

**READING THE SWAZI REED DANCE (*UMHLANGA*) AS A LITERARY
TRADITIONAL PERFORMANCE ART**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted for any other degree or examination in any other university.

Lomagugu Precious Masango

13th November 2008

DEDICATION

To the memory of Dr Puleng Hanong

“DEATH WHERE IS THY STING”

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Plate I: King Mswati III's daughter, Nkhosatana Sikhanyiso (left) and her cousin (right) with younger princesses in full Umhlanga regalia. (*The Times of Swaziland* 31/08/2005)

GLOSSARY

Key: p = phrase; n = noun; ip = idiomatic phrase; int = interjection

- ***Emagumbi lamane emhlaba (p)***: the four regions of the country (Hhohho, Manzini, Shiselweni, Lubombo).
- ***Imbali yeMaswati (n)***: refers to the 'Flower' of the Swazi Nation; the girls' *libutfo* or regiment comprising the *umcwasho* girls who participated in the *Umhlanga* during the event's performance between 2004 and 2007.
- ***Imbokodvo (n)***: stone used for grinding.
- ***Imvunulo(n)***: refers to the traditional regalia shown in Plate I
- ***INcwala (n)***: first fruit sacred ceremony and national prayer involving the King.

- ***Indlamu (n)***: short colourful beaded skirt worn by younger girls.
- ***Indvuku (n)***: sticks held in the right hand (in place of the knife) during the dance.
- ***Inhlambelo (n)***: King's enclosure made out of *lusekwane*.
- ***Injobo itfungelwa ebandla (id-p)***: an idiom which means an important topic is discussed by a group of men or council.
- ***Inkhundla (n)***: center used both as polling station and center for communal meetings. (plu: *tinkhundla*).
- ***Inyandzaleyo (n/int)***: a loud and shrill cry or exclamation used to raise alarm
- ***Kukhonta***: a Swazi custom where a man seek land to construct his homestead from an area chief.
- ***Kulamuta***: a Swazi custom where a man eventually marries his wife's younger sister (his sister in-law).
- ***Liduku(n)***: a new innovation on the dress code where girls fasten long handkerchiefs of different colours on a ring around their arms.
- ***Lifahlawane(n)***: musical strap tied around the ankles as an accompaniment to the singing and dancing.
- ***Ligcabho(n)***: a feeling of pride or something to be proud of or satisfied about.
- ***Ligcebesha(n)***: traditional necklace made out of colourful beads.
- ***Liguma(n)***: traditional fencing/enclosure hugging a hut which acts as a windbreaker (plu: *emaguma*).
- ***Ligusha(plu)***: a slippery vegetable (similar to okra) eaten with porridge the stable food in the country.
- ***Ligwalagwala(n)***: red feather plugged in the hair by the princesses and princes and close relatives to the royal household.
- ***Lihawu(n)***: small shield held in the left hand during the dance.
- ***Lihiya(n)***: clothing material tied on top.

- ***Lilangeni***: praise name for the Dlamini clan/Swazi currency (plu: *Emalangeni*).
- ***Lilawu(n)***: man's hut.
- ***Lisiko(n)***: tradition/custom
- ***Liso leNkhosi(np)***: Kings'Eye (Private Secretary to the King)
- ***LiSwati(n)***: a Swazi citizen (plu: *emaSwati*)
- ***Lobola***: is to pay bride price in the form of cows.
- ***Luhlanga(n)***: one reed ((plu) *imihlanga*).
- ***Luhlanga LwakaNgwane(np)***: part of praise name for the Dlamini.
- ***Lusekwane(n)***: tree used to construct the King's enclosure during *iNcwala*.
- ***Marula(n)***: an alcoholic drink/brew made from the fruit of a natural wild tree.
- ***Muti(n)***: a form of concoction/substance associated with witchcraft
- ***Sibhimbi(n)***: any ceremony held to mark an historical event in the history of the nation or that of the country.
- ***Sika(v)***: cut
- ***Sidvwashi(n)***: clothing material tied around the waist instead of the *indlamu*.
- ***Sidvwaba(n)***: traditional skirt made out of cow's skin worn by women (*lutsango*)
- ***SiSwati(n)***: Swazi language/culture/custom
- ***Tingoma temhlanga(np)***: songs sung during the *Umhlanga ceremony*
- ***Umcwasho(n)***: woollen head-gear made up of different colours depending on the girl's age.
- ***Umgaco(n)***: long woollen tassels of different colours worn by *Umhlanga* maidens covering the top part of the body reaching below the *indlamu*.
- ***Umjijimba(n)***: woollen tassels hanging on the right side of the *indlamu* down to the knee.

- **Umukhwa(n):** knife held in the right hand during the dance(sometimes a stick and recently colourful feather dusts are used in its place).
- **Uyezwa na!(int):** Do you hear! (a royal command used to summon people for royal duties such as *Umhlanga*).

Social Distinction

- **Babe(n):** Father
- **Bayethe(n):** salutation reserved for the King
- **Butfobhi(n):** maidenhood
- **Butimba(n):** Royal Hunt ceremony that involves the King and *emabutfo*.
- **Emabutfo(n):** Regiments, could be of men, boys, girls, women
- **Kubutseka(n):** process of initiation to being a member of a particular regiment .
- **Imbongi(n):** praise-singer
- **INdlovukati(n):** ‘She Elephant’ or Queen Mother.
- **INGwenyama(n):** ‘the Lion’ or King.
- **INkhosatana (n)the King’s senior daughter.**
- **INkhosi(n):** a King
- **INkhosikati(n):** the King’s wife. (plu: *emakhosikati*) .
- **Indvuna(n):** guard.
- **Intfombi(n):** a maiden.
- **Intsatseli(n):** journalist
- **Libandla(n):** council of elders.
- **Ligabazi(n):** skilled public performer dancer or singer
- **Lijaha(n):** an able bodied young man
- **Lincusa(n):** liaison or go-in between.
- **Liphovela(n):** the King’s fiancée.
- **Lizinyane(n):** literally meaning calf (King’s biological child).(plu: *emazinyane*)

- ***Lutsango(n)***: women regiment (who also cuts reeds).
- ***Tingatja(n)***: regiment name for young boys who cut *lusekwane*
- ***Make(n)***: mother
- ***Mhleka(n)***: the Queen Mother (meaning the most beautiful one)
- ***Mveli Nqanti(np)***: The first god of the Swazi people.
- ***Sigodlo(n)***: Royal Residence
- ***Sikhulu(n)***: area chief.
- ***Sive(n)***: ordinary Swazis or commoners.
- ***Umgijimi(n)*** chief's forerunner.
- ***Ummemo(n)***: communal tribute labour entertainment held at the chief's headquarters (*emphakatsini*).
- ***UmntfwaneNkhosi(n)***: prince and princess forming the ruling Dlamini lineage (*bantfwabeNkhosi*).
- ***Umphakatsi(n)***: chief's headquarters
- ***Umsebenti weNkhosi(n)***: a King's duty or tribute labour.

Bugabazi (dance skills)

- ***Dlalisela(v)***: when *eMakhosikati*, *iNgwenyama* together with his *libutfo* and *bantfwabeNkhosi* join the *Imbali* regiment in song and dance at the arena. Also evidenced during the solo *giya* performed by the senior princesses acknowledged by their brothers who advance in dance form to salute them using their *emahawu*.
- ***Giya(v)***: to display one's dancing skills.
- ***Phoseka(v)***: is when *lijaha* (young man) jumps aggressively towards the dancing arena exhibiting his prowess in appreciation of the girls' dance skills, singing and beauty.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CNN	Cable News Network (of America)
PUDEMO	People's United Democratic Movement
SBIS	Swaziland Broadcasting and Information Services
SFTU	Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions
SNTC	Swaziland National Trust Commission
STBS	Swaziland Television and Broadcasting Service
STA	Swaziland Television Authority
SWAAGA	Swaziland Action Group Against Abuse
SWAYOCO	Swaziland Youth Congress
<i>TTS</i>	<i>The Times of Swaziland</i>
<i>TSO</i>	<i>The Swazi Observer</i>
USDF	<i>Umbutfo</i> Swaziland Defense Force
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

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