, in a long broad belt of hundreds of clan units, from Swaziland right through KwaZulu-Natal far down into the Cape, particularly the Eastern Cape.<sup>9</sup> As will be indicated later, the indigenous people of south-east Africa are divided into three separate families, the Nguni, the Sotho (Ntungwa) and the Thonga.<sup>10</sup> Generally speaking, the Sothos are found in the Transvaal, Orange Free State and Lesotho. The Thongas are found in Northern Zululand and Portuguese East Africa.<sup>11</sup>

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8. K. M. Kilfoil: The Rise of the Zulu Empire: From: Kleio-Bulletin No.2, Vol.III, p. 9.

9. I. Schapera: The Bantu-Speaking Tribes of South Africa, p.45.

10. A.T. Bryant: Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, p.4.

11. Ibid.

Broadly speaking, there exists a link in their speech although they differ fundamentally. When speaking, the Nguni have soft and low speech, while that of the Ntungwa is hard and high-pitched.<sup>12</sup> The examples below indicate this linkage which suggest that at one stage they had lived together:

| <u>IsiZulu</u> (Nguni) | <u>Sotho</u> (Ntungwa) | <u>English</u>     |
|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| inkomo                 | khomo                  | beast              |
| umuntu                 | motho                  | person             |
| abantu                 | batho                  | people             |
| amanzi                 | metsi                  | water              |
| indlela                | tsela                  | path <sup>13</sup> |

Earlier on I mentioned that the Mthethwa belong to the mighty Nguni family. According to Bryant, of all the African people the Nguni have so far proved best in that the Nguni family has produced so many great and distinguished political heroes, conquerors, statesmen, social organisers and wise, progressive, and magnanimous rulers.<sup>14</sup>

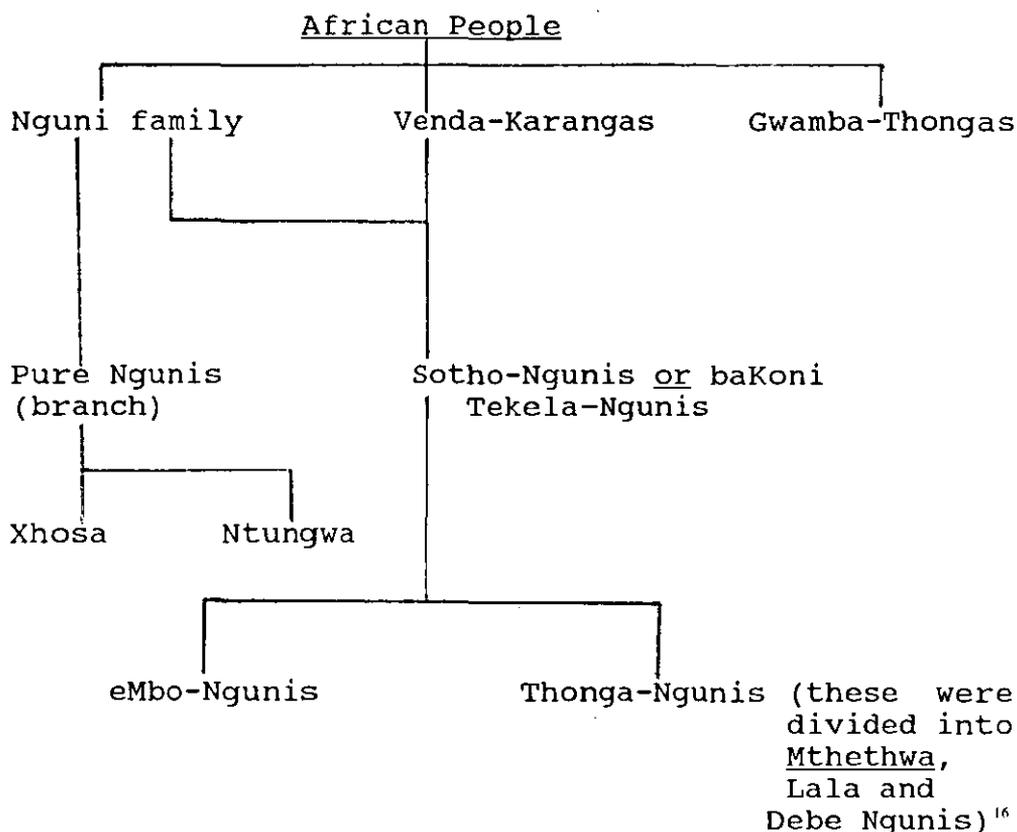
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12. M.M. Fuze: The Black People and Whence They Came, pp. 1-2.

13. Ibid.

14. A.T. Bryant: Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, p. 4.

Dingiswayo and Shaka, founders of the Zulu nation; Khama and Mshweshwe, both of baKoni origin and founders of the Ngwato, the second of the Sotho nation; Soshangane, conqueror of Portuguese East Africa; Mzilikazi of Zimbabwe; Sibitwane, of Upper Zambezia; Zwangendaba, of Zambia, were all alike great heroes and descendents of Nguni stock.<sup>15</sup>

The family tree below indicates the different segments of Nguni lineage:



15. A.T. Bryant: Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, p. 4.

16. A.T. Bryant: Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, p.7.

As mentioned earlier on, the Ntungwa moved first into what is now South-eastern Transvaal. Soon afterwards the Venda-Karanga people arrived and settled along the Limpopo and mixed with the remaining Ngunis they found there. Before this inter-mixture of language and culture could advance very far, another group of the Ngunis migrated further. These were the Tekela-Nguni (ababetekela).<sup>17</sup>

To tekela means to pronounce certain consonants in the manner peculiar to these people.<sup>18</sup> The Tekela-Nguni migrated seawards and sub-divided further.<sup>19</sup> They settled between Ubombo mountain range and the sea, southwards of Delagoa Bay.<sup>20</sup> One group of the Tekela-Nguni which settled between Ubombo mountains and the sea, called itself abamBo or abaseMbo. It is not very clear if their clan name "abamBo" did not come into being as a result of malaria which infested the place and troubled them.<sup>21</sup>

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17. K. M. Kilfoil: The Rise of the Zulu Empire: From: Kleio-Bulletin No.2, Vol.III, p. 9.

18. A.T. Bryant: Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, p.7.

19. C.N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 27-04-1995.

20. C.N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 27-04-1995.

21. C.N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 27-04-1995.

AbaKwaMthethwa lived side-by-side with abaseMbo. They were troubled by such animals as the hippopotami, lions, elephants and mosquitos as the place is generally damp.<sup>22</sup>

By the end of the 16th century, the abaMbo were still at Ubombo when the Portuguese first traversed Delagoa Bay. The eMbo people settled later in modern Swaziland, others in northern KwaZulu in places like the present Vryheid and Utrecht districts. Others still crossed uMzinyathi river. They were called the eMbo (Mkhize) or Dlamini or Swazi-Ngunis.<sup>23</sup>

The Mthethwa people also began to move further south at about the beginning of the 16th century.<sup>24</sup> The Mthethwa departure from Ubombo area was possibly because of the wild animals and malaria as stated earlier on. Inkosi of the Mthethwa people at this time was Xaba.

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22. C.N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 27-04-1995.

23. A.T. Bryant: Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, p.7.

24. K. M. Kilfoil: The Rise of the Zulu Empire: From: Kleio-Bulletin No.2, Vol.III, p. 9.

#### 1.4 What Language did the Mthethwa People Speak?

As the Mthethwa people are Nguni, they spoke the Nguni language which was spoken and generally understood by the rest of the Nguni people. Since the Mthethwa people lived side-by-side with the Thongas and because of intermarriage between the two language groups, the Mthethwa language was affected and they would also tekela (which is to pronounce words such that where there are "Z" one pronounced it "t", "d", etc.) This was as a result of the Lala language, e.g:

| <u>isiZulu</u> | <u>Tekela</u> | <u>English</u>     |
|----------------|---------------|--------------------|
| umfazi         | umfati        | woman              |
| umuzi          | umuti         | homestead          |
| umuntu         | umunu         | person             |
| amanzi         | amada         | water              |
| inkomo         | iyimo         | beast              |
| utshwala       | ulwalwa       | beer <sup>25</sup> |

Mkabi Nzuza, a lady who married Senzangakhona afterwards, tells of her experience when they attended udwendwe to celebrate Jobe's seventh marriage. She was still very young in those days.

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25. C. Cowley: KwaZulu, p. 32.

She saw for the first time a young lad, Godongwana, who was handsome and she fell in love with him. She says Godongwana said to her "Wota Nombi" meaning in isiZulu "Woza Ntombi."<sup>26</sup> This was because the Mthethwa people talked both in the Tekela and Thefuya language where the consonant "l" is softened for a "y".<sup>27</sup> e.g.:

| <u>isiZulu</u> | <u>Thefuya(yeyeza)</u> | <u>English</u> |
|----------------|------------------------|----------------|
| lala           | yaya                   | sleep          |
| baleka         | bayeka                 | run away       |
| lutho          | yutho                  | nothing        |

The language of the Mthethwa people has, in a way, been affected by this yeyeza lingua for, even up to this very day when the standard language in Zululand is isiZulu, some Mthethwa people still use the thefuya language, especially among the older group. It is, however, fading away. Some younger people use to talk it deliberately in a playful manner.

It is interesting to note that there is no hardship in understanding one another among the Nguni of South Africa and in some cases even the Ngoni beyond the

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26. C. Cowley: KwaZulu, p. 34.

27. J. Y. Gibson: The Story of the Zulus, p. 13.

boundaries of South Africa. A striking similarity exists even between isiZulu and Swahili, the main language spoken in East Africa. Generally isiZulu and Swahili have more in common with each other than with the intervening languages of south central Africa.<sup>28</sup> The following is an indication of such relationship:

| <u>isiZulu</u> | <u>Swahili</u> | <u>English</u>      |
|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| ukulala        | kulala         | to sleep            |
| ingoma         | ngoma          | music               |
| umlungu        | mzungu         | white person        |
| imali          | mali           | money <sup>29</sup> |

#### 1.5 The Trend the Mthethwa People Followed During Migration

The Mthethwa people had to leave the area lying between Ubombo and the sea because of the problems stated earlier on. When they came further south under inkosi Xaba in about 1720, they found divers Thonga people already in occupation of the land along the seafront where Sokhulu is today.<sup>30</sup>

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28. D.D. Phiri". From Nguni to Ngoni. p.12.

29. Ibid.

30. N. Mthethwa, :eNseleni, 06-05-1995.

The Mthethwa then occupied the land along uMfolozi river. Inkosi by this time was Khayi kaXaba kaMadangu. Inkosi Khayi erected his big umuzi on the confluence of the White uMfolozi and the Black uMfolozi rivers. The name of Khayi's umuzi was Masangomabili (Two Gates).<sup>31</sup> C. Mthethwa informs us that this umuzi was so big that part of the family fetched their drinking water from the White uMfolozi whilst the other from the Black uMfolozi rivers.<sup>32</sup>

Along the way and over the years as the Mthethwa people migrated, new clan names were born. When they left Ubombo area part of the Mthethwa people were not willing to go because they said they were still busy trapping amaseme (kind of birds). A new clan name was born because those Mthethwa people who remained behind were henceforth known as the Seme people (abakwaSeme).<sup>33</sup>

As they moved southwards, just around the present day Hluhluwe, another group remained behind picking up from the trees the fruit known as "umncubu".<sup>34</sup> Yet

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31. C.N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 06-05-1995.

32. C.N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 06-05-1995.

33. C.N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 06-05-1995.

34. C.N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 06-05-1995.

another clan originated because from that time on that group of people which was left behind because of umncubu became known as the "Mncubu" people. With the passage of time this changed to the present day Mncube. The change in the last vowel was brought about for no apparent reason except the passage of time.

The Seme and the Mncube people were not the only clan names that moved out of and are related to the Mthethwa people. The Cele people like abaNkwaMthethwa were the descendants of one and the same Nyambose.<sup>35</sup>

AmaNkanga people (abasemaNkangeni), like the Cele people were also members of the Mthethwa group of Tonga-Ngunis.<sup>36</sup>

When the Mthethwa people finally settled in their present Mthethwaland that they occupy, they had a number of clans that were in one way or another related to them. Van Warmelo suggests that though a clan be known for instance as the Mthethwa, there may be twenty, fifty or a hundred different clan names, represented within that polity.<sup>37</sup>

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35. A.T. Bryant: Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, p. 538.

36. Ibid., p. 545.

Of importance is that there was no great difference in the language spoken by the Mthethwa people. Their language could be easily understood by their fellow Nguni neighbours like abakwaZulu, abakwaKhumalo, amaHlubi, abaseMbo, etc.<sup>38</sup>

#### 1.6 Phases of Political Development of the Mthethwa People

Bryant divides the history of the Nguni groups into three phases. The first phase dating from around AD 1500 to 1700. This he says, was a period when the Nguni migrated into the region from north and north west and dispersed in their separate clans to localities where many of them are still to be found today or at least the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>39</sup>

During this first phase the Mthethwa people arrived at uBombo mountain range to settle between these mountain ranges and the sea. They also moved further

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37. I. Schapera: The Bantu-Speaking Tribes of South Africa, p.49.

38. C. Cowley: KwaZulu, p. 33.

39. A. Duminy & B. Guest (eds): Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910, p.50.

south under their inkosi Xaba. Inkosi Khayi led them from where Sokhulu is today to establish themselves along uMfolozi river. At this time their inkosi was Jobe.

The second phase constituted what Bryant called the "Golden Age" of east Nguni history. This he described as a period when people lived in peace and stability in numerous small-scale clans under one strong ruler.<sup>40</sup> The political development of the Mthethwa people at this time was such that king Dingiswayo had distinguished himself as a supreme ruler and had built the Mthethwa confederacy with more than thirty clans under Dingiswayo's overlordship.<sup>41</sup> The period was indeed peaceful and stable.

The third phase was the "era of autocracy".<sup>42</sup> This began with the accession of Shaka to the head of Zulu polity in about the year 1816. Unlike Dingiswayo who was generous and humane, Shaka subjugated and destroyed his opponents. The Mthethwa at this time

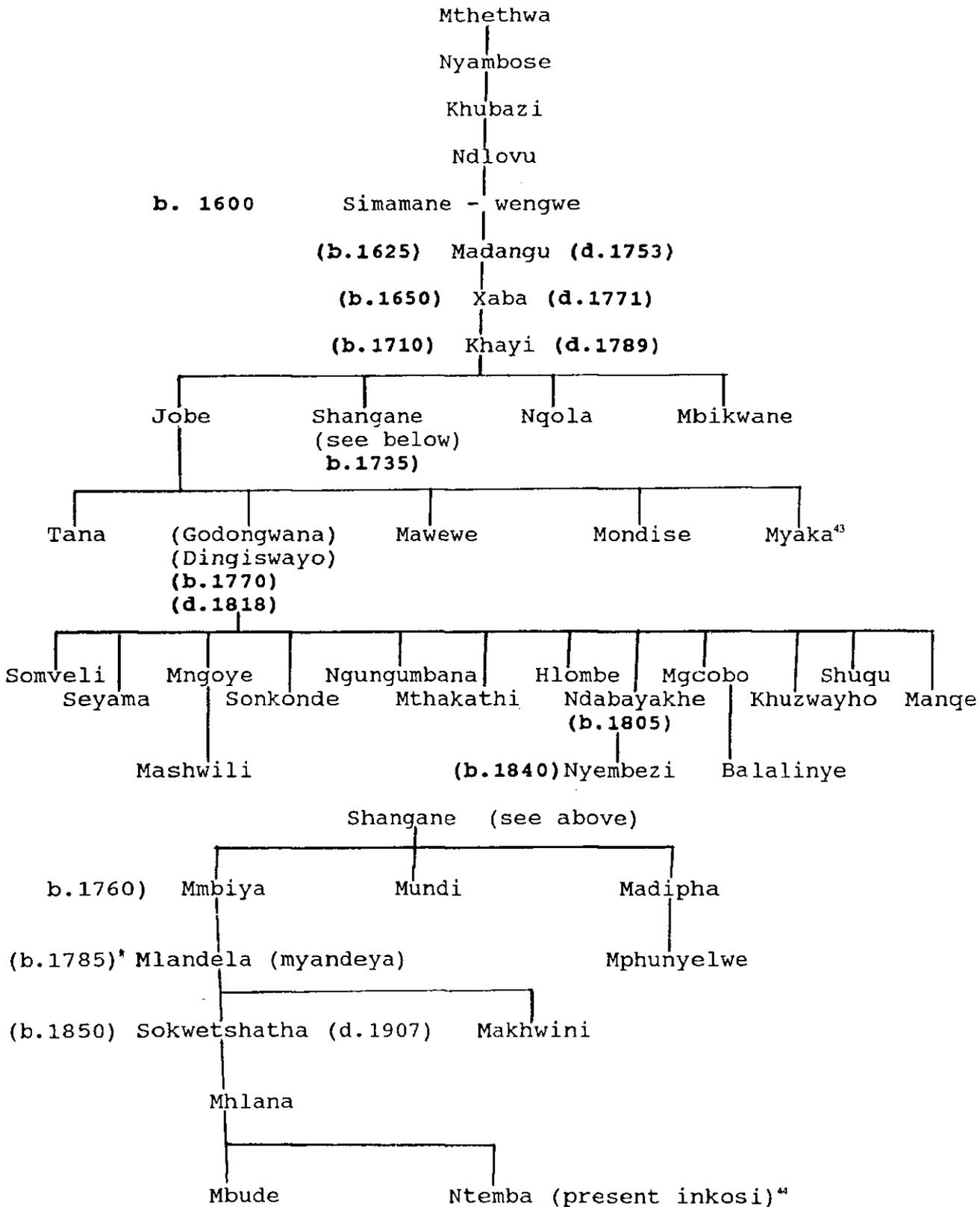
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40. A. Duminy & B. Guest (eds): Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910, p.50.

41. R.B. Edgerton: Like Lions They Fought. p. 9.

42. A. Duminy & B. Guest (eds): Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910, p.50.

had formed part of a very strong Zulu army under king Shaka who had begun building the Zulu nation as we know it to-day.

1.7 The Genealogy of the Mthethwa Clan

43. J. Stuart: Ubaxoxele, p. 14.

44. A.T. Bryant: Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, p.85.

Because of practical problems encountered in the oral tradition it has not been possible to establish birth and death dates in respect of all the names particularly those of amakhosi.

#### 1.8 Royal and Principal Imizi of the Mthethwa Clan

The tradition among the Mthethwa people has it that each umuzi has to have a name by which it is known. This does not refer to the clan name like Mthethwa but a proper name for Umuzi like oYengweni. Below are some of imizi most of which are still in existence. A few, however, are no longer in existence except in names:

##### 1.8.1 Royal imizi (Imizi yaseNdlunkulu).

e.g.: oYengweni, eBelungwini, eNhlabeni, eMinini, oHeni, eManineni, eZiyondleya, eZichweni, eNyakeni, eNingizimu, eNtambana, eNhlangano, eNyakatho, eSifazaneni,<sup>45</sup> kwaBhekwayinkosi, eNhlabosini, KwaNgwenya, eKhafuleni, kwaPhum'zum'lomo, etc.

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45. J. Stuart: Ubaxoxele, p. 14.

1.8.2 Some Principal Imizi (Eyabanumzana)

eNxebeni, kwaMfazi, eZimfabeni, eNdulo, eziNtandaneni, eSikhupheni, kwaNqaba, eKwahlukaneni, eKukhanyeni, kwaPhephisa, eNkeni, kwaNginikani, oDlodleni, eMthini, eMtimona, oPhunguzeni, ePhazini, oBhengeni, etc.

1.8.3 Some Religious Imizi

eMbabe, eKwazini, eThembelizayo, eThembelisha, eBhekinkosi, eKhenani, etc.<sup>46</sup>

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46. C. N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 27-04-1995.

## Chapter Two

### 2.1 An examination of the controversy surrounding Dingiswayo's formative journey

That Godongwana fled from his father Jobe, and went into exile and after a long period of absence, finally returned to KwaMthethwa to take over the throne when his father had died a natural death, seems to be accepted as established facts.<sup>1</sup> Let us, as a starting point, try to establish why Jobe set out to kill his sons.

There are several conflicting versions leading to the manner in which inkosi Jobe acted. The first version is that some people, close to the royal family, wished that Mawewe, who was the son of Jobe from a minor wife, should succeed Jobe, instead of Tana, who was the eldest, or twin brother Godongwana, both of whose mother was Mabamba, the Mbokazi princess.<sup>2</sup> These people then started circulating rumours that Tana and Godongwana were plotting to kill Jobe.<sup>3</sup> Nodunga, inkosi Jobe's principal advisor, is sus-

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1. C. N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 01-04-1995.

2. C. N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 01-04-1995.

3. C. N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 01-04-1995.

pected of having been involved in this plot, for he is the one who divulged this to Jobe. Jobe thereafter set out to have his sons, Tana and Godongwana killed.<sup>4</sup>

The second account is that Tana had fallen in love with a young woman who became pregnant.<sup>5</sup> This, in the Mthethwa tradition, was a punishable offence, especially because Tana had not been initiated (engakajutshwa). It is said that Godongwana was expecting his father, Jobe, to punish and reprimand Tana for this act. Instead, Jobe was very happy because he happened to approve of Tana's fiancé and was gladly awaiting a grandchild.<sup>6</sup> It was because of this contented connivance by Jobe that Godongwana was reported as having said that his father was indeed old if he condoned Tana's indiscretion.<sup>7</sup> People who overheard him interpreted Godongwana to mean that Jobe was now useless and needed to be replaced.<sup>8</sup>

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4. M. P. Mbuthu, eSikhupheni, 27-04-1995.

5. M. P. Mbuthu, eSikhupheni, 27-04-1995.

6. C. N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 27-04-1995.

7. N. Mthethwa, eNsileni, 27-04-1995.

8. C. N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 01-04-1995.

The third version has it that the two boys, Tana and Godongwana, had a discussion as they were bathing in the cool waters of the uMfolozi river one afternoon. As they were talking excitedly they happened to be overheard. The following is an account of Godongwana's conversation: "It would be for our people's good, Tana, to have you for their king instead of our father. Soon he will be full of foolishness and lacking in wisdom, so for our people's good we must help our father out of this world."<sup>9</sup>

It is difficult to know the basic truth inherent in these three accounts. What is noteworthy is that the matter was reported by Nodunga for unknown motives.<sup>10</sup>

The aftermath of this informing against the princes was dramatic. How the boys were besieged and stabbed to death and how Godongwana escaped with a barbed assegai in his back, is a probable version of events. What needs to be pointed out, however, is that it was rumoured that a group of men from eNhlambeni, one of

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9. V. Ridgway: Stories From Zulu History, p. 4.

10. M. P. Mbuthu, eSikhupheni, 27-04-1995.

Khayi's (Jobe's father) imizi, who were to do the execution, reached an agreement that Godongwana should be saved and not killed."

Godongwana must have been a favourite of the people because the people were saying uneso, which means that he would see to it that people who frequented the royal umuzi, oYengweni, were given something to eat. In the light of the foregoing statement, it is hard to deny that his escape was deliberately connived at.<sup>12</sup> It would seem therefore that the people favoured Godongwana as Jobe's successor. This could also be accounted for by the fact that when two members of the searching expedition finally found Godongwana hidden under a log in the amaWunzi forest (bush), not far from Jobe's umuzi, they did not disclose his whereabouts.<sup>13</sup>

We may assume that they must have held him in high esteem to have dared go against the king's will which would have resulted in death if discovered. Instead they camouflaged Godongwana's chances of being found adding that he would, in any case, die from the deep

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11. C. N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 01-04-1995.

12. C. N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 01-04-1995.

13. C. N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 27-04-1995.

wound he had sustained.<sup>14</sup> These sympathizers also informed Godongwana's sister, Dingiwe, who subsequently nursed his wounded brother in the amaWunzi forest until his wound had healed.

We are reminded that Dingiwe was the one also who pulled out the barbed assegai (iklwa) from Godongwana's wound.<sup>15</sup> As soon as Godongwana could walk, she is purported to have said:

"Go, my brother, and make your life far from here, return not until our father is dead, for his heart is so full of anger that, should he find you, another assegai will pierce you and surely kill you. Our home is no longer safe for you."<sup>16</sup>

Some sources like Cecil Cowley's "KwaZulu" suggest that it was Mmama, not Dingiwe, who cared for Godongwana while in hiding in the bush.<sup>17</sup> Mkabi, inkosi Senzangakhona's first wife, (Senzangakhona was inkosi of a small Zulu clan situated to the west of the Mthethwaland in the eMakhosini valley) gives the information that Mmama was

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14. C. Cowley: KwaZulu, p. 35.

15. V. Ridgway: Stories From Zulu History, p. 6.

16. Ibid.

17. C. Cowley: KwaZulu, p. 35.

the daughter of Jobe from Mabamba (Godongwana's mother) who took care of his brother bringing him food and herbs to heal his wound.<sup>18</sup>

From recent discussions with some elderly people at KwaMthethwa, the writer has gained the information that Dingiwe was Godongwana's sister but from another wife of Jobe and not from Mabamba, who is Godongwana's mother. She was said to be very fond of her brother Godongwana.<sup>19</sup>

It is doubtful, however, that both girls could have been involved in the nursing of Godongwana. The matter was too delicate to be known by a number of people because it meant death should it be discovered. Once Godongwana had partly recovered, he made off from amaWonzi bush during the night to a distant place.

## 2.2 Godongwana in exile

There is a great controversy surrounding Godongwana's place of exile as a refugee. What, up to now, is not certain, is where Godongwana spent his time as a refugee. What is also not clear is the time spent in exile. One author estimates that he spent about 15 years here.<sup>20</sup>

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18. C. Cowley: KwaZulu, p. 35.

19. C. N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 04-03-1995.

20. C. C. R. Murphy: A Mixed Bag, p. 236.

What is certainly agreed on here is that when Godongwana finally returned home, he was riding a horse and carrying a gun.<sup>21</sup>

Before going any further I would ask that we look at the praises (izithakazelo) of the Mhlongo clan as referred to by Koopman in his excellent modern analysis.<sup>22</sup> The Mhlongo's praise names are "Njomane ka Mgabhi owaduka iminyakanyaka kwathi ngowesine watholakala." ("Horse of Mgabhi that strayed for many years (but) was found again in the fourth (year).")<sup>23</sup>

I, like Koopman, became puzzled because, being a Mthethwa, my people know of no connection between the Mthethwa and the Mhlongo clan (abaseLangeni).

The striking co-incidence here is that these praise names refer to a returned exile, i.e. the one who had been away for four years (had strayed) and finally returned riding a horse. Mgabhi was inkosi of the Mhlongo clan who is shown by Bryant's genealogy as having ruled between 1784 and 1802.<sup>24</sup> This is approximately the same period as

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21. J. Argyle & E. Preston-Whyte: Social System and Tradition in Southern Africa, p. 9.

22. A. Koopman: Dingiswayo Rides Again: From: Journal of Natal and Zulu History, p. 10.

23. Ibid.

24. A. T. Bryant: Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, p.

that of Jobe, inkosi of the Mthethwa people. This connection is problematical for if the people who lived north of the Thukela river had known or seen the horse from the eLangeni clan, they would not fear Godongwana. After this interlude we must return to the central narrative.

Koopman analyses the four basic accounts that are given regarding the direction that Godongwana took. These four accounts are given by Henry Francis Fynn, Sir Theophilus Shepstone, James Stuart and Professor John Argyle.<sup>25</sup>

### 2.3 The First Hypothesis: Henry Francis Fynn

The Fynn hypothesis was first propounded by Henry Francis Fynn who was a young white trader who had come to settle in Natal as a merchant from the Cape.<sup>26</sup> Born on March 29, 1803, Fynn was 21 years when he obtained at first hand this information from African sources in Zululand.<sup>27</sup> The information was reliable because Fynn came to Zululand approximately six years after the death of Godongwana who

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25. A. Koopman: Dingiswayo Rides Again: From: Journal of Natal and Zulu History, p. 10.

26. T. Cameron & S.B. Spies (eds): An Illustrated History of South Africa, p. 116.

27. A. T. Bryant: A Zulu-English Dictionary, p. 30.

was then known to people as Dingiswayo meaning "an outcast", "one in distress" or "the exiled".<sup>28</sup> Moreover, Henry Francis Fynn could talk isiZulu fluently.

Fynn's hypothesis maintains that on leaving his Mthethwa territory, Dingiswayo joined a group of unknown traders who were wandering from the north-west until he found himself among the Hlubi clan which lay some 100 miles from KwaMthethwa.<sup>29</sup> This hypothesis is most likely to be closest to the truth of all the hypothesis put forward for the following reasons:

First, it would be possible for a youth of Dingiswayo's age to cover a distance of approximately 100 miles on foot. The map shows that from kwaMthethwa to the Hlubi territory, across uMzinyathi river, was a distance that could be traversed with reasonable difficulties within a few days.

On his arrival in Hlubiland he was received by Ngqwashu, inkosi Bhungane's induna. Bhungane was inkosi of the amaHlubi clan.<sup>30</sup>

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28. J. Stuart & D. McK. Malcolm (eds): The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn, pp. 1-11.

29. C. N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 27-04-1995.

30. C. Cowley: KwaZulu, p. 38.

Bhungane's principal umuzi was kwaMagoloza, on the uMzinyathi river near Newcastle.<sup>31</sup>

It is said that when Dingiswayo arrived at Ngqwashu's umuzi, Ngqwashu's wife complained that Dingiswayo was too dignified ("Unesithunzi, uyangesinda").<sup>32</sup> Ngqwashu then took Dingiswayo to inkosi Bhungane to officially inform him about the presence of such a person in his territory.<sup>33</sup>

Dingiswayo had already told Ngqwashu that he was the son of Jobe and told him everything that had happened. One supportive piece of evidence underlying this hypothesis is the language issue. It must be remembered that the Hlubi people, like abaThethwa are abeNguni. Dingiswayo, therefore, did not experience any language problem.<sup>34</sup>

On hearing that Dingiswayo was Jobe's son, inkosi Bhungane wanted to verify this. There is a generally accepted belief that inkosi or any person of royal blood is never attacked, bitten or killed by the lion. There

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31. C. de W. Webb & J. B. Wright: The James Stuart Archive, Vol.II, p. 12.

32. J. Stuart: Ubaxoxele, p. 17.

33. Ibid.

34. A. T. Bryant: Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, p. 10.

are two conflicting hypotheses of what happened to Dingiswayo at the royal umuzi of Bhungane. The first account is that Bhungane wanted to make sure that Dingiswayo was indeed the son of Jobe by sending him to fetch the two cubs of a lioness some distance from Bhungane's umuzi.<sup>35</sup> On the basis of the generally accepted belief mentioned above, it is evident that Bhungane was putting Dingiswayo through a tough test. Dingiswayo is reported to have passed that test because he brought the two cubs back to Bhungane.<sup>36</sup>

The second hypothesis is that in the Hlubiland there was a lion that had been killing cattle night after night. The men finally decided to go out and kill the lion.<sup>37</sup> Dingiswayo, who had asked to join the animal hunt,<sup>38</sup> requested when they come to the bush that he be allowed to fight the lion alone.<sup>39</sup> Permission was granted and a reward promised. Dingiswayo finally killed the lion single-handed. Once the animal was dead, Dingiswayo

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35. C. de W. Webb & J. B. Wright: The James Stuart Archive, Vol.II, p.12.

36. J. Stuart: Ubaxoxele, p. 18.

37. Ibid.

38. V. Ridgway: Stories From Zulu History, p. 8.

39. Ibid.

noticed that it was a lioness and not very far from the scene found the two cubs which he took to Bhungane.<sup>40</sup> Dingiswayo was given cattle as a reward by inkosi Bhungane.

Whichever of the two version may be the truth, one thing is certain and that is Bhungane realised that Dingiswayo was indeed the son of Jobe because he could not be killed by a lioness.<sup>41</sup>

Following Fynn's hypothesis, which, on the basis of its sources appears to be the most reliable and favoured by other historians, Dingiswayo apparently joined a white man who was moving towards the north-east with the intention of reaching Delagoa Bay.<sup>42</sup> This white man was Dr Cowan, a military surgeon, who had operated on inkosi Bhungane's knee.<sup>43</sup> Fynn tells us that Dr Cowan was later murdered by Phakathwayho, inkosi of the Qwabe people on the southerly bank of Umhlathuze river.<sup>44</sup>

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40. C. N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 06-05-1995.

41. C. N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 06-05-1995.

42. V. Ridgway: Stories From Zulu History, p. 11.

43. B. Roberts: The Zulu Kings, p. 40.

44. N. Mthethwa, eNseleni, 06-05-1995.

#### 2.4 The Second Hypothesis: Theophilus Shepstone

This hypothesis was first recorded by Sir Theophilus Shepstone (uSomtsewu kaSonzica - as commonly known by the Zulus) who was Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal. He was proficient in isiZulu. It states, "It seems that in his travels, (Dingiswayo) had reached the Cape Colony and must have lived with or entered the service of some colonists."<sup>45</sup>

When Dingiswayo finally took over the throne, he was so endowed with the new and progressive ideas that his period in exile may be likened to years of college training. The knowledge he had acquired from his contact with other people, especially white people, was to credit him with something which none of his neighbouring clans possessed.

Shepstone himself does not say in his paper where he got this information from.<sup>46</sup> This vague information is thus treated with suspicion by many historians.<sup>47</sup> For example Shepstone often says "it seems" without affirming the

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45. A. Koopman: Dingiswayo Rides Again: From: Journal of Natal and Zulu History, p. 10.

46. J. Bird: The Annals of Natal 1495 - 1845, pp. 155-166.

47. A. Koopman: Dingiswayo Rides Again: From: Journal of Natal and Zulu History, p. 10.

source of his information. With this in mind, it is almost impossible to accept his hypothesis, that Dingiswayo is said to have reached Grahamstown on foot. This journey would have been both arduous and hazardous, and in any case one can only assume at the motivation for such a journey.

#### 2.5 The Third Hypothesis: James Stuart

Even though this information was collected as late as 1903, its source gives this version credibility. Stuart received this information from the direct and biological grandson of Dinginswayo, Mashwili kaMngoye kaDingiswayo.<sup>48</sup> Part of his hypothesis coincides with that of Fynn in that Dingiswayo went as far as the Hlubi people. Stuart, however, goes on to say Dingiswayo still felt that he was not safe from the retribution of his father's agents and therefore proceeded to Grahamstown in the Cape.<sup>49</sup>

According to Fynn, Dingiswayo obtained the horse and the gun from Dr Cowan, a military surgeon.<sup>50</sup> Obviously Dingiswayo had only one horse and one gun obtained from one source. On weighing the possibilities I would still

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48. L. Gunner & M. Gwala (eds): Musho, p. 155.

49. C. N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 06-05-1995.

50. V. Ridgway: Stories From Zulu History, p. 11.

go with the Fynn hypothesis because it has the advantage of being recorded from experiences emanating some six years after the death of Dingiswayo as opposed to Stuart's source recorded in 1903, that is, 85 years later.

On the question of Dingiswayo having reached kwelamaHlubi there is a living evidence that Langalibalele, the Hlubi prince, who was born just when Dingiswayo left the Hlubiland was given the name Mthethwa and Godongwana woYengo by his father Mthimkhulu.<sup>51</sup> This, to me, was their appreciation to Dingiswayo for having stayed with them.

## 2.6 The Fourth Hypothesis: John Argyle

This hypothesis is self-contradictory in a number of ways. First it is difficult to accept that Dingiswayo was a former slave. If he came to the Mthethwaland as a former slave from the Cape Colonial society, presumably he would not have known the language spoken by the people he was later to lead. Back at home on arrival we hear him singing:

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51. C. de W. Webb & J. B. Wright: The James Stuart Archive, Vol.I, p.13.

"Ngqwaba, ngqwaba, yemuka nayo!  
 Uyiyenga ngani na?"<sup>52</sup>  
 ("Clatter, clatter, away he goes,  
 He goes with him;  
 With what does he lure it?")

Mbangambi, an old friend of Dingiswayo, immediately recognised the voice to be the one of an old friend and prince, the son of the late inkosi Jobe. Argyle's assertion that Dingiswayo was not an "African" but a "Khoikhoi" (or a "Coloured") refugee<sup>53</sup> would have learnt Zulu (or Nguni) traits by the time he reached elakwa-Mthethwa, is not valid.<sup>54</sup> Even if he could have acquired at least some Zulu (or Nguni) language, it would not have been possible for him to sing the above song that would be recognised by Mbangambi.

If Dingiswayo was indeed an impostor, the Mthethwa people would not have accepted him so readily as their inkosi. They would also probably not condone the death of their inkosi, Mawewe. Instead the Mthethwa people themselves

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 52. J. Stuart & D. McK. Malcolm (eds): The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn, p. 6.

53. J. Argyle: Dingiswayo Discovered: An Interpretation of His Legendary Origins, p. 10.

54. Ibid., p. 11.

admitted, on Dingiswayo's arrival, that they were also waiting for his coming, for the old inkosi, Jobe, mentioned that on his death they must wait for Godongwana, as he called him. Jobe admitted that Godongwana had not died.<sup>55</sup>

Argyle maintains that during his long travels, Dingiswayo would have turned dark brown for his people not to see that he was a Khoikhoi or a Coloured, but interestingly he tells us nothing about the nature of his hair. Pursuing his speculation, Argyle writes:

"I reject the assertion that Dingiswayo had come from the coast and that he returned to it with this Sotho party; instead I propose that he was either already a member of the party (Sotho party) when it reached the Hlubi country or that he was himself a Hlubi who joined it there."<sup>56</sup>

This was in response to the hypothesis that Dingiswayo joined the party of "Chwana-Sutu" which accompanied Umlungu who came to the Hlubi people.<sup>57</sup>

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55. J. Stuart: Ubaxoxele, p.22.

56. J. Argyle: Dingiswayo Discovered: An Interpretation of His Legendary Origins, p. 13.

57. A. Koopman: Dingiswayo Rides Again: From: Journal of Natal and Zulu History, p. 6.

This is strange because Argyle has told us that Dingiswayo was a Khoikhoi or a Coloured.<sup>58</sup> It is possible that Argyle simply wanted to make use of the material he had collected from the Soli people of Zambia and thought the Dingiswayo incidence an appropriate one.<sup>59</sup>

Argyle turns around and tells us that Dingiswayo was "VoorVoortrekker". The suggestion being made here is that Dingiswayo's clothes and his light skin, would have led the Zululand Nguni to have confused him with a white man.<sup>60</sup> To this assertion a contradiction exists in the praise names of king Dingiswayo where it says:

"Unyawoth' omnyama! UNofukuthwayo!"<sup>61</sup>

I cannot construct a correct English version of the above praises, but the following should give an idea:

unyawothi - It is a type of grass

omnyama - That is black

ukufukutha - It is to eat fresh uncooked meat

This suggests that Dingiswayo was dark and not white or coloured as Argyle suggests.

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58. J. Argyle: Dingiswayo Discovered: An Interpretation of His Legendary Origins, p. 11.

59. Ibid.

60. A. Koopman: Dingiswayo Rides Again: From: Journal of Natal and Zulu History, p. 6.

61. J. Stuart: Ubaxoxele, p.43.

Argyle finally affirms the Fynn/Stuart theory that Dingiswayo did go to the Hlubi people. Argyle feels that this would account for the horse and the gun. He goes further by hinting that Dingiswayo was a Sotho impostor.<sup>62</sup> I do not intend dwelling much on this hypothesis but it is enough to say of the four hypotheses given so far, Argyle's, on the basis of its contradiction, is the least credible.

## 2.7 Mkaba (uMaNzuzza) Zulu's Version

The last evidence available is that of Mkaba (née Nzuzza) who was the first wife of inkosi Senzangakhona of the Zulu clan. Her version, in my opinion, approaches nearest the truth because, according to Mkaba, who knew Dingiswayo long before she even married Senzangakhona, Dingiswayo went straight from emaWonzi forest to Senzangakhona's umuzi, eSiklebheni, where he was cared for until his wound was healed.<sup>63</sup>

Mkabi tells us that Dingiswayo was hidden at eSiklebheni for they knew that, if Jobe came to know that his son was

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62. J. Argyle: Dingiswayo Discovered: An Interpretation of His Legendary Origins, p. 12.

63. C. Cowley: KwaZulu, p. 38.

hidden by the Zulu people, it could mean invasion and possible bloodshed.<sup>64</sup>

Mkaba rejects it as "nonsense" that Dingiswayo is said to have once reached the Cape.<sup>65</sup> She agrees, however, that from eSiklebheni Dingiswayo left, after three or four weeks of his arrival, with a group of traders who were looking to purchase cattle and slaves.<sup>66</sup> Dingiswayo could understand their language and so he apparently felt comfortable to leave along with them.

This information appears to be credible because Mkaba even tells us that after eight years of his wandering, Dingiswayo returned home to take over as inkosi of the Mthethwa people after killing his half-brother, Mawewe.<sup>67</sup>

Mkabi also tells us that he got most of the information regarding Dingiswayo's activities in exile from Dingiswayo himself. Senzangakhona and his wives used to visit Dingiswayo so as to khonza (submit/pay their respect) to the Mthethwa king.<sup>68</sup>

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64. C. Cowley: KwaZulu, p. 38.

65. Ibid., p. 38.

66. C. Cowley: KwaZulu, p. 38.

67. J. Stuart: Ubaxoxele, p.24.

68. C. Cowley: KwaZulu, p. 38.

## 2.8 Koopman's Analysis of the First Four Hypotheses

Adrian Koopman is a lecturer in the Department of African Languages at the University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg campus). He admits the confusion that exists about the place of Dingiswayo's exile. He points out at the factors that are common in the hypotheses, namely, that Dingiswayo left the Mthethwa country, that he met a "mysterious" white man, and that he obtained a horse and a gun.<sup>69</sup>

Koopman gives the possible misunderstanding that may come about from the answers given by Dingiswayo on his way in his wanderings. As he was the son of Jobe from the Mbokazi princess, Mabamba, at Jobe's eBelungwini umuzi, it would be easy for Dingiswayo on his travels, on being asked Uvelaphi/Ungowaphi? (Where are you from?) that he would have replied Ngiphum'eBelungwini/Ngingowas'eBelungwini. (I am from eBelungwini umuzi.) He then asserts that those who did not know of the name of Jobe's umuzi could have easily misconstrued this reply as "I come from amongst white men."

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69. A. Koopman: Dingiswayo Rides Again: From: Journal of Natal and Zulu History, p. 6.

In Jobe's personal praises (izibongo) the following was recited at his burial: "uJobe wakoKhayi, uNomagaga wabelungu." ("Jobe, son of Khayi, skin-and-bones of the white men.")<sup>70</sup>

In further assessing Dingiswayo's place of exile, Koopman emphasizes Bryant's statement regarding the "greater security and happiness ... he might have had anywhere within the first hundred miles of his march."<sup>71</sup> Whilst it is true that Dingiswayo would have been in danger had he sought refuge among any of the clans in the immediate neighbourhood of the Mthethwa, seeing that they were all dominated by the Mthethwa, it seems that he would have fled just far enough to be safe.<sup>72</sup> On the strength of the above, Koopman feels that Dingiswayo did not go as far as the Cape as is alleged by some writers.

## 2.9 My personal Assessment

It is true that Dingiswayo was escaping from death at home, but for all practical purposes the Cape (Grahamstown) was an unrealistic destination. I, like

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70. A. Koopman: Journal of Natal and Zulu History, p. 7.

71. A. T. Bryant: Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, p. 91.

72. A. Koopman: Dingiswayo Rides Again: From: Journal of Natal and Zulu History, p. 6.

Koopman, agree that Dingiswayo would have been in danger had he sought refuge among any of the clans in the immediate neighbourhood of the Mthethwa clan, but to think of Grahamstown is, in my view, improbable.

Road maps and diaries today tell us that the distance from Durban to Grahamstown is approximately 883 kilometres by road.<sup>73</sup> Maps also tell us that the distance from Empangeni to Durban is 160 kilometres by road and from oYengweni to Empangeni it is about 24 kilometres. One then gets a rough total distance by road to be approximately 1067 kilometres. If we bear in mind that in those days nature was more hostile than it is today, then we can possibly conclude that it would not be logical for Dingiswayo to proceed over thousand kilometres on foot without a fixed or predetermined destination.

What is also not clear is the kind of determination that might have motivated Dingiswayo to proceed and cover over a thousand kilometres through a possibly hostile territory. One hesitates to discuss basic human needs like food, water and protection.

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73. 1995 Kagiso Diary, n.p.

I would agree with the hypothesis that goes as far as the Hlubiland or even beyond that. It is also not clear why, given that he reached Grahamstown, he did not arrive finally among the African people and not the Whites as it is alleged.

#### 2.10 Dingiswayo Returns Home

Dingiswayo is said to have returned to his homeland (KwaMthethwa) at oYengweni in about 1806.<sup>74</sup> It is said that from Hlubiland stories had reached him that the old king, Jobe, had passed away by this time. At about the same period of the arrival of the sad news from KwaMthethwa, there came to Bhungani, inkosi yamaHlubi, a white military doctor on his way to Delagoa Bay. He was apparently Dr Cowan. He had an expedition of a few men who went with him towards the sea.<sup>75</sup>

Dingiswayo was eager to go along with that umlungu in an effort to reach his home. It is during this association with Dr Cowan that Dingiswayo was instructed in the innovative ways of the white man in military, governmental and trading matters.<sup>76</sup>

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74. A. T. Bryant: Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, p. 95.

75. A. T. Bryant: Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, p. 94.

76. B. Roberts: The Zulu Kings, p. 39.

No one can say precisely where Dingiswayo obtained his horse and a gun from. Speculations are that he would have got it from Dr Cowan who is reported to have been put to death by Phakathwayo, inkosi yakawaQwabe.<sup>77</sup> On arrival at kwaMthethwa (oYengweni) Dingiswayo announced his arrival to an old friend, Mbangambi.<sup>78</sup>

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77. J. Bird: The Annals of Natal, 1495 to 1845, p. 62.

78. V. Ridgway: Stories From Zulu History, p. 18.

### Chapter Three

#### 3.1 Theory Put Into Practice

The long years that Dingiswayo had spent in exile were to be of great advantage to him in later life. They were not altogether different from a college or a school where a future king had to go through before embarking on the task of leading his people. On his return to oYengweni, around 1806, Dingiswayo had dreams to fulfil.<sup>1</sup>

The main task that he assigned to himself on his return was to reorganise the Mthethwa army.<sup>2</sup> In addition to opening trade with the Whites in Delagoa Bay, he also intended to blend the two previously distinct Nguni institutions, education and the military.<sup>3</sup>

This chapter is going to focus on his reorganisation of the Mthethwa army, his age-set regiments implementation which stimulated communal love and a

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1. A. T. Bryant: Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, p. 95.
  2. V. Ridgway: Stories From Zulu History, p. 18.
  3. K. M. Kilfoil: The Rise of the Zulu Empire: From: Kleio-Bulletin No.2, Vol.III, p. 14.

sense of belonging and discipline among his warriors. His military campaigns against a number of neighbouring clans will be looked into later.

Dingiswayo was quick to establish that there was a need among the Mthethwa people for a very strong ruler who was going to assume the role of overlordship and mediate wherever and whenever disputes arose.<sup>4</sup> During the early stages of Dingiswayo's reign, a number of smaller neighbouring clans used to fight vigorously. Their quarrels no longer aimed at settling disputes, but at conquest, extermination and expulsion.<sup>5</sup>

Dingiswayo was able to restore stability among the Mthethwa for a long time. Extensive wars aimed at survival and expansion only started during the reign of Shaka, inkosi of the small Zulu clan situated to the west of abakwamthethwa.<sup>6</sup>

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4. E. H. Brookes & C. de B. Webb: A History of Natal, p. 7.

5. K. M. Kilfoil: The Rise of the Zulu Empire: From: Kileio-Bulletin No.2, Vol.III, p. 14.

6. C. Cowley: KwaZulu, p. 42.

### 3.2 The age-grade regiment (Amabutho)

The first task that Dingiswayo did was to abolish circumcision. He did this in order to delay menfolk from getting married.<sup>7</sup> His army, as a result, became possibly much stronger, disciplined and better organised and this provided him the means to further his political ambitions.<sup>8</sup> His great natural ability and intellect had been enriched by his exposure to other people away from his home-country including, possibly, the advice and his talk with the white man from whom he is supposed to have acquired a horse and a gun.<sup>9</sup>

Dingiswayo divided his warriors into regiments (amabutho), distinguishing each regiment by a unique name and the colour of their shields.<sup>10</sup> It is generally believed, and rightly so, that the Zulu regimental system was begun by Dingiswayo and later borrowed by Shaka. He is believed to have acquired

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7. C. N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 27-04-1995.

8. C. S. Bourquin: The Zulu Military Organization and The Challenge of 1879, From: Military History Journal Vol.4, No.1, p. 139.

9. J. Bird: The Annals of Natal, 1495 to 1845, p. 63.

10. Ibid.

ideas from the direction of the Cape or Orange Free State."

One must, however, be quick to say that the age-set regimental system was not a completely new thing among the Mthethwa people. Jobe had had his regiments.<sup>12</sup> The amabutho Amnyama (Black regiments) and amabutho Amhlope (White regiments) as well as uYengondlovu (Elephant-baiters) had already been formed by Jobe.<sup>13</sup> This shows that there is reason to believe that Dingiswayo need not have gone so far afield (as far as the Cape) to get his inspiration for the regimental system.<sup>14</sup>

On the day following the murder of Mawewe, Dingiswayo started forming his own age-regiments (amabutho).<sup>15</sup> He banded together a number of young men, all of roughly the same age, drawn from a group which recognised his authority. He did this also for purposes of conducting them through the rites which

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11. E. J. Krige: The Social System of the Zulus, p. 8.

12. E. H. Brookes & C. de B. Webb: A History of Natal, p. 8.

13. J. Stuart: Ubaxoxele, p.24.

14. E. H. Brookes & C. de B. Webb: A History of Natal, p. 8.

15. J. Stuart: Ubaxoxele, p.24.

marked transition from youth to manhood.<sup>16</sup> At the head of each ibutho (singular form of 'regiment) was an induna (headman or commander).

Due to the abundance of human material, the following age-regiments (amabutho) were formed by Dingiswayo, each with its induna:

1. iZichwe (Bushmen); under induna uThayiza.
2. iNyakeni (Spoon-bags); under induna uDube kaYengeni.<sup>17</sup>
3. iNhlangano (Unity); their induna was uNgomane kaMgomboyi of Mdletshe.
4. iNingizimu (South); their induna was Mayanda kaVeyana of Mkhwanazi.
5. iMini (Day light); under induna uNomadidi ka Gugushi of Mthembu.
6. iSifazane (Females); under their induna uNohaya kaNgabha kaNsindona kaMwandla.
7. iNyakatho (North); It is not clear who headed this regiment.<sup>18</sup>

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16. A. H. Duminy & B. Guest: Natal and Zululand From Earliest-Times to 1910, p. 63.

17. A. T. Bryant: Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, p. 136.

18. J. Stuart: Ubaxoxele, p. 24.

The formation of these age-regiments (amabutho) took place at oYengweni. These seven regiments were in addition to those that belonged to Jobe, of which only three are remembered, Amnyama (Black), Amhlophe (White) and uYengondlovu (Elephant-baiters).<sup>19</sup>

The age-grade regiments (amabutho) were intended, primarily, for war purposes, although they would perform some other duties. They constituted circumcision schools which were periodically formed when the ruling inkosi banded together a number of young men of about the same age.<sup>20</sup> With Dingiswayo turning his attention to Delagoa Bay for trade purposes when the demand for ivory increased, he turned some of his amabutho hunting elephants for ivory. Amabutho were also employed as standing forces for the maintenance of political subordination of conquered communities and to extract an increased quantity of tribute from them. Finally, with the growing inter-clan wars, amabutho were serving more and more in the capacity of army and police force.<sup>21</sup>

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19. Ibid., p. 24.

20. A. Duminy & B. Guest: Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910, p. 62.

21. Ibid., p. 63.

### 3.3 Dingiswayo's Military Campaigns

Dingiswayo's military campaigns, which took place roughly between the years 1806 to 1818, resulted in the incorporation of no less than thirty clans into the hegemony of the Mthethwa ruling house.<sup>22</sup>

What is worth mentioning here, however, is that the incorporation of other clans and communities is not something that was started by Dingiswayo. He merely strengthened the process that was already in place. The earliest phase of Mthethwa expansion had already started during the reign of inkosi Khayi in about the third quarter of the eighteenth century.<sup>23</sup> In the days of Khayi, inkosi of Mthethwa people, communities incorporated into the Mthethwa overlordship were able to claim to be kinsfolk of the ruling house. During the reign of inkosi Jobe, Khayi's son and that of Dingiswayo, inkosi Jobe's son, chiefdoms subjected to Mthethwa rule were deliberately prevented from claiming to be kinsfolk of the ruling house.<sup>24</sup>

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22. R. B. Edgerton: Like Lions They Fought, p. 9.

23. A. Duminy & B. Guest: Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910, p.64.

24. Ibid., p. 64.

When discussing the growth of the Mthethwa clan, it must be remembered that from as early days as when Dingiswayo escaped from his father as Godongwana at oYengweni, many neighbouring chiefdoms to which he went as a refugee, greatly feared the mighty Jobe, who had established a growing kingdom.<sup>25</sup> Dingiswayo's military campaigns greatly strengthened the Mthethwa confederacy.

### 3.3.1 Campaign against abaThembu (the Mthembus)

The first clan to be conquered by Dingiswayo were abaThembu.<sup>26</sup> What annoyed Dingiswayo was to hear that Jama, inkosi of the Mthembu people, had isigodlo (an internal household where the king's maidens (wives) or girls presented to the king as tribute were kept).<sup>27</sup>

Dingiswayo had sent messengers to Jama to ask for the reason why he was keeping isigodlo as though he was a king. Jama's reply was: "Ngiyinkosi, noma ngingesiyo eyohlanga." ("I am inkosi, though not a king").<sup>28</sup> He admitted having isigodlo. This greatly angered Dingiswayo who set about teaching Jama a lesson.<sup>29</sup>

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25. C. N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 01-04-1995.

26. V. Ridgway: Stories From Zulu History, p. 27.

27. J. Stuart: Ubaxoxele, p.26.

28. J. Stuart: Ubaxoxele, p.26.

29. N. Mthethwa, eNseleni, 06-05-1995.

Dingiswayo sent out his warriors to beseige Jama's umuzi. They put Jama to death taking with them all his belongings, including cattle, his wives and isigodlo, which had been the cause of the war.<sup>30</sup> When Dingiswayo's warriors finally arrived at kwaMthethwa with the spoils, Dingiswayo was not happy. He told his warriors that he did not like the taking inkosi's wives hostage and killing the inkosi. He issued a magnanimous order that amakhosi should no longer be killed, neither should their wives be taken as spoils "... for this will make the earth poor and barren."<sup>31</sup> From that day on amakhosi were no longer to be killed.

Dingiswayo was indeed a human and a sympathetic king for he did not want to see the people he had conquered starving. He would only take the oxen and had them distributed among his warriors while he returned the cows to the defeated people for them to have milk and for breeding purposes.<sup>32</sup>

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30. J. Stuart: Ubaxoxele, p.26.

31. Ibid.

32. N. Mthethwa, eNseleni, 06-05-1995.

### 3.3.2 Campaign against Thokozwayo

Dingiswayo's second campaign was against Thokozwayo, son of Mandayisa.

He had heard that Thokozwayo was celebrating a certain function. It is not clear what function it was. Dingiswayo sent messengers to Thokozwayo to ask who said he must celebrate that function. The reply was: "Ngizoyek' umkhosi, kanti kanginkosi yini na?" ("Am I not inkosi, why should I not celebrate this function?")<sup>33</sup> Dingiswayo too umbrage at this reply and so he sent off his warriors to teach Thokozwayo a lesson. The latter was stabbed to death and his head was cut off.<sup>34</sup>

### 3.3.3 Campaign against Phakathwayo, inkosi of abokwaQwabe

Dingiswayo's third campaign was against Phakathwayo kaKhondlo, kaMncinci, kaLufutha, kaSimamane of the Qwabe people. Phakathwayo had many heads of cattle. The casus belli was that Phakathwayo used to graze his heads of cattle separately according to their colours.<sup>35</sup> Dingiswayo sent a messenger telling Phakathwayo to mix

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33. J. Stuart: Ubaxoxele, p.27.

34. Ibid., p. 27.

35. C. N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 27-04-1995.

his cattle and not separate them according to their colours. The reply from Phakathwayo was: "Ngenz'empahleni yami ngokuthanda kwami." ("I do what I like with my livestock.")<sup>36</sup>

Dingiswayo felt that this reply lacked the necessary respect and then sent his impi to attack the Qwabe people. The Mthethwa impi conquered Phakathwayo and took his cattle and isigodlo. They did not take his wives, for many of them were Dingiswayo's sisters.<sup>37</sup>

Phakathwayo, himself, went to Dingiswayo to plead for food and pledge his loyalty to the Mthethwa overlordship. Most of all he was going to Dingiswayo as his relative through marriage to tell him that his children were starving. They talked peace whereupon Dingiswayo generously gave Phakathwayo many cows so that he could get milk and oxen so that he might slaughter for his people. They stayed in peace for some time.<sup>38</sup>

After a long time (number of years not known) a quarrel arose between Phakathwayo and his younger brother, Nomo, because the latter also claimed to be inkosi.

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36. N. Mthethwa, eNseleni, 06-05-1995.

37. J. Stuart: Ubaxoxele, p.27.

38. M. P. Mbuthu, eSikhupheni, 27-04-1995.

Phakathwayo then called upon Dingiswayo to mediate, which the latter did. The brothers' quarrel was over the division of cattle. Dingiswayo told Nomo to take all his cattle and give them to Phakathwayo and come along with Dingiswayo to kwaMthethwa. At kwaMthethwa Dingiswayo gave Nomo a piece of land to settle at Mpemvu (name of the mountain) near Cwaka next to eNseleni river. Dingiswayo also generously gave Nomo more cattle than the ones he was asked to leave with Phakathwayo.<sup>39</sup>

Meanwhile, Phakathwayo, fearing that Dingiswayo would make Nomo inkosi, attacked Nomo at night and killed him. Dingiswayo's amabutho then attacked and punished Phakathwayo, killing all his ibutho (regiment) by the name of iZinkonde. Phakathwayo himself was not killed. He apologised to Dingiswayo for what he had done.<sup>40</sup>

#### 3.3.4 Campaign against Matiwane

Dingiswayo's fourth campaign was against Matiwane kaMasumpa, kaSihayo of emaNgwaneni. It is said Matiwane bragged that he was inkosi. He celebrated functions,

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39. M. P. Mbuthu, eSikhupheni, 27-04-1995.

40. J. Stuart: Ubaxoxele, p.29.

kept isigodlo and had regiments (amabutho). He therefore needed neither assistance nor opinion from another inkosi.<sup>41</sup>

On hearing this, Dingiswayo sent all his amabutho, including the three old ones belonging to his father - Amnyama, Amhlophe and uYengondlovu. At dawn he was at Matiwane's territory. He first released one of his father's ibutho eliMhlophe. They fought Matiwane until the sun rose. Realising that it was indecisive, Dingiswayo released the next ibutho eliMnyama. After a long time, just when he was anticipating releasing all his amabutho, he saw the first huts burning. Matiwane had been defeated.<sup>42</sup> It was at this battle that Ziyongo, inkosi uJobe's dunankulu (Prime Minister), fought until his cloth, which he got from Dingiswayo as a present, was taken away by the enemies.<sup>43</sup>

As Matiwane's people retreated, Dingiswayo took the spoils in the form of cattle and isigodlo and his wives. When Dingiswayo heard of Ziyongo's cloth that had been taken, he sent people to go and announce that if the

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41. C. N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 06-05-1995.

42. C. N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 06-05-1995.

43. J. Stuart: Ubaxoxele, p. 30.

cloth was not returned on that same day, he would send his impi the following day, mightier than on the previous occasion against Matiwane again.

When Matiwane sent his messengers with cattle as tribute to acknowledge Dingiswayo's overlordship as well as bringing back Ziyongo's cloth, Dingiswayo released Matiwane's wives and gave them cows for milk so that they would not starve.<sup>44</sup> From that day on they lived in peace and they never attacked each other.

### 3.3.5 Campaign against Macingwane

Dingiswayo's fifth campaign was against Macingwane kaLubhoko of eNgonyameni at Nkandla. Macingwane was a Mchunu. He also kept isigodlo. Dingiswayo asked him to do away with his isigodlo to avoid war and the taking away of his cattle. Macingwane refused and was attacked. Macingwane's impi was defeated and his cattle and isigodlo were taken away. Macingwane accepted Dingiswayo's overlordship.<sup>45</sup>

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44. J. Stuart: Ubaxoxele, p. 30.

45. M. P. Mbuthu, eSikhupheni, 27-04-1995.

### 3.3.6 Campaign against Zwide

Zwide was inkosi of the Ndwandwe clan. The Ndwandwe clan under Zwide were very powerful and aggressive.<sup>46</sup> There were several campaigns against each other. In some cases Dingiswayo himself was defeated but Zwide was defeated and held hostage on more than one occasion. Zwide was released by Dingiswayo on all occasions because the two were relatives by marriage.<sup>47</sup> One war in which Shaka participated as a member of iZichwe age-regiment was carefully discussed and planned by Shaka.<sup>48</sup> Zwide was defeated.

The final campaign against Zwide by Dingiswayo is discussed in the fourth chapter under the "Death of Dingiswayo".

### 3.3.7 Campaigns against other clans

Altogether Dingiswayo caused more than thirty (30) clans to submit to his hegemony.<sup>49</sup> It is therefore not going to be possible to record all of his campaigns against

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46. C. Cowley: KwaZulu, p. 45.

47. J. Stuart: Ubaxoxele, p.31.

48. I. Perrett: Footprints In Time - Natal, p. 16.

49. R. B. Edgerton: Like Lions They Fought, p. 9.

these clans. Moreover, not all of them were subjected to some coercion. Particularly those that were smaller would accept his authority without there being a need for Dingiswayo to send his army. It must be pointed out also that the wars that Dingiswayo began with his neighbours were not on a grand scale.<sup>50</sup> This was so, probably, because Dingiswayo avoided as far as possible the unnecessary shedding of blood. He insisted strongly that women and children should not be killed. "I fight with men, not with women and children".<sup>51</sup> At times he even endeavoured to save the lives of his enemies.<sup>52</sup> On one occasion when they attacked Zwide with his three regiments, the elderly uYengondlovu, iNyakeni and iZichwe, Dingiswayo "... adjured the dynamic Shaka on no account to take Zwide's life and to kill as little as possible."<sup>53</sup> Indeed at the end of the war some 500 people had been killed and an equal number wounded out of a total force of about 2500 engaged.<sup>54</sup>

The most important of the conquered clans were the Mthembu, Qwabe, eLangeni, Matiwane, Macingwane, Qadi,

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50. J. Bird: The Annals of Natal, 1495 to 1845, p. 63.

51. V. Ridgway: Stories From Zulu History, p. 23.

52. E. A. Ritter: Shaka Zulu, p. 61.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid., p. 63.

Zulu, Mtshali, Buthelezi, Khuswayo, Swazi, Xhosa, etc.<sup>55</sup> On some occasions, Dingiswayo used ijadu (love-dances) to entice his enemies to peaceful subjugation. The Qwabe people, under Khondlo, are one such example who, after several unsuccessful attempts were attacked by Dingiswayo's uYengondlovu regiment.<sup>56</sup> Khondlo was quick to hear of the intention and ordered all his people to withdraw to oNgoye forest with their cattle. On hearing of Khondlo's response, Dingiswayo ordered his maidens to begin singing and dancing. That was too much for the young Qwabe warriors to resist. They soon came out of the forest and joined in ijadu (love-dance).<sup>57</sup> Dingiswayo then had the opportunity of talking to the Qwabe people into submitting in a peaceful manner to his rule. Dingiswayo won the day with a love-dance and joy instead of a battle and bloodshed.<sup>58</sup>

Fynn had this to say of Dingiswayo, : "He never destroyed or permanently dispersed any people with whom he went to war."<sup>59</sup> When his enemies agreed to accept him as their

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55. J. Stuart: The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn, p. 9.

56. V. Ridgway: Stories From Zulu History, p. 23.

57. C. N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 06-05-1995.

58. V. Ridgway: Stories From Zulu History, p. 22.

59. Ibid.

king, he usually allowed them to reoccupy their own country and continue being ruled by their inkosi.<sup>60</sup>

The Mngadi people were the other clan that felt the might of Dingiswayo. Their inkosi, Madlokovu, refused to recognise Dingiswayo as their overlord. When they heard that the Mthethwa army was coming to punish them, inkosi Madlokovu ordered his people to hide in a huge cave on the edge of a hill overlooking the Mfule river.<sup>61</sup> They all got into the cave but their cattle were left on the way. Dingiswayo's warriors captured the cattle and took them back to their king.<sup>62</sup> It is said that when the cattle were sorted by Dingiswayo according to colour and size, and were divided among his warriors who had taken part as a bonus of their labours,<sup>63</sup> Dingiswayo, as usual, ordered that certain of the best ones should be returned to the Mngadi people for breeding purposes, so that they should not be left entirely without cattle and starve.<sup>64</sup>

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60. K. M. Kilfoil: The Rise of the Zulu Empire: From: Kleio-Bulletin No.2, Vol.III, p. 15.

61. V. Ridgway: Stories From Zulu History, p. 22.

62. C. N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 06-05-1995.

63. C. N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 06-05-1995.

64. V. Ridgway: Stories From Zulu History, p. 23.

Here, again, we see another example of the magnanimity of Dingiswayo. When he returned some cattle, he would return the cows so that the defeated clan might get milk. On rare occasions he would give oxen if he wanted that inkosi to slaughter for his people as he did with Phakathwayo of the Qwabe people.

Mkabi, the first wife of Senzangakhona confesses that: "uDingiswayo kwakuyinkosi enhle futhi kuyinkosi enkulu, sasihlezi sinethezekile phansi kwekhwapha lakhe." ("Dingiswayo was a good and a great king, we were settled in great satisfaction under his wing.").<sup>65</sup> There were many other smaller clans who, voluntarily opted to recognise Dingiswayo's supremacy, who would pay tribute to him and enter into negotiations in a peaceful manner when the need arose. Some of these clans were abaKwaZulu, the Mbonambi and Sokhulu people.<sup>66</sup>

Dingiswayo was unquestionably a highly intelligent and humane man.<sup>67</sup> He used only enough force to obtain the submission of his adversaries. He did not wantonly destroy the kraals or deprive the people of too many

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65. C. Cowley: KwaZulu, p. 44.

66. Ibid., p. 45.

67. A. R. Willcox: Southern Land, p. 182.

cattle. He would never kill women and children.<sup>68</sup> He was a builder rather than a destroyer. He created a nation out of scores of warring clans.<sup>69</sup> The culmination of this process probably earned him the right to the title "king". Thus the old type of Nguni chiefdom which Dingiswayo took over from his father Jobe, expanded into a confederacy of chiefdoms, knit together by the paramountcy of Dingiswayo and undergirded by the effective army he controlled.<sup>70</sup> While subject chiefdoms tended to remain intact in many respects, their menfolk were conscripted into Dingiswayo's amabutho (age-grade regiments), thereby securing the integration of the chiefdoms into the Mthethwa confederacy.<sup>71</sup>

### 3.4 Successes in Dingiswayo's military campaigns

Few factors could be attributed to Dingiswayo's military success. One of them is the fact that he started forming his amabutho (age-grade regiments) in a completely new style. Each ibutho (age-grade regiment) was clearly distinguished by its dress and the colour of

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68. Ibid., p. 184.

69. Ibid.

70. K. M. Kilfoil: The Rise of the Zulu Empire: From: Kleio-Bulletin No.2, Vol.III, p. 15.

71. T. Cameron & S.B. Spies (eds): An Illustrated History of South Africa, p. 116.

its shield.<sup>72</sup> Each *ibutho* (age-set regiment) was made up of men of roughly the same age group. Dingiswayo himself selected a leader for each *ibutho* on the basis of merit.<sup>73</sup> The circumcision rite was deferred until Dingiswayo had brought under his domain all the clans within his reach.<sup>74</sup> His army, therefore, became strong and provided him the means to further his political ambitions.<sup>75</sup> Above all, Dingiswayo's *amabutho* were highly disciplined.<sup>76</sup>

When Shaka Zulu, the son of Senzangakhona, inkosi of a small Zulu clan, finally joined *izichwe* regiment in about 1812, his ideas greatly boosted the performance of *izichwe* in particular and the entire army of Dingiswayo in general.<sup>77</sup> In one of his many campaigns against *Zwide*, inkosi of the *Ndwandwe* people, who was very powerful and aggressive to the north of the *Mthethwa*

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72. B. Roberts: The Zulu Kings, p. 40.

73. C. S. Bourquin: The Zulu Military Organization and The Challenge of 1879, From: Military History Journal Vol.4, No.1, p. 139.

74. J. Bird: The Annals of Natal, 1495 to 1845, p. 64.

75. C. S. Bourquin: The Zulu Military Organization and The Challenge of 1879, From: Military History Journal Vol.4, No.1, p. 139.

76. A. R. Willcox: Southern Land, p. 184.

77. C. N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 06-05-1995.

territory, Dingiswayo was debating with his amabutho the tactics they would employ in attacking the Ndwandwe people. He quickly emphasized again that he did not wish to destroy, for as he intended, he merely wanted to teach Zwide a lesson, whereupon Shaka sharply rejoined, "which will never be learned."<sup>78</sup> Shaka had wanted Zwide not only to be taught a lesson but to be destroyed once and for all. He wanted what Shaka called impi ebomvu (red war), that is, to destroy your enemy for good and forget about him. The rest of the war council, however, voted solidly against Shaka.<sup>79</sup> In short, they were also against destroying Zwide. Shaka, however, strongly defended his ideas, even against Dingiswayo. It was a feature at this isigungu (war council) that everyone was entitled to freely voice his opinion, even against Dingiswayo himself.<sup>80</sup> This, in my opinion, is one thing that accounted for his success because he was not undlovukayiphendulwa (a dictator).

Dingiswayo was said to have "assumed a despotic power hitherto unknown" by some authors such as Fynn, but it is clear from the previous paragraph that he, all the

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78. E. A. Ritter: Shaka Zulu, p. 60.

79. Ibid., p. 60.

80. Ibid., p. 60.

same, was still able to listen and take advice from others.<sup>81</sup>

What added to Dingiswayo's success was that he was kind-hearted. Clans under his domain enjoyed complete protection with the result that none of them revolted against him.

In the process Dingiswayo had served to provide Shaka with military and political tactics which were to provide Shaka with both the knowledge and the organisation he later required to realise his own ambitions.<sup>82</sup>

### 3.5 Origins of the royal salute "Bayede"

Dingiswayo was, indeed, like a very big tree which provided shade for clans under his confederacy to rest under his protection. The royal salute, "Beyethe", ("bring them") is conceived to have originated in these circumstances. It come from 'Mabalethe' ("Let them bring") or "let them pay tribute," or even "let them bring clans" that they may come and have rest. In our

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81. J. Stuart & D. McK. Malcolm (eds): The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn, p. 9.

82. B. Roberts: The Zulu Kings, p. 46.

present isiZulu language it would be Mabalethe (Let them bring) but in the "yeyeza" or "thefuya" lingua as used by the Mthethwa people in those days, the concept became entrenched as "Mabayethe". This basically meant, if there be that which oppresses, or troubles, the people, let them bring it - "and he will give them rest."<sup>83</sup> This has become the royal salute and it was first used to address Dingiswayo. Not every inkosi could be addressed as such. Only the supreme "king of kings" could.

"The extent to which Dingiswayo carried his conquests is not definitely dominion over most of the tribes between Thukela and Phongolo rivers."<sup>84</sup> This is true because even the Ndwandwe people of Zwide were twice defeated by Dingiswayo. On both occasions Zwide, himself, was captured by Dingiswayo but was freed on both occasions. Dingiswayo seemed to have freed Zwide because he (Zwide) was Jobe's companion. Dingiswayo's sister, Dingiwe, the one who saved Dingiswayo's life at amaWonzi forest, was married to Zwide. Later, his generous act was to prove his last and fatal error as it was the same Zwide that was to put him to death.<sup>85</sup>

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83. J. Y. Gibson: The Story of the Zulus, p. 13.

84. Ibid., p. 13.

85. A. T. Bryant: Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, p. 158.

## Chapter Four

### 4.1 Economic Development of abakwaMthethwa

It has already been mentioned earlier that one of Dingiswayo's greatest dreams was to blend the two previously distinct Nguni institutions, education and the military in order to reorganise the Mthethwa army.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately at the time when Dingiswayo became inkosi of the Mthethwa people, there had been a great famine in the country. This famine took place in 1801 and 1802.<sup>2</sup> The rains had unexpectedly dried up and this great famine began to take hold of the country.<sup>3</sup> This famine was so great and devastating to the food reserves that it became known as Madlathule (let him eat and remain silent).<sup>4</sup> Anyone

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1. K. M. Kilfoil: The Rise of the Zulu Empire: From: Kleio-Bulletin No.2, Vol.III, p. 14.
  2. T. Cameron & S.B. Spies (eds): An Illustrated History of South Africa, p. 117.
  3. Readers Digest: Illustrated History of S.A., p. 82.
  4. T. Cameron & S.B. Spies (eds): An Illustrated History of South Africa, p. 117.

who came across any small amount of food would not announce the discovery but would keep it secretly for his family.

As livestock was dying in large numbers, competition for surviving herds became fiercer than ever. The political scenario was dominated at the beginning of the nineteenth century by the rivalry among the six newly emerged polities in KwaZulu-Natal. They were the Mabhudu, the Dlamini-Ngwane, AmaHlubi, abaNdwandwe, abaNkomo and abaNkomo.

It is important to mention at this stage that Dingiswayo was not only concerned with warfare and conquest. He also wanted to make his people rich by developing trade.<sup>6</sup> He endeavoured to put into practice what he had learnt from Dr Cowan.

Dingiswayo facilitated trade with Delagoa Bay when he sent one hundred oxen and a quantity of elephant tusks in exchange for beads and blankets from the Portuguese port.<sup>7</sup> This trade was continued on a wide

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5. A. Duminy & B. Guest: Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910, p.66.

6. I. Perrett: Footprints In Time - Natal, p. 17.

7. J. Y. Gibson: The Story of the Zulu, p. 14.

scale. The Mthethwa people also sent wooden platters and spoons, carved in light wood with dark patterns burnt in them.

Men also made soft karosses (hides) and took them to Delagoa Bay for barter trade with the Portuguese. A cattle skin processing industry was established by Dingiswayo. It provided a hundred men with employment in that cottage industry. These people had to be taught the skills involved in work. From the barter trade exchanged in Delagoa Bay, some goods were selected for imitation purposes by these Mthethwa cottage industry men. Dingiswayo encouraged this imitation by giving out a beautiful reward for anyone who would produce a chair, a table and milk tureen.<sup>8</sup>

The Mthethwa people became economically viable since trade with Delagoa Bay began. The closest chiefdom to Delagoa Bay was Mabhudu. Dingiswayo entered into an alliance with Mabhudu, apparently in an effort to make all trade exclusively his prerogative.<sup>9</sup> Inkosi

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8. J. Stuart & D. Mck. Malcolm: The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn, p. 11.

9. T. Cameron & S.B. Spies (eds): An Illustrated History of South Africa, p. 117.

Makhasane was the ruler of the Mabhudu from 1790 onward and he dominated the area to the south east of Delagoa Bay and the coast.<sup>10</sup>

Further east, Dingiswayo was aware of the aggressive nature of the Ndwandwe people under Zwide and because he was eager to expand the Mthethwa control and influence up to and including Delagoa Bay, he was determined to combine his forces with Makhasane in order to form a strong alliance. Interestingly one historian sees Makhasane as a weaker partner politically,<sup>11</sup> while another sees Makhasane as a leader of a strong and a viable polity.<sup>12</sup>

In concluding an alliance with Makhasane, Dingiswayo sought to cut Zwide and the Ndwandwe off from trade with either Mabhudu or the Portuguese in Delagoa Bay.<sup>13</sup> Dingiswayo intended to surround Mabhudu with a

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10. J. Wright: The Dynamics of Power and Conflict in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu Region in the late 18th and Early 19th Centuries, p. 157.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. T. Cameron & S.B. Spies (eds): An Illustrated History of South Africa, p. 117.

frontier of politie subordinate to the Mthethwa rule. This was intended to enlarge the Mthethwa hunting area for ivory.<sup>14</sup>

The Ndwandwe people under Zwide were engaged in fighting for territorial expansion. They were attempted to expand their power on two fronts from their territorial heartland in the Magudu-Nongoma region. To the east the Ndwandwe were trying to extend effective control over three tributary chiefdoms lying to the north and west of Lake Saint Lucia. These were the Gasa, the Msane and the Jele.<sup>15</sup> The Gasa, the Msane and the Jele were attacked by the Ndwandwe, probably because they were strategically situated on the trade route between Delagoa Bay and the Mthethwa country.<sup>16</sup>

To the north west the Ndwandwe were engaged in the struggle with the Dlamini, for the control of the mid-Phongolo valley.<sup>17</sup>

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14. T. Cameron & S.B. Spies (eds): An Illustrated History of South Africa, p. 117.

15. J. Wright: The Dynamics of Power and Conflict in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu Region in the late 18th and Early 19th Centuries, p. 158.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

It has been suggested that Dingiswayo's primary aim was to establish control over the trade route to the north as a means of strengthening the Mthethwa state economically.<sup>18</sup>

The Mthethwa people were not only expanding to the east, but were also expanding to the west. The Mthethwa expansion to the west has been regarded as having been strategic for trade reasons. Specifically the rise of the Mthethwa interests in this region reflected a major shift from ivory to cattle.<sup>19</sup>

#### 4.2 The Relationship between Dingiswayo and the Portuguese Traders

The working relation between Dingiswayo and the Portuguese was very cordial. At one stage Dingiswayo is said by Mkaba to have been helped by Portuguese mercenaries in his war against Phakathwayo of the Qwabe people.<sup>20</sup>

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18. J. Wright: The Dynamics of Power and Conflict in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu Region in the late 18th and Early 19th Centuries, p. 159.

19. Ibid. p. 161

20. C. Cowley: KwaZulu, p. 45.

Things began to change somewhat when ivory trade declined allowing trade with cattle to return to prominence. Whereas ivory had been a luxury item of trade under the prerogative of the king and exchange had directly involved few commoners, cattle on the contrary played a pivotal role in the life of every household.<sup>21</sup>

#### 4.3 Dingiswayo's Relationship with the Ndwandwe People under Zwide

Even though the two amakhosi of the Mthethwa and the Ndwandwe people had marriage ties, for example, Dingiswayo's sister was married to Zwide, they not only lived in suspicion of each other but they fought each other constantly.<sup>22</sup> As each of these two great powers extended their respective influences over their neighbouring clans, it became inevitable that there would be a collision.<sup>23</sup>

After Zwide's several defeats and two releases by Dingiswayo after being captured, Zwide was still not

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21. A. Duminy & B. Guest: Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910, p.66.

22. C. N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 27-04-1995.

23. K. M. Kilfoil: The Rise of the Zulu Empire: From: Kleio-Bulletin No.2, Vol.III, p. 14.

grateful that his life had been saved. Dingiswayo could not win Zwide as an ally. Instead Zwide remained the worst of his enemies who was intent on revenge.

#### 4.4 Dingiswayo murdered by Zwide

By the year 1818, Dingiswayo had defeated Zwide three times. Every time Zwide had promised to acknowledge the supremacy of Dingiswayo and to refrain from attacking his other neighbours. Dingiswayo had wanted Zwide to obtain approval from him before waging a war against his neighbours and Dingiswayo would let him fight for the right cause.<sup>24</sup> Dingiswayo was both angry and disappointed at hearing that Zwide had attacked and destroyed people of Matiwane, ruthlessly killing all men, women and children. Dingiswayo sent messages to Zwide asking for an explanation and redress.<sup>25</sup> Zwide would not give a satisfactory explanation. Zwide had, apparently, gathered strength and determined, once again, to try his luck against Dingiswayo.

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24. E. A. Ritter: Shaka Zulu, p. 129

25. Ibid.

Tradition has it that Zwide succeeded by magical means when he sent his sister Ntombazana to try and win love of Dingiswayo. The purpose of that love relation pretence was to have access to Dingiswayo's personal clothing, including dirt from his head-ring and other parts of the body, unbeknown to Dingiswayo. All such items would be used for magic making which, if well-mixed would, it was believed, weaken Dingiswayo and make it possible for him to be defeated by Zwide. This plan was to succeed.<sup>26</sup>

At this opportune moment, when Zwide's magical concoction (muthi) was ready, he (Zwide) happened to have a serious misunderstanding with Malusi, his half brother, over Malusi's marriage with Nomathuli, Dingiswayo's sister. To create a casus belli, Zwide had Malusi killed.<sup>27</sup>

This act by Zwide greatly annoyed Dingiswayo who immediately prepared for action. He mobilised his army and ordered his vassal, Shaka, to do likewise.<sup>28</sup>

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26. A. T. Bryant: Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, p. 163.

27. E. A. Ritter: Shaka Zulu, p. 130.

28. Ibid.

There are a few versions on what happened between the time Dingiswayo left his oYengweni royal umuzi and marched to his death. It is not my intention to discuss these versions here. What is perhaps necessary to mention is that because of his generosity and ingeniousness, Dingiswayo left his impi behind and proceeded alone, with a few maidens to Zwide to discuss circumstances which led to the death of Malusi.<sup>29</sup>

True to his conciliatory policies and his magnanimity, Dingiswayo would possibly have avoided the war had his talks with Zwide been successful. But when he finally got to Zwide, he was captured and taken prisoner by Zwide.<sup>30</sup>

At first Zwide showed every desire to save Dingiswayo's life and free him on condition that Dingiswayo agreed to becoming a tributary chief. Such proposal was rejected with indignation by Dingiswayo, who used such insulting language that Zwide saw no other option but to put Dingiswayo to death.<sup>31</sup> The witchcraft power had finally succeeded.

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29. C. N. Mthethwa, eMbabe, 27-04-1995.

30. B. Roberts: The Zulu Kings, p. 49.

31. J. Stuart & D. Mck. Malcolm: The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn, p. 11.

After Dingiswayo had been killed by Zwide at his kwaDlovunga umuzi in 1818, the Mthethwa people were left without a leader. It was then that the shattered pieces of the Mthethwa confederacy were purposefully picked up by Shaka, who completed the second and final phase of reconstruction among the northern Nguni, during which the Zulu kingdom emerged.<sup>32</sup>

## 5 Conclusion

AbaKwaMthethwa are still to be found to-day where their great great amakhosi like Jobe and Dingiswayo left them. All the subsequent amakhosi of the Mthethwa people lived and ruled in the same area where their forefathers lived although their territory has decreased in size. It is presently situated between uMfolozi and eNseleni rivers and stretches from the old N2 national road in the east to beyond Mvamanzi and Mendu mountains in the west.

In this history of abaNkwaMthethwa the focus has tended to concentrate on Dingiswayo because it is believed that he was the first African ruler in this

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32. T. Cameron & S.B. Spies (eds): An Illustrated History of South Africa, p. 118.

part of the country to create the idea of a confederacy of clans (states) under one supreme ruler. Dingiswayo started the building of his strong empire but could unfortunately not enjoy its fulfilment. It was king Shaka who finally completed what is today known as the Zulu nation.

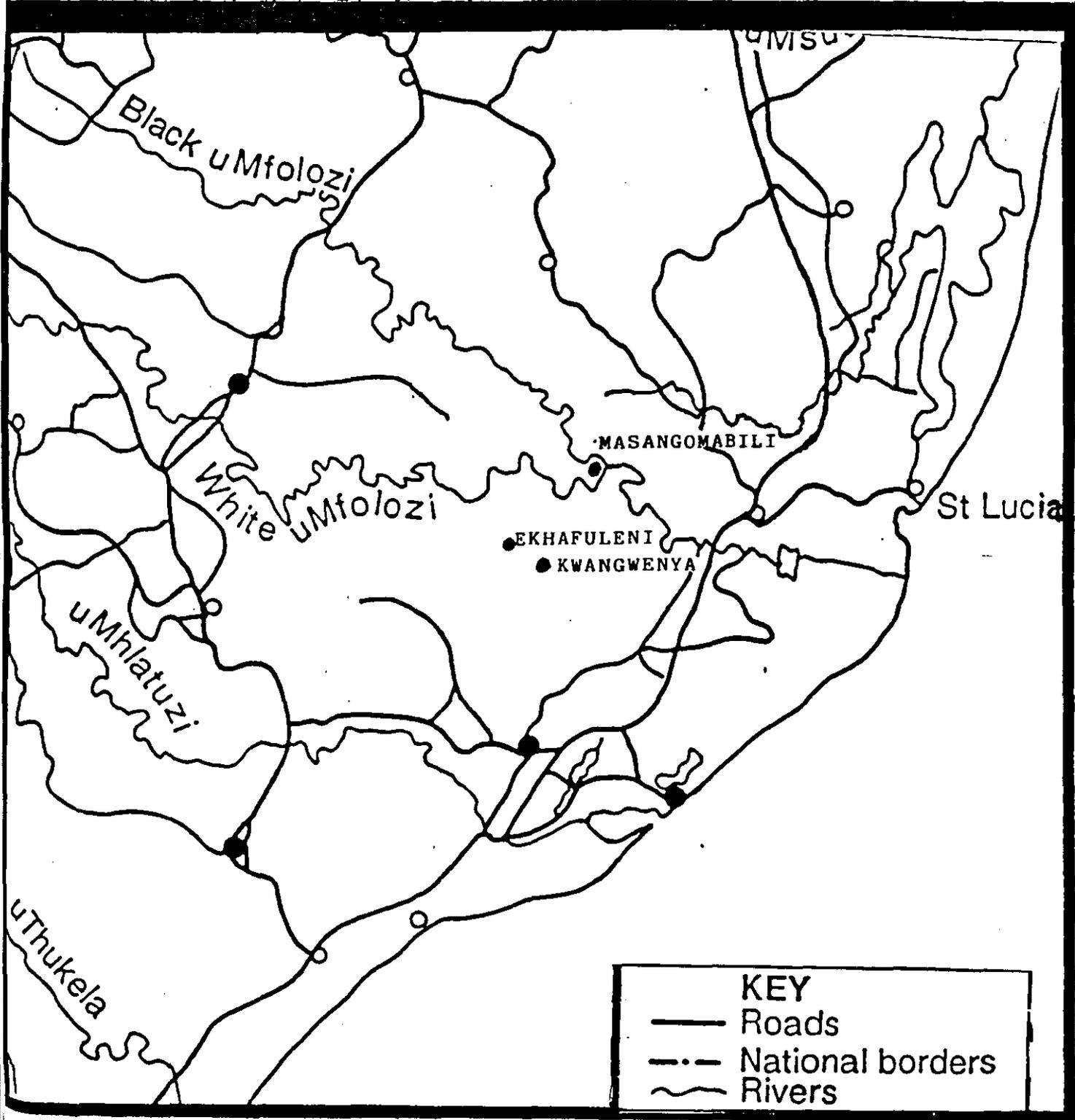
The death of Dingiswayo was both a blow and a setback to the Mthethwa people. Dingiswayo, the most enlightened of the African rulers, the most kind and the lover of peace was sorely missed in the terrible wars that followed. His death left a scar among AbaKwaMthethwa that nothing but the passage of time would heal.

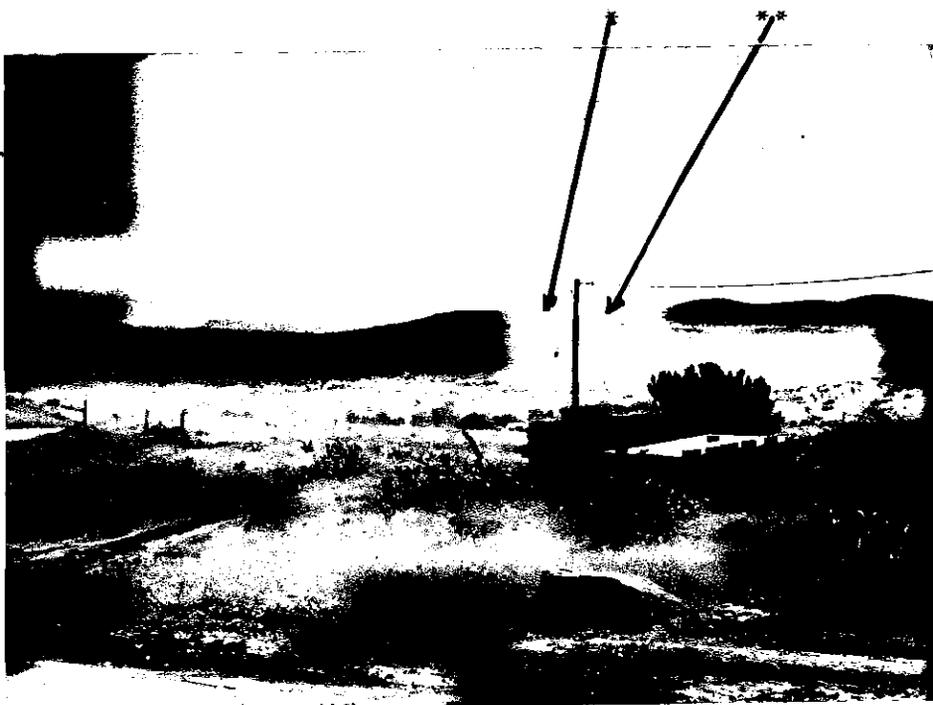
"uMaf'avuke, njengedangabane.  
 uSombangeya kaNdaba!  
 uMadlekezele, inkomo yanganene,  
 Izothengana nayiph'enenekazi  
 Izothengana no Mbangambi wo Vuma, emaShobeni.  
 uSombangeya kaso'atshelwa izindaba,  
 Uyatshelw' izindaba, ugijimel' ehawini."<sup>33</sup>

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33. J. Stuart: Ubaxoxele, pp. 42-3.

Some Royal Imizi at Kwa Mthethwa.

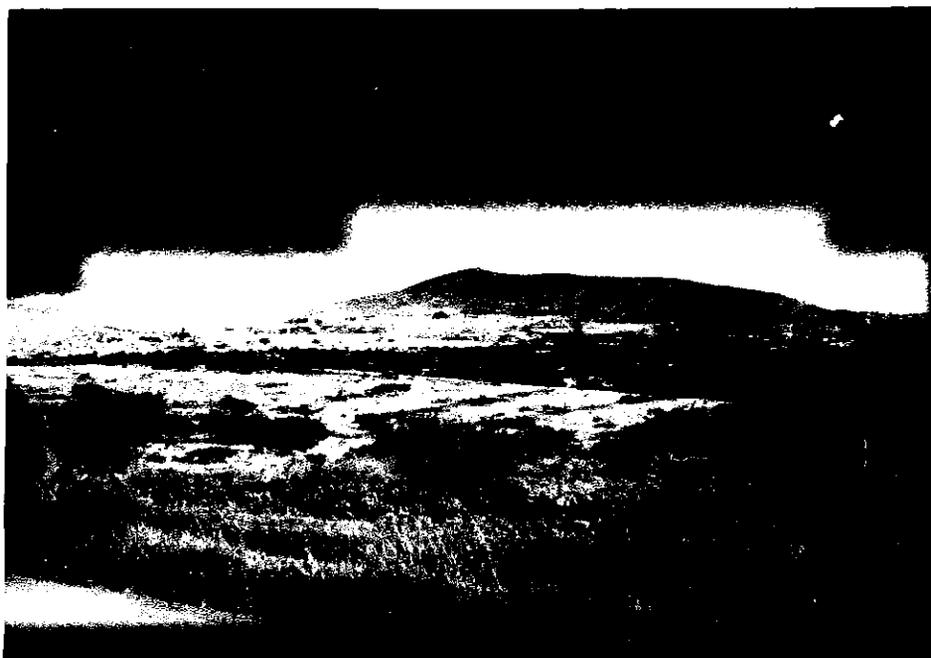




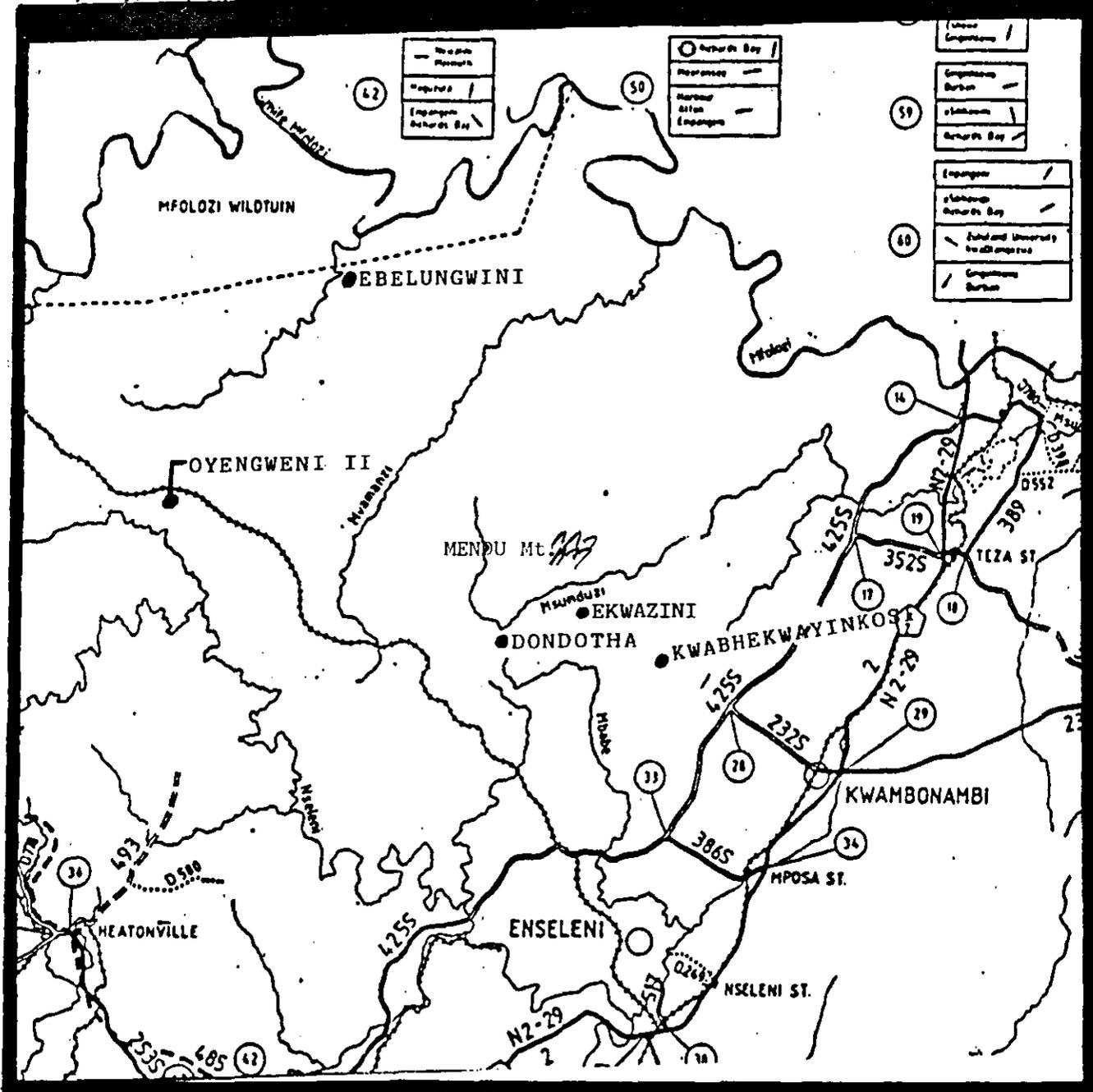
ABOVE: \* Ebelungwini -- inkosi Jobe's umuzi.

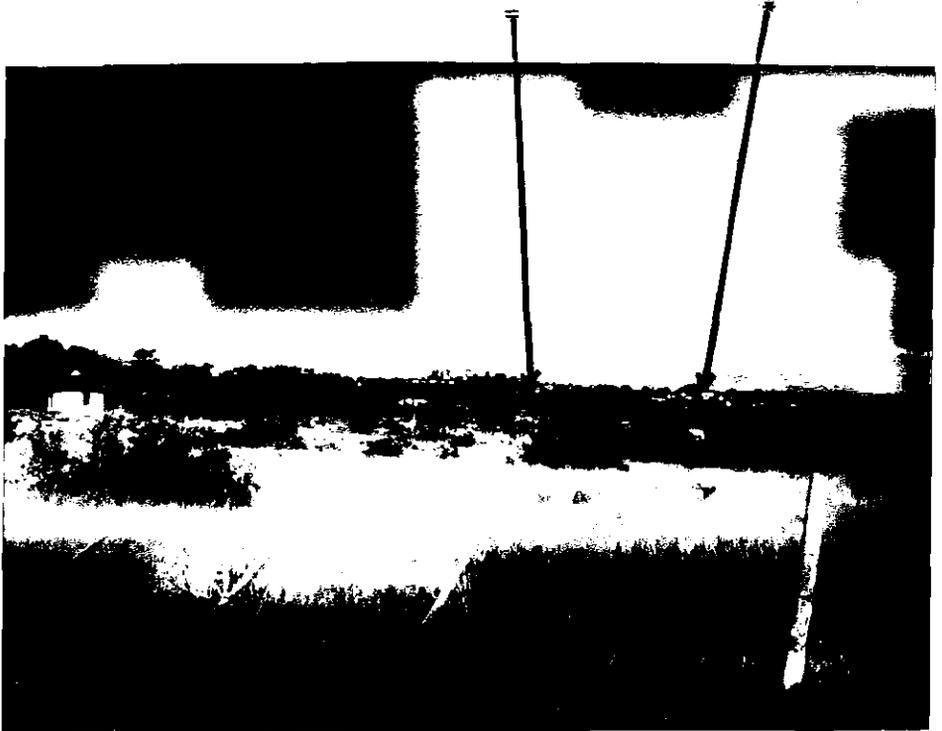
\*\* Mduba on the slope of the mountain. This is where Dingiswayo hid his weapons at a place that was later to be known as eZikhalinizenkosi.

BELOW: Dondotha location from across Msunduzi river in the east.



Map of Kwamiethwa - From the Roads Dept. Embangueni





ABOVE: = Sokwetshatha's umuzi in the middle - eKhafuleni  
 \* KwaBhekwayinkosi, Ntemba, the present  
 inkosi's umuzi.

BELOW: uMendu mountain in the distance from above  
 Dondotha.



Mafa Phineas Mbutu, one local  
authority interviewed



*Ngenhla uMfu Phinias  
Mbutu. Isithombe ngu:  
Peter Zietsman.*

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Interviews Conducted

Mbuthu, Mafa Phineas (aged 112 years).

Work : Pensioner

Address : Thandaza Store  
P O Box 14  
KwaMbonambi 3915

Date Interviewed : 27-04-1995

Length of Interview : 1,5 Hours.

Mthethwa, Christian Nkosini (aged 82 years)

Work : Pensioner  
Address : eMbabe Store  
P O Box  
KwaMbonambi 3915  
Date Interviewed : 01-04-1995,  
27-04-1995 and  
06-05-1995  
Length of Interviews : 6 Hours.

Mthethwa, Nxebeni (aged 78 years)

Work : Induna of inkosi yaKwaKhoza  
Address : Mhawu Store  
P O eNseleni  
Date Interviewed : 01-04-1995.  
Length of Interview : 1 Hour.