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IDEOLOGY, ORAL TRADITIONS AND THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER IN THE EARLY ZULU KINGDOM

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A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Arts,
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg,
for the Degree of Master of Arts.

Decleration

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Carolyn Hamilton
30th day of July, 1985.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the struggle for power in the Zulu kingdom during the reign of Shaka. It traces both the territorial growth of the kingdom and transformations within Zulu society. Its primary aim is to overcome two significant limitations of earlier studies: their focus on achievement and conquest history; and their assertion that the military system introduced by Shaka saw the extensive appointment of commoners to important offices and positions of authority. Both of these notions owe much to the nature of the available evidence, being largely oral traditions, understood to be the history of the society's rulers. Through the development of methods of analysis of oral traditions which take cognizance of their fundamentally ideological character, this study focuses on social stratification in the Zulu kingdom: on the emergence of a closed and privileged ruling elite and on the creation of a subordinate group of super-exploited tributaries, denied the rights and benefits of full Zulu citizenship. This perspective reveals the struggles surrounding the establishment of Zulu dominance and illuminates the history of resistance to Zulu overrule.

Emerging social stratification is considered in the wider context of the transition from small-scale chiefdoms to much larger polities of two types; active trading states like that of Mthethwa, and essentially defensive states like that of Qwabe. The Zulu kingdom is considered to have emerged initially as a defensive polity and to have subsequently transformed itself into a hierarchised and aggressively expanding state. This change is examined both in terms of the states' internal reorganization and external expansion. The former saw the extensive restructuring of the ruling clan, the enormous expansion of, and the extension of royal control over, the Zulu amabutho, notably through the establishment

of a vast pool of female labour under direct royal control in the izigodlo. The latter occurred in two phases: the first phase of territorial expansion saw the close integration of new subjects, while the second phase was characterized by a failure on the part of the Zulu rulers fully to assimilate new subjects. This situation was underpinned by the extensive coercive power at the disposal of the ruling group, and by the development of a new ideology of state. The amantungwa, Nguni and amalala identities were key features of the new ideology, and were developed at this time as ethnic identities distinguishing privileged from unprivileged in Zulu society and legitimating the position of each. They were not simply imposed on the society by the new rulers, but emerged out of the struggles for power in which the Zulu engaged. As ethnic identities, they were closely linked to and subtly affected the corpus of traditions of origins of all the groups concerned.

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ABBREVIATIONS

K.C.	Killie Campbell Africana Library
Sw.A.	Swaziland National Archives
J.S.A.	James Stuart Archive
S.A.L.	South African Library

GLOSSARY OF ZULU AND SWAZI TERMS USED IN THE TEXT[1]

Bemdzabuko (Swazi): lit. those who *dzabuka'd*. Cf. ukuDabuka; a term used to refer to those clans who claimed to have originated together with the Swazi *royal clan*.

ukuBonga: to declaim praises.

imBongi (izimBongi): praise-singer, a specialist declaimer of praises.

isiBongo (iziBongo): a. clan-name; b. (plural only) praises, praise-names.

ukuButha: lit. to gather; to form young men or women into age-grades or other individually distinct units.

iButho (amaButho): age-group or other similar unit, so-called 'regiment'.

isiCoco (iziCoco): headring.

ukuDabuka (Swazi - kuDzabuka): lit. to get torn or rent; to be brought into existence.

ukuDabula: lit. to rend, cleave or split; to bring into existence.

inDuna (izinDuna): a civil or military official appointed to a position of authority or command.

ukwEthula: lit. to take off and put down; to present the first-born daughter of a marriage to the patron who supplied the lobola cattle for the marriage.

isiGodlo (iziGodlo): a king's (or important chief's) private enclosure at the upper end of an establishment, containing the huts of his household; b. women resident in the king's enclosure. Cf. umNdlunkulu.

inGodosi (izinGodosi): betrothed girl for whom lobola has been paid.

ukuHlobonga: to practice external sexual intercourse.

ukuHlonipha: to show respect through the practice of formal avoidances in action or in speech.

iJadu: a dancing competition, the object of which was to encourage social intercourse between young men and women of different areas.

inKatha: lit. a grass ring or coil; symbol of the unity of the Zulu nation.

iKhanda (amaKhanda): establishment erected and occupied by the amabutho, containing in addition an isigodlo.

emaKhandzambili (Swazi): lit. those found ahead; a term used to refer to those clans found in Swaziland by the immigrant Swazi royal clan.

ukuKhonza: to give one's allegiance to, or to subject oneself to a king or a chief, to pay formal respects to.

ubuKhosi: kingship, 'majesty'.

umKhosi: the annual 'fir ceremony held at the chief establishment . ng or chief in the December - January period, a festival at which the king was ritually strengthened, the ancestral spirits praised and the allegiance of the people renewed.

ukuKleza: to milk a cow straight into the mouth, as done for a period by cadets of the amabutho.

inKosikazi (amaKhosikazi): principal wife of a king or chief or a man of position; title applied by courtesy to any wife of a man of such position.

ukuLobola: to formalize a marriage by the conveyance of property (usually cattle) from the man's family to the father or guardian of the woman.

iLobola (sing. only): cattle or goods handed over in a marriage transaction by the man's family to the father or guardian of the woman.

isiLulu (iziLulu): a large, rounded basket made of plaited grass used for storing grain.

iNceku (iziNceku): attendant in a king's or a chief's household responsible for the performance of certain domestic duties, and for private services for the king or chief.

iNdlunkulu (iziNdlunkulu): a. hut of a king's or a chief's principal wife; b. group of huts attached to it; b. the family attached to those huts.

umNdlunkulu (sing. only): a section of the girls resident in the king's private enclosure within an establishment. Cf. isiGodlo.

iNsizwa (iziNsizwa): youth approaching manhood, young man who has not yet put on the headring.

umNtwana (abaNtwana): lit. child; member of the royal family.

iNyanga (iziNyanga): diviner, herbalist, doctor.

ukuQhumbuza: to bore large holes in the ear-lobes.

ukuSisa: to place livestock in the care of a dependant who then has certain rights of usufruct.

ukuTekela (variant: ukuTekeza): to speak in the Swazi, 'Lala' or Bhaca fashion in which 'tsh' is substituted for the Zulu 'th', and 't' or 'dz' for 'z'.

ukuThela: lit. to pour into; to add people to an ibutho.

ukuThunga: lit. to s[illegible] have a headring sewn on.

1 The definitions contained in this glossary are based on those provided in Webb and Wright's glossary to The James Stuart Archive, modified and augmented with reference to Bryant's Zulu-English Dictionary, as well as to the ensuing analysis of certain of the institutions listed.

PREFACE

This study began as an analysis of power and authority in the Zulu kingdom under Shaka, br adly located within a tradition of scholarship focused on the Zulu achievement. The issues which it sought to address concerned the fundamental refashionings of relations of power which occurred in early nineteenth century Zululand and which underlay the powerful position of the Zulu king. The questions initially addressed included those of who had access to resources, who held what offices under what conditions, how Zulu rule was implemented and enforced on a daily basis, and how control was exerted over the remote areas of the enormous kingdom.

The parameters of the topic were largely determined by the apparent availability of evidence. Mostly in the form of oral traditions - conventionally understood to be the history of a society's rulers - the evidence seemed to restrict the study to analysis of the holding of power and authority. Closer investigation of the oral data however showed the available traditions to be not simply chronicles of domination, but rather to be riddled with contradictions. The processes of identifying and analysing these contradictions gave rise to two crucial perceptions which significantly altered the emphasis of the study. The first perception was that the oral traditions contained signs of the processes underlying the achievement of Zulu domination. Traditions overtly concerned to describe the Zulu achievement contained features not consistent with their purported subject.

It became clear that, almost in spite of themselves, oral traditions retained clear signs of the struggles which underlay the growth of Zulu power and the development of a hegemonic view of history itself. The capacity of oral traditions to yield up data about

the conquered, as well as the conquerors, allowed the focus of the thesis to shift from the Zulu achievement towards the activities at this time of all the historic peoples of the Phongola-Mzimkhulu region. The second perception, an extension of the first, was that the nature, history and the role of oral traditions in northern Nguni-speaking societies themselves demanded investigation.

Thus, the emphasis of the study shifted onto the processes and struggles underlying the emergence of Zulu hegemony, and was extended methodologically to an examination of the role and the manipulation of history, and of oral traditions in particular, in Zulu society, both in the reign of Shaka, and subsequently. These two perceptions transferred the focus of this study squarely onto the role of ideology in the emergence of the Zulu state.

These perceptions, and indeed, an altered view of the very nature of precolonial historical research and its methods, were not achieved without difficulty. Acknowledgements and thanks are due to a large number of people who have guided and assisted me, in particular to Philip Bonner, who supervised this thesis, and who has doggedly sought to teach me to write clearly. My interest in precolonial studies was captured and shaped by John Wright who has been an invaluable critic of many of the arguments that follow and has permitted me to draw freely on his extensive knowledge of Zulu history. The completion of this thesis owes much to his intellectual companionship and his unfailing support. Thanks are also due to Harriet Gavshon for introducing me to Marxist literary criticism and for engaging in a lively exchange on the subject.

My fieldwork was made possible by the assistance and persistence of a number of people in Swaziland, in particular the late Mtwananenkosi Makhungu, who both promoted my research and gave me warm encouragement; Henry 'Hlahlamehlo' Dlamini who gave me the benefit of his extensive knowledge of Swazi affairs and his charming companionship on extended field trips; the staff and students of the Franson Christian High School at Mhlosheni who housed me for some months and who took a lively interest in the research; Maureen and Ralph Irwin whose warmth and hospitality are unforgettable; John Masson who smoothed away all my logistic difficulties and research problems; and finally all the informants who gave of their time and knowledge to contribute to the research.

I am also indebted to the Killie Campbell Africana Library for permitting me access to their archival collections, and to Professor T. Cope of the University of Natal, the Essery family of Riet Valley, and Jenny Marrot for their assistance in the location of new sources. The financial assistance of the Human Sciences Research Council and the University of the Witwatersrand Senior Bursary Fund are gratefully acknowledged.

Finally, I owe much to the support and companionship of my friends and fellow students, especially Jill, Leslie and Rena.

INTRODUCTION

The rise of the Zulu state in the early nineteenth century under its most famous king, Shaka, is probably the best known event in the precolonial history of southern Africa. As such, it has become the focus of more general debates surrounding the writing and interpretation of the history of the precolonial era in this area.

Precolonial history was largely ignored by the early settler historians. Insofar as they considered it at all, they did so in terms of theories of migrations and the populating of Africa. The precolonial societies encountered by the first settlers were dismissed as being 'barbarous', 'backward' and 'warlike'.[1] Early missionary amateur historians were similarly influenced by the Darwinian and diffusionist trends of late Victorian scholarship. In many instances, having resided in African societies and having become intimately acquainted with their way of life however, the missionaries tended to focus their writings squarely on the African societies, evoking the notion of the 'noble savage'.[2]

With the growth of the myth that Bantu-speakers crossed the Limpopo at the same time as the first Dutch landed at the Cape - an essential aspect of the justification of apartheid in South Africa - precolonial history gained a degree of attention sufficient to ensure that officially curtailed limits were placed on the period of precolonial inhabitation of southern Africa.[3]

In the 1950s precolonial history began to play a further role in underwriting white rule. It was increasingly invoked to justify the 'retribalization' of surplus Africans in urban areas, and in the creation of nine, supposedly historically immutable ethnic identities - each ultimately to become an independent 'homeland' (or two).[4] Within these ethnic divisions, the precolonial history of southern Africa was initially left to the early ethnographers like van Warmelo, Schapera, Stayt, Breutz, Myburgh and the Kriges.[5] However, working with essentially structural-functionalist frameworks, and in many instances, themselves on the state payroll, these scholars failed to break free of the ideological constraints of the ethnic categories imposed on them.[6] Their brief references to the precolonial past of the 'tribes' which were their focus, were flawed by the implicit assumption that rural African societies of the early twentieth century differed little from rural societies a century earlier.

The 1960s saw attempts to move beyond this systematized and normative picture of precolonial societies, as scholars like Gluckman and Omer-Cooper identified phenomena in the precolonial past such as the rise of states and the growth of interstate conflict, and sought to account for them.[7] The 1970s saw the more Africanist focus of these scholars develop into two new directions at the popularly political and academic levels. The first of these, emerging together with the political growth of the black consciousness movement, presented a highly idealised, if inconsistent view of prewhite life in southern Africa. Notions of communal ownership, social equality and/or social mobility, responsive and responsible chiefship, liberally sprinkled with images of power and glory, were the characteristics of precolonial history typically invoked by the idea of a black rennaissance.[8] Variations

on these themes have survived into the 1980s to become embedded in the ideological appropriation of the pre-colonial past by groups as politically diverse as the African National Congress and Inkatha.[9]

The other development of the 1970s was the infusion of early Africanist academic writings with more materialist concerns. This provided historians with crucial new tools for the conceptualization of precolonial societies. The phenomenon of 'state formation', and most notably the emergence of the Zulu state has been the chief subject of this approach. The last two decades have thus seen considerable debate over explanations of the rise of the Zulu state, with contributions from both outside and within a Marxist paradigm.

Amidst the controversy there is consens[illegible]t while the reign of Shaka saw the emergence o[illegible]t sophisticated state in south-east Africa, t[illegible] state was preceded by a number of powerful polities whose evolution and growth had roots in the events and trends of the later eighteenth century. One of the earliest attempts to account for state formation was Gluckman's thesis that the later eighteenth century saw a situation of population build-up in south-east Africa, creating social tensions and conflict over available resources - resolved by the imposition of central controls.[10] The population pressure hypothesis gained a further dimension from the ecological insights provided by the pioneering work of Webb and Daniel on the settlement preferences of northern Nguni - speakers.[11] Webb and Daniel noted that the capitals of the most important early states all occupied sites from which a particular combination of ecological zones could be easily exploited. These similarities of environment, they argued, suggested that mounting population pressure led to increased conflict

over particularly scarce combinations of resources, heightened by drought and famine around the turn of the century.

Building on the population-ecology hypothesis, Guy subsequently developed an explanation of state formation in terms of an ecological crisis precipitated by demographic pressure.[12] Guy argued that a particular combination of environmental resources was essential for the precolonial economy of Zululand. Over and above access to adequate water resources and soils for crop cultivation, the utilisation of a variety of veld types was crucial to successful animal husbandry. Guy noted that grazing in Zululand depended on the availability of two grass types, sourveld and sweetveld: the former being palatable and nutritious in the growing season only, and the latter providing good grazing all year round. Access to both types was, Guy argued, a fundamental need for precolonial pastoralism. The existence of these combinations in uniquely favourable circumstances in a relatively large number of areas in Zululand, led to rapid increases in population. However, because of an inherent fragility in the grassland regime - in particular its vulnerability to the depredations of intensive human activity - this led to a crisis, considerably exacerbated once the population density made migration to new areas difficult. The probable outcome of this ecological disequilibrium, Guy suggested, would have been 'increasing violence between social groups living in an area as they struggled for access to diminishing resources'.[13]

It was this struggle which Guy saw as allowing centralized leaders to emerge with control over larger areas in which they sought to rationalize access to resources and to implement more effective controls over the environment. The extension of chiefly power in this

way was effected by means of the amabutho - the formation of units of young men to fight and labour on the chief's behalf.

The notion of an ecological crisis is supported by the dendroclimatological evidence derived from Hall's analysis of single tree sample from the Howick area. His study suggests that the late eighteenth century saw a trend towards increased precipitation followed by a sharp decline in rainfall in the early nineteenth century.[14] However, both the dendroclimatological evidence and the thesis of ecological crisis propounded by Guy are, in a number of key respects, open to doubt. Firstly, there is some doubt as to the scientific basis of the tree sample used and to its representivity of the sub-region.[15] Secondly, the dendroclimatological data also indicate that the precipitation pattern of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was part of a recurrent fifty year cycle, although possibly being an instance of particularly good rain followed by especially severe drought. Recent archaeological research has extended the period in which the farming settlement of south-east Africa is known to have prevailed at least twice as far back as was previously supposed, to an antiquity of some sixteen hundred years.[16] This raises the question of why an ecological crisis precipitating state formation did not come to a head far sooner than the late eighteenth century. Thirdly, on the basis of wider archaeological evidence, Hall has suggested that Acock's reconstruction of precolonial veld-types, on which Guy's arguments draw heavily, demands considerable modification. In the lowland areas, Hall argues, there was sufficient grazing for both the summer and the winter months. It was only in the upland areas that an ecological instability might have prevailed. While the notion of an ecological crisis, especially in the uplands, may yet prove to be a crucial

factor in the history of south-east Africa, the archaeological evidence suggests that it alone was not the motor behind state formation in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

One explanation of state formation advanced that does account for the emergence of states in the second half of the eighteenth century has reference to the external force of mercantile capital. A connection between ivory trading at Delagoa Bay and the emergence of the states to the south of the port was initially proposed by Smith, and subsequently developed by Slater and Hedges.[17]

The rigid schema of social epochs which characterizes Slater's analysis is both generalized and distorting of the historical reality of south-east African history, but the unambiguously materialist framework which he employs suggests away in which participation in the expanding Delagoa Bay trade could have prompted chiefs to increase the production of trade goods (ivory) through the extension of their controls over the labour power of their subjects. Slater's focus on labour suggests that rather than a situation of population pressure, a growing labour shortage, heightened by the depredations of the Madlathule famine, was more likely to have been a feature of this period. Indeed, the amabutho system, and the associated restrictions on marriage can be as easily read in terms of a labour shortage problem as one of population pressure, by making rationalized, centralized labour available to chiefs for longer periods, and by eliminating labour power decreases as a result of pregnancy and infant care.[18]

Hedge's study of trade and politics in south-east Africa followed soon after that of Slater, periodising

the fluctuations and shifts in the Delagoa Bay trade more closely. Hedges argued that after 1750, the demand for ivory at Delagoa Bay rose, and that this markedly stimulated competition for its supply, and for the monopolisation of trade routes. By c.1800, the trade in ivory had been superseded by a demand for cattle at Delagoa Bay. While hunting was a production process which demanded a degree of centralized labour, the shift from a commodity of little local value like ivory, to cattle, a commodity of enormous local value, Hedges argues, sparked off intense competition, an escalation of cattle raiding activities and the vastly increased centralization and militarization of aggregates of labour power. It was these circumstances which, he suggests, gave rise to the amabutho.[19]

Slater conceptualizes change in response to the Delagoa Bay trade in terms of a transition from a feudal mode of production to absolutism.[20] Slater's feudal mode of production is inappropriately applied to the pre-state societies of south-east Africa where productive relations differed markedly from those of feudal Europe in terms of land tenure, the labour process and the nature of surplus extraction. Although Slater defines a social epoch as being distinguished from its predecessors by the emergence of a new kind of social and political order, the transition from a feudal to an absolutist state, is, as described by Slater, a mutation rather than a transformation. Moreover, the notion of an absolutist state developing out of the feudal state seems an inadequate way of conceptualizing the enormous changes identified in the social and political relations of the period. While the Shakan state and the absolutist states of Europe may have shared certain features such as centralized armies, the historic forces bringing about the two systems were very different. The emergence

of the absolutist states of Europe was essentially a form of readjustment rather than a form of social revolution. In the European context, absolutist states are understood to have come about as a result of the partial surrender to monarchies, of the political and economic sovereignty of the feudal aristocracies. This shift is considered to be a consequence of pressure exerted on the aristocracies by a peasant revival, and/or by the emergence of a flourishing bourgeoisie.[21] Neither of these features was present in the precolonial states of south-east Africa. Likewise, the post-c.1750 period was marked, not by the struggle for power between aristocracy and monarchy, which characterized the emergence of absolutism in Europe, but rather, by the coalescence of a new and increasingly powerful aristocracy united behind the monarch, and sharply distinguished from the remainder of society.

Hedges, in conceptualizing the emergence of state societies, also fails to come to grips with the nature and extent of the changes involved. He sees in the state period the maintenance of an earlier lineage mode of production, characterized by the continued location of agricultural production in the homestead, but complemented and extended by centralized political structures such as the amabutho. The Zulu state is thus seen as developing out of and as extending a lineage mode of production.[22]

In contrast, Bonner has more recently argued that the effect of the Delagoa Bay trade was to cause a transition to an entirely different social formation, finally crystallized by the crisis of the Madlathule famine.[23] Bonner argued that the effects of the trade were uneven, as some lineages around the king gained the means to control other lineages, and to usurp the economic controls hitherto wielded by the society's elders. What

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emerged, Bonner suggests, was a 'new tributary mode of production, replete with a new division of labour, the interruption of the homestead heads' control over reproduction and production'[24] and a new aristocratic class closely allied to the monarchy. Implicit in Bonner's model is the crucial recognition that the apparent continuity of ideological forms across this period masked real changes in the social order.

Bonner's model of change seems to be supported by the available archaeological evidence. Hall has noted the absence of trade goods at the single pre-Shakan 'royal' settlement as yet excavated, that of the Buthelezi capital of eLangeni.[25] This, he argues, suggests that the Buthelezi, a small peripheral chiefdom, was unable to break into the mercantile trade, and lends support to the suggestion that the struggle for the control of the Delagoa Bay trade was of crucial importance in the emergence of state societies. Evidence that the effect of the trade was to cause a transition from lineage-based societies to tributary states, he argues further, is provided by the signs that decentralized settlement patterns were superseded by greater concentrations of people and wealth for the centralized utilization of the best lands.

The strength of Bonner's model of a transition to a new tributary society lies in two key areas. It accords far greater significance to the changes of this period than do either Slater or Hedges' models. At the same time, it takes cognizance of the signs of the previous order sedimented in the new society - the basis of the continuity posited by Hedges, and more implicitly, also present in Slater's work - but reconceptualizes its continued existence in terms of ideology. For Bonner this period saw

> the emergence of new principles of structuring social organisation; new methods of surplus appropriation; a new division of labour; a new aristocratic class (composed of regional and military leaders and the close family of the dominant lineage); a new dynamic of production, centered on the production of surplus for the luxury consumption of this group, and new content in old ideological shells.[25] (my emphasis)

The continuity of the ideology of kinship in the new tributary mode of production was there to mask the new relations of production, to legitimate new social divisions, and to entrench the new social order. Although not developed by Bonner, this perspective allows for an examination of the social and political cohesion of the new states which moves beyond explanations of state formation predicated on the development of mechanisms of coercion alone.

This study takes as its starting point, the thesis attested to by both documentary and archaeological data that state societies emerged in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in response to the penetration of mercantile capital in south-east Africa. It accepts, as a working hypothesis, the notion developed by Hedges and supported in Bonner's model, that the pre-state societies of south-east Africa were essentially lineage-based. However, it attempts to take further and to restrict their usage of the term. Hammond-Tooke has recently criticised the application of the concept of the lineage mode of production in a south-east African context on two grounds. Noting that the concept was originally applied to social formations that have been classified by anthropologists as segmentary societies in which political integration derives from the political relations of territory-owning descent groups whose relationships are calibrated on a genealogy and can thus be fairly precisely stated, Hammond-Tooke argues that functional descent groups were absent in the south-east African context. It is his contention

that the 'on the ground' reality of social relationships saw the widespread dispersal of clans and that territorial and political units were not coterminous with descent groups. He further points out that 'there were no clan genealogies on which to structure 'hierarchies' of segments'.[26]

Hammond-Tooke's claim that lineage-based societies were absent in south-east Africa is well-demonstrated for the period of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. However, his claim that no such thing as a society comprised of genealogically related hierarchies of lineages has ever existed in southern Africa, is not borne out by his arguments, based as they are entirely on twentieth-century fieldwork of Reader (1966), Preston-Whyte (1984), Cook (1930), Davies (1927), Hunter (1936), E. Krige (1937,1983), Webster (1960s), A. Kuper (1975), Stayt (1931) and Kuckertz (1984).[27] The intervening two hundred years, between the period for which the model of lineage-based societies is proposed,and that for which Hammond-Tooke has demonstrated the existence of only residual lineage identities without corporate structures, was a period of enormous change away from lineage-based polities. The atomized social units identified by the twentieth century anthropologists are a result of the supersession of lineage societies by the great states, and the effects of subsequent social engineering and population dislocation by British administrators, and still later, by the apartheid government. Given the scale and extent of these changes a method of illuminating precolonial societies by extrapolation backwards from twentieth century data is not adequate. This crucial reservation must negate much of Hammond-Tooke's attack on what he considers to be Hedges' wilful misuse of evidence to prove that in precolonial times, hunting took place on a lineage basis.

Hammond-Tooke correctly points out that Hedges' two sources on this point both state that hunting was *organized by political officers.* However, both references are to twentieth century sources: they no more disprove Hedges' model than they prove it. Hammond-Tooke's criticism is irrelevant and Hedges' notion reverts to being a largely theoretical proposition.[28]

Holding to the orthodoxy that religious institutions are the features of society most resistant to change, Hammond-Tooke has similarly argued that twentieth-century evidence revealing the existence of limited effective cult groups reflects a former state of affairs, and supports the assumption of limited descent groupings in the past.[29] *The attribution of continuity* to religious institutions is an anthropological commonplace but, in the northern Nguni-speaking case at least, religious institutions have never been demonstrated to have remained unchanged over time.

Ultimately, Hammond-Tooke himself acknowledges that neither of these arguments proves that early southern-African societies were not based on hierarchies of lineages. He notes, 'All that can be said is that *there is no clear evidence* for this: on the contrary, the evidence seems to point equally to a bilateral or or cognatic previous system as much as it does to a segmentary lineage system'.[30] In support of this contention, Hammond-Tooke again looks to data from twentieth century comparative studies.

The historical reconstruction of the pre-state societies of the early eighteenth century is complicated by a paucity of relevant data and an almost exclusive reliance on oral sources. The nature of the evidence is such that the 'on the ground reality' of social

relations remains elusive. Although there is no historical evidence to support Hammond-Tooke's suggestions, a valuable contribution to precolonial studies lies in the questions arising out of present-day studies which he has forced historians to ask about precolonial societies. Although the surviving oral traditions indicate strongly that the cognitive basis of early social relations was framed in terms of claimed genealogical connections, Hammond-Tooke's work is a reminder that, in all probability, other social relations and forms of social cohesion - such as marriage alliances and socialization through circumcision schools - prevailed, the record of which no longer exists.[31]

The designation of the pre-state societies of south-east Africa as lineage-based is not meant to suggest that the society was necessarily composed of corporate lineage structures. It merely recognizes the pervasive importance of kinship and the centrality of ideas of common descent i.e. not so much as the social reality 'on the ground' but as an important ideological 'cement' of the society.

Constrained by the lack of evidence on other forms of social relationship, the phenomenon which historians of early precolonial societies can fruitfully investigate is this dominance of kinship ideology and its emphasis in the oral traditions. Pointers also exist which suggest that agnatic kinship constituted a dominant social principle more widely, and that local polities in the early eighteenth century were very different from the states of the late eighteenth century.

Signs of this are to be found in evidence from early shipwreck accounts in which there are no indications of

the existence of centralized capitals, or any other institutions of state.[32] Although it was claimed in one account dating from the 1680s that all barter proceeded with the king's consent, shipwreck parties found local inhabitants eager to engage in trade, and experienced no interventions by chiefs or kings guarding monopolies.[33] The survivors of the Stavenisse shipwreck in 1686 noted that cattle taken in war were not redistributed by the king, but were 'divided' amongst the king and the 'great men', while metal booty was kept by the heroes who obtained it.[34] They commented that there was little distinction between the king and the common people beyond the wearing of a distinctive pelt.[35] Likewise, the basis of chiefly power was identified to lie in two areas, the settlement of disputes and in ritual seniority.[36] It was commented that

> the oldest man governs the rest, for all that live together are of kin, and they submit to his government.[37]

The kin basis of society also receives some confirmation from the difficulty experienced by early traders in obtaining slaves because of the strength of the social bonds between all members of the society.[38]

The existence of lineage-based societies in pre-state south-east African is further suggested by the surviving oral record. This occurs in two forms: the first is data which appear to refer directly to the pre-state period; the second is the residue of the previous social order discernible in the state societies discussed in the oral record.

Oral data which purport to refer to pre- and early state societies are to be found in the traditions of origin of the first states, i.e. those whose initial aggregation dates back to the period c.1750.[39] The oral record of only two of these early states, that of

the Mthethwa and Qwabe, survives in a sufficiently coherent form to permit detailed analysis.

The initial expansion and earliest social cohesion of both the Mthethwa and Qwabe polities is cast in the oral traditions in terms of kinship ties. The lineages of both chiefdoms of this period claimed a common ancestry and genealogically demonstrable connections. Close examination of the traditions of origin of these lineages reveals a pattern of contradictions in the data suggestive of the invention of the claims of genealogical connection, and their superimposition on other historical data. This suggests that in the earliest phases of both Mthethwa and Qwabe expansion, social cohesion was secured through the creation of links of agnatic kinship.[40]

Elsewhere, John Wright and I have argued that precisely such a process would have characterized pre-state lineage-based societies.[41] In a polity of that period, certain lineage groupings would have dominated in certain areas. Outsiders moving into the region probably sought to forge political links with the inhabitants in a variety of ways: by entering into patron-client relationships (possibly in the form of cattle loans (<u>sisa</u>)); through participation in local circumcision lodges; and by taking part in the collective labours of the community, such as hunting and fighting.

In these activities a loose idiom of kinship was likely to be employed, manifested in the calling of patrons 'father' and others of the community by similar family titles. Outsiders would have been concerned to assimilate with the community as closely as possible and the kinship idiom which governed their daily activities would have been reinforced through the creation and maintenance of genealogical links, fictive if necessary,

with the dominant lineage grouping. Wright and I contended that notions of kinship operated in polities of this nature to bring about the political incorporation of constituent lineages into a 'family'. We argued that there would have been an on-going process whereby differences of dialect and custom between lineages in the same polity tended to become blurred and eventually disappear. Politically, linguistically and culturally, these polities would have tended towards, although probably never have realized, homogeneity.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, the development of new institutions of domination, notably the amabutho, facilitated the emergence of a form of centralized authority and gave to chiefs a new coercive capacity. As the ability of centralized chiefs to coerce subjects increased, and as their capacity to monopolise the benefits of the trade was extended, there was less and less incentive for the incorporation of subjects into the body politic through the idiom of kinship which imposed obligations on rulers as well as ruled. Concomitantly, there was more and more incentive to use power to exclude them from the central decision-making process.[42]

Mthethwa traditions which refer to this period of the dynamic expansion of trading states are sharply distinguished from traditions about the earlier period. Amongst the Mthethwa, the groups incorporated in this later phase did not claim genealogical connections with the Mthethwa ruling lineage. This suggests that at that time, as a result of changing circumstances the Mthethwa were sufficiently powerful to enter into relations of tribute exaction, backing their demands with force.[43] Mthethwa traditions concerned with this period differ markedly from traditions which refer to

Qwabe expansion at much the same time. The emergence of the Qwabe polity, in response to a spiral of conflict in the sub-region rather than in response to the trade itself, saw a similar expansion of the Qwabe military capacity but without comparable processes of social stratification. Thus, the disjuncture which characterizes the Mthethwa traditions is not found to the same extent in the traditions of the Qwabe - rather Qwabe growth saw the continuation of close assimilation with subject lineages, the consolidation of a core group and the expulsion of other groups. The Qwabe polity did not undergo the same structural transformations as the Mthethwa state, and the signs of the achievement of social cohesion by means of an ideology of kinship in Qwabe oral traditions thus continue to be marked in the later period.

Although the data in the Mthethwa and Qwabe traditions of origin point to the existence of pre-state lineage-based societies and affirm the notion of a major transition, the bulk of the traditions were recorded c.1900, some 150 years after the event. The question which must now be addressed concerns the effect on the traditions of the intervening years between the period which they purport to describe and the time of their transcription. The contradictions in many traditions of origin suggest that they were largely manufactured claims. A question of considerable complexity is that of establishing with some certainty <u>when</u> they were invented.

The unpacking of over a century's effects on even a single oral tradition, is a highly detailed and complex exercise which, with recent advances in the methods of oral tradition analysis, is only now becoming feasible. This review looks forward to seeing such an exercise carried out on a systematic basis, by pointing to the

broad effects of the period c.1750-1900, on the origin traditions of the Mthethwa and Qwabe.

Working backwards from the time when their traditions of origin were first recorded, it should be noted that the period between 1830 and 1900 saw the advance and decline of certain lineages in response to changing local circumstances. As an individual lineage gained in political preeminence it may have emphasised its connections with the ruling lineage, in some cases claiming for itself a greater antiquity or seniority. Likewise, a lineage which experienced chiefly disfavour may have found itself, through a variety of means, being increasingly distanced from the ruling lineage in genealogical terms. Such flux would undoubtedly have been a constant feature of the political scene. By way of contrast, events which would have had a more or less even effect across an entire chiefdom, causing patterned shifts or alterations in the status claims of lineages, would have been of the nature of major social upheavals and would have been rare. The major event of significance for the Mthethwa chiefdom in the post-Shakan nineteenth century was the breaking of Mthethwa ties with the Zulu royal house and the participation of the Mthethwa in the Zulu civil war on the side of Zibhebhu.[44] The effects of this on Mthethwa oral traditions were probably limited to traditions concerning Mthethwa - Zulu relations, and the traditions of the Mthethwa ruling lineage, for the latter owed its position to the promotion and support of the Zulu kings. Traditions concerned with the relationship between the Mthethwa ruling lineage and the other lineages of the chiefdom were unlikely to have been affected by a changing relationship with the Zulu. Indeed, there appear to be no indications of any other major events which might have been of significance to the latter, for this period was one of stability for

the Mthethwa under the long rule of Mlandela and subsequently, his son, Sokwetshata. The post-Shakan period had rather different effects on the oral traditions of the Qwabe, for the Qwabe chiefdom disintegrated after the death of Shaka and its scattered lineages were subject to few uniform influences.[45] Thus, although for different reasons, the traditions of the Mthethwa and the Qwabe were unlikely to have experienced large-scale, common manipulation after the reign of Shaka.

Under Shaka, it will be argued in this thesis, traditions of origin of subordinate chiefdoms, and of their ruling lineages in particular, underwent major restructuring vis-a-vis Zulu oral traditions. However, there are no indications of anything in this period which was likely to have precipitated a major adulteration of the traditions of origin of the subordinate Mthethwa and Qwabe lineages vis-a-vis their respective ruling lineages. Although Shaka ousted both Mondise, Dingiswayo's successor, and killed Phakathwayo, the Qwabe chief, the new chiefs whom he recognised in their places were members of the Mthethwa and Qwabe ruling houses, albeit of junior branches. In that sense, their incorporation under the Zulu saw little internal intervention in the chiefdoms.[46]

The only period in the history of the traditions concerning the early growth of Mthethwa and Qwabe which was likely to have seen tampering occur on a systematic basis seems to be that of the heyday of the emergence of trading states in the Mthethwa case, the latter half of the reign of Jobe into the reign of Dingiswayo. It could be argued that this period of an all-time high in the Delagoa Bay trade might have seen the manipulation of traditions of origin as a means of limiting the benefits of the trade to a small group, and of legitimating this monopoly. In all probability, this

did occur to a certain extent, but the questions which must be posed are: what were the criteria determining which groups were to be able to claim genealogical connections with the ruling lineage and which were to be denied this opportunity; and secondly, why was the unity of the privileged echelon of each society framed in terms of agnatic kinship?

The evidence of the Mthethwa case indicates that the majority of the groups which claimed genealogical connections with the ruling lineage were incorporated before those who did not claim to be kin. Indeed, the manufacture of such claims could not have been affected overnight, but would have had to have occurred over a lengthy period. It can be inferred from this that, in the early states, access to the privileged sector of society was initially determined by historical connections with the ruling lineage, although subsequently over time, outsider groups would have been admitted on a similar basis. In other words, while some of the claims of a genealogical connection with the ruling lineage may have been invented in the state period, it was the prior existence of such claims amongst the lineages of the original nucleus of the chiefdom which gave to the ruling echelons in state societies subsequently, a form of cohesion cast in terms of agnatic kinship. The polities which experienced minimal changes in the later eighteenth century such as the Qwabe accorded a far greater importance to kinship connections than those polities, like Mthethwa, which underwent more extensive transformations. From this it can be inferred that kinship and genealogical mapping was considerably more significant in the pre-state period.

While evidence which appears to refer to the pre-state period is rare, evidence on the states of south-east

Africa, and the Zulu state in particular, is comparatively rich. It is, moreover, in many ways suggestive of the kind of societies which preceded the rise of states. Signs of pre-state societies can be found in rituals of state, and sedimented in the traditions of origin of the new states. This is not to suggest that religious institutions and ideas about society are more resistant to change than other features of society and that they tend to reflect former states of affairs. Rather, both play a key role in the entrenchment and legitimation of new ideas and new social orders, but their strength in this respect is derived from their appearance of continuity with the past. Close examination of the rituals and traditions reveals a residue of previous societies. In particular, the form of ancestor worship, and the concept of the hereditary kingship which prevailed in state societies strongly suggests that the principle of agnatic descent has a long history in the south-east Africa. However, in the various forms in which they were preserved, these residues of the past were subjected to processes of selection and restructuring. The identification of these interventions of the state period is a necessary preliminary to using these data to illuminate pre-state societies.

The case for the existence of precolonial lineage-based societies thus waits on the divestment of oral evidence of some of its subsequent ideological overlays. It is to this necessarily prior task of illuminating the effects of the state period on traditions of origin and the emergence of state ideologies which this thesis addresses itself. To sum up then, the phrase 'lineage-based' is employed with a limited meaning and in preference to the term 'lineage mode of production' more commonly used by Hedges and Bonner. The original observational derivants of the latter

analytical category were the twentieth century lineage societies of West Africa which differ markedly from precolonial and precapitalist lineage societies.[47] As the theory of precolonial modes of production is as yet in its infancy, and remains hotly debated, it would likewise be premature to engage in the rechristening of the precolonial social epochs, and indeed, such an exercise is beyond the scope of this thesis.

In this study, the term lineage is used to refer to all the descendants of a common ancestor in the male line, amongst whom very exact connections were traceable. Clan is used to refer to a group of lineages which did not marry, and who claimed descent from a common ancestor who could be very remote. Where clans split taking new clan names (izibongo) for themselves, and intermarried with one another, their common ancestry and continued, but altered, relationship is acknowledged in their designation as 'collateral clans'. Membership of lineages and clans is therefore understood to depend on birth (or in some cases, the invention of claims of common descent). Neither of these units was necessarily coterminous with a specific territorial unit, either in the pre-state period, or subsequently. Splintering, clan fission and geographical spread, as well as the incidence of individual and small groups of refugees, were likely to have been features of all precolonial societies, and would have seen non-kin constantly settling alongside one another. In lineage-based societies however, as was suggested earlier, political incorporation of outsiders would have, over time, entailed the creation of claims of common descent with the hosts. In such societies, territorial units would have manifested a tendency towards genealogical homogeneity - something which probably never achieved the condition of being fully realised. In state societies, for a

number of historically specific reasons to be illuminated in this study, social cohesion took another form, and territorial units remained to a larger extent genealogically heterogenous.

The term chiefdom is used to refer to a political unit occupying a defined territorial area, under an independent, or semi-independent chief. In terms of the propositions advanced above, pre-state chiefdoms would have tended towards a greater degree of genealogical homogeneity than the chiefdoms and ultimately, the states of the later period - the Zulu state coming ultimately to contain within itself an enormous range of genealogically heterogenous clans.

Some explanation of the use of the term Zulu in this study is therefore also necessary. In the phrases 'Zulu chiefdom', and later 'Zulu kingdom' and 'Zulu state', it refers to the genealogically heterogenous groups of lineages which recognised the rule of Senzangakhona, and later Shaka. In the pre-Shakan 'Zulu chiefdom', the lineages comprising the chiefdom were fewer, and less heterogenous than those which comprised the later state. The geographical limits of the 'Zulu chiefdom' and the 'Zulu kingdom' were constantly shifting in the period considered in this study. Thus the term Zululand is used simply as a geographical designation for the area between the Phongola and the Thukela rivers, while that of Natal is used to refer to the area between the Thukela and the Mzimkhulu river.

'Zulu' is also used in this study to refer to those lineages which claimed to be directly connected to the line of Zulu kings, and who laid claim to the clan-name (isibongo) of 'Zulu'. In this sense, the term usually occurs in the forms 'Zulu clan', 'Zulu ruling

lineage', 'Zulu royal house', and even 'collateral Zulu clan', although the latter usually assumed another isibongo. These distinctions should indicate that the use of the term Zulu in no way endorses the idea of a Zulu ethnic identity. Rather, the thrust of this study is to challenge notions of its historic immutability and legitimacy. This will be attempted through close examination of the emergence of the Zulu kingdom, and an analysis of the means by which it achieved social cohesion, and in particular the construction of a state ideology.

The neglect, by scholars, of the role of ideology in securing the social cohesion of state societies like that of the Zulu, has had ramifications for the methods of analysis which they have brought to bear on their sources, and in particular, on oral evidence. Although cognizance has been taken of issues such as bias and memory fallibility in the use of oral traditions, there has been no recognition of the effects of the role of oral traditions in precolonial Zulu society on the content of the traditions.

Chapter one attempts to redress this imbalance by indicating how, in non-literate, precapitalist societies where ancestor worship figured prominently, history, and data on origins in particular, were key areas where ideological restructuring occurred; and how oral testimony was the primary means whereby new ideas about society were circulated and became entrenched. The central proposition of the first chapter is that while traditions may contain some direct information on precolonial ideologies, the bulk of the historical evidence on past ideologies is to be obtained through the deconstruction of the ideological artefact, the oral tradition itself. It will be argued that the oral tradition can provide information not only, as has been generally assumed, on the ideological intervention of the powerholders of a historic society, but

also on the signs of the struggle in which they engaged, and on the resistance and opposition of subaltern cultures. Oral traditions, like ideology itself, it will be argued, were not pliant tools in the hands of society's rulers.

Utilizing the methods for the analysis of oral traditions outlined in the first chapter, the next chapter goes on to look at the precursor polity out of which the Zulu state emerged, that of the Mthethwa. The growth of Mthethwa in response to the expansion of the Delagoa Bay trade is traced, focusing on the structural transformations underlying the transition from a lineage-to a tributary-based society. It will be suggested however, that, for a number of reasons, the Mthethwa paramountcy under Dingiswayo failed to develop its coercive power sufficiently to counter the growing militarisation of its neighbours, and further, that it failed to underwrite coercion with adequate ideological forms of social cohesion and control, leading ultimately to its defeat by the Ndwandwe.

Following Zwide's triumph over Dingiswayo, and the rout of the Mthethwa army, the Zulu found themselves in a critical situation in terms of manpower and resource needs. Fear of attack by the Qwabe as well, led them to attack the latter, despite their apparently far greater strength. Chapter three examines Zulu-Qwabe relations in detail, focusing on the processes of and struggles surrounding the incorporation of this group. Close examination of Qwabe traditions of origin reveal signs of their systematic adulteration. In particular, it will be argued that the tradition that the progenitor figure Malandela was the father of Zulu and Qwabe, was a product of the Shakan era and of the difficulties experienced by the Zulu in the effective incorporation of the Qwabe.

With the collapse of Mthethwa support for Shaka, internal opposition to his rule increased, creating an imperative for the reorganization of the Zulu chiefdom from within. Chapter four examines the restructuring of the Zulu clan undertaken by Shaka, in particular, the creation of collateral sub-clans and the effects of intermarriage amongst them facilitating the concentration of wealth at the apex of Zulu society.

Chapter five looks at the first phase of Zulu expansion and the emergence of the early defensive state. It further examines the evolution of these components of the early kingdom into a closed and privileged elite group centered around the Zulu and collateral clans.

In this chapter it is suggested that the claims of these groups to be fellow amantungwa and to have a common origin were manufactured during the reign of Shaka to serve as the basis of their unity and to legitimate their privileged position. It is further argued that the particular form assumed by the hegemonic ideology which was emerging at this time was shaped as much by the resistance encountered to Zulu rule as by the interests of the new rulers.

Chapter six examines the expansion of the Zulu military capacity to levels unprecedented in south-east Africa. It will be argued that the Zulu achievement in this regard was initially shaped by the threat posed to much of Zululand by the Ndwandwe kingdom, under Zwide. Zwide's capture of Dingiswayo, and the rout of the Mthethwa c.1817, created a need for the extremely rapid expansion and reorganisation of the remaining army under Shaka. The chapter focuses on the panoply of ideological mechanisms utilized to bring about rapid acquiescence of a diverse group of clans to Zulu hegemony, and acceptance of a new social order. It

will be argued that the intensive training of the amabutho at ritually specific establishments (amakhanda) served to focus their loyalties on the person of the king. Investigation of the enormous differences of status between amabutho will mark an important reconsideration of the notion of the age-basis of the amabutho system, and it will be further argued that the amabutho system served to locate men within a new social hierarchy, and to entrench divisions between privileged and unprivileged in the society.

Chapter seven looks at the emergence of a specifically female state institution in association with the amabutho, fulfilling similar socialization functions, and with a similar capacity for drawing on the labour power of the homestead. It will be argued that these izigodlo were, in addition, responsible for agricultural production at the amakhanda and that the royal monopoly exerted over agricultural production at the amakhanda through a range of prohibitions and restrictions surrounding the izigodlo, provided an important means of control over the men of the amabutho.

This focus on life at the amakhanda indicates the way in which the coercive apparatus of the Zulu state was developed and refined over time, and highlights the role of the amakhanda as the nexus of a process of resocialisation and a forum for the introduction of new ideas about society.

The final chapter examines the extension of Zulu rule over chiefdoms on its periphery and the use of ethnicity to exclude this sector of society from the full benefits of Zulu citizenship whilst subjecting them to processes of intense exploitation.

Social stratification in the early Zulu kingdom has been suggested in the work of previous scholars, but oral traditions, generally conceptualized as presenting a homogeneous picture of society from the view of its rulers, have never been used to illuminate social differentiation. According to oral traditions a vital and dynamic role in the development of precolonial ideological complexes, and reconceptualizing them in terms of a non-reductionist understanding of ideology however, yields evidence of the struggles of the dominant and the dominated. Examined in depth in the third, fifth and final chapters, it represents the beginning of a fundamental shift in emphasis away from ruling class history in the precolonial period.

Sources

Precolonial studies of non-literate societies also present an exciting challenge to modern historians because of the relative absence of conventional sources, particularly the paucity of eye-witness accounts. Consequently, precolonial studies are characterized by a search for alternative, often unusual kinds of evidence, and the development of new methods for their animation and utilization in the reconstruction of the precolonial past. This study is based on seven major sources - a mixture of oral testimonies and other forms of oral evidence, early travellers' accounts, and early secondary accounts - some of these hitherto untapped.

The major collections of archival material on the history of precolonial Zululand-Natal are housed in the Killie Campbell Africana Library in Durban. The most important of these for this study, has been the extensive James Stuart Collection. Stuart (1868-1942), a fluent Zulu linguist, worked for the greater part of his life in Zululand and Swaziland in the colonial administration. In that period, he strove to record as much as he

could of the history, language, oral literature, social customs and mythology of the people amongst whom he was working. He deliberately sought out well-informed persons and interviewed them. The near-verbatim transcripts of his discussions, along with the details of his informants, circumstances and dates of the interviews, make up the core of this collection. A selection of the historical data in the collection are in the process of being published in an edited and annotated form. To date, three volumes of the projected six volume James Stuart Archive series have appeared, containing the testimonies of almost a hundred informants.[48] Extensive use has been made of both the printed archive and the unpublished collection in this study, and throughout, these data has been refracted through the twin prisms of the contemporary circumstances of each informant, as far as they are known, and the contemporary circumstances, interests and motivations of Stuart himself. Although elusive, the latter have been illuminated in a variety of ways: by means of the questions which Stuart selected to address to his informants, through a comparison of his interviews with the work of other scholars known to have interviewed the same informants, and by his own writings. In the 1920s, Stuart produced a series of five Zulu readers which represent his own synthesised account of the data which he marshalled over the years. Invaluable for the reconstruction of his persona in the testimonies, his writings also represent important reference works in their own right.[49]

Another important source, used systematically for the first time in this study, is the Zulu Essay Competition Collection, also housed in the Killie Campbell Library.

This collection comprises the prizewinning essays of two competitions organised in 1942 and 1950, by Killie Campbell, in conjunction with the then Native Education Department. The entrants were African teachers in Zululand and Natal schools. In most cases, the essays are about the history of the entrant's own isibongo and in many instances, the writers have indicated exactly who their informants were. In terms of historical content, the essays are of mixed value. At best, they contain information of astonishing historical depth and surprizing detail. Their typically local emphasis constitutes an important counterweight to the more general character of the data collected by Stuart. The essays with the least historical data and the greatest incoherence are not without worth, for they provide an important measure of the degeneration of oral traditions and, in some instances, the patterns characteristic of poorly preserved data are themselves important indicators of historical processes.

A third collection consulted at the Killie Campbell Library is that of the papers of Guy Vivian Essery (1875-1958), who, like Stuart, was a fluent Zulu linguist and for a long time a resident magistrate in Zululand. He was also an amateur historian, who collected historical data from well-informed persons whom he encountered in the course of his work. These data occurs in two forms in his papers. There are a number of testimonies taken down by Essery which appear to be verbatim transcripts, to which are appended details of the deponents, and the date, place and circumstances of the making of the statement. Valuable historical data are also to be found in Essery's own writings. In some cases, his informants are acknowledged; in other instances where they are not and where the data concerned are known not to have been available at that time in secondary sources, it

can be deduced that Essery obtained it first hand from local informants. The Essery papers which include some of his correspondence, are fascinating for the light which they shed on the interaction between early scholars of the Zulu, and their trade in information, and in particular, on A.T. Bryant's methods of asking strategically placed individuals, like Essery, to collect specific information on his behalf. It was only by accident and the good offices of friends in the Mhlali district where I conducted a period of fieldwork, that I discovered that a selection of Essery's papers have remained in the possession of his descendants on the Natal North Coast family farm. They kindly permitted me access to their collection also filling in much of his background, most importantly, discussing his interest in history and his methods of data collection.

In 1870, the Rev. H. Callaway, a missionary at Springvale in Natal, published The Religious System of the AmaZulu.[50] The book contains the testimonies of over thirty informants from both Zululand and Natal recorded in the 1850s. Most of the testimonies were recorded verbatim in the original Zulu, as dictation lessons by the new missionary, trying to improve his Zulu. The few testimonies which Callaway was obliged to commit to memory and to transcribe later, are clearly distinguished in the text from the others. The Zulu testimonies are accompanied by Callaway's own translations into English, and are characterised by a great sensitivity to nuances in meaning. A typical example of this is Callaway's translation of the word phrase 'ekuqaleni'. He followed missionary convention in translating this as 'in the beginning', but he carefully noted that this was not really accurate.

> There is the same obscurity in the Zulu use of this phrase as in our own. We must understand it here as meaning, in the beginning of the present order of things, and not from all eternity,[51]

the latter being the conventional missionary interpretation. In most instances, moreover, Callaway noted down

the circumstances under which the interviews were conducted, the names and social standing of his informants, and the form in which questions were put to them. In a letter to a friend in England, composed at the time when he was collected testimonies, Callaway commented on his method,

> I have many hundred pages of Kafir M.S.S. written at dictation at the mouth of different Kaffirs. They are tales, myths, customs etc ... I go over this carefully, write it out clearly, call the Kaffir *who has told me the tale, or another, and get him* to explain everything I cannot fully understand; the explanations are also written and appended to the paper. This is pure Kaffir, not adulterated by foreign idioms...[52]

Despite the rare rigour of Callaway's recording techniques and the book's status as the earliest collection *of such primary material yet extant*, Callaway's interviews have never been used in a systematic way as historical evidence. The chief reason for this would *seem to lie in the persistence* in the mind of early European commentators within Zulu society, and amongst twentieth century students of the precolonial Zulu, of a division between religion and history, and their characterisation as myth and fact respectively. Likewise, Callaway's collection of nursery tales dating from the same period, which display a similar rigour in their transcription, have never been used as historical sources.[53]

Extensive use has also been made of oral traditions recorded in 1983. These were collected in southern Swaziland and northern Zululand from groups which had either been part of the Zulu kingdom earlier in time, or who had close contact with the kingdom, or who claimed origins in common with groups in Zululand. This region was the object of intensive fieldwork because of the concentration in the area of traditions of greater stability and chronological depth than anywhere else in south-east Africa - a point first noted by Bonner in the early 1970s.[54] As some of the groups interviewed left Zululand before the reign of Shaka, others late in his reign, and still others some time after his death, this set of interviews constitutes a crucial means of periodising changes in oral traditions and in the location of influences dating specifically to the Shakan period.

Extensive use has also been made of the diaries of two of the earliest traders in Zululand and Natal, Henry Francis Fynn and Nathanial Isaacs.[55] These works are essential for the periodisation of events during the reign of Shaka, and are, moreover, the only absolute contemporary sources available. However, the major written texts on which this study draws are the works of A.T. Bryant.[56] Bryant (1865-1953) was for a long time associated with the Marianhill Mission Station in Natal, and was later based at a mission near Eshowe. It was during thi period that Bryant collected the bulk of the data for a number of books on Zulu history, society and language.

Although the scholarship, and the archaeological research in particular, of the last two decades has suggested that Bryant's work is probably flawed in a number of vital respects, his writings remain highly influential, indeed, indispensable for scholars. There are two reasons for this. The first of these lies in the sheer

volume of the work - its comprehensiveness, and its wealth of detail. As Shula Marks has noted, Bryant's writings represent 'almost fifty years of work gathering the oral traditions through the length and breadth of Natal from old and knowledgeable African informants who no long exist.'[57] As such, Bryant's 'archive' is second only to that of Stuart. However, Bryant's writings are characterized by a plethora of disconcerting literary flourishes, with speculations and theories indiscriminat interwoven with historical data, and his sources are largely unnamed. As such the deficiencies of Bryant's works as historical sources are the exact antithesis of the virtues of the Stuart interviews. A major thrust of this study will lie in the unpacking of some of Bryant's theories, notably those concerning the origins of the inhabitants of Zululand-Natal, and the identification of patterns of evidence distorting his work. However, ascription of greater validity to direct testimonies like those of the Stuart collection should not be taken too far. The great advantage in Bryant's writings which is absent in the Stuart collection, is precisely that which has been the most deplored, the overt presence of the scholar. This permits the easier deduction of his methods and estimation of the extent of his interventions in his texts. In a sense, the strengths and weaknesses of Stuart and Bryant's works are the inverse of each other, and the two sources lend themselves to a complementary usage. It is this articulation which constitutes the methodological spine of the discussion in the following chapters.

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3. J.H. Hofmeyr, South Africa, Pretoria, 1931, p. 51; also see Eric Louw's speech to the annual congress of SABRA, 1959, quoted in M. Wilson, 'The Early History of the Transkei and Ciskei', African Studies, 18, 4 (1959), p. 167; J.E. Holloway, 'Black and White Colonizers of South Africa', South Africa International, 9, no. 2, October (1978), p. 73; also see South African history textbooks, for example A.N. Boyce, Then and Now: A History for Std VI, Cape Town, 1968, especially chapter 15 and p. 78.

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6. See Wright's discussion of state support of research into African languages and culture from the 1920s onwards. J.B. Wright, 'Politics, Ideology and the invention of the "Nguni"', unpublished paper presented to a joint seminar of the African Studies Institute and the Department of History, University of the Witwatersrand, 1983, pp. 10-19.

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8. See Steve Biko cited in D.A. Kotze, African Politics in South Africa 1964-1974: Parties and Issues, Pretoria, 1975, p. 83; M.B.G. Mothlabi, 'The Theory and Practice of Black Resistance to Apartheid: a social-ethical analysis of the internal struggle for political and social change', Ph.d. thesis, Boston, 1980, pp. 203-4; G. Gerhart, Black Power in South Africa: The Evolution of an Ideology, California, 1978, see chapter 8, p. 271 in particular. The influence of earlier writers from North and West Africa such as L.S. Senghor (Selected Poems, London, 1964), and S. Badian, (La Mort de Chaka, Paris, 1961)

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13. Guy, Destruction, p. 9.

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18. Slater, 'Transitions', chapter 9.

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21. P. Anderson, Lineages of the Absolutist State, London, 1974, see especially the early chapters.

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23. P.L. Bonner, Kings, commoners and concessionaires: the evolution and dissolution of the nineteenth century Swazi state, Cambridge, 1983, p. 23.

24. Ibid.

25. Bonner, Kings, p. 21.

26. W.D. Hammond-Tooke, 'Descent Groups, Chiefdoms and South African Historiography', Journal of Southern African Studies, 11, 2, (1985), p. 217.

27. Ibid., pp. 314-16.

28. Ibid., p. 310.

29. Ibid., p. 317.

30. Ibid., p. 318.

31. Ibid.

32. See the shipwreck accounts in J. Bird, The Annals of Natal 1495-1845, Vol. 1, Pietermaritzburg, 1888, especially details from the 1686 Stavenisse wreck account. On circumcision at that time see p. 42.

33. Ibid., pp. 35, 42, 43.

34. Ibid., p. 43.

35. Ibid., p.

36. Ibid., p. 46.

37. Ibid., Dampier's Voyage, c.1690, p. 59. The reference concerns the area between 31°30 and 28°S (p. 56.).

38. Ibid., p. 45.

39. The history of groups which did not evolve into states, and whose history failed to interlock with the histories of the other components of a state, is now largely lost.

40. See below, pp. 110-15, 155-61.

41. C. Hamilton and J. Wright, 'The making of the Tala: ethnicity, ideology and class-formation in a precolonial context', paper presented to the Third History Workshop conference, University of the Witwatersrand, 1984, p. 9.

42. Ibid., p. 10.

43. See below, pp. 115-16.
Bryant, Olden Times, p. 185.

44. Guy, Destruction, pp. 34, 74, 110 - 11, 171, 183, also see p. 250.

45. See below, pp. 153-54.

46. See below, pp. 174-75.

47. See, for example, P.P. Rey, 'The Lineage Mode of Production', Critique of Anthropology, 3 (1975), pp. 27-39; Rey and Dupre, 'Reflections on a Theory of Exchange', in D. Seddon(ed.), Relations of Production: Marxist Approaches to Economic Anthropology, London, 1978. The French Marxist anthropologists from whom the category emanates, themselves fail to make this distinction, creating the 'primitive societies' of the twentieth century which are the objects of their studies as 'pre-capitalist'.

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49. Of particular use to this study have been uBaxoxele, London, 1924, and uKulumetule, London, 1925.

50. Rev. H. Callaway, The Religious System of the AmaZulu, Pietermaritzburg, 1870.

51. Ibid., p. 2, FN.4.

52. M.S. Benham, Henry Callaway: a Memoir, (ed.), Rev. Canon Benham, London, 1896, p. 98. Extract date 28.05.1860.

53. Rev. H. Callaway, Nursery Tales, traditions and histories of the Zulus, Pietermaritzburg, 1868.

54. Bonner, Kings, pp. 6-8.

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56. These include a series of articles in Izindaba Zabantu, Oct. 1910 - March 1913, subsequently republished in A History of the Zulu and Neighbouring Tribes, Cape Town, 1964; also A Zulu-English Dictionary, Pietermaritzburg, 1905, which contains a wealth of largely untapped historical and ethnographic data under individual word entries, preceeded by a sixty page 'Sketch of the Origin and Early History of the Zulu People', and includes lists of clan and praise names, and lists of historic persons and place names; Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, London, 1929, Bryant's definitive work on the early history of south-east Africa, with particular emphasis on the rise of Shaka and the Zulu military state; The Zulu People as they were before the White man came, Pietermaritzburg, 1949.

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CHAPTER ONE

IDEOLOGY AND ORAL TRADITIONS: METHODS FOR THE ANALYSIS OF ORAL HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

A key focus of this study is the social differentiation and concomitant ideological transformations which characterized the emergence of the precolonial states of south-east Africa. It will be argued in the following chapters that origin traditions were of particular importance in the emergence of an ideology of state - a perspective which pushes the temporal limits of this thesis back in time, into the period broadly designated as the later Iron Age. Much of the evidence on which it draws is therefore data which purports to refer to the very remote precolonial past.

To date, this remote period has been largely the preserve of archaeological research. The historical yield of the data recovered by the archaeologists occurs primarily in the form of ecological information and evidence on settlement patterns.[1] While material data of this sort can be used to support or refute claims made about the origins of certain groups, historical evidence of past ideologies survives in words alone. However, contemporary written accounts are only available for the last four years of the period covered by this study. As a result, this thesis draws heavily on oral history, although other sources of data - linguistic, ethnographical, archaeological and ecological - are used throughout, both to illuminate the traditions from within, and to corroborate the historical evidence derived from them.

The rubric 'oral history' refers to a variety of methodologies, and the use of many different kinds of sources. The most important characteristic common to all oral historical evidence is its transmission by word of mouth - spoken, recited or sung. In their attempts to come to grips with the specificity of evidence that is spoken rather than written, and to systematise the various forms in which oral historical evidence occurs, methodologists of oral history have spawned a cumbersome and imprecise terminology for their discipline. Its unwieldiness arises from a dichotomy which exists between the concerns and associated methodologies of the 'Africanist' historians and the new social historians; the former concerned to illuminate the remote precolonial past of Africa through the utilization of oral traditions, and the latter using oral sources primarily for the history of the recent past, often within living memory.

At the most simple level, this dichotomy has led to the development of a relatively rigid distinction between 'oral tradition' - tacitly recognized as the preserve of the Africanists, and adhering to Vansina's early criterion as being the product of a 'chain of transmission' over a number of generations[2] - and what is termed 'oral history' by the social historians from Essex University[3] or 'oral testimony' (David Henige's designation for all non-traditional oral evidence[4]) - referring primarily to personal reminiscences and life histories, the meat of so much contemporary social history.

It is difficult to avoid the suspicion that the terminological distinction between 'oral tradition' and 'oral history'/'oral testimony' in fact reflects an implicit criticism by users of the latter type of evidence that there is little material of historical value in the

'oral traditions' of Africa, particularly for the distant past given the biases and distortions to which 'oral traditions' have been shown to be subject.[5] Certainly, the terrain on which the divide between 'oral tradition' and 'oral history' is located is explicitly that of methodology. Historians within the two 'genres' centered on the universities of Wisconsin and Essex, not only attend separate conferences, but have each developed their own, virtually exclusive, journals of the method of oral historical studies.[6] Information on the technology of oral recordings is possibly the only acknowledged area of common interest. Even that seems to be of limited value, for the technological needs and difficulties of the oral historian in a remote, rural corner of Africa are often very different from those of the urban social historian.

While both journals reflect an active discourse in oral historical studies, the existence of methodological distinctions between them remain largely unqueried and undebated. These distinctions are understood to be located primarily in the differences in time depth for which each 'school' seeks oral evidence as an historical source, an issue which includes the problems of the effect of a 'chain of transmission'. It is clear from the methodological discussion in both journals that oral accounts which have been relayed across a number of generations demand special analytical skills and methods different from those needed for the utilisation of more contemporary, eye-witness accounts. Nonetheless, cognizance must surely be taken of the real and very great dangers that lie in the continued separation in this way, and the development in isolation from one another, of independent modes of analysis of two parts of a single process, that of the oral transmission of history.

The semantic imprecision of the distinctions between 'oral traditions' and 'oral history'/'oral testimonies', is also disturbing. A more useful distinction can be made between the sources (oral traditions and oral testimonies) and the products of the activities of historians (oral history). Indeed, in their own right oral traditions and oral testimonies may be oral history, especially where the informants concerned consider themselves to be actively engaged in the processes of the production of historical knowledge.[7]

Moreover, there lies in the drawing of too fine a distinction between oral traditions and oral testimonies, a danger of losing sight of the way in which these forms of oral historical evidence are both ways of relaying historical information. Oral traditions are communicated through time by means of an ongoing process of testimony and constantly mesh with the personal experiences of the informants. Similarly, testimonies, as the first-hand experience of informants, often draw on traditional historical perceptions, and, in turn, themselves enter a chain of transmission ultimately to evolve into the body of historical information transmitted as 'tradition'. Indeed, this process characterizes the flow of historical information in literate societies as much as in non-literate ones, although in the former, the problems of memory fall away. The historian who records a testimony verbatim, either in writing or on a tape recorder, merely intervenes in this process. Ultimately, when she or he comes to use the testimony, the historian is injected into the same process of transforming the 'testimony' into 'tradition' through its synthesis with other data, although perhaps by means of entirely different methods and in terms of other objectives. At many levels, testimony, tradition and history are interlocked notions.[8]

There is also an essentially unacknowledged sense to the distinction between 'tradition' and 'testimony' as concerned with the difference between 'public' and 'personal' (or 'popular') history. 'Public' history refers to formally presented versions of history, frequently emanating from 'professional' historians within the society. 'Personal' history, as represented in people's own memories and their attempts to make sense of the past, is characteristically individual. The validity of this distinction can be questioned in the same terms as that between 'tradition' and 'testimony'. The personal will always impinge on the individual who deals in the domain of 'public' history, in terms of his/her *memory, logic or political* allegiance, and vice-versa. It seems doubtful that these two spheres could ever be considered to be sufficiently separate so as to warrant what are rapidly evolving into distinct disciplines. Paul Irwin has observed with reference to his case study of the oral history of Liptako, that the two domains are in practice inseparable.

> Liptako's wise old men ... respond consciously to traditions, testing them against the wisdom of their different experiences and the dictates of their various interests, accepting some of what they hear and rejecting some, gradually building up their ideas about the past.[9]

Moreover, he notes that even where living informants have not imposed their own views on a tradition, it is likely that in the long chain of transmission lying behind their stories there are those who did just that.[10]

Behind these distinctions between 'tradition' and 'testimony', 'public' and 'personal' history, lies an implicit assumption that in oral form, 'tradition', or 'public' history, reflects the ideology of ruling groups, serving to legitimate their claims to power, rights and dues. Social history using 'oral testimony'/ personal reminiscences on the other hand, is considered

either to be free of ideological considerations, or else to be reflective of the culture and ideology of subordinate groups.[11]

The relationship between ideology and traditions has been addressed in a recent publication edited by Hobsbawm and Ranger, The Invention of Tradition. The central premise underlying the five essays of this book is that traditions play a key role in the construction of the ideologies of nationalism, imperialism and radicalism. The great value of these essays lies in their perception of a responsive relationship between traditions and current ideologies.

> The term 'invented tradition' is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past.[12]

However, though it is acknowledged that traditions draw on the past selectively, the very notion of 'invented' tradition suggests an arbitrary act at a particular point in time, to suit or satisfy particular political or material objectives and as a form of social engineering. This view of traditions seems to draw on an implicitly class-reductionist conception of ideology itself, and on an understanding of ideology as simply imposed from above.

Suggestions of a more satisfactory conceptualization of the relationship between ideology and oral history come from the recent work of the Popular Memory Group at the Center for Cultural Studies, in Birmingham. Whilst continuing to work with the 'public' (dominant memory) and private (popular memory) dichotomy, they affirm the importance of history as an arena of struggle. They define 'popular memory' as a 'dimension of political

practice', an active force in shaping prevailing political consciousness and a site of political struggle.[13] The relationship between 'popular memory' and ideology however, is not investigated by the group. One approach which allows one to take this perspective further is a closer examination of ideology.

Ideology is a notoriously elusive and equivocal concept, and a term widely used with diverse significances. For precapitalist societies most work on ideology and culture draws on the anthropological structural-functional body of theory that, ironically, shares common themes with earlier reductionist and functionalist Marxism.[14] Critiques of these approaches and some of the most exciting new theories of ideology have recently come from non-functionalist Marxism, applied to capitalist societies. Although precapitalist societies are different in a number of crucial ways, these theories provide insights which allow one to go beyond the restricted confines of structural-functionalism. It is to a brief examination of some of these theories that this chapter now turns, before proceeding to see how they can be used to illuminate an understanding of the ideologies of precapitalist societies and their relationship to oral traditions.

In the theory of ideology, reductionism is a problem closely linked to that of economism. The (reductionist) view of ideology as a set of theories and cognitions which express the interests of a particular class derives from Lenin, and the experience of the Russian Revolution.[15] This view asserts the necessary class-belonging of all the elements of an ideology, and ultimately, that all social classes have their own paradigmatic ideologies.

Similar notions implicitly inform orthodox Marxist anthropological notions of ideology and the analysis of oral traditions. Writing on the ideology of the

precapitalist Inca, the French Marxist anthropologist Godelier noted that in the new conquest society, insofar as former relations of production continued to survive and to give form to new relations of production, so too did ideological forms serve both as material and as a schema of representation for the new social relations, i.e. the old ideological forms were able to represent new relations.[16] However, they could only do this, in Godelier's view, by making them appear as something else, something analogous to the former mode of production, an extension of it. This had two effects inevitably characterising the whole ideology of domination - the concealment or the disappearance of the oppressive nature of the new mode of production and the justification of this oppression in the eyes of both the dominated and the dominant. Essentially, Godelier's argument is both economistic and reductionist. While it highlights the key role of the past and of history in the creation of precapitalist ideologies, oral traditions are implicitly considered to be the products or artefacts of ruling group ideologies, and are understood to be imposed on society in the form of a 'false consciousness' functioning to mask the reality of power relations and oppression in the society. This view suggests that no direct or alternative cognitions of the real conditions of life are possible, that the experience of life is a perpetual illusion, and the distortion of reality is at the whim of the ruling class.

The recent ideas of Althusser on the semi-autonomy of politics, aesthetics, ideology and the judiciary have significantly modified this notion of a mechanical reflection, but his thesis that the central mechanism of ideology is the interpellation of individuals as subjects, does not allow for the coexistence of a dominant ideology and any other world view or culture.[17] The problem of reductionism remains. Althusser argues

that the subordinate groups in a society can only formulate their grievances in the language and the logic of the dominant class. The problem with this formulation is that it loses sight of the struggle in which the proponents of a dominant ideology have to engage. E.P. Thompson's suggestion of an eternal friction between the lived experience of the people and imposed consciousness seems more useful.[18]

The term 'culture' also has a long history and a wide range of meanings, but it has increasingly come to refer to the idea of 'the lived experience' of the people and the values which they hold, and as such exists in opposition to the notion of imposed consciousness. As Gramsci has noted, culture in contrast to ideology, is frequently deeply contradictory and heterogeneous in character. Its spontaneity is often chaotic although it demonstrates the capacity to gain in coherence through opposition to other interests. It is a conception of the world, which like ideology, must be understood to be linked to and shaped by 'objective circumstances' of existence, not in the sense of an objective base - the material forces of production controlling the form culture will assume - but rather in the sense of those material forces which limit the range of human responses possible, or exert a pressure on the people who share these conditions to respond to them in a particular way. Practical human activity, Gramsci notes, cannot be separated from human consciousness.[19]

Gramsci's ideas seem to be particularly useful for reaching an understanding of the relationship between ideology and culture, and the process of struggle in which they often seem to engage. Gramsci introduces the notion of hegemony which he uses to capture the actual processes in which the relationship between the

world of ideas of the dominant and dominated vary and agree.[20] He focuses on the transformation and rearticulation of existing ideological elements into new and prevalent or hegemonic ideologies. Ideology is then

> ... the terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position and struggle.[21]

For Gramsci, this process is not simply the replacement of one class ideology by another. A common world view comes to be s[illegible]red by the dominant group, and allied subordinate groups and as such, it is the organic expression of the whole bloc. This process is not one of building a brand new ideological system, but rather, it is a process of criticism of existing ideological complexes, and a process of transformation and rearrangement in which the new ideology is built up in course of political and economic struggles.

The ideological elements involved are drawn from a variety of sources and different interest groups, but the unity stems from an articulating principle, and that is always provided by the hegemonic group. Commenting on Gramsci's writings, Chantal Mouffe notes that this articulating principle is never very precisely defined by Gramsci, but that it seems to involve

> a system of values, the realisation of which depends on the central role played by the hegemonic class at the level of relations of produ[illegible]ion.[22]

It is through this perpetual process of articulation and rearticulation that ideological elements acquire a class character which is not intrinsic to them, rather than through a process of confrontation between two already elaborated world views. In its drive to assert hegemony therefore, any ruling class has to represent more than simply its own narrow corporate interests, and it has to find ways moreover of universalizing the latter. What results then, Gramsci suggests,

is a form of consent that is active and direct, the product of real interchange between rulers and ruled.

Laclau is another theorist of ideology who rejects the class ascription of ideological elements. For Laclau, any conceptualisation of ideology must be situated firmly in the nexus of class struggle, and he asserts

> A class is hegemonic not so much to the extent that it is able to impose a uniform conception of the world on the rest of society, but to the extent that it can articulate different versions of the world in such a way that their potential antagonism is neutralized.[23] (my emphasis)

The theories of Laclau and Gramsci offer an understanding of ideology which is not merely anti-reductionist, but which accounts for resistance and its manifestations at the level of ideology/culture, and which takes cognizance of the processes involved. Their ideas, developed in the twentieth century, pertain to capitalist society, and in some cases, are programmes of action as much as analytical tools. As such, they cannot be imported wholesale for the analysis of precapitalist ideologies. In appropriate contexts however, they can be used to provide insights in the same way that the Marxist study of precapitalist societies generally has had to deduce its method and theory of precapitalist social formations from Marx's theory of capitalism and class struggle - to extract the general from the science of historical materialism.

The precolonial Zulu state is a not inappropriate place to embark on this exercise for the practice and struggles of the process of Zulu state formation lend themselves to an analysis that draws on the theory of class struggle. The emergence of the centralised Zulu state was characterised by a marked intensification of relations of exploitation, facilitated notably by the development of the amabutho (the so called 'regimental') system. The amabutho constituted

a new coercive apparatus in the hands of the rulers, and were the means whereby the labour power and reproduction of the society came under the control of an emergent aristocracy, at the expense of the former dominance of lineage heads and elders. The division between those who laboured and those who did not was thus sharpened, and crystallized into a new and fixed alignment removed from the earlier dominant characteristic of an evolution from labouring junior to power-wielding elder. The growing importance of raiding as the chief productive activity saw a concentration of the means of production in the hands of the rulers, and the increased extraction of surplus labour from the kingdom's homesteads in the service of the state. Increasingly, under Shaka, society in Zululand-Natal came to be characterized by a principal contradiction between two groups, rulers and ruled. Sub-categories of various sorts existed within them, but the fundamental groups developed economic relations to each other and to outsiders, buttressed by associated political and ideological forms.[24]

One major distinction which can be made between the ideologies of capitalist societies, and those of precapitalist societies like that of the Zulu, concerns the role of history and the significance of the past. In precolonial Zulu society, where a form of ancestor-worship prevailed, history acquired especially powerful ideological connotations. References to the previous order of things evoked not merely the sanction of past experience, but that of the ancestors who had power to affect the present. Consequently, appeals to history and apparent continuity with the past in such a society constituted ideological elements of much greater power and effect than they did in twentieth-century, capitalist societies.

Likewise, in precolonial, precapitalist societies like

that of the Zulu, the means whereby ideologies became entrenched in the society - the precolonial equivalent of Althusser's 'Ideological State Apparatus', and Gramsci's hegemonic apparatus which constitutes the 'ideological structure' of the dominant group[25] - were considerably more limited than in twentieth-century, capitalist societies with their schools, radios, televisions, cinemas and a myriad of other forms of media. In Zulu society, the transmission of new ideas was largely by word of mouth. These two differences between capitalist and precapitalist societies highlight the absolutely central role of oral history in the ideology of a society such as that of the Zulu.

The issue to which this c[illegible]w turns is the development of a methodology for the analysis of oral traditions which moves beyond a reductionist conceptualization of ideology, and the view of oral traditions as the pliant tools in the hands of a society's rulers. In this endeavour, further insights can be gleaned from the work of t[illegible]ntieth-century analysts of the relationship between ideology and written texts, notably from the method and practice of Marxist literary criticism.

In response to recent advances in the theory of ideology, Macherey, and more recently Jameson, have suggested a new approach to the analysis of texts.[26] The essence of their approach is to allow a degree of autonomy to the text. The text is considered to exist independently of the author because it has the capacity to say things that the author did not intend it to. Silences in a text - for example, the failure to mention something that might be expected - can be as revealing as a statement itself. In particular their approach suggests that while texts have the appearance of representing a complete and seamless ideology, in spite of themselves

they contain evidence of contradictions which arise because an ideology is never an accomplished fact, but is '... the terrain on which men move, ... and struggle'.

For Macherey, contradiction is the very condition of the narrative. He suggests that a 'deconstructive reading', in Marxist terms, is what is needed to lay bare the 'faultlines' in the text, and ultimately, to reveal ideological struggles. By this he means an analysis of the process of the construction of the text out of the discourses which prevailed at the time of writing.

> The aim is to locate the point of contradiction within the text, the point at which it transgresses the limits within which it is constructed, breaks free of the constraints of its own realist form.[27]

Jameson suggests a method for achieving this. He posits that the fault lines of the text should be read in terms of three 'horizons'. These three horizons, he argues, are distinct moments in the interpretation of the text. The first horizon is that of political history, where the individual work must be grasped as a symbolic act and as an imaginary resolution to a real contradiction. At this level, he suggests that the structural approach of *Lévi-Strauss to the* illumination of text would be useful.[28] Indeed, the approach is not new in the analysis of oral tradition. Vansina has commented recently on the value and the dangers of this in the interpretation of oral traditions.

> *Basically, structuralism* is a fine tool for literary criticism provided that one accepts that it deals with resonances as a given reader can read into a text beyond the intentions of an *author.*[29]

The qualification of this activity that Vansina stresses, is that the researcher (or the critic) must seek exegesis using the hermeneutical skills <u>current</u> in the society concerned,

> The fieldworker must learn distinctions between reality and symbol. He must learn the rules of context that close off further deduction or deny equivalences etc. so as to unveil the underlying tensions of the text.[30]

For Jameson however, interpretation cannot stop at demonstrating that a text offers a symbolic resolution to a situation which is contradictory in the society concerned. Every text needs to be interpreted in terms of a second horizon, that of the struggle between classes. Jameson argues that the imaginary resolution of texts' contradictions revealed in the first horizon reflects the hegemonic ideology of the society. However, when examined in terms of the second horizon, the determinants of the particular form taken by the hegemonic ideology-the 'symbolic act' (which constituted the imaginary resolution) - are revealed. Jameson, following Mikhail Bakhtin, suggests class discourse is 'dialogical'. The value and character of symbolic action are not imposed by the dominant class, but are modified and enlarged by a dialogue between classes. It is Jameson's contention that this perspective on the dialogical

> ... allows us to reread or rewrite the hegemonic forms themselves; they can also be grasped as a process of reappropriation and neutralization, the co-optation and class formation, the cultural universalization of forms which originally expressed the situation of 'popular', subordinate or dominated groups.[31]

Jameson describes the third horizon in terms of which all texts must also be read as the 'cultural revolution', the moment in which the coexistence of various modes of production becomes visibly antagonistic, their contradictions moving to the very center of political, social and historical life'.[32] The text of this third horizon is what Jameson terms the ideology of form, where form must be apprehended as content. Notable in this horizon

is the identification in texts of sedimentation from previous modes of production. Jameson's conception of the third horizon is not as fully developed as the other two, but is probably best understood through the example of sexual and patriarchial exploitation which he uses,

> ... it becomes clear that sexism and the patriarchial are to be grasped as the sedimentation and virulent survival of forms of alienation specific to the oldest mode of production of human history, with its division of labour between men and women, and its division of power between youth and elder. The analysis of the ideology of form, properly completed, should reveal the *formal persistence* of such archaic structures of alienation - and the sign systems specific to them - beneath the overlay of all the more recent and historically original types of alienation ...[33]

Jameson's proposal is that the act of interpretation must come to grips with the dialectic in terms of all three horizons. He offers a method of analysis whereby the ideological seamlessness of any text can be demonstrated to be fiction.

The ideas of the Marxist literary critics are thus *profoundly anti-reductionist.* No text, in these terms can ever exist as the voice of a single interest. The great value of their method is the restoration of the notion of contradiction to the Marxist analysis of literature, and to Marxist interpretation.

> The object of the critic then, is to seek not the unity of the work, but the multiplicity and diversity of its meanings, its incompleteness, the omissions which it displays but cannot describe and above all its contradictions.[34]

Many historians working in a Marxist paradigm have not applied a similarly dialectical approach to their analysis of historical texts. They have remained bound to a conservative methodology of evidence corroboration, seeking, lawyer-like, internal coherence in their texts *as a sign of their validity as historical sources.* It may be that the historian using oral texts, or texts

that were once oral, can take this bold step more easily. Paul Thompson commented in this regard, although from a different perspective, that there was a

> ... stronger tendency for written material to be ordered and composed, whether around chronology or theories with a more literary choice of words, and a conscious and complete syntax. The oral form, with its hesitations, back-tracks and parentheses, *just because it was less coherent* allowed much more room for the expression of doubt and contradiction.[35]

Oral traditions are by definition unfixed (at least until recorded). They are usually in daily currency in a society. Consequently, lived experience constantly confronts the hegemonic ideology represented in the traditions. Where antagonistic interests are represented in the traditions, a dialogue is set up, to which the traditions, precisely because they are not fixed texts, can respond immediately. For ideological discourse in a precapitalist, precolonial context, oral traditions are, in a heightened sense, not merely the vehicle of a hegemonic ideology, but the very site of the expression of the dialogue and the conflict in which it engages, and of the friction between lived experience and imposed consciousness - not in E.P. Thompson's essentially ahistorical sense of a perpetual, eternal tension, but in a process of change over time. In non-literate societies, traditions are the arena in which different sets of ideas about the world confront one another, square up, and take cognizance of one another. Feierman, in his study of Shambaa oral traditions, noted something of this process in perceiving that subtle elaborations in traditions constantly take place in response to the arguments of the opposition.[36]

The proposition advanced here is that the oral traditions of any group develop in dialectical response to the oral traditions of other groups, and are moulded by the latter as much as they mould themselves. They cannot be viewed

as passive and reflective of a particular set of interests. *Like ideology itself, they cannot be reduced to expressions of ruling group interests.* Traditions are active, and in certain senses, autonomous, mediating among the *interests of several groups, sometimes compelling* the ruling group to bend to the needs of the ruled. Traditions are bound to manifest a degree of evenhandedness *sufficient to allow social conformity;* they must validate themselves ethically in the eyes of several interest groups, and not just the rulers.

The particular capacity of oral traditions to embody contradictions within their texts, and their heightened ability, by virtue of their character as unfixed texts, to engage in a dialogue with other ideas around them, suggests that the insights of the Marxist literary critics can be usefully drawn on in their analysis. The fundamental direction to be derived from their work is the restoration of the contradiction to the centre of any such analysis. Where earlier approaches to the analysis of oral traditions have found historical evidence in the occurrence of the same 'facts' across a number of sources, and have preferred sources that demonstrate an internal consistency, the thrust of this approach is the location of 'fault-lines' and their exploration. Earlier studies have focused on problems of memory and their effect on oral traditions, and while the perspective developed here recognizes that the very process of remembering is creative, selective and involves structuring, its thrust is to argue that these processes were themselves shaped by what Jameson has termed the 'political unconscious', and the priority of their response to contradictions in oral texts.[37]

The methods by which the 'fault-lines' of oral texts are to be located and analysed will, in this study, be guided by Jameson's perceptions contained in his notion

of the three horizons of interpretation. His model seems especially appropriate for adaptation to the analysis of oral traditions because of its clear focus on the dialogue of discourses - an important, but neglected aspect of oral texts. The capacity of his model to take cognizance of the sedimentation in texts of previous modes of production contributes an important new perspective for the analysis of oral traditions pertinent to a society in transition, such as that of the Zulu. This is especially the case where, as in this study, the focus is on the changing ideological content of traditions - where new content can be expected to occur in what Bonner has termed the 'old ideological shells'[38] of a previous society or mode of production. Adaptation of Jameson's model for the analysis of oral texts also seems appropriate because it is developed in terms of an understanding of literature as 'a weaker form of myth or a late[illegible]e of ritual'[39], where all are equally informed b[illegible]iority of political interpretation.

It will be argued in the following chapters that with the extension and entrenchment of Zulu rule across Zululand-Natal, and the crystallization of a division between privileged and unprivileged in Zulu society, a hegemonic ideology legitimating Zulu rule and the distinctions of status emerged. It will be further argued that this ideology was not simply invented and imposed on Zulu society by its rulers, but that it derived from ideological elements which had previously enjoyed a currency, the selection of which was determined in the course of the struggles which underlay the emergence of the Zulu kingdom. The 'articulating principle' of the new ideology was provided by the hegemonic group and the central role which it played in the relations of production, but its form was shaped by the necessity of articulating a number of different

world views, and the neutralization of their political antagonisms.

These processes were the most visible in the ideologically powerful domain of history, and in particular, in the realm of traditions of origin. The reasons for this emphasis lay in the limitations placed on the range of ideological change that was possible in such a society. Insofar as former relations of production continued to survive and lend form to new relations of production in a transitional society such as that of the Zulu, old ideological forms tended to serve both as 'material and scheme of representation for new social relations'.[40] As Thompson has noted at the level of language, 'to say new things you have to squeeze new meanings out of old words'.[41] The survival of old forms created a sense of continuity with the past, and functioned in that way to legitimate the new social order. This would have been especially significant in a society such as that of the Zulu, where, as we have already noted, ancestors were understood to be able to influence the present. As long as an 'ancestor cult' was maintained as the basis of chiefly or kingly power in Zululand-Natal, notions of common descent as important to social cohesion could be modified, but not jettisoned. In terms of these constraints on the emergence of a hegemonic ideology in the Zulu kingdom, traditions of origin, which formed the basis of claims of common descent, were the prime terrain of ideological struggle.

The bulk of the traditions of origin reviewed in the coming chapters were recorded c.1900, although some were recorded both earlier and later, and can be used to give a sense of the changes which traditions of origin were undergoing at various times. In c.1900, the traditions of origin collected in Zululand-Natal

would have differed from those which prevailed during the reign of Shaka.[42] Many of the factors which affected traditions of origin in the intervening eighty years varied according to the different historical experiences of different groups in that period, and some of the threads of these specific influences will be drawn out in the ensuing chapters. These preliminary explorations of the influence of events of the nineteenth century on the data collected by Stuart will establish a basic framework, and serve as a necessary prior step to a task which is beyond the scope of this thesis, that of the systematic exposition and close regional differentiation of the nineteenth century background to Zulu oral traditions by way of magisterial records and like sources.

Features of the preliminary framework which warrant immediate mention include the major ideological changes experienced in the region during the reign of Shaka, the effect of civil conflict in the second half of the century on prevailing notions of history, and that of the imposition of British rule, in Natal in 1838, and in Zululand in 1879. With British rule, the inhabitants of Natal and Zululand came under pressure to respond to the administration's notions of chiefship and land rights. Wright argues that the ability to demonstrate genealogical seniority and historical primacy of land occupation appealed to the colonial administrators, and lent itself to mobilisation against aggressive settler colonialism.[43] The withdrawal of Zulu rule from Natal in the 1830s, and the collapse of the Zulu royal house in the 1880s also had an effect on the historical claims of the various groupings in Zululand-Natal, notably the revival of traditions effaced by the emergence of Zulu hegemony. These factors, in varying degrees affected the oral traditions of most of the inhabitants of Zululand, Natal. Although not always explicit, the analysis of tradition of origin patterns

in the following chapters at every turn, takes cognizance of the likely affects of these events and the possible associated distortions.

Current political events also affected forms of oral historical evidence other than traditions of origin - such as clan-names and praises - demanding that their analysis be subject to similar qualifications. Little used as a source of historical evidence by present-day scholars, izithakazelo (sing. isithakazelo; siSwati, tinanatelo, sing. sinantelo) were recognized in Zulu society as being a rich form of historical data.

> Each and every clan, besides the actual 'clan-name' (isiBongo) (e.g. aba-kwaZulu, the-Zulu-clan; aba-s-eLangeni, the-eLangeni-clan-which was usually the name of the clan's founder, or of his kraal), possessed also an iziTakazelo, or a name whereby to address members of the clan, perhaps originally the name of the founder's father, or the name of some other celebrated clan personality (e.g. Ndabazita, for the Zulu clan; Mhlongo for the eLangeni clan). In polite conversation, a clansman was accordingly addressed not by the clan's isiBongo, but by its isiTakazelo ...[44]

Izithakazelo seem to have lent themselves to manipulation in the services of ideological purposes, notably creating bonds between certain groups and introducing distance between others. The way in which they functioned in Zulu society was similar to the role of clan praises in Shona society where

> 'the definition of the group is achieved not through the statement of who rules but through the claim to a common ancestor'.[45]

Bryant compiled two extensive lists of izithakazelo, the most comprehensive of which is that appended to his Olden Times in Zululand and Natal. He gives between one and three izithakazelo for each isibongo (clan-name) mostly consisting of a single name each. These izithakazelo recorded by Bryant were nowhere near as extensive as the tinanatelo which are yet extant in

Swaziland, some of which comprise many lines and often merge with the praises of individuals. Thus for the isibongo Khumalo, Bryant gives the izithakazelo 'Ndabazitha', 'Ndaba', and 'Ntungwa', and for the isibongo Nxumalo, 'Mkatshwa'.[46] Swazi informants today give much longer tinanatelo for each isibongo; 'Kuhlase', 'Mntungwa', and 'Lukambule' for Khumalo; and 'Ndwandwe', 'Mkatshwa', 'wena waseGudu inkomo', 'wena kaZide', 'waLanga', and 'wena wanakaKokele bantu bahlatshwa emkhabeni banje ngezinkomo', for Nxumalo. Khumalo informants, like many other informants interviewed on the subject of tinanatelo in Swaziland, were unable to explain any of their tinanatelo, whilst the Nxumalo informants could locate some aspects of theirs, such as 'Magudu', their place of origin, or Khokele who was a renowned Nxumalo hero, famous for stabbing people in the stomach. This last sinanatelo was drawn from the praise poem of Khokhele, and in this way the tinanatelo were linked to the ancestors of the group, and in some ways must have echoed the function of individual praises in the society.[47]

The ostensible function of izithakazelo seems to have been preservation of the memory of a clan's wider genealogical connections. People claim genealogical connections and tend to observe marriage prohibitions with groups who share the same izithakazelo, even where the circumstances of their connection are not (or no longer) known. It is widely asserted that a group 'must' be related to whomsoever their izithakazelo (or tinanatelo) conjoin with. Unlike clan-names (izibongo), izithakazelo are not fixed for all time. Numerous izithakazelo are not even the names of ancestors. Rather, the characteristic obscurity of meaning of most izithakazelo predisposed them to manipulations of meaning, additions and subtractions, and facilitated the creation of fictive kin relationship.[48] Izithakazelo

had no ritual role which might have served as an imperative for their accurate preservation. These features suggest that izithakazelo, possibly even more than traditions of origin, were open to manipulation, both in the reign of Shaka and subsequently. As historical evidence, izithakazelo should enormously illuminate the processes by which social cohesion in the Zulu kingdom was obtained. However, they require critical analysis and their literal veracity should be understood to be subject to considerable reservation.

The hermeneutic applied to this kind of source should again take the dialectic as its starting point. The location of antinomies and anomalies involves the collation of all the available izithakazelo, the establishment of inconsistencies within that body of data, and the testing of that information against other sources, such as the relevant group traditions of genesis.

Conversely, certain kinds of evidence do exist which date from the Shakan period, which, like traditions of origin, can be described as being perceived by the society concerned as being formally historical, and, therefore as being likely areas for ideological interventions, but,which for specific reasons, were unlikely to have changed much in the post-Shakan period. One such source of evidence is the praise poem (isibongo, pl.izibongo). Acknowledgement of the historical content of izibongo is to be found in comparative data and in the circumstances of the use of izibongo by the Zulu. In a recent study conducted by Landeg White in Malawi and Mozambique, informants indicated that the historical content of a praise-poem was its most important feature.[49] Amongst the Tswana, Schapera also found that the preferred praise-poems were those said to be 'full of history'.[50] It can likewise be

inferred from the common recitation by Stuart's informants of praise poems (about important historical figures) in the midst of historical narratives - to lend added dimensions and validity to their testimonies - that these sentiments were shared by the inhabitants of Zululand-Natal.[51] Indeed, the recitation of praise poems at the graves of ancestors to encourage their intervention in the world of the present would seem to prove conclusively that praise poems were perceived of as being profoundly historical in nature.[52]

The ideological role of the izibongo is suggested by the tight control over the activity of praising exerted by kings and chiefs. The position of royal imbongi (praise singer) was a jealously guarded and highly valued appointment, carrying with it immense statu. Shaka's most renowned izimbongi were Magolwana kaMkatini, and Nomxamama kaSoshaya of the Bisini people, an especial favourite of the king.[53] Nomxamama was stationed at Shaka's later capital of Dukuza, but there were royal izimbongi at every 'military' establishment (ikhanda).[54] The izimbongi were required to recite the praises of the king and his ancestors on all public occasions so as continually to reaffirm the legitimacy of the ruling house.

> Praise poems are the record of power, a catalogue of success. On behalf of those who maintain and manipulate and occasionally usurp authority, they lay claim to legitimacy. They are not, in the last resort, important as a form of entertainment, an opportunity for performance; they are the annals of the ruling group.[55]

However, they were not only the annals of societies' rulers. Although the izimbongi were primarily concerned to praise the king or chief, they were also charged with representing the grievances of the king's subjects. The izimbongi were uniquely able to criticise the prevailing order nd to do so with impunity.[56] Cope describes the imbongi as

> ... the intermediary between the chief and his subjects, for when he presents the chief to his people in the recitation, he is also representing the opinion of the people to the chief. Thus the praise poem contains criticism as well as praise.[57]

Likewise Nyembezi, in his study of the historical background to the izibongo of the Zulu 'military' age, has suggested that praise-poems 'may provide the final solution as to what the people of the time thought of the king'.[58]

The izibongo, as a poetry form, constitute concentrated and rich historical texts. They bear complex witness to the societies from which they emerge and exhibit a double ideological aspect. They were at once a form of history in which the world view of the rulers was expressed, and a vehicle for the expression of social disaffection. They were, at the same time, the chronicles of individual lives, of both rulers and commoners, for praises were not confined to the scions of chiefly houses. Every man accumulated praises across his lifetime. They 'gave a man his personality'.[59] On a day to day basis, these individual praises were an aspect of a much larger apparatus for the socialization of individuals and the development of particular attitudes and values in society. Mazize Kunene prefers to translate izibongo as 'poems of excellence' because their purpose was that of 'elevating highest, desirable qualities in society ... they project an ethical system beyond the circumstances of the individual'.[60] During the Shakan period, they were concerned with the projection of a suitably military ethos. Mtshapi, one of Stuart's informants observed,

> Izibongo in the case of the amagawe (heroes) were ... to inspire and infuse the army with wrath. This was their object.[61]

and the ethnographer Krige observed

> When a warrior giya's (dances) the spectators shout out his praises, and in a military life like that of the Zulu's, where praises had to be

> won by brave deeds in battle, these praises led to great emulation. They were an encouragement, not only to the man who had won them, but to others who had not yet distinguished themselves. In view of all this publicity, the position of a coward, who would have had no-one to praise him if he dared to giya, must have been invidious.[62]

Lestrade described the praise poem as

> a type of composition intermediate between the pure, mainly narrative epic, and the pure, mainly apostrophic ode, being a combination of exclamatory narrative and laudatory apostrophizing.[63]

Clearly, izibongo can be of use to the historian in a number of ways.

While the izibongo were of a formally historical nature, and were undoubtedly mobilized ideologically, their mutability over time has been an issue of some debate. Jeff Opland has recently contended that the praise poem is, above all else, essentially performance art [64], and indeed, there can be no doubt that the written text of a praise-poem can never express the excitement and other facets of live delivery. According to Samuelson, izibongo were so-called because they were bellowed out, for ukubonga also means to roar like a lion or a bull.[65] Conventionally, delivery was rapid, accompanied by frenzied and energetic movement, whilst the normal downdrift intonation of speech was abandoned during recitation, giving a sense of great import and occasion. Mandlakazi, one of Stuart's informants, described the performance of Shaka's imbongi thus,

> Magolwana used to recite praises to such an extent that he would go down on his hands and knees, and lose his voice. He was once given a pair of large horns which were fixed to either side of his head as if they were on the head of a cow or ox. An imbongi would recite and recite, then stop a little, move on further, then go on praising, then stop, then go on again.[66]

Opland's contention is that the emphasis in praise poetry on performance falls squarely on the creativity of the

imbongi at the time of the performance. Drawing on a contemporary case study, Opland argues that the Xhosa praise poem was a eulogy characterised by a freedom to diverge during performance. Opland noted that the poet used a number of formulae and set phrases as aids to *extempore composition.* For Opland, this suggests that the traditional role of the imbongi was as an incitor, a moulder of public opinion, and that izibongo were and are only relevant to the present, the time of the rendition.[67] However, Opland's thesis is open to question from a number of directions.

Landeg White has staunchly defended praise poems as a source of historical evidence for the periods which are their essential subjects. White deduces from what is known of Stuart's recording techniques that his informants were likely to have been memorizers of poems, rather than composers. The izibongo recorded by Stuart, he argues, would have been affected less by the exigencies of the present, and more by problems of *memory* fallibility on the part of the informants, very few of whom claimed the skills of an imbongi. Moreover, White notes, in the izibongo, the set formulae of the poems seem to be less those of form, and more those of content. He suggests that set content formulae were used and reused as mnemotechnical devices, enabling historical content to echo on and on into the present.[68] In fact, Opland's own work, as well as that of White, indicates that izibongo actually change very little over time. It seems probable that the absolutely crucial role of praises in most rituals would have served to ensure that the praises were conserved in their original form as far as possible. The anachronisms and archaisms characteristic of the izibongo survived even once their meaning became obscured, while the poetic form of the praises - their rhythm, alliteration, assonance and parallelisms - would also have facilitated their memory

over time. The izimbongi were, in fact, renowned for their powers of memory. One informant commented,

> I, Mandhlakazi, once asked a son of Magolwana how it was that the Zulu izimbongi were able to remember the praises of kings to so extraordinary a degree, how it was that they managed to dispose themselves to receive and retain so much, what drugs they ate which opened up the chest or heart to the reception of so much...[69]

The importance for all ritual, of the ancestors, not only of the chiefly houses, but those of every man, created an imperative throughout society for the preservation of praises as accurately as possible, and indeed, the durability over time of praises is remarked on in the praise poem of Dingane,

> Vezi Kof' Abantu, Kusal' Izibongo
> Izona Zosala Zibadalula
> Izona Zosal' Zibalilel' Emanxiweni.
> (The people of Vezi will die, praises will remain,
> They will remain exposing them,
> They will remain mourning for them in the deserted kraals.)[70]

Although the poems can be said to contain a strong historic core, they were also adulterated by later overlays. White demonstrates this with reference to the praises of Ndaba and those of his descendant, Shaka. He notes that they shared certain praises in an adapted form, and suggests that the particular form and content of Ndaba's praises derived from the reign of Shaka and were projected backwards in an effort to create a respectable genealogy for Shaka.[71] The reverse of course, may equally well have been the case, with similar implications for the question of adulteration.

White's thesis posits a strong connection between power and the praise poem, where izibongo were the poetry of patronage in a society with a strong military inflection. Praise poems from the post-Shakan period, R. Kunene has noted, were considerably lower key.[72] The survival of the dominant military aspect in the Shakan izibongo

yet extant indicates in yet another way, how, in the final analysis, the praise poem nonetheless preserved *for the present, aspects of the past.* As such, izibongo constitute a further source of evidence on ideology, and on that of the Shakan period in particular, while also operating as a kind of 'control' against which ideological manipulations in other more malleable forms of historical evidence can be measured.

The third source of oral historical evidence with which this chapter is concerned is the so-called 'tradition of creation', conventionally understood to be 'religious'.[73] Vansina has argued that traditions of this order tend *to retain elements of earlier ages because of their* concern with the ultimate values of the society, the readjustment of which is usually a slow process.[74] Conceptualizing the 'tradition of creation' in these terms can be criticised on two grounds. It will be argued that its characterization as 'religious' is misplaced, and secondly, that in periods of enormous social change, traditions concerned with social values, were key areas in which and by means of which new social values were expressed, although with a significance very different from that of traditions of origin.

The religious character of the 'tradition of creation' owes its origin to early missionary representation of the tradition's leading actor 'Unkulunkulu' as 'The Creator', and his equation with the Christian god.[75] In northern Nguni-speaking society however, many variant forms of the tradition exist, and a number of 'Unkulunkulu' figures are held to exist at the same time. Moreover, in some versions, the title 'Unkulunkulu' is transposed with the name 'Umdabuko'.[76] This noun derives from the verb ukudabuka, meaning 'to break away', with the connotation of origination.[77] *Where umdabuko* occurs in the form of a common noun, it means 'original

source, custom'. Callaway whose translations were considerably less glib than those of other missionaries, observed that the verb dabuka and its derivatives embodied a very particular sense of a process whereby small social groups broke off or separated from larger social groups.[78] Although 'Unkulunkulu' was associated with the origin of the people,

> Unkulunkulu wa vela emhlangeni ... Kwa dabuka abantu, ba datshulwa Unkulunkulu. (Unkulunkulu sprang from a bed of reeds ... ... Men broke off, being broken off by Unkulunkulu)[79]

it is clear that there was nothing of religious significance attached to this figure. He was neither worshipped nor sacrificed to in the way that the amadhlozi, the spirits of the ancestors, were.[80] Callaway concluded that

> It appears, therefore, that in the native mind there is scarcely any notion of a Deity if any at all, wrapt up in their sayings about a heavenly chief. When it is applied to God, it is simply the result of teaching. Among themselves he is not regarded as the Creator, nor as the Preserver of men; but as a power, it may be nothing more than an earthly chief, still celebrated by name ...[81]

The figure of 'Umdabuko', alias 'Unkulunkulu', was bedecked rather with historical connotations.

There were a number of points at which 'traditions of creation' overlapped with traditions of origin. The origins of specific groups were discussed as instances of 'dabuka', while the image of the reed (uhlanga) from which it was claimed in the 'traditions of creation' that all people sprang, was also used to account for the origins of individual groups. Unkulunkulu-ness itself was another concept appropriated in group traditions, and applied to individual ancestor figures. 'Unkulunkulu' of the Zulu clan was identified as Jama, and that of the Khuze people as Dlamini.[82]

Dabuka, the myth of 'Unkulunkulu' and the metaphor of the reed were also of cosmogonical significance, not for the purposes of cosmogony alone, but also because of the centrality of notions of common descent in these societies. Callaway's misnamed 'traditions of creation' existed as cultural documents concerned with the characteristic features, the ideological fabric and the values of the society, which were, in the final analysis, prescribed by loose notions of common descent. Insofar as these features were accounted for, reiterated and validated in the 'traditions of creation', the latter were both historical and ideological, but in a sense that was ultimately different from that of group traditions and their brand of more immediate and material utility discussed extensively earlier. The different utility of the so-called 'traditions of creation' demands for their explication the use of a different method of analysis. The direction that this will take is affected by an awareness of their mythical component.

To assert at length, as has been done here, the historical character of 'traditions of creation' is to emphasise their historical aspect as against the religious, but not to deny their mythological character. Indeed, myth is not without a strong component of history. However, the conventional historical approach to the utilization of myths as historical sources has been to isolate in the myth the minute germs of history and to seek their corroboration from other historical sources. An alternative approach to the explication of myth is the essentially ahistoric method of the structuralists, represented most notably in the work of Lévi-Strauss.[83] Historians of precolonial Africa have, on the whole, been reluctant to employ the methods of the structuralists. These methods have been criticised on a number of counts, notably for the absolute freedom of choice exercised by the analyst in finding and setting

up oppositions between symbols within a text, or even across texts. The significance of this is that it is not necessary for anyone in the society to think the same way as the analyst. Moreover, the underlying assumption is that a foreigner would know best because of his or her access to comparative material. The method has also been criticised for its unscientific basis as proceeding by analogical reasoning only, aiming to convince, rather than to prove.[84]

The structural analysis of myth has however been recently rescued with certain reservations and modifications in Steven Feierman's exciting examination of Shambaa traditions, and in particular, in his handling of the myth of Mbegha, the founding ancestor of the Shambaa.[85] Feierman's approach is to locate his analysis firmly within the parameters of Shambaa culture, proceeding from the assumption that traditions are themselves 'elements in "living culture"'.[86]

> A full reading of a simple tradition may require a broad understanding of (local) cosmology and social organisation.[87]

Using these methods, Feierman discovered in the Mbegha myth

> ... a rich statement of the way in which the Shambaa describe the values of their society, and the fundamental lasting characteristics of Shambaa political life. By describing the broad characteristics of society in the myth of the founding hero, the Shambaa are saying that society as it is known, took its shape in the days of the founding of the kingdom.[88]

The mythico-tradition of 'Unkulunkulu' is by no means as textured a text as the myth of Mbegha, and in many of the versions recorded by Callaway, it has been seriously flawed through missionary intervention in the establishment of a convention of translation, and by the influence of the Christian conception of the creation in the testimonies of mission-educated informants.

Nonetheless, the story of the origin of the people in this form was clearly a fundamental cultural document, concerned with the central dynamic of socio-political life in Zululand-Natal, and with the role of origins in the establishment of group identities in the context of perpetual assertion of the governing principle of social cohesion in terms of a kinship relation defined by common descent.

The implications of this for the utilisation of these traditions by the historian are indicated by what Vansina in his comments on traditions of genesis has called the 'floating gap' in dynastic history.[89] Usually found in chiefly lists between 'creation' and the first chiefs identified by name, this gap seems to distinguish traditions which function as a site of the dialectic in the sense posited in the first section of this chapter (i.e. in group traditions of a formal historical character) from those, like the myth of Unkulunkulu which as an uncontested cultural document, did not function as such a site. This is to argue for the tradition of 'Unkulunkulu' the opposite of that argued by Feierman about the myth of Mbegha. Feierman notes that the materials for the critical analysis of the myth are

> ... to be found in those separate traditions which have not become part of the collectively accepted picture of Mbegha.[90]

either in the traditions of outsider groups, or in private traditions within the kingdom. While Feierman's method of effecting this is not systematically developed, his proposal contains an echo of the methods delineated in considerable detail in the first section of this chapter for the analysis of contested traditions. This method is however not applicable to the analysis of the so-called 'tradition of creation', for that which is asserted in this cultural document was not contended in any form. In the broadest sense, it constituted the

framework of the prevailing ideological discourse, the final limits of both resistance and domination. In these 'traditions of creation' was located the ultimate continuity of a 'kinship' principle. They were cultural charters which used the medium of the past to legitimate the new political order.

The method that has been adopted here for the analysis of the story of 'Unkulunkulu' is to consider all the known variations of the tradition, but not to seek historical evidence in the common denominators, since there is no reason to suggest that historical truth lies in the most frequently reiterated version rather than in one of the variants. Rather, the approach is to account for the differences between the versions with reference to missionary interventions. Where, in the ensuing chapters, 'traditions of creation' are used as historical sources, the method of their analysis will be, following Feierman, structural, but with the same reservation that all the steps in the process of the structural analysis of myth must be demonstrated to be emic to the culture concerned. In particular, the meanings proposed for metaphors should be shown to have local currency, and maximum use must be made of the hermeneutical skills current within the society concerned. The structural approach then is used simply as a heuristic device. The method of analysis will depart from that of Feierman in seeing this type of tradition as not affected in form or content by other traditions.

The last type of oral texts used in this study are those which do not purport to be about history. Here the questions that must be addressed are: what kinds of historical sources do they constitute; and what is the relationship between these texts and ideology?

Such texts occur in three forms: non-fictional but acknowledgedly legendary tales, proverbs, and avowedly fictional tales. Nursery tales, legends and proverbs are often characterized by archaisms which are not understood by the users. 'Ring-a-ring a roses, a pocket full of posies, atisha, atisha, we all fall down' is often recited to children, although its relevance to the Great Plague, - the ruby spots which signalled the onset of disease, and the posies which were necessary to ward off the stench of the corpses - is largely unknown.[91] Likewise, if we consider the proverb, 'Might as well be hung for a sheep as for a lamb', it is so long since anyone was hung for sheep stealing, it's usage seems to have generated an impetus of its own in the present. Nyembezi, in the preface to his collection of Zulu proverbs, observed this to be a typical characteristic of Zulu proverbs,

> Many a time, I have approached an old Zulu, and asked for an explanation of the origin of certain proverbs. The answer generally is, 'My child, that is the way that we speak, and that is the way that we have always spoken. When we were born, people spoke thus,[92]

an echo of the inability of many izimbongi to explain the praises which they recited.

The process over time whereby the original meaning of a proverb was lost, is aggravated by the tendency within proverbs towards the achievement of a rhythmical form. This takes the form of vowel elision, and sometimes the discarding of whole words which affected the content of the proverb adversely, but assisted in memory of the whole.[93]

Proverbs and folk tales amongst the Zulu were closely related literary forms, the one often giving rise to the other.[94] Many proverbs and folktales however, had their origin in historical events. Take, for example, the proverb 'Amabon' abonen' ashiwo nguGcugwe',

(*the seers* have seen each other, said Gcugcwa). The aphorism is commonly used by a person in a tight situation, and suggests that *those who have an* advantage over the person concerned, will, one day, find themselves in a similar plight. In the testimony of one of Stuart's informants, we find an anecdote which indicates the historical origin of the proverb,

> Gcugcwa *caused trouble in Tshaka's country* (in Zululand), others caused trouble in our country (i.e. carried on their evil practices.) Gcugcwa ka Nqabeni ... stole Tshaka's cattle. He was chief of the Woziyana people. Gcugcwa was caught near the *Tukela where he usually thieved.* He was taken to Tshaka. Tshaka said, 'We see you, Gcugcwa.' Gcugcwa replied, 'We see each other, Nkosi. You see me now; they will see you tomorrow.' He said this because he knew his death was imminent. Gcugcwa *was then tied across* the gate and Tshaka directed that all the cattle - those from whom he had been so fond of stealing - were driven over him and trampled him to death.[95]

Another interesting example is provided by the proverb 'Ukwenza umcathu kaBovungane' (to make the slow march of *Bovungane*). *The origins of this* aphorism were elucidated by Bryant,

> Shaka was already on the Zulu throne *and Bofungane* (sic) presided over the Ngongomas. Now this *Bofungane was a* bit of a dandy in his way, particularly fastidious about dirty feet. There were no shoe shops in Bantuland so this punctilious prince was compelled to walk to his bath *down* at the brook in bare feet, but on his return rush *matting was spread* along his path lest his dainty feet be soiled. His children too were trained to equal fastidiousness, especially the girls lest they stumble and fall whilst *bearing gourds* of beer or water on their heads, so much so that *their gingerly* picking of their way became a by word in the land. Umcathu ka Bofungane.[96]

Proverbs as evidence are valuable to the historian, not only insofar as they *corroborate traditions*, but also because of the spontaneous quality of proverbs as against other forms of oral historical evidence. Proverbs were never imposed on society, nor were they perceived as a site of the struggles of conflicting

interests.

> It is important for us to realise that an expression must be accepted by the people in order to give it the status of a proverb. Such acceptance is not voluntary in that people never go out of their way to popularise an expression voluntarily. They use it because they like it, and because it appeals to them, but the usage is spontaneous. In that way do proverbs arise.
> Again, we do not find any people whose special task it is to evolve proverbs.[97]

Nursery tales similarly often contain fragments of historical evidence. The proliferation of cannibal stories with which naughty Zulu children were regaled provide a good illustration of this. Under much 'fee-fi-fo-fumm' ('Eh, ehi endhlini yami lapa namhla nje ku nuka zantungwana. Banta bami, n'enze njani na? Leli punga li vela pi na?')[98] - literally, 'Fee-fi , my house here today smells suspicious. My children, what have you done? Where does this smell come from'- there are details to be found about the famine which underlay anthropophagy in Zululand-Natal, about social attitudes to and the life-style of cannibals.

Much of the historical information which lurks in folk-tales and proverbs is less easily locatable. The story of Mdhlubu and the frog, for example, contains references to two of the least understood elements typical of the traditions of origin of northern-Nguni speakers - the emphasis of the low country against the uplands.[99]

The story of Mdhlubu is long and complex. The first part, typical of a number of foundling stories, relates how Mdhlubu, daughter of a king, was for particular reasons, reared in the household of a neighbouring king. When she was old enough to marry, she was told that she was a foundling and thus should marry one of her brothers. This revelation set her off to seek her real parents. In her quest, she was assisted

by a frog, who brought her to the place of her family. Great rejoicing accompanied her return.

Then the story seems suddenly to slip into another gear. It proceeds to describe her marriage to yet another neighbouring monarch, 'Unkosi yasenhla', the king of the highlands. At this juncture in the tale, Mdhlubu's father is for the first time addressed as 'Unkosi yasenzansi', king of the lowlands. The ideas of 'upland' and 'lowland' identities figure prominently in traditions of origin, but in a form and in contexts which make their interpretation very difficult. The story of Mdhlubu, however, offers an allegoric representation of the relationship between the two identities. One aspect explored by the tale is their distinctiveness. In the legend the upland-lowland relationship appears to be conceptualized in terms of far greater simplicity than occurs in the traditions. Presumably, this is a consequence of the non-'historical', fictive status of the story of Mdhlubu, allowing it to remain free of the ideological interventions to which traditions appear to have been subject. It seems that where nursery tales or legends have survived at all, they do so with remarkably few alterations.[100]

Two important and early sources of nursery tales from northern-Nguni speaking societies exist: Bleek's Zulu Legends, collected in 1855-6, and Callaway's collection, published in 1868.[101] However, 'nursery tales' have not been used by historians, probably because of their fictional aspect. Certainly, most of the tales do not claim to be true. Nonetheless, what is understood by a society to be fiction can constitute a source for the history of that society, as Stephen Grey has demonstrated with reference to the role of the novelist Leipoldt 'as archivist'. Grey observes of the fictional

novel

> There is no one-to-one correlation between the page and the history. Social detail within fiction is accumulated towards an end which is different from that of the historian; the latter amasses data in order to reduce it to a pattern, while the novelist elicits detail to authenticate a pre-existing order ... Fiction is not meant to be disguised or veiled fact. 'Fact' in the construct of the artwork is merely a component part of the whole intentionality of the work, the impact and effect of which lies in the speculative, not the literal, realm. Therefore, the concept of community within fiction lies not so much in the cast of characters and settings, but in the range and circumstances of the work itself - every novel is a community in its own terms. Its history from below is the background against which the foreground achieves resonance and assemblance of truthfulness.[102]

When we seek history in the fictional oral text, we need to identify the 'end' or the purpose of the fiction in order that we may illuminate a new kind of historical evidence, of the sort that is generally missing in the formal traditions with their emphasis on political issues. 'Fiction' Grey observes, 'is a crooked mirror which reflects, not the apparent world one experiences in the book, but the real world in which one (the novelist) lives'.[103] Precisely because of this, we can gain from fiction, information, not about historic events and personalities, but a reflection of the world of the stories' creator. This is a vast realm of potential data concerned with the details of home life and family relationships, other social practices, cosmologies and philosophies.

The values expressed in fiction, the structures delineated and the idioms used are all cultural products of history, and as Spear has argued with reference to oral traditions,

> these cultural patterns often show greater persistence over time than the actual structures or behaviours they represent. Values generated in the past often assume their own historical reality and outlive the circumstances of their creation.[104]

Fiction as an historical source provides a rare opportunity for precolonial history to acquire, in a limited sense, something of the texture of social history.

Although nursery tales tended to have a fixed text it is necessary to remain alive to possible intervention in the creator's text by a contemporary narrator. The 'nursery' tales and other stories recorded by Callaway and Bleek were traditions heard by their informants from their grandparents. While these were clearly subjected to all the distortions - the frailty of human memory, for example - typical of chains of testimony, they were not subject to the kinds of distortions which affected traditions with formal historical content. They were not constantly being architected into new forms and designs. This is one of the unique strengths of fiction as historical evidence.[105]

The chief difficulty in using oral fiction as an historical source lies in establishing what present-reality the story reflects. It is not the present-time of its documentation since that was not the time of its composition. Likewise, fiction, because of its ahistorical standing in the society, did not lend itself to direct appropriation by the interests which prevailed at the time of documentation, in the way that formally historical traditions typically did. The alterations which would have occurred in an oral work of fiction between the time of its composition, and the time of its documentation by the first researchers, would have been informal, accidental or subconscious. The ideological aspect of fiction would have been less to establish or legitimate 'social cohesion, real or artificial communities ... institutions, status, or relations of authority,' and more the 'inculcation of beliefs, value systems, and conventions of behaviour'.[106] These presumably changed less easily over time than did dynasties or political configurations. Once archaic,

they would presumably have been dropped from the fiction, or retained with a stress on their antiquity and oddity. It would thus seem that for as long as a fiction had relevance in the present, it probably reflected present reality, except in the case of emphasised anachronisms. Thus, Callaway and Bleek's tales, recorded in c.1860, probably reflected social relations behaviour and value systems then current. But for how far back in time can that present-reality be said to hold good?

Here the historian is on shaky ground. However, it is known that Callaway's informants claimed to have heard the tales from their grandparents. This suggests that use of fiction recorded in c.1860 as an historical source for much of the first half of the nineteenth century is justifiable, especially where corroboration from other sources can be established.

By way of example, let us consider the example of story of Sikhulumi, son of Hlokohloko, one of the many foundling stories recorded by Callaway.[107] Hlokohloko was a powerful king who refused to allow any of his wives to bring up a son, as he feared that a son might one day depose him. On one occasion however, a son, Sikhulumi, survived and was brought up by his mother's relatives in secret. Eventually, Sikhulumi returned as a young man to his father's people. He was rejected by his father, and he retreated into a wild forest where he became a great man in his own right, with an enormous following. Sikhulumi then went back to his mother's people. At first, they did not recognise him, but when reminded of some of the details of Sikhulumi's boyhood amongst them, his uncle acknowledged that it was indeed Sikhulumi. Sikhulumi then returned again to his father's place, where an attempt was made to kill him, but he proved to be invulnerable. He then

killed the people of his father and took their cattle, departing with his army, his mother and sister.

This tale echoes the many forms in which succession disputes were represented in the historical traditions, (perhaps the best known of which was the accession of Shaka) although the tale was not the same as any one historically identifiable incident. The function of this tale would seem to have been to assert, in principle, the importance of legitimate succession, familiarizing the listeners with the forms in which kinship relations were asserted, and offering a framework for the explanation of events such as irregular successions, which were crucial issues in societies which practiced ancestor worship.

In sources of oral historical evidence which were not perceived by the societies concerned to have historical content, the relationship between ideology and the oral text differed from that which prevailed between ideology and purportedly historical texts. The apparently ahistorical nature of the former made them unlikely sites of direct ideological interventions. They did, however, fulfil an ideological role at the level of socialization. While they did not alter directly in response to political shifts in the way that overtly historical sources did, they were responsive to changes in the social order over an extended period. These differences intersect with distinctions between oral texts which occur in free and fixed form, identifying some sources as likely to have altered more over time than others. Exploration of these differences dictates the use of different modes of analysis in each case. As a review of the range of oral historical sources as well, the methods outlined in this chapter follow Vansina's dictum that it is an essential aspect of the analysts approach to ensure that his or her

methods are appropriate, not just to the particular sources used in a particular study, but to full range of available sources.[108]

1. See, for example, the recent work of Hall, 'The Ecology of the Iron Age', chapters 4-8.

2. J. Vansina, Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology, London, 1965, pp. 19-20. The ranks of the 'Africanists' include J. Miller, editor of The African Past Speaks, Folkstone, 1980, and the other contributors to that volume; S. Feierman, author of The Shambaa Kingdom: A History, Madison, 1974; and P. Irwin, Liptako Speaks: History from Oral Tradition in Africa, Princeton, 1981.

3. P. Thompson, Voice of the Past, Oxford, 1978.

4. D. Henige, Oral Historiography, London, 1982, p. 2; Henige, '"The Disease of Writing": Ganda and Nyoro kinglists in a newly literate world', in Miller (ed), The African Past Speaks, pp. 240-61.

5. See, for example, D.R. Wright, 'Can a blind man really know an elephant? Lessons on the limitations of oral traditions from Paul Irwin's Liptako Speaks', History in Africa, 9 (1982), p. 320; also see Irwin's own comments in Liptako Speaks, pp. 30-3; C.C. Wrigley, 'The Story of Rukidi', Africa, 43 (1973), pp. 219-34; T.O. Beidelman, 'Myth, Legend and Oral History: A Kaguru Traditional Text', Anthropos, 65 (1970), pp. 74-97; J. Vansina, 'Comment: Traditions of Genesis', Journal of African History, 15 (1974), p. 320; Miller, 'Listening for the African Past' in Miller (ed), The African Past Speaks, p. 3.

6. History in Africa was started in 1974, and edited by David Henige of the University of Wisconsin. Oral History, the journal of the Oral Historical Society in Essex, started in 1973, is edited jointly

by Paul Thompson and various others. To date, it has carried only a handful of articles on the oral history of Africa.

7. See A. Portelli's discussion of the distinction between oral sources and the use of oral sources in history, in 'The Peculiarities of Oral History' in History Workshop: a journal of socialist historians, 12, Autumn (1981), p. 96.

8. See Miller's observations on the capacity of personal reminiscences to transform into traditions, and his discussion of Vansina's comments on traditions using personalized terms. (Miller, 'Listening',p. 10, and also pp. 21-4.)

9. Irwin, Liptako Speaks, p. 30.

10. Ibid., p. 33.

11. On 'public' and 'personal' history, see Henige 'The Disease of Writing', pp. 240-61. T. Ranger in his discussion, 'Personal Reminiscence and the Experience of the People in East-Central Africa', in Oral History, 6, Spring, 1, (1978) pp. 45-75, offers a stimulating challenge to Vansina's rejection of personal reminiscence, and suggests that informal material on African societies can offer historians a great deal that is of historical value. The distinction between 'public' and 'personal' history is posed in rather a different way in the work of the Popular Memory Group, from the Centre for Cultural Studies at Birmingham University. (See P. Thompson's discussion in his report on the fourteenth History Workshop, (1980) in Oral History, 9, Spring, 1 (1981), pp. 6-8, and the discussion on p. 50 below.)

One work which has attempted to bridge these divisions is Andrew Roberts' article, 'The Use of Oral Sources for African History', Oral History, 4, 1, Spring (1976) pp. 41-55. Also see Thompson's comments, The Voice of the Past, pp, x, 5.

12. E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds.), The Invention of Tradition, Cambridge, 1983, p, 2.

13. Popular Memory Group from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 'Popular memory: theory, politics method', in Making Histories, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, London, 1982, pp. 205-52.

14. See, for example, T.O. Beidelman, 'Swazi Royal Ritual', Africa, 36 (1966), pp. 373-405; E.E. Evans-Pritchard, Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande, Oxford, 1937; Evans-Pritchard, 'Divine Kingship of the Shilluk of the Nilotic Sudan', in Essays on Social Anthropology, London, 1962; also see the more recent work of the French Marxist anthropologist, Maurice Godelier, who worked with Bettelheim and Lévi-Strauss in the 1960s, and whose work remains sympathetic to structuralism. (M. Godelier, Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology, Great Britain, 1977.)

15. J. Larrain, The Concept of Ideology, London, 1979, Chapter three.

16. Godelier, Perspectives, chapter two.

17. L. Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', in Lenin and Philosophy, London, 1971, pp. 152 - 58. See E. Laclau, Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory, London, 1977, p. 101, FN. 32; E.P. Thompson, The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays, London, 1978, p. 290.

18. Ibid., p. 406.

19. A. Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks, London, 1971, pp. 198-99, 530, 538, 547.

20. Ibid., p. 79. Gwyn Williams explains Gramsci's notion of hegemony 'to mean a *socio-political* situation, in his terminology a "moment", in which the philosophy and practice of a society fuse, or are in an equilibrium; an *order in which one* concept of reality is diffused throughout society in all its institutional and private manifestations, informing with its spirit, all taste, morality, customs, religions and political principles, and all social relations, particularly in their intellectual *and moral connotations.* ('Gramsci's concept of "Egemonia"'; Journal of the History of Ideas, 4,(1960), p. 587.) Hegemony is thus used to refer to '*approved' domination.* 'It has to do with the way one social group influences other groups, making certain compromises with them in order to *gain their consent* for its leadership of society as a whole'. (Anne Showstack Sassoon (ed), Approaches to Gramsci, London, 1982, p. 13). Also see Mouffe's discussion of Gramscian hegemony. ('Hegemony and ideology in Gramsci', in C. Mouffe, (ed), Gramsci and Marxist Theory, London, 1979, chapter five.)

21. Ibid.,p. 79.

22. Mouffe, 'Hegemony', p. 193.

23. Laclau, Politics and Ideology, p. 161.

24. See C. Hamilton and J. Wright, 'The making of the lala; ethnicity, ideology and class-formation in a precolonial context', paper presented to the History Workshop, 1984, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

25. Althusser, 'Ideology', pp. 155-58; Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, p. 12.

26. P. Macherey, A Theory of Literary Production, trans. G. Wall, London, 1978; F. Jameson, The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act, New York, 1981.

27. Macherey, A Theory of Literary Production, p. 94.

28. Jameson, The Political Unconscious, pp. 76-83.

29. J. Vansina, 'Is Elegance Proof? Structuralism and African History', History in Africa, Vol. 10 (1983), p. 314.

30. Ibid.; also see P. Thompson's comments on seeing oral sources as essentially a means of understanding a society and its culture from within. ('The New Oral History in France' in Samuel, Peoples History, p. 76).

31. Jameson, The Political Unconscious, p. 86.

32. Ibid., p. 96.

33. Ibid., pp. 99-100.

34. Ibid., p. 109.

35. P. Thompson, 'Report on the Fourth International Oral History Conference', Oral History, 11, Spring, 1 (1983), p. 20.

36. Feierman, The Shambaa, p. 13.

37. Jameson, The Political Unconscious, p. 70; J. Vansina, (ed.), 'Memory and Oral Tradition' in Miller, The African Past Speaks, pp. 262-79. This approach also takes cognizance of the point raised by Elizabeth Tonkin that recall is not a purely individual phenomenon. ('The boundaries of history in oral performance', History in Africa, 9 (1982), pp. 273-84).

38. Bonner, Kings, p. 22.

39. Jameson, The Political Unconscious, p. 70.

40. Godelier, Perspectives, chapter four; also see T. Spear '"Oral Traditions": Whose History?', History in Africa, 8 (1981), pp. 173-74, on 'the lack of alternatives in "traditional" thought'.

41. Thompson, 'Report on the Fourteenth History Workshop', p. 7.

42. The understanding of the dynamics of oral traditions in this study draws on the work of R. Harms, 'Bobangi Oral Traditions: Indicators of Changing Perceptions' in Miller (ed.), An African Past Speaks, pp. 178-98.

43. See J. Wright's discussion of the likely effects of these factors on oral traditions, 'Politics, Ideology and the Invention of the Nguni', pp. 24-5.

44. Bryant, Zulu People, p. 209.

45. L. White 'Power and the Praise Poem', paper presented to the Conference on Literature and Society in Southern Africa, Centre for Southern African Studies, University of York, Sept. 1981, p. 26.

46. Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 685, 694.

47. Interview with Titus Khumalo, Dabuluhlanga Nxumalo and three others, at Mbilaneni, Swaziland, 17.09.83. The same points are made by J. Peires, The House of Phalo, Johannesburg, 1981, pp. 170-71, although he appears to conflate Xhosa clan praises with individual praises (izibongo).

48. See J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 58, evidence of Mcotoyi; also see below, pp. 273-77.

49. White 'Power and the Praise-Poem', p. 16.

50. I. Schapera, Praise Poems of Tswana Chiefs, Oxford, 1965, p. 15, quoted in White, 'Power and the Praise-Poem', p. 17.

51. The interspersal of praise-poems in historical narrative characterizes many of the testimonies of the Stuart Papers (K.C), the testimonies contained in the 'Bonner interviews' (Sw.A) and the testimonies collected by Hamilton (Sw.A) collected in Swaziland. The izibongo discussed in this study are drawn from these assemblages, as well as from T. Cope,

Izibongo: Zulu praise-poems, Oxford, 1968; C.L.S. Nyembezi, Izibongo zamakhosi, Pietermaritzburg, 1958; R.C. Samuelson, Long, Long Ago, Durban, 1929, pp. 258-88.

52. Bryant, Zulu People, p. 525; K.C., Stuart Papers, file 58, notebook 17, evidence of Mtshapi and Ndube; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 108, evidence of Mgidhlana; Rev. W. Wanger, The Collector, Vol. 4, Marianhill, n.d., see section on amadhlozi in particular.

53. Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 595, 667; K.C., Stuart Papers, file 60, notebook 24, evidence of Tununu; E. Krige, The Social System of the Zulus, Pietermaritzburg, 1936, p. 236; Kunene, Emperor Shaka, pp. xxi, xxxii, 246; J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 31, evidence of Baleni; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 87, evidence of Melapi; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 106, evidence of Mgidhlana.

54. Samuelson, Long, Long Ago, p. 253.

55. White, 'Power and the Praise Poem', p. 18.

56. Bryant, Zulu People, p. 486; also see J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 30, evidence of Baleni; Bryant, Olden Times, p. 667; Peires, House of Phalo, p. 171. for the occurrence of criticism in Xhosa izibongo.

57. Cope, Izibongo, p. 28. In their respective izibongo, Senzangakhona was criticised for his obstinacy, while Cetshwayo was warned not to provoke the white men of Natal. Shaka was criticised for badly organized campaigns and for indiscriminate killings.

58. C. Nyembezi, 'Historical Background to the Izibongo of the Zulu military age', African Studies, 7 (1948), p. 174.

59. Stuart, uKulumetule, pp. 93-101.

60. Kunene, Emperor Shaka, p. xxix.

61. K.C., Stuart Papers, file 58, notebook 17, evidence of Mtshapi.

62. Krige, Social System, p. 272, FN. 1. Also see J.S.A. Vol. 3, p. 198, evidence of Mkebeni.

63. G. Lestrade, 'Traditional Literature' in I. Schapera, (ed), Bantu-Speaking Tribes of South Africa, Cape Town, 1946, p. 295.

64. J. Opland, 'The Installation of the Chancellor: a Study in Transitional Oral Poetry', paper presented to the Conference on Literature and Society in Southern Africa, University of York, September, 1981; Opland 'Imbongi Nezibongo: the Xhosa Tribal Poet and the Contemporary Poetic Tradition', 1975, quoted in White, 'Power and the Praise Poem', p. 3.

65. Samuelson, Long, Long Ago, p. 253.

66. J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 177, evidence of Mandhlakazi.

67. Opland, 'The Installation'.

68. White, 'Power and the Praise Poem'; also see P. Thompson's comments on the reliability over time of certain forms of oral evidence such as official poetry, indicated by the survival of archaisms. ('Oral evidence in African History: A note

on some common problems', Oral History, 2, no. 1, Spring (1974), pp. 65-7.

69. J.S.A., Vol. 2, pp. 176-77, evidence of Mandhlakazi.

70. Nyembezi, 'Historical Background', p. 174; also see Feierman's comments, The Shambaa, pp. 12-13; Cope, Izibongo, p. 33.

71. White, 'Power and the Praise Poem', pp. 18-19.

72. R. Kunene, 'An Analytical Survey of Zulu Poetry, both traditional and Modern', unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Natal, 1962, quoted in Cope, Izibongo, p. 50.

73. See Callaway, Religious System, section one.

74. Vansina, 'Comment', p. 320.

75. See the debate amongst Callaway (first section, The Religious System), Bishop J. Colenso (Ten Weeks in Natal, London, 1855) and the Rev. W. Wanger ('The Zulu Notion of God according to the traditional Zulu God-names', Anthropos, 18, 19, 20, 21 (1923-26). Also see Benham's discussion of Callaway's objections to Colenso's translation of 'God', and the extracts from Callaway's diary pertinent to the subject, (Henry Callway, pp. x, 55, 101; also p. 52, and Callaway's letter to Mr. Hanbury, 21 July, 1855); J. Colenso, Zulu-English Dictionary, Pietermaritzburg, 1861, p. 34; J.L. Döhne, Zulu-Kafir Dictionary, Cape Town, 1857, p. 178.

76. Callaway, Religious System, p. 50, FN.95.

77. Bryant, Dictionary, p. 88; Döhne, Dictionary, p. 56; Colenso, Dictionary, p. 80.

78. Callaway, Religious System, pp. 1-2, FN. 3.

79. Ibid., pp. 33-4.

80. Ibid., p. 7.

81. Ibid., p. 124.

82. Ibid., pp. 47-8, 85, 90, 98-9.

83. C. Lévi-Strauss, Myth and Meaning, London, 1978; An Introduction to a Science of Mythology: The Raw and the Cooked, Vol. 1, London, 1970; also see Miller, 'Listening', p. 20.

84. For an illuminating discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the structuralist method for African history, see Vansina, 'Is elegance proof?' pp. 307-348.

85. Feierman, The Shambaa, pp. 4, 65-71.

86. Ibid., p. 9.

87. Ibid., p. 4.

88. Ibid., p. 9.

89. Vansina, 'Comment', p. 319.

90. Feierman, The Shambaa, p. 71.

91. The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes, (eds.), Iona and Peter Opie, Oxford, 1966, pp. 364-65.

92. C. Nyembezi, Zulu Proverbs, Johannesburg, 1954, preface.

93. Ibid.

94. Ibid., pp. 4-5; also see F. Mayr, 'Zulu Proverbs', Anthropos, 7 (1912), pp. 957-63; C. Doke, 'Bantu Wisdom Lore', African Studies, vi (1947), pp. 101-14.

95. J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 81, evidence of Melapi.

96. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 490.

97. Nyembezi, Zulu Proverbs, introduction. Also see D. Malcolm and J. Stuart, Zulu Proverbs, Pietermaritzburg, 1949, p. 6, on the importance of the popular acceptance of proverbs. The perspective developed here on the use of proverbs as historical evidence is informed by Willis' work on Fipa proverbs, in There was a Certain Man. The Spoken Art of the Fipa, Oxford, 1978, pp.92-4. Although not open to manipulation to suit political purposes, proverbs were ideological insofar as they contributed towards the socialisation process; for example, the adage 'Ihlonipha lapha fngayi kugana khona' (She respects where she will not marry) means that a girl can never tell where she will marry. The proverb advises a girl to respect all her elders, and all men. Should such a girl prove recalcitrant, she would be enjoined 'AkuQhalaqhala lahlul' isidwaba' (no stubborn girl had the better of the skin skirt) - the isidwaba was the skin skirt put on by married women, and it

was generally believed that once she had done that, a woman would lose her arrogance. (Nyembezi, Proverbs, pp. 11, 19). Proverbs of this sort were part of a whole range of ideological devices through which the subordination of women was ensured.

98. Callaway, Nursery Tales, p. 49.

99. This version of the tale of Mdhlubu and the frog comes from Callaway, Nursery Tales, pp. 237 - 53.

100. Also see the legend of 'ULangalasenhla NoLangalasenzansi', in Callaway, Nursery Tales, pp. 89-95, which similarly stresses the differences between these two identities.

101. W.H.I. Bleek, Zulu Legends, (ed.), J.A. Engelbrecht, Pretoria, 1952.

102. S. Grey, 'Leipoldt's Valley Community: the Novelist as Archivist', paper presented to History Workshop, University of the Witwatersrand, 1984, p. 5.

103. Ibid., p. 10.

104. Spear, 'Oral Traditions', p. 171.

105. See Thompson's comments on the reliability of testimonies that are now conceived of as 'history' in 'Oral Evidence', p. 65.

106. Hobsbawm and Ranger, The Invention of Tradition, introduction, p. 9.

107. Callaway, Nursery Tales, pp. 41-7.

108. Vansina, 'Is elegance proof', pp. 307-48.

CHAPTER TWO

THE EVOLUTION AND COLLAPSE OF MTHETHWA POWER: SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE MFOLOZI - MHLATHUZE REGION c.1750 - 1818

The pre-Shaka Mthethwa polity serves as an appropriate introduction to the emergence of the Zulu kingdom for two reasons. The ready availability of sources on Mthethwa compared to the other pre-Shakan states; and the historic involvement of both the Zulu chiefdom and of Shaka personally in Mthethwa affairs prior to the collapse of Mthethwa power. The object of this chapter will be both to account for the transformation of the small-scale, largely genealogically homogenous Mthethwa chiefdom into a powerful tributary polity, and to examine the ultimate failure of the Mthethwa polity, in contrast to that of the Zulu, to weld a cohesive nation out of its component and subject parts.

The development of the polity will be explored through the twin contexts of the material and ideological bases of state formation. In the first context, three issues will be addressed: fluctuations and shifts in the Delagoa Bay trade; ecological constraints within the polity; and the effects of change and conflict immediately beyond the Mthethwa borders. In the second context, the nature and the conditions of the relations of incorporation which prevailed will be examined. It will be suggested that the Mthethwa polity was characterized by its inability to move beyond the limited ideology of kinship which had hitherto prevailed.

Mthethwa domination over non-kin subjects remained that of an essentially external power, based on the co-option of the ruling lineages of certain of its subjects, the restructuring of others, and ultimately, the coercion of the bulk of the subordinate chiefdoms. In the final section of this chapter, it will be suggested that the differences between the Mthethwa polity and the Zulu kingdom in this respect were a consequence of different contingent historical factors and regional variations.

Periodisation

The growth of the Mthethwa polity, and the development of forces of adhesion between the aggregates which came to comprise the polity will, for the purposes of analysis, be considered in terms of three broadly distinct phases associated with the reigns of the Mthethwa kings, Khayi, Jobe and Dingiswayo. This association is not meant to suggest that the particular abilities of each sucessive king determined the form of Mthethwa expansion in his reign. Neither does it necessarily mean that the king concerned reigned for the entire phase. It is simply a convention of periodisation which reflects that found in the oral traditions.

Vansina explains this association in oral history between phases and trends and the reign of a specific ruler.[1] In his analysis of time periods longer than a year or a season, he suggests that calculations are made according to a calendar of sociological data where 'the whole of the past can be conceived of in terms of social structure'.[2] Consequently, time is measured by, and in relation to, the structural relations obtaining between groups. A calendar of this sort, in oral history, only exists for the most recent historical period. 'A new order' is always associated with the 'last historical period'. In the Mthethwa

case, this last historical period only extends as far as the beginning of Khayi's reign, when the Mthethwa first came to settle in the Mfolozi area, and when Mthethwa history in the oral traditions begins. This suggests that an entirely distinct era is considered to have been inaugurated at that point. The calendar for the ensuing period is divided into periods which represent the stages of development which the members of a society think that their society has experienced. Amongst the Mthethwa three phases are clearly differentiated, and identified in the literature with the three reigns. However, as Vansina indicates, these associations are frequently arbitrary and for the convenience of transmission. The association between a reign and its characteristics is least accurate when one king dies and is replaced, since the oral traditions indicate a sharp disjuncture in the characteristics of the two reigns even where change has been manifestly gradual.

Consequently, the terms 'Khayi's reign' or 'Jobe's reign' could also be read as 'phase one' and 'phase two'; where 'phase' is defined with reference to a time period broadly contemporary with the actual reign, and by being characteristically different from other phases. In the absence of other independent sources of dating, a rough chronology in this form must suffice.

Sources

Information on the Mthethwa polity, in contrast to that on other pre-Shakan chiefdoms, is at present most richly available in the written accounts of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but relatively scarce in the oral record. This unusual ratio is a consequence of the interest inspired in the early travellers by the figure of Dingiswayo, Shaka's

predecessor, as paramount in south-east Africa.

Henry Francis Fynn was one of the first European travellers in Zululand-Natal, and it was on his writings and statements over the following decades in which a history of Dingiswayo features prominently, that subsequent writers on the Mthethwa drew heavily. Like many of the latter, Fynn was concerned to offer some kind of explanation for the emergence of the large Mthethwa paramountcy, and the even greater Zulu state which followed. Fynn noted that when the young Dingiswayo was a refugee in the Hlubi chiefdom, he supposedly spent a long interval in the company of a European traveller in the area, Dr. Cowan. It was this contact, Fynn suggested, that influenced Dingiswayo, and which underlay his successes.[3]

A similar idea was developed by Sir Theophilus Shepstone, the Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal, who claimed in 1875, that while a refugee, Dingiswayo had wandered as far afield as the Cape Colony, where he was influenced by contact with European civilisation. Shepstone suggested that he imported some of the phenomena which he witnessed there back to Mthethwa, and implied that this constituted the basis of the power which he subsequently accrued as the Mthethwa chief.[4]

The writers of the late nineteenth century, like Stuart and Bryant, tended to idealise Dingiswayo, comparing his reign favourably with the greater despotism of Shaka.[5] As Hedges noted, Dingiswayo and his interpolated attitudes formed the character in Zulu history who most fitted the European ideal of what Zulu and Natal Africans should be like, that is, accepting the basis of European government.'[6] The career of Dingiswayo, and his role in state formation in south-east Africa continued to receive attention from later scholars, although the

notion of European influence, and even that of the legitimacy of Dingiswayo's claims to be an Mthethwa, have been queried.[7]

The emphasis on Dingiswayo which characterised early and secondary written sources, is paralleled in the limited oral record of Mthethwa history which has survived. In the oral sources, this emphasis is the product of slightly different impulses, the primary feature of which is the tendency typical of oral literature for all the events of a particular era to be associated with the leadership figure of the time, and for all changes and innovations of the time to be attributed to his (or occasionally, her) doings. In this chapter it will be suggested further that the emphasis on the figure and the reign of Dingiswayo in Mthethwa oral traditions, at the expense of oral traditions which purport to refer to the earlier history of Mthethwa, is also an effect of the particular ideological shape and form assumed by the Mthethwa polity in its heyday. It will be argued that the ideological forms of integration which prevailed under Dingiswayo were limited - at least in contrast to those which subsequently characterized the Zulu state - and the role of history and of traditions of genesis being less important allowed the noteworthy events of the reign of Dingiswayo to dominate Mthethwa oral history.

However, emphasis on the activities of Dingiswayo does not occur uniformly in the traditions recounted by Mthethwa informants. The variations which occur within the oral record are, in some instances, the result of faulty transmission over time, but more often, they reflect the different historical experiences of the reconteurs and the political groupings with which they and their predecessors were aligned. The evidence of

the essayist Lionel Mkhwanazi, recorded in 1950, provides an excellent example of this. Mkhwanazi claimed that his people, one of the earliest groups to be incorporated by the Mthethwa, owed their occupation of the Mpukunyoni area near Lake St. Lucia where they were then still resident, to a grant made by Shaka.[8] In marked contrast, it was claimed by Bryant and by Nhlele, one of Stuart's informants, and evidenced by a variety of other supportive details contained the relevant traditions, that Mkhwanazi occupation of the area was of considerably greater antiquity.[9] The discrepancy between the two sources can best be understood through illumination of the rifts which existed between the Mkhwanazi and the Mthethwa in the nineteenth century. These began with a dispute over the area between the Mkhwanazi under Malanda, and a member of the Mthethwa ruling lineage. The period following the death of Dingiswayo saw the Mkhwanazi moving away from their erstwhile suzerains and closer to the ruling Zulu as Malanda married a daughter of Senzangakhona, and his son married a sister of Mpande.[10] The rift between the Mkhwanazi and the Mthethwa culminated in their participation in the Zulu civil war on opposing sides.[11]

Mthethwa incorporation into the Zulu kingdom under Shaka also had a marked impact on the Mthethwa oral record. When Shaka assumed the mantle of Dingiswayo's rule, the Mthethwa chiefdom was reeling under the defeat and losses sustained during their battle encounter with the Ndwandwe. Shaka replaced Dingiswayo's heir with his own appointee, following which action, numbers of Mthethwa departed the Zulu kingdom.[12] The traditions also record the departure from Mthethwa, to Shaka, of many important Mthethwa individuals, from which it can be inferred that an even larger segment of the polity probably transferred direct allegiance to the Zulu.[13] Much of what was left of the Mthethwa chiefdom declined,

eventually falling into the unscrupulous hands of John Dunn.[14] The early fragmentation of much of Mthethwa is probably the cause of the relative paucity of Mthethwa oral tradition.

Transferred Mthethwa allegiances and indeed, the absence of Mthethwa history characterizes the historical knowledge of informants of the Mthethwa izibongo in particular. Testimonies made to Stuart by the informant Ndukwana constitute a typical example. Ndukwana was born late in the reign of Shaka, of an Mthethwa father, and was raised out of Mthethwa country at the royal Zulu establishment of Mphangisweni.[15] Although an excellent informant on the Zulu kingdom, Ndukwana's knowledge of Mthethwa affairs was poor, for as a child, he heard 'only the wars of Tshaka being spoken of, although there were men of great age'.[16] The historical knowledge of Mthethwa affairs of another of Stuart's Mthethwa informants, Magidi, was equally lacking. Magidi was the son of Ngomane, a preeminent induna under Dingiswayo, and subsequently an important officer in the Zulu kingdom. Born c.1837 in Zululand, Magidi crossed into Natal in 1843 with Mawa, in flight from the then Zulu king Mpande. Thus, he was raised outside of Zululand, where he eventually became chief of the Dletsheni (his father's people, previously a component part of the Mthethwa paramountcy), in the Lower Tugela Division. Despite his occupancy of this historic office, his testimony suggests that his knowledge of both Mthethwa and Zulu affairs was limited.[17] A similar lack of knowledge also characterized the testimonies of other of Stuart's Mthethwa informants, such as Makewu, chief of the Dube people at Lower Tugela in Natal,[18] and Mpambukelwa kaCanguse of the Mpanza.[19]

Presumably, a version of Mthethwa history would have been best preserved by the Mthethwa ruling lineage itself. Unfortunately, no direct statements made by

members of the Mthethwa chiefly house are known to have survived. However, Bryant's writings, probably the most comprehensive account of Mthethwa history available, seem to have been based on three sources, one of which was the Mthethwa chief at the turn of the century, Sokwetshata kaMlandela, the other two being the early trader Fynn,[20] and G.V. Essery[21] a resident magistrate in early twentieth century Zululand. The extent to which Bryant's survey is based on the evidence of Sokwetshata is difficult to ascertain.[22] It contains data not available in the other two sources, but which might have been gleaned from further sources, particularly regarding the various subordinate chiefdoms which recognized Mthethwa paramountcy. However, it is likely that at least such data as concerned the Mthethwa ruling lineage derived from Sokwetshata, and possibly some of his relatives. However, Sokwetshata was not a direct descendant of Khayi, Jobe or Dingiswayo, but a member of an upstart junior lineage. Only Stuart's account of Mthethwa history, found in uBaxoxelo, is based on information from a descendant of the original ruling house, that of Matshwili, a grandson of Dingiswayo.[23] The original text of Matshwili's testimony seems not to have survived, and, like the data provided by Sokwetshata and recorded by Bryant, Matshwili's history as it appears in uBaxoxelo is probably adulterated by the preconceptions, biases and interests of both informant and recorder. Nonetheless, the text seems to retain much of the voice of Matshwili.

Another valuable source of oral data is the testimony of Nhlekele kaMakana of the Cambini. Under Dingiswayo, his father Makana belonged to the Mthethwa iziCwe ibutho, but after the collapse of the polity, he khonza'd Shaka, and joined a Zulu ibutho at Nobamba. Nhlekele was born c.1850 and became one of Sokwetshata's leading izinduna back in the Mthethwa chiefdom. In

contrast to informants like Ndukwana and Magidi whose fathers likewise joined Shaka, Nhlekele's allegiance and service to the Mthethwa chiefship provided a context for acquiring an extensive knowledge of Mthethwa history, largely framed in the perspective of the new ruling Mthethwa lineage.[24]

The evidence of informants belonging to or associated with the Mthethwa ruling lineage, recorded at the turn of the century was likely to have reflected the complex political reality of the Mthethwa chieftaincy at that time. Sokwetshata's father, Mlandela was himself the son of a brother of Dingiswayo. However, he was not Dingiswayo's rightful heir, and had been appointed to the Mthethwa chieftaincy by Shaka. He married extensively into the Zulu royalty, and Sokwetshata was his son from Nomqoto, a daughter of Senzangakhona.[25] For close on half a century, the fortunes of the Mthethwa chiefly house had been intimately bound up with those of the ruling Zulu. However, with the outbreak of civil war in the early 1880s, the Mthethwa joined the anti-Usuthu faction and fought with Zibhebhu against the Zulu royals, possibly in an attempt to restore something of the lost greatness of the chiefdom.[26] Presumably, this complex set of historic tensions coloured the history recounted by the Mthethwa chiefs and their supporters.

Although the available sources are sparse and subject to the numerous biases outlined, a start can be made on the historical reconstruction of the processes of Mthethwa expansion. It is an endeavour which seeks to take account, as far as is possible, of subsequent distortion, manipulation and deterioration of the evidence. Through the establishment of a framework for the analysis and periodisation of Mthethwa history, it also seeks to identify areas where further, and more detailed research

into the background of informants and the history of the traditions would be valuable.

For such purposes, the three-phase model can be conveniently employed. It will be posited that phase one - the reign of Khayi - saw the Mthethwa ruling lineage gradually expand and assimilate certain of its neighbours. It will be shown that, although of highly disparate origins, over time this group came to consider themselves to be kin, and to be genealogically connected to the Mthethwa ruling lineage. Thus, c1750, an as yet small and genealogically homogenous Mthethwa chiefdom was emerging. The next phase of Mthethwa expansion, in the reign of Jobe, was characterized by the extension of control by this nucleus over other of their neighbours, and the absence of any effort on their part to assimilate the new subject chiefdoms. The third and final phase, under Dingiswayo, saw the culmination of earlier trends in the establishment of an extensive Mthethwa paramountcy, based on systematic tribute exaction (by the nuclear lineages) from conquered, but yet intact component chiefdoms.

Phase one: early Mthethwa expansion and the assimilation of a number of different groups under Khayi.

The Mthethwa ruling lineage, the Nyambose under Khayi, was reputed to have travelled down from the north, into the Mfolozi-Mhlathuze area then inhabited by the Mbokazi. Khayi obtained permission from the Mbokazi to build on their northern flank.[27] At this time, the Mbokazi occupied an area in what was later to become the very heartland of Mthethwa, around the present-day settlement of kwaMbonambi. Bryant's evidence is somewhat confused and contradictory regarding the precise location of the 'northern flank' first settled by Khayi, but a number of factors suggest that it was probably in the tract of country adjacent to the Black Mfolozi, on both sides

of it, above its junction with the White.'[28] Presumably, the Mbokazi sought to strengthen their northern borders which appear to have been under considerable pressure at this stage. The fact that the Mbokazi 'permitted' Khayi to settle in the area, and that Khayi travelled to the Mbokazi capital to secure this consent, suggests that the Mthethwa khonza'd, i.e. that they gave their allegiance, or subjected themselves to the Mbokazi, the dominant power in the area.[29] The relationship between the Mthethwa and their new overlords was cemented by the marriage of Khayi's heir, Jobe, to an Mbokazi princess, Mabamba kaNzimase.[30]

The area indicated for Mthethwa settlement was uniquely advantageous for the hunting of elephant. It has been described at some length by Hall, in his analysis of the pitfall traps found there.[31] These were located on an isthmus of high land in the confluence of the two Mfolozis, where a natural funnel was formed into which animals could be driven. It was 'a rare combination of natural features ... and traps ... dug to take maximum advantage of the landscape structure'.[32] The line of traps extended between the two rivers and were easily camouflaged. Although Hall concentrates on their significance for the Shakan period, the archaeological evidence suggests that the traps had been used frequently over time, while other sources noted that the Mthethwa were famed for their use of such traps.[33] The shallowness of the traps indicates that they were designed for hippo, buffalo and elephant. Hall further suggests that fencing was used to direct game into the traps and that the game was chased from the far north-west. This sophisticated arrangement indicates hunting on a substantial scale could have been efficiently undertaken by small groups.

It is possible that during the reign of Khayi, the growth of the ivory trade noted by Hedges[34] changed the status of the Mthethwa location from that of precarious buffer area in the northern Ndwandwe border region, to one centered on a prime hunting area which could be effectively utilized by an initially small group. This would explain the subsequent growth of Mthethwa in the later years of Khayi's reign, until under Dingiswayo, they were finally able to assert themselves over their old suzerains, the Mbokazi.[35]

Mthethwa expansion and accretion of influence was gradual. It focused on securing the confluence area and extending into the hunting regions of the surrounding riverine plains, through 'annexation' and the incorporation of land, neighbours and 'immigrants'. The Mkhwanazi, under Cungele, were among the first to khonza Khayi, and were assigned land to settle in the north-east of the confluence area.[36] Given the importance of hunting, it is significant that Cungele's son, Velana, is remembered in the oral traditions as a highly skilled hide-scraper.[37] It can be inferred from the Mkhwanazi case that at this time the Mthethwa began to move from the position of beneficiary to one of patron, since if the Mthethwa had still acknowledged Mbokazi 'overlordship', the Mkhwanazi would have appealed to the Mbokazi for land. The site allocated to the Mkhwanazi was probably the first step taken by the Mthethwa in the process of securing their own trade-routes to the north.[38]

The available oral traditions do not establish with any certainty whether Mthethwa conquest of the Cambini occurred during the reign of Khayi, or early in that of Jobe, but the move effectively secured the southern reaches of the confluence area. The Cambini chief, Maliba, and the ruling lineage were killed off by the

Mthethwa forces.[39] Presumably the Cambini had formerly owed allegiance to the Mbokazi, for the area which they occupied lay directly between the heart of Mbokazi territory and the lands which the Mbokazi had allocated earlier to the Mthethwa.[40]

The confluence area was finally fully secured when the Dletsheni khonza'd the Mthethwa. It seems that this move was precipitated by a growing threat from the Ndwandwe to the north which led to the death of the Dletsheni chief, Nombobo, and suggests that association with the Mthethwa had begun to offer real protection.[41]

The Mkhwanazi, Cambini, Dletsheni, and a fourth group which joined them at this time, the Gengeni, all claimed to be kin relations and to have a common ancestry with the Nyambose. At the same time, and sometimes within the testimony of a single informant, these claims are contradicted by the existence of data pointing to other, disparate origins for these groups, separate from the Nyambose.[42]

The common pattern to these contradictions suggests that they warrant closer examination. All the groups which joined the Mthethwa in the earliest phase of its expansion and whose origins manifest such contradictions were described in the traditions as being small bands of 'refugees'. Bryant commented in the following vein,

> The Mthethwa received additions to their families not by moral and martial force alone. Stress of circumstance more than once compelled fugitive or impoverished parties to seek shelter or settlement with them. Each of these parties, not being members of the Mthethwa family, in the course of a hundred years or so, had already built up in the Mthethwa midst, a new dependent clanlet, usually congregated together under its particular patriarch and in its own allotted location.[43]

Each of these groups and indeed, individual refugees, joined the Mthethwa as dependents of one or another sort.

Dependents in northern Nguni-speaking society were usually attached to the house of one of their patron's wives, and given resources and protection. In exchange, they offered allegiance and labour to their patron, even once ensconced in separate establishments.[44] The emphasis in the client-patron relationship was on assimilation. In virtually every respect, dependents came to be considered fully-fledged members of the clan unit of their patron, to the extent that they were able to eat the amasi (soured milk) of their patron's homestead. The drinking of milk in this society was an index of incorporation. According to Krige, 'To drink milk with the members of another sib is tantamount to pledging blood-brotherhood with that sib'.[45] Dependents continued to take cognizance of their own, different origins only insofar as they still refrained from marrying into the clans of their birth. They retained their own old izibongo ('clan-names'), but adopted new izithakazelo ('address-names') through which everyday identification with their new context was affirmed.[46] The groups which joined the Mthethwa at this time seem to have done so on much the same terms as individual dependents, and their integration was discussed in terms of a similar idiom of kinship. Over time, this relationship was extended, and genealogical links, fictive where necessary, were established with the ruling Mthethwa. The kin relationship thus allowed subordinate groups to make important claims on the ruli[illegible]eage. Conversely, the dominant lineage wou[illegible]ouraged the creation of these links, for the m[illegible]e of its political power lay in the ritual aut[illegible]y which it exercised over related lineages by virtue of its genealogical seniority and proximity to the ancestors. In its earliest phase thus, Mthethwa expansion was characterized

by the close assimilation of the Nyambose with their new subjects.

The expansion of the original Mthethwa chiefdom astride the Mfolozi confluence itself generated the impetus and means for further growth. Exploitation of the confluence area and the concomitant adscititious extension of the chiefdom allowed the Mthethwa access to the game areas on neighbouring plains, where extensive co-operation was essential for successful hunting. Hedges has argued that the role of a ruling lineage in the organization of wider labour processes outside of the village and involving a collectivity of groups considerably enhanced its hegemonic position.[47] The head of the hunt also received a portion of every animal killed. 'Royal game' was, of course, elephant tusks, but also otter, and the skins of many other animals such as leopard.[48]

With the expansion of the ivory trade at Delagoa Bay, the Mthethwa chief was well placed to exploit extended hunting areas and to utilize larger aggregates of labour. Competition with other groups over the valuable ivory trade provided a further incentive for the establishment of large aggregates of social force. It was these developments which precipitated a new phase in the emergence and expansion of the Mthethwa kingdom.

Phase Two: the emergence of the Mthethwa tributary state

The second phase in Mthethwa expansion, associated in the oral traditions with the reign of Jobe, was characterized by greater participation in the Delagoa Bay trade, by a greater degree of militarization, and by more active expansion on the part of the Mthethwa. It was also distinguished from the earlier phase by the failure of the Mthethwa to assimilate with their

latest subjects.

The period 1770-1780 saw the price paid for ivory at the Bay double, and remain at a peak until 1795.[49] Mthethwa monopolization of the Mfolozi confluence had been consolidated by Khayi. Under Jobe, exploitation of its resources, and those of hunting grounds further afield, together with the establishment of a royal monopoly over ivory trading, facilitated the growth and consolidation of the Mthethwa ruling lineage vis-a-vis its subjects. It also provided the ruling lineage with the means to extend and entrench its control over centralized labour units, in the form of the early amabutho, the so-called 'regiments'. The first records of Mthethwa amabutho [illegible] the reign of Jobe. It was claimed that he had two amabutho of differing status, the Nyalazi, the 'black' or junior unit, and the Yengendlovu, the 'whites' or senior unit.[50]

Hedges has described the growth of the amabutho system out of extended hunting groups, and in response to the demands of the ivory trade,[51] while Guy sees it as a response to an ecological crisis in the later eighteenth century, characterized by a scarcity of good grazing and agricultural land.[52] Guy argues that Mthethwa expansion and incorporation of various groups not only contributed the necessary men for the amabutho, but also facilitated rationalized access to a greater range of resources. Although the model of ecological crisis alone is as unsatisfactory an explanation of the emergence of amabutho as it is of state formation, Guy's explanation complements that of Hedges. Together they suggest that the emergence of the amabutho was not merely an indicator of escalating warfare, but that it was a result of a far-reaching process of social reorganization, providing chiefs with the means to extend control of production and reproduction in their domains.[53]

The development of the amabutho system will be examined in greater detail in chapter six, but, it should be noted here that it provided the institutional framework necessary for the increasingly sophisticated co-ordination of the activities of large numbers of men, and could be used to expand the territorial area under a chief's authority, thus extending both the natural resources and the labour at his disposal.[54] It also provided the means for the ruling Mthethwa to extend their control over new subject chiefdoms, and to extract tribute without extending to them the rights and benefits of Mthethwa citizenship.

The Sokhulu appear to be one of the largest chiefdoms to be incorporated on these terms. Under Langa, they khonza'd Khayi, but before they were given land on which to settle, they were required to undertake a military campaign on behalf of the Mthethwa against the Tsonga They cleared the latter from an area south of the Mfolozi mouth and settled there themselves.[55] The Sokhulu entered into tributary relations with the Mthethwa and supplied them with umoba (sugar cane), and possibly cattle 'so fat they could only move with difficulty'.[56] Jobe gave one of his daughters in marriage to the Sokhulu chief, thus strengthening Mthethwa-Sokhulu relations.[57] The incorporation of yet another group, that of the Dube, seems to have occurred at much the same time, and in terms that closely paralleled the Sokhulu situation. The area occupied by the Dube was renowned for its fertility and for its multiple crops of maize. Tribute in the form of agricultural produce was levied on the Dube.[58] Little is known about a third group the Ncube - who khonza'd Jobe and were given land on the coastal plain near St. Lucia Bay, north of the Mfolozi - beyond the fact that like the Sokhulu and Dube, they were Mthethwa subjects who were not closely assimilated into the polity.[59]

Unlike the groups who khonza'd Khayi some time earlier, these groups did not come to think of themselves as kin of the Mthethwa and they were not drafted into the Mthethwa amabutho. It seems therefore that during the reign of Jobe, the Mthethwa considered themselves to be sufficiently powerful to enter into relations of tribute extraction, and to back their demands with force. Likewise, at this time, the Mthethwa were able to provide effective protection to small refugee groups.

> The many weak tribes on the banks of the White Mfolozi had fled to Jobe, chief of the abaTetwa, and begged his protection for he was a man of mercy.[60]

The growing strength and the improved position of the Mthethwa during the reign of Jobe is further illustrated by the story of Godongwana's flight. Jobe had two sons from his Mbokazi wife Mabamba, Dingiswayo (then called Godongwana) and Tana. Jobe, in an attempt to assert greater Mthethwa independence of their erstwhile Mbokazi suzerains proclaimed as his heir, Mawewe, a son by another wife, much to the chagrin of the Mbokazi. Dissatisfaction with this decision percolated through the kingdom, and Jobe was obliged to take action against the rumblings of discontent. In a surprise midnight raid, he moved against the sons of his Mbokazi wife. Tana was killed, but Godongwana, although wounded, escaped to his mother's people, where he was succoured.[61]

Although Jobe was unsuccessful in persuading the Mbokazi to surrender Godongwana to him, he was able to exert sufficient pressure to cause them to ask Godongwana to leave their shelter. Godongwana then moved southwards, amongst the Qwabe. However, once Godongwana moved north of the Mhlathuze again, Jobe gave a convincing demonstration of the strength of his amabutho. The Langeni, amongst whom Godongwana then sought refuge were not eager to oppose the Mthethwa militarily,

although they refused to accede to the Mthethwa request to kill Godongwana. Nonetheless, the Mthethwa army easily gained access to the Langeni homestead which sheltered the fugitive, only to find that he had fled.[62] The story suggests that the Mthethwa amabutho were, by then, a force to be reckoned with.

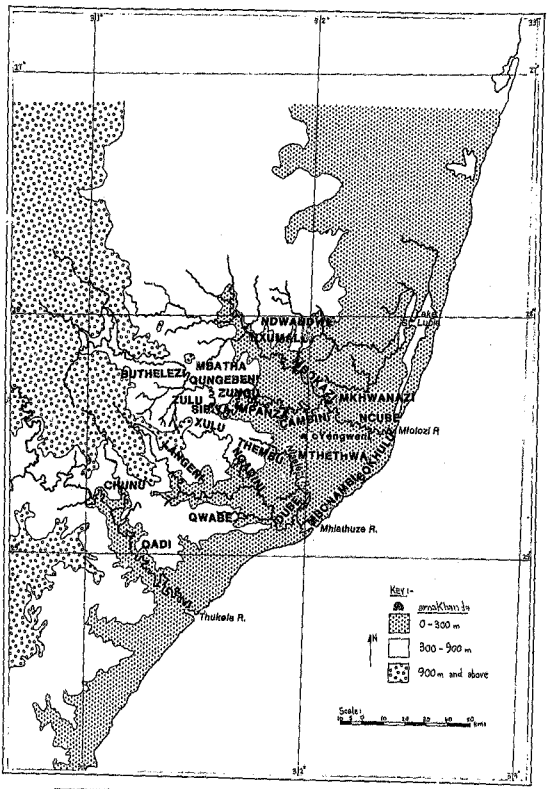
Although the Mthethwa were expanding rapidly, the relevant traditions, such as the account of Godongwana's flight, suggest that a constant tension existed between what the amabutho were required to do, and the forces actually available for deployment. Indeed, under Jobe, it seems that recruitment to the amabutho was limited to men drawn from three sources: men of the original Mthethwa izibongo; men who, as 'refugees' or outcasts from other groups, joined the Mthethwa in their individual capacities, and were conceived of in much the same manner and under similar conditions to those described on page 114; and finally, the men of the 'related' clans.[63] Conversely, both the Sokhulu, the Dube, and possibly the Ncube, who fell into none of these categories, and who retained their own separate and unrelated 'clan' identities, maintained their own separate forces after submitting to the Mthethwa.[64] Their assistance could be called on by the Mthethwa chief, but their forces could be withheld or diverted at critical moments.

A number of features of Jobe's reign, notably the expansion of the Mthethwa polity without the assimilation of new subject groups, competition for resources, the problems of the emerging amabutho system, and the capacity of tributaries to withhold military support, continued into the reign of Dingiswayo, and culminated in a crisis that brought about the collapse of the Mthethwa kingdom.

Phase three: the reign of Dingiswayo and a crisis of expansion

With the death of Jobe, Godongwana returned to his maternal relatives, the Mbokazi, and from a base there, challenged the succession of Mawewe, Jobe's designated heir.[65] His bid was bolstered by military support from three sources; men called up by Mbangambi, the Dube chief, who was connected to the Mbokazi (Godongwana's maternal relatives) and who was induna of two Dube amabutho, the Mpola and the Buda; men of the Mthethwa army whose izinduna defected to Godongwana; and an escort of the Mhlase people, also called the Mphisi (or iziBizini), provided by the Hlubi chief Bhungane, when Godongwana quitted his last refuge amongst the Hlubi.[66] The news of Godongwana's return, and the support which he was marshalling was reported first to Nqola kaKhayi (a member of the Mthethwa royal lineage and Mthethwa representative in Dube country) who in turn relayed the news to Mawewe. An Mthethwa force was sent to deal with the claimant but was betrayed by a faction within its ranks and defeated by Godongwana's own forces.[67] Thus it was that Dingiswayo, 'the one in distress' as he was now known, finally succeeded to the chieftaincy and Mthethwa entered into the third phase of expansion which has been identified.[68]

Dingiswayo was obliged to embark on active campaigning to secure his position. There are considerable discrepancies in the various sources as to the sequence of his campaigns. The order adhered to here is based on two considerations: the highest degree of correllation obtainable from the sources, and the greatest geographic logic, in as much as it seems unlikely that Dingiswayo would have first attacked a group in an area further from the Mthethwa capital before resolving relations with groups in the intervening area, except in extraordinary circumstances.



The Mthethwa paramountcy under Dingiswayo, c.1800.

News of Dingiswayo's early successes caused Mawewe to flee to the Qwabe where his presence posed a continued threat to Dingiswayo.[69] It rendered the legitimacy of his accession questionable, and provided a nucleus of possible opposition for disaffected Mthethwa elements, together with whom the Qwabe could have made common cause. Groups such as the Dube, Mbonambi and Mbokazi, the major and most valuable tributaries of the Mthethwa polity were genealogically linked to the Qwabe and this might have meant a conflict of interest in those areas as long as the Qwabe appeared to offer them a viable alternative to Mthethwa hegemony.[70]

The Mthethwa army had demonstrated its inadequacy when it was pitted against Dingiswayo's own motley band of supporters. Even once the two forces were amalgamated, considerable reorganization was necessary before a campaign against a major power such as [illegible]e could be envisaged. The traditions suggest that [illegible] was one of the new chief's primary objectives. In the first instance, the number of amabutho appears to have been substantially increased. The following names have survived in the oral traditions and should be compared with only two associated with Jobe; Mveyeyo, Nyakeni, Cobo, Ningizimu, isiFazana, iziCwe and Nhlangane.[71]

However, expansion of the amabutho system should not be seen merely as a response to the Qwabe threat, and later that of the Buthelezi.[72] Increased militarization was also a consequence of the changing nature of the Delagoa Bay trade, from ivory, a product of little local value, to cattle, the extraction of which posed the Mthethwa ruling lineage with a formidable problem.[73] The extension of the amabutho under Dingiswayo marked an important advance in the rise of the Mthethwa state. The new kingdom however displayed many signs of continuity with the past, and failed to transcend certain

crucial weaknesses in the old order. Firstly, while engaging in a programme of massive expansion, the form which this expansion assumed did not ultimately provide the military resources necessary to sustain the state through a period of mounting sub-regional military conflict and climatological crisis. Secondly, it did not achieve the political and ideological coherence developed in Shaka's Zulu state We will deal with each of these issues in turn.

Through his reorganization of the army, Dingiswayo was able to embark on a course of consolidation and expansion. Three areas of such activity can be distinguished after 1800; the stabilization of the northern reaches of the polity; the coastal campaigns, and expansion inland.

To the north of the Mfolozi, Mthethwa policy was one of consolidation, and not in this period, of expansion to secure trade routes as is commonly supposed.[74] The northern-most border, the Mona river, divided the Mthethwa from the Nxumalo section of the Ndwandwe, with whom relations were strengthened by the gift of Nomatuli kaJobe, a royal bride, to the Nxumalo chief, Malusi kaMatshuku.[75] For the most part, the remainder of the northern border was occupied by groups with close links and long association with the Mthethwa, largely the 'related' lineages, who were incorporated directly into the Mthethwa amabutho.

The coastlands subsequently became the focus of Mthethwa activity. The coastal plain was occupied by the Sokhulu and Qube, who had khonza'd the Mthethwa, and were maintained as tributaries, particularly of agricultural products. Control over these groups seems to have been intensified under Dingiswayo, with the continued enforcement of the earlier patterns of their differential

incorporation, and the appointment of Mthethwa loyalists as local chiefs.[76] The Mbonambi, who inhabited an area just south of the Sokhulu, were obliged to khonza Dingiswayo at this time, and they appear to have paid tribute in the form of maize and spear-heads, two products for which they were famed.[77]

According to Bryant, another of Dingiswayo's early campaigns was conducted further south, against the Ngadi, near the Mfule river and the Qwabe border. The Ngadi were genealogically linked to the Qwabe and refused to acknowledge Mthethwa hegemony. A force was sent against them and much cattle was captured and removed by the Mthethwa. The traditions relate that the life of the Ngadi chief, Madlokovu, was spared through a judicious retreat and then his voluntary act of khonza to Dingiswayo.[78] The Qadi, who occupied territory to the south, almost at the Thukela, were similarly treated. They were decisively beaten and then required to khonza the Mthethwa paramount. Their cattle were also removed to the Mthethwa royal establishments.[79] There are no references in the relevant traditions to men of either the Ngadi or the Qadi being incorporated into the Mthethwa army.[80]

Dingiswayo then turned to the Qwabe proper. The Qwabe chief, Khondlo, was obliged to recognize Mthethwa overrule, and was himself denied the right to many of the features of the ubukhosi - the outward signs of kingship. These included the removal of the Qwabe isigodlo (special establishment of women), the maintenance of which was conventionally a royal perogative.[81] According to Stuart, Dingiswayo also denied Khondlo a further royal right, that of keeping herds according to the colour of their hides, and of slaughtering meat for the amabutho, the latter a jealously guarded monopoly.[82] A cattle tribute (mostly oxen) was further demanded of

the Qwabe.[83] Mthethwa interests south of the Mhlathuze were henceforward to be represented by Myaka, a member of the Mthethwa a ruling lineage.[84] Formal rights of chieftainship were likewise asserted over Mjezi, another chief of the area whose isigodlo was removed,[85] while an Mthethwa attack on yet another neighbouring chief, Tokozwayo kaMandayiza was specifically to prevent him from conducting the umkhosi, a central royal ritual.[86] Finally, Macingwane of the Chunu was obliged to surrender both isigodlo and cattle.[87]

Mthethwa control over the south was considerably tighter and more direct than is suggested by Hedges.[88] On the death of the Qwabe chief, Khondlo, Dingiswayo asserted the right of suzerain in deciding the succession dispute between Nomo and Phakathwayo in the latter's favour. However, he allocated land to Nomo in the intermediate area between the Mthethwa and Qwabe, exerting the right of a recognized chief. Furthermore, Dingiswayo defended Nomo against the crack Qwabe ibutho, the iziNkondo, who were sent to kill him. This campaign saw the Mthethwa establish control over the important river crossing of the Mhlathuze drifts.[89] This form of control over north-south movement was essential to the maintenance of a trade monopoly, while also providing a means of policing the southern reaches of the kingdom. Smith suggests that it was also a means of tribute exaction.[90] This move undoubtedly augmented Mthethwa control over the region, but nonetheless Mthethwa expansion continued to be marked by the absence of any attempt to appropriate or absorb the amabutho of their new subjects.

Mthethwa operations to the south and in the coastal plain appear to have been designed to establish tributary arrangements involving both agricultural products and cattle. Control seems to have been formal, with the

establishment of a powerful representative of the Mthethwa in the area. In these aspects, the Mthethwa expansion of this period differed from its growth under Jobe. The most likely reason for these differences was the switch from a trade in ivory to one in cattle and the extension of the amabutho system in a period of marked climatological crisis when successful cattle-keeping would have seen increased competition for access to areas of superior grazing.

Control of the coastlands appears to have been a matter of paramount importance for the Mthethwa chief, and ultimately, the centre of the Mthethwa chiefdom was moved from the Mfolozi confluence into the coastal lowland area occupied by their erstwhile suzerains, the Mbokazi. The Mbokazi chief was murdered, and a minor, Guluzana, was placed in power. The Mbokazi in turn, were obliged to occupy the confluence area vacated by the Mthethwa.[91]

The coastal belt, known in this area as the Mozambique plain, is an area of extremely high rainfall, usually over 1040mm, which experiences no dry season, and no frost. The vegetation was presumably a patchwork of forest and scrub-forest, and human-created grasslands, of both sweet and sour veld. The frequency of river valleys ensured easy access to water and to all types of grazing.[92] The strength of Mthethwa interest in this area during the reign of Dingiswayo was linked to the changing imperatives of the trade with Delagoa Bay, and the replacement of ivory with cattle as the chief commodity. With the shift to the coast, the Mthethwa effectively exchanged elephant-country for cattle country. The Mthethwa were thus able to exploit the lowlands directly, in addition to the resources of their lowland tributaries which the Mthethwa rulers sought to husband almost as carefully as their own.

The Ngadi, Qadi and Qwabe to the south of the new Mthethwa heartland are all recorded as having been 'leniently' treated by Dingiswayo. In particular, he did not appropriate all their cattle, but left sufficient for breeding purposes. In this way, a regular supply of cattle tribute was ensured at a time when the demand for cattle at Delagoa Bay was very great.[93]

While the cattle areas in the east and south were clearly the main focus of Mthethwa activities, expansion also took place in the interior. This occurred in three phases. An early period of consolidation (probably preparatory to the Qwabe campaign in the south) was followed by the establishment of tribute relations and extended control over a wider area - a policy aggressively pursued by Dingiswayo. The third phase consisted of the Shakan initiatives in the area, on behalf of the Mthethwa suzerain, which differed markedly from the earlier expansion.

Mthethwa activity in the interior seems to have been primarily a response to a threat posed by the Buthelezi. The Buthelezi had defeated their neighbours, the Zulu under Senzangakhona, and allied themselves to the section of the Bisini who had declined to support Dingiswayo's claim to the Mthethwa chieftaincy.[94] The Buthelezi had also expanded into the Qungebeni territory, thus enlarging their common border with the Mthethwa, and had occupied the strategic Mcakweni heights and Babanango mountain. A sense of their menace is conveyed by Bryant when he speaks of the '... Buthelezis' glaring warningly from over the Mpembeni'.[95]

The Mthethwa attitude on their mutual border was, at first, essentially defensive, as they sought to contain the Buthelezi through strategic expansion of their own.

According to Bryant, the Thembu were the earliest objects of Mthethwa interest in the west.[96] The Thembu occupied an area on the south bank of the Mfolozi, and bordering on the Bisini section allied to the Buthelezi. They were a small group who refused to khonza Dingiswayo. Possibly, they sought to exploit Mthethwa-Buthelezi tensions. Dingiswayo moved swiftly to pre-empt this by attacking the main Thembu establishment, Ntlangwini, and killing their chief.[97] Their neighbours, the Xulu, suffered a similar fate.[98]

The strategic value of the manoeuvres against these two areas of possible opposition is indicated with reference to the geographical configuration of the borders established. The Thembu and the Zulu provided buffer areas against the Buthelezi, while providing Mthethwa with access to the strategic Mthonjaneni heights. Both groups were situated in relative proximity to major Mthethwa establishments which facilitated their government by the Mthethwa. The Xulu, in particular, had been considerably dispersed during the encounter, and the smallness of the chiefdoms concerned probably made Mthethwa rule easier.[99]

Subsequent to the Qwabe campaign, Dingiswayo again turned his attention to the west, probably in response to renewed Buthelezi activity. This time the scope of his reaction was more comprehensive, and an extensive campaign was undertaken. Relations with the Langeni were affirmed and tribute extraction enforced. The Langeni remained under their chief Makedama kaMbhengi.[100] The Mthethwa army then moved against the Mbatha, neighbours of the Buthelezi, who occupied the area around the Ntlazatshe.[101] Conflict was most intense with the Buthelezi themselves, and resulted in the death of Bakuza, the heir. It seems that this defeat and the flight of the chief heralded the

submission of the Buthelezi satellites such as the Zulu, Qungebeni, Sibiya and Dlamini.[102]

It was probably during this phase that Dingiswayo also moved against the Chunu and the Khumalo.[103] They were required to recognise Dingiswayo as their suzerain, and not to take any action without consulting him, but they were permitted to retain izigodlo, and the perogative of butha'ing.[104] They continued to conduct independent military action, but only after consultation with Dingiswayo. Zulu dignitaries were regularly required to attend 'dances' at the Mthethwa capital, while Senzakhona went 'down to Dingiswayo's to look for a new wife', for whom the Mthethwa were likely to have demanded a not inconsiderable lobola. Matters of state were discussed at these big dances, and the chiefs khonza'd Dingiswayo.[105] Like the lowland chiefdoms, those in the west were not assimilated by the Mthethwa. The corollary of this was that their men were not incorporated into the Mthethwa army.

It was Dingiswayo's policy to remove recalcitrant chiefs and to replace them with minors or known Mthethwa loyalists from amidst their ranks. The Thembu chief Jama was killed by Dingiswayo and his heir, Ndina, a minor, was forced to khonza Dingiswayo.[106] The neighbouring Xulu chief, Xabashe kaDanda was similarly murdered by Dingiswayo, and a new dynasty under Mapoloba raised up to the chieftaincy.[107] Likewise, the Qungebeni and Dlamini chiefs who resisted Dingiswayo were killed, and their replacements approved and supported by the Mthethwa king.[108]

High office in Mthethwa kingdom was limited to a narrow sector. Dingiswayo appears to have recruited extensively from the ranks of the groups first incorporated into Mthethwa for his corps of commanders and senior adminis-

trators. Ngomane of the Dletsheni became commander-in-chief of the Mthethwa army and an induna of the Nhlangane ibutho.[109] He was placed in charge of a district apparently near kwaNogqogqa, on the turbulent south-western border of the Mthethwa paramountcy, abutting on the small Zulu chiefdom.[110] His command on the periphery of the kingdom and his close involvement with the installation of the new Zulu chief suggests that Mthethwa expansion inland may have occurred under his supervision. Furthermore, it was his task to absorb all refugees from the Mthethwa's inland neighbours, to incorporate them effectively into the amabutho and to conduct diplomatic relations to the west.[111] His attendance was required at the court at oYengweni, Dingiswayo's capital, where he frequently resided.[112] Presumably, this widespread demand made of all the izinduna enabled the Mthethwa chief to retain effective control over his subordinates and minimized the possibility of localised opposition gathering round the izinduna in their areas of command. Furthermore, the evidence suggests that Ngomane was moved to various posts and areas over time, although it should be noted that care was taken to ensure that he did not hold high office amongst his own people, the Dletsheni.[113] Ngomane's position, and that of the Dletsheni, was significantly enhanced by the marriage of Dingiswayo to Gudayi, a sister of Ngomane. Ngomane owed this honour and his high position to the fact that he was a high-ranking member of Dletsheni, a group considered to be related to the Mthethwa ruling lineage. At the same time, as a Dletsheni, rather than a member of the Nyambose, Ngomane could not have easily challenged or threatened the position of the reigning king.[114]

Another of the 'related' groups to supply Dingiswayo's administrative corps was the Gengeni. oYengweni, the

Mthethwa capital, was placed under the command of a Gengeni notable, Mzaca kaMnqinya. oYengweni was situated midway between the Ntseleni and the Mfolozi rivers (again, a posting distant from the induna's own home area), and Mzaca was responsible for exercising direct rule over a number of groups in the vicinity of oYengweni who had been forcibly incorporated into the Mthethwa kingdom.[115] Similarly, Velana kaCungele of the 'related' Mkhwanazi was given charge of the royal establishment oHeni and was appointed induna of the Ningizmu ibutho,[116] while Mandeku of the Mswelì, another 'related' group, was renowned as one of Dingiswayo's most senior izinduna.[117] Thus, the limited data available on Mthethwa izinduna, suggests that the constituency from which they were drawn comprised those clans which claimed to be related to the Mthethwa ruling lineage, excluding members of the ruling lineage itself.

As chief of the Sokhulu, Dingiswayo appointed an acknowledged supporter of the paramountcy, Nqoboko kaLanga. Nqoboko, a son of the previous Sokhulu chief, had been raised at the Mthethwa capital after his mother, a royal Mthethwa woman, fled from the Sokhulu on the death of his father. Nqoboko was thus closely connected to the ruling lineage. As a Sokhulu, however (like Ngomane) he was excluded from the Mthethwa chiefship.[118] Dingiswayo promoted the aspirations of Nqoboko for he was eager to assert greater control over the Sokhulu. Although they had khonza'd Jobe, the Sokhulu had continued to retain a measure of independence, as well as their own military forces.[119] They were, by far, the most powerful element in the north-east. Installation of Nqoboka with Mthethwa military aid meant that the new ruling lineage of the Sokhulu would have been connected to the Mthethwa in a way that the old was not. Furthermore, Nqoboka remained reliant on Mthethwa military

backing. He, like Ngomane, was required to report to oYengweni frequently, to khonza often, and to oversee the extraction of tribute, in particular, sugar-cane and cattle, from the Sokhulu.[120] On Dingiswayo's behalf, he was required to extend the area of Mthethwa hegemony and to continue the process of consolidation in the north. Using the Sokhulu forces he overran the neighbouring Nzimeleni, killing off their ruling lineage and incorporating them under his command.[121]

In this way, Dingiswayo began to sub-contract out military responsibility at a time when the evidence suggests that the Mthethwa army was experiencing problems. It was said to be considerably smaller than the army of the neighbouring Ndwandwe, and seems to have been heavily overextended.[122] This crisis appears to have created the circumstances underlying Dingiswayo's decision to promote the claims of another of his trusted lieutenants to a local chieftaincy, that of the Zulu.

There are grounds for believing that Dingiswayo had Senzangakhona murdered and that he then provided his fugitive son Shaka, (by then a Mthethwa protogee) with a force with which to stake a claim to the Zulu chieftaincy.[123] As in the case of Nqoboko, who was given military control of the north-east and was assisted to the Sokhulu chieftaincy with Mthethwa amabutho, Shaka was accompanied amongst the Zulu by his own iziCwe unit, as well as the Nhlangane and Nyakeni.[124]

Like Nqoboka, Shaka is recorded as having fled amongst the Mthethwa as a 'refugee', and the stories of his youth are strongly indicative of the extent to which his only allegiance was to the Mthethwa. They incorporate many details of his very real 'adoption' into the Mthethwa. In the words of another of Stuart's

informants, he was given Ngomane as 'his father and advisor'.[125] The nature of the relationship between Ngomane and Shaka is stressed in the traditions, and is obviously a part of the explanation as to why he was entrusted with such a great commission on behalf of the Mthethwa ruling lineage. Shaka had been raised in Ngomane's household and when he returned to the Zulu, 'Dingiswayo gave him Ngomane kaNqomboli, saying "This is your father", and also allowed him a considerable following of people'.[126] Furthermore according to Stuart, Shaka was linked on the maternal side to the Mthethwa ruling lineage.[127]

After Shaka's successful accession, Dingiswayo ensured that the Mthethwa ruling lineage was well represented at the new Zulu court. He sent Gudayi, one of his wives with Shaka, as well as a contingent of Mthethwa agents or 'spies'.[128] It seems that Dingiswayo's strategy was the creation of a subsidiary satellite chiefdom in the west, under Shaka, which would serve as a nucleus for the close assimilation of its neighbours, and their unification into a cohesive unit centered on the Zulu chieftaincy. Presumably, the logic behind this was that it had the effect of incorporating and subordinating large numbers of people, rendering them available for recruitment into local amabutho, to whom, like the Sokhulu, the Mthethwa could sub-contract military responsibilities. The decentralized distribution of the amabutho of the Mthethwa polity and its tributaries meant the Mthethwa heartland was not required to support the bulk of the Mthethwa military reserves thus avoiding intensive exploitation of the heartland region.

However, this strategy was ultimately to contribute materially to the downfall of the Mthethwa state. Dingiswayo's failure to amalgamate and centralize the

amabutho of his tributaries together with those of the Mthethwa nucleus was a corollary of the Mthethwa rulers' growing disinclination to incorporate new subjects fully into the Mthethwa body politic. The concomitant rights and obligations which the establishment of 'kin' relations would have imposed were avoided. Instead, what emerged was a tendency for the Mthethwa chiefdom to assert its paramountcy in the sub-region, to demand a limited recognition thereof, some tribute, and, if necessary, military support. It seems that under Dingiswayo, Mthethwa circumstances were such that the Mthethwa either did not need to enforce more stringent conditions of subordination on their tributaries, or lacked the necessary means to do so.

The failure of the Mthethwa to integrate the bulk of their subjects into a cohesive polity had two effects. The first was that the sharp distinctions maintained between the original Mthethwa and later additions to the polity underlay an emerging system of social stratification. The increasing exclusivity of Mthethwa rule was further entrenched by the 'separation off' of a number of sections of the dominant lineage, and their endowment with separate izibongo. This led to the creation of the Nxele, Seme and Msweli 'sub-clans' out of the original Nyambose clan[129], and possibly the Msondo and Mpanza.[130] The creation of new 'sub-clans' in this way was a royal perogative, and as a characteristic feature of state-formation, will be discussed at greater length in chapter four. Its effective consequence was that it facilitated intermarriage within the ruling lineage, circumventing thus the social rule of exogamy. This meant that resources, in the form of lobola could be made to circulate within an increasingly limited group. This led to even greater disparities in wealth between a small and closed ruling group, and the remainder of the paramountcy. The Mthethwa paramountcy was

neatly divided into the ruling clan (abendlunkulu) and the commoners (abantu kazana)'.[131]

The second effect of the existence of decentralized chiefdom-based amabutho and of the failure of Mthethwa to assimilate with its new subjects, was the concomitant absence of any ideological unity between the Mthethwa and their tributaries, and the constant possibility of independent action on the part of the subordinate chiefdoms. Ultimately this, in form of the Zulu failure to respond to a Mthethwa request for military support, underlay the collapse of Mthethwa power.

Under Shaka, the Zulu army had been reformed and expanded, and carried out a number of local sorties on behalf of the Mthethwa paramount. One of Shaka's earliest campaigns was conducted against the recalcitrant Mbatha, at the same time as Dingiswayo attacked the nearby Ntshalini. The former was a cattle raid which turned into a massacre, earning Shaka a sharp reproof from his suzerain. Mthethwa policy continued to be shaped by the need to secure regular supplies of cattle tribute, and in the Zulu case, it seems that Dingiswayo wished to see the Zulu amabutho extended through the incorporation of men from a wide range of subject chiefdoms.

Subsequently, Shaka successfully attacked his immediate neighbours, the Langeni, the Qungebeni, a section of the Khumalo and the Buthelezi. Their incorporation under local Zulu rule was total. Their men were absorbed into the Zulu amabutho, and numbers of their women were placed in the Zulu izigodlo.[132] In the Langeni case, many 'orphans' were shipped back to Mthethwa, where they were given land and encouraged to settle individually under local Mthethwa chiefs.[133] A major Zulu establishment, eNdlamate, was erected on Langeni lands, while

Zulu officials were appointed to administer the Qungebeni chiefdom.[134] Cattle tribute was exacted from the new conquests and sent on to Dingiswayo, who in turn, liberally rewarded his highly successful 'border-agent', Shaka.[135] Shaka was also occupied with the collection of tribute on Dingiswayo's behalf further afield, from the Qadi and Ngadi,[136] and took his amabutho to fight with Dingiswayo against Matiwane of the Ngwane, a campaign which brought high ransoms and much cattle but which also brought an impending clash with the Ndwandwe one step closer.[137]

The threat to Mthethwa, posed by the looming presence of Zwide and the powerful Ndwandwe army to the north, is crystallized in the story of the so-called 'semen plot'. According to a number of sources, Zwide resolved to assure himself of victory over Dingiswayo through magical means, based on the widely-held principle that procurement of intimate personal particles would provide a powerful cantrip against that person. Chiefs were well aware of this danger and ensured that all their body discharges (saliva, nail-parings, hair-clippings etc) were carefully guarded and secretly buried. This was the task of a specially appointed and highly trusted official, the intsila, whose bare back was always handy to collect the chiefs' expectorations, while the izisindabisa concealed royal excreta. The elaborate security involved indicates the seriousness with which this threat was regarded.[138]

Zwide sent two women to Dingiswayo, his own sister Ntombazana and a daughter of Malusi, chief of the Nxumalo. The girls were charged with obtaining the royal semen, the only possibility not taken care of by the various officials. However, Dingiswayo was warned of the danger afterwards by the daughter of Malusi who was also his niece. As a result of this betrayal,

Zwide moved against the Nxumalo now allied to the Mthethwa. This brought Ndwandwe forces right onto Dingiswayo's northern border as did an attack at much the same time on another of Dingiswayo's tributaries, the Khumalo.[139] The Ndwandwe - Mthethwa conflict has been variously explained in terms of population-pressure theses, Guy's model of environmental crisis and competition for resources, and once again, competition over the Delagoa Bay trade. However one accounts for the escalation in conflict, there can be no doubt that increased militarization in one area evoked a ripple effect in neighbouring areas. In the Mthethwa case in particular, expansion of the amabutho in the latter years of Dingiswayo's reign, appears to have been a response to the Ndwandwe threat. However, Mthethwa forces alone were unable to contain the Ndwandwe. Presumably, Dingiswayo had realised this when he sanctioned Shaka's accession to the Zulu chieftaincy, but the astuteness of that move did not save the Mthethwa kingdom. The Mthethwa army was fated to face the Ndwandwe alone, without their second army. It appears that Shaka seized his opportunity to throw off the restraints of Mthethwa hegemony. Dingiswayo was captured and killed alone, and the Mthethwa army retired in disorder.[140]

The ease with which Zulu tardiness in rendezvousing with the Mthethwa army caused the collapse of the paramountcy, demonstrated both the relative military weakness of Mthethwa and the fragility of the polity's bonds of cohesion. Indeed, the Mthethwa polity had not attempted to develop the sophisticated structures and institutions of a tightly-knit state. The development of Mthethwa as a paramount chiefdom with hegemony over a number of separate but tributary chiefdoms was probably shaped by the particular circumstances in which it emerged. As Bonner has argued, 'different mixes of factors affected each of the states ... and led to significant

variations in the structures that emerged'.[141]

One of the factor mixes were those of regional peculiarities. The Mthethwa occupied a fertile coastal plain, where an existence was extracted from the environment with greater ease than was the case further inland. Consequently, resources were less contested, and violence was more curtailed. The expansion and changing content of the Delagoa Bay trade and later the climatological crisis of the early nineteenth century created the circumstances for the development of the Mthethwa amabutho, and for increased surplus extraction by the Mthethwa rulers. These factors also precipitated the emergence of a new tributary society. However, the institutional dimension which increased violence had given to the Ndwandwe, and later the Zulu states, was largely absent amongst the Mthethwa, and the ideological apparatus of kingship was concomitantly less developed.

The following chapters turn to consider the sharper conflicts and the greater intensity of the struggles out of which the Zulu state emerged. They examine the material circumstances of the emergent Zulu state and attempt to account for its greater cohesion and resilience. They focus on the development of a state ideology to underpin social cohesion, and to define and legitimate the position of the new kingdom's rulers. They examine the way in which old notions of kinship were altered and meshed with other ideas in the service not only of social integration, but also that of exclusion - the exclusion of subordinate groups from the rights and privileges enjoyed by the society's rulers.

1. Vansina, *Oral Tradition*, pp. 100-102.

2. Ibid., p. 100.

3. Fynn, Diary, pp. 7-11; H.Fynn, 'Occurrences Among the Native Races', in J. Bird, The Annals of Natal 1495-1845, Vol. 1, Pietermaritzburg, 1888, pp. 60-71.

4. Sir Theophilus Shepstone, 'Paper on the Zulu-Kafir Race', in Bird, Annals, p. 163.

5. K.C., Stuart Papers, 'Biography of Dingiswayo'; Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 100, 101. Also see Fynn in Bird, Annals, p. 64.

6. Hedges, 'Trade and Politics', p. 3.

7. See for example, J. Argyle, 'Dingiswayo Discovered: An Interpretation of his Legendary Origins', in Social System and Tradition in Southern Africa, J. Argyle and E. Preston-Whyte, (eds.), Cape Town, 1978, pp. 1-18; Hedges, 'Trade and Politics', pp. 183-85.

8. K.C., Essay Competition, 1950, 'Izindaba zomlandu wabakwaMkwanazi kwelakwaMpukunyoni', by Lionel J.D. Mkhwanazi. The informant Mkhwanazi was a Christian based at the Lutheran Theological Seminary near Rorkes Drift. His account of MkhWanazi affairs and history is very detailed.

9. See above, p. 112; K.C., Stuart Papers, file 65, notebook 4, p. 16, evidence of Nhlekele.

10. K.C., Essay Competition, essay by Mkhwanazi, p. 6.

11. Guy, Destruction, pp. 200, 205.

12. J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 200, evidence of Jantshi and Ndukwana.

13. See below, pp. 390-91; K.C., Stuart Papers, file 65, notebook 4, p. 8, evidence of Nhlekele.

14. Guy, Destruction, p. 34.

15. J.S.A., Vol. 4, (forthcoming) pp. 277, 285, 292, evidence of Ndukwana. My thanks to John Wright for permitting me access to the manuscript of volume four.

16. J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 162, evidence of Ndukwana contained in the testimony of Mkando.

17. J.S.A., Vol. 2, pp. 79-81, evidence of Magidi, and editors' N. 1, p. 81.

18. J.S.A., Vol. 2, pp. 161-63, evidence of Makewu.

19. J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 291-93, evidence of Mpambukelwa.

20. See note 3.

21. Compare Bryant's data, Olden Times, p. 127, with that of Essery, in K.C., Essery Papers, Ms. 1473, 'The Murder of Shaka Zulu', p. 13.

22. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 87; J.S.A., Vol. 4 (forthcoming), p. 279, evidence of Ndukwana.

23. Stuart, uBaxoxele, p. 14. The informant Matshwili was born c.1838, and gave his testimony to Stuart in 1903.

24. K.C., Stuart Papers, file 65, notebook 4, evidence of Nhlekele, pp. 8-19.

25. M. Fuze, The Black People and Whence They Came, transl. by H.C. Lugg, (ed.), A.T. Cope, Pietermaritzburg, 1979, p. 49; Bryant, Olden Times, p. 203; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 259, evidence of Mmemi.

26. Guy, Destruction, p. 205.

27. Bryant, Olden Times p. 84.

28. Ibid., p. 83. *In fact Bryant says that the Mthethwa occupied this area before they khonza'd the Mbokazi, but this contradicts all the other evidence available, including that which occurs elsewhere in Olden Times, in particular p. 84; also see K.C., file 41, p. 4, evidence of Ndukwana.*

29. Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 84, 217. This definition *of khonza is that* utilized by Webb and Wright in The James Stuart Archive series.

30. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 84; K.C., Stuart Papers, file 53, 'The Life of Tshaka', by Stuart.

31. M. Hall, 'Shakan pitfall traps: hunting technique in the Zulu kingdom' in Annals of the Natal Museum, 12, 1 (1977), Pietermaritzburg, pp. 1-12. Also see Bryant, Olden Times, p. 217.

32. Hall, 'Shakan pitfall traps', p. 2.

33. J. Shooter, The Kafirs of Natal and the Zulu Country, London, 1857, p. 40.

34. D. Hedges, 'Trade and Politics', chapter 5, and p. 127, in particular.

35. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 84.

36. Ibid. See the situation of the Mkhwanazi given on the enclosed map in Olden Times; K.C., Essay Competition, essay by Mkhwanazi, pp. 1-6.

37. Ibid; Bryant, Olden Times, p. 113.

38. This thesis was first advanced by A. Smith, 'The Trade of Delagoa Bay', p. 185,but with reference to the reign of Dingiswayo sometime later.

39. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 116.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 79, evidence of Magidi kaNgomane, a Oletsheni informant.

42. Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 109, 112, 116, 684; K.C., Stuart Papers, file 65, notebook 4, pp. 10, 18, evidence of Nhlekele; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 79, evidence of Mag ii.

43. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 108.

44. Krige, Social System, p. 34.
It is significant in this context that the Cambini were known as the undlunkhulu house of the Mthethwa ruling lineage, where undlunkhulu specifically indicated a relationship of kin, see K.C., Stuart Papers, file 65, notebook 4, p. 18, evidence of Nhlekele.

45. Krige, Social System, p. 34.

46. On the flexibility of izithakazelo see ibid., pp. 34, 35; Bryant, Olden Times, p. 15; and the discussion in chapter five.

47. Hedges, 'Trade and Politics', pp. 71-4.

48. Bryant, *Zulu People*, pp. 682-86.

49. Hedges, 'Trade and Politics', pp. 131-32.

50. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 99; Stuart, uBaxoxele, p. 24.

51. Hedges, 'Trade and Politics', pp. 73-4.

52. Guy, The Destruction, chapter 1, p. 9 in particular.

53. Guy, 'Ecological factors', p. 14.

54. J. Wright, 'Pre-Shakan Age-Group Formation among the Northern Nguni', Natalia, 8 (Dec. 1978), p. 25.

55. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 109.

56. Ibid; K.C., Stuart Papers, file 65, notebook 4, p. 12, evidence of Nhlekele.

57. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 109; Fuze, The Black People, p. 19.

58. Ibid; K.C., Stuart Papers, files 61, 62, evidence of Mkehlengana and Socwatsha; Bryant, Olden Times, p. 106.

59. Ibid., pp. 114-15.

60. T. Mofolo, Chaka: A Historical Romance, Oxford, 1931, p. 4. Mofolo was foremost a literary writer, but he also considered himself to be an historian. As a non-Zulu, he was also acutely conscious of the necessity of coming to understand an historical society other than his own. His comments are reproduced here as one historian's conceptualization of the social cohesion of early polities. For a penetrating review of Mofolo as writer and historian see D. Burness, 'Thomas Mofolo's Chaka', in Burness (ed.), Shaka, King of the Zulus in African Literature, pp. 1-23.

61. Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 86-7; Fynn, Diary, p. 2; Stuart, uBaxoxele, chapter 3; H. Fynn, 'Occurrences among the Native Races', in Bird, Annals, p. 61; Fuze, The Black People, p. 14; Sir T. Shepstone, 'The Early History of the Zulu-Kafir Race of South-Eastern Africa' in Bird, Annals, p. 161.

62. Fynn, Diary, pp. 2-4.

63. See below p. 113.
Of group two, Shaka was the most famous example, but also see the example of Nqoboka discussed on p. 131 below.

64. See below, pp. 131-2, 135; K.C., Stuart Papers, file 53, 'The Life of Tshaka', by Stuart; Bryant, Olden Times, p. 109.

65. Fynn, Diary, p. 5; Bryant, Olden Times, p. 90.

66. K.C., Stuart Papers, file 53, 'The Life of Tshaka' by Stuart; Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 80, 89; Fynn, Diary, p. 4; Fuze, The Black People, p. 16. The Bisini appear to have been the people over whom Dingiswayo had been appointed as a sub-chief whilst

a refugee amongst the Hlubi. They occupied an area on the Mthethwa-Hlubi border. A division existed between two groups of Bizini and appears to reflect a division over support for Dingiswayo. The section which did not return to Mthethwa with the new chief is reputed to have khonza'd the Buthelezi. The Bizini section which accompanied Dingiswayo later came to be considered a Mthethwa sub-clan, as did another group of Hlubi 'refugees', the Ngayini. (Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 114, 117; J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 176, evidence of Jantshi)

67. Fynn, Diary, p. 6; Stuart, uBaxoxele, chapter 3; Fynn, 'Occurrences', p. 62.

68. Fynn, Diary, p. 6; B.W. Vilakazi, uDingiswayo kaJobe, London, 1939, p. 2.

69. Fynn, Diary, p. 7; Fynn, 'Occurrences', p. 62. There is some debate on this point. Bryant (Olden Times, p. 90) maintains that Mawewe fled to the Nxumalo. This was unlikely for two reasons: evident cordiality between Dingiswayo and the Nxumalo chief, Malusi and the marriage of Dingiswayo's sister to Malusi (K.C., Stuart Papers, file 53, 'The Life of Tshaka', by Stuart); the immediacy with which a campaign against the Qwabe was launched by the Mthethwa.

70. Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 681 - 97. The Mbonambi, Mbokazi and Dube all shared the isithakazelo 'Mbuyazi', which proclaimed a connection with the Qwabe; K.C., Stuart Papers, file 62, notebook 61, evidence of Mkehlengana and Socwatsha.

71. K.C., Stuart Papers, file 53, 'The Life of Tshaka', by Stuart; K.C., Stuart Papers, file 65, notebook 4, evidence of Nhlekele, pp. 9, 48; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 48, evidence of Madikane; Bryant, Olden Times, p. 98, Fynn, 'Occurrences' pp. 63-4.

72. See below, p. 127.

73. Hedges, 'Trade and Politics', pp. 149-52.

74. Ibid., pp. 182, 187.

75. K.C., Stuart Papers, file 53, 'The Life of Tshaka', by Stuart.

76. See below, p. 129.

77. Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 103, 105.

78. Ibid., p. 101.

79. Fynn, Diary, pp. 8, 9, 10; Fynn, 'Occurrences', p. 64; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 269, evidence of Mmemi.

80. The little evidence available on these two groups within the Mthethwa paramountcy indicates that they were sections of clans, and that the numbers of people involved were not large. From this, it can be inferred that they were unlikely to have maintained armies after their subjugation by Dingiswayo. On Qadi and Ngadi dispersal across the Zululand-Natal area see J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 237, evidence of Maquza; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 69, evidence of Mageza; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 268, evidence of Maziyana.

81. K.C., Stuart Papers, file 53, 'The Life of Tshaka', by Stuart; Bryant, Olden Times, p. 100. On the significance of izigodlo see chapter seven.

82. K.C., Stuart Papers, file 53, 'The Life of Tshaka', by Stuart; J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 41, evidence of Baleni; J.S.A., Vol. 1, pp. 323, 343, evidence of Lunguza.

83. Fynn, Diary, p. 9; K.C., Stuart Papers, file 53, 'The Life of Tshaka', by Stuart; Bryant, Olden Times, p. 189.

84. Isaacs, Travels, p. 33.

85. K.C., Stuart Papers, file 53, 'The Life of Tshaka', by Stuart.

86. Ibid.

87. Ibid.

88. See Hedges, 'Trade and Politics', pp. 176-77.

89. K.C., Stuart Papers, file 53, 'The Life of Tshaka', by Stuart; J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 243-45, evidence of Mmemi.

90. Smith, 'The struggle for control of southern Mocambique 1720-1835', p. 184.

91. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 84.

92. See Hedges description, 'Trade and Politics', p. 31; Guy, Destruction, pp. 6, 7; Slater, 'Transitions', p. 41, Hall, 'The Ecology of the Iron Age', chapter 8.

93. Fynn, Diary, pp. 8, 9, 10; Bryant, Olden Times, p. 100.

94. Ibid., pp. 28, 114.

95. Ibid., p. 131.

96. Ibid., pp. 101, 114, and see position of the Thembu on the enclosed map.

97. Ibid., pp. 101-2, 243.

98. Ibid., p. 101, 229.

99. Ibid., p. 102.

100. Ibid.

101. Ibid.

102. Ibid., pp. 55, 102, 129.

103. Ibid., p. 102; K.C., Stuart Papers, file 53, 'The Life of Tshaka', by Stuart.

104. J.S.A., Vol. 1, pp. 181-83, evidence of Jantshi.

105. Ibid., p. 181; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 48, evidence of Madikane, where Senzangakhona was reputed to have said that Shaka was 'at *Mtetwa, where we are ruled*'.

106. Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 101; 243.

107. Ibid., pp. 101, 229.

108. Ibid., pp. 102, 129.

109. K.C., Stuart Papers, file 53, 'The Life of Tshaka' by Stuart; Fynn, Diary, p. 13.

110. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 65; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 264, evidence of Mayinga. (This was the establishment to which Shaka was sent on his arrival amongst the Mthethwa, under the command of Ngomane).

111. Shaka was, of course, the most famous of these refugees. See also the cases of Silwane and Nomleti (J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 48, evidence of Madikane).

112. J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 79, evidence of Magidi.

113. See below, p. 133.

114. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 123.

115. Ibid., pp. 86, 95; K.C., Essay Competition, 1942, 'Historical Records', by C.J. Magwaza, based on the evidence of Muntuwenkosi Mthethwa of the Mbokodwembovu ibutho, pp. 2-3.

116. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 113; Stuart, uBaxoxele, p. 41; K.C., Stuart Papers, file 53, 'The Life of Tshaka', by Stuart.

117. K.C., Stuart Papers, file 65, notebook 4, p. 16, evidence of Nhlekele,

118. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 105.

119. Ibid.

120. Ibid., p. 110; K.C., Stuart Papers, file 65, notebook 4, evidence of Nhlekele.

121. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 110.

122. On the size and composition of the Mthethwa army see the interesting comments of M. Kunene, Emperor Shaka the Great, London, 1979, p. xv. Kunene's work, unfortunately without source annotation, contains a wealth of detail apparently derived from primary sources.

123. J.S.A., Vol. 1, pp. 180-82, evidence of Jantshi; J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 198-99, evidence of Mkebeni.

124. Ibid; Bryant, Olden Times, p. 120; K.C., Stuart Papers, file 53, 'The Life of Tshaka', by Stuart.

125. J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 190, evidence of Jantshi.

126. Ibid. p. 182; and see p. 180.

127. K.C., Stuart Papers, 'The Life of Tshaka', by Stuart.

128. Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 120, 123.

129. Ibid., p. 117.

130. Ibid., p. 114; K.C. Essay Competition, 1950, 'The Bengus and Jali', by Rev. T.S.W. Mthembu, pp. 9-10. K.C., Essay Competition, 1950, 'The Mpanza tribe', by S.P. Mpanza, pp. 3, 6, 7, 8, 10.

131. Kunene, Emperor Shaka, p. xv; also see the distinctions drawn by Kunene between Dingiswayo's establishment of the Mthethwa paramountcy and the earlier polity based on 'membership' of the Mthethwa family.

132. Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 133, 136, 225; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 61, evidence of Madikane.

133. Ibid.

134. K.C., Essery Papers, M.S. 1473, 'The Murder of Shaka Zulu', p. 13; Bryant, Olden Times, p. 126.

135. Ibid., p. 131, 132-33; J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 183, evidence of Jantshi.

136. J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 107, evidence of Mahashahasha.

137. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 127.

138. Ibid., pp. 163-64; J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 183, evidence of Jantshi.

139. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 172.

140. Fynn, 'Occurrences', p. 65.

141. Bonner, Kings, p. 23.

CHAPTER THREE

'THE GREAT REED OF THE MHLATHUZE': AN ANALYSIS OF QWABE INCORPORATION INTO THE ZULU STATE AND THE INVENTION OF THE MALANDELA TRADITION

This chapter will examine the circumstances of Qwabe incorporation into the Zulu kingdom c.1818, and the relations which prevailed between the Qwabe and the ruling Zulu over the following decade. It will seek to analyse the nature of Zulu hegemony in that period, the form of incorporation experienced by the Qwabe, and the kinds of resistance in which the Qwabe engaged.

For a number of reasons, analysis of Qwabe-Zulu relations in this chapter precedes discussion of groups whose incorporation by the Zulu occurred slightly earlier. Firstly, Qwabe was one of the largest chiefdoms to be subjected to the Zulu; secondly, in cultural, linguistic and historical terms, the Qwabe were, of all the groups with which the Zulu sought to assimilate, the most different from the Zulu. As such, the Qwabe experience was of enormous significance in shaping the emerging Zulu kingdom, in establishing the parameters of prevailing relations of incorporation and the associated ideological discourse. As a result, the Qwabe case provides key insights for the analysis of the Shaka period. Finally, Qwabe traditions provide the clearest examples of how spurious notions of kinship were fabricated to create a common identity with and loyalty to the Zulu ruling elite.

Hitherto, virtually all studies of Zulu state formation have fallen back on a coercive model. This does not

provide an adequate conceptualisation of the aggregative processes which underlay the emergence of the vast and heterogeneous Zulu kingdom. Expansion was effected through a variety of other devices which differed regionally in response to local conditions. The extension of Zulu overrule exploited a range of options from naked repression to genuine cooption either singly or in combinations. It can be demonstrated that the Zulu ruling lineage sought means to legitimate its newly-achieved political dominance. This was attempted through the creation of a new ideological system which served to sanction the reservation of power and privilege for certain groups, and the exclusion of others through appeals to the remote past. The processes involved in the emergence of a new ideological system were not those of invention but rather of transformation and rearrangement, as a new ideology was built up in the course of political and economic struggles, out of existing ideological complexes. It will be argued that the way in which the Zulu ruling elite sought to impose its rule over the Qwabe was meant to be achieved through a process of active and direct consent. Its form was designed to represent more than simply the narrow interests of the Zulu, and to articulate different visions of the world in such a way that their potential antagonisms were neutralised.

This process can be traced through a careful dissection of Qwabe traditions of origin which display patterns of contradictions indicative of subsequent manipulations. The traditions of many groups incorporated by the Zulu bear a similar imprint of intervention and will be discussed at length in later chapters of this thesis. However, Qwabe traditions reveal this process particularly sharply because of the disintegration of the Qwabe chiefdom in the 1830s. As a result

of this, Qwabe traditions which have survived into the twentieth century have done so largely in a 'frozen' form. At the time of their conquest by the Zulu, the Qwabe chiefdom occupied the area between the Mhlathuze and Thukela rivers. Under Shaka, the chiefdom retained its coherence and continued to inhabit the same area. Immediately after the assassination of Shaka in 1828, the Qwabe, led by Nqetho, took flight from the new Zulu king, Dingane. They made their way south in a series of running battles, their numbers ever-diminishing, until they were defeated and scattered by the Mpondo chief, Faku. Finally,

> Heedless and forlorn, the small surviving remnant of the Qwabe host scattered like sheep before the devastating wolf. Some accepted menial subjection under their conqueror Faku, some gravitated helplessly back to a more miserable servitude to the Zulu.[1]

The Qwabe chiefdom had vanished, and Qwabe history came to an end in the early 1830s. In fact, the traditions and history of the Qwabe had largely ceased to be of interest or relevance to the Qwabe informants questioned by Stuart. One of them, Mbovu, of the Makhanya section of the Qwabe, was in his seventies when he spoke to Stuart, and he observed,

> I no longer belong to the old generation. I am a seed that has dropped to a new state of civilisation. I take but little interest in former affairs.[2]

and he peevishly enquired of his interviewer,

> Why do you stir up these old graves? When the tribe is still standing and flourishing, it is something, but now we are broken and scattered.[3]

Mbovu's attitude towards Qwabe history presumably reflects the falling into disuse of Qwabe traditions of origins in the post-Shakan period. It was likely that this affected the reliability of the data and encouraged its faulty transmission. However, although the quality of Qwabe oral traditions probably deteriorated in this period, a corollary of their neglect was minimal manipulation of their content in the post-

Shakan nineteenth century. Consequently, Qwabe traditions provide a key reference point in the periodisation of interpolations in the traditions of Zululand as a whole. Hence, for a number of reasons, Qwabe traditions have a particular methodological interest, and the methodological approach adopted here is carried through the rest of this thesis.

Qwabe traditions of origin and their contradictions

The traditions of the individual subordinate Qwabe lineages and those of the Qwabe chiefdom as a whole are characterized by three fundamental contradictions. The first contradiction is located in the claims of the subordinate lineages to be the kinsfolk (of varying degrees of closeness) of the Qwabe ruling lineage, and the clear signs that most of the groups concerned actually had other, immigrant origins. The second anomaly lies in, on the one hand, acknowledgement in the traditions of the dominant position of the Qwabe ruling house and, on the other hand, the maintenance of traditions which challenged the seniority of the ruling lineage. The third contradiction exists between the claims made in the Malandela story that the Qwabe and the Zulu shared a common origin, and a host of indications from the traditions of the subordinate lineages, and from other sources, that the history of the Qwabe lineages was not linked in the remot past to that of the Zulu.

It will be suggested that the roots of the first contradiction lay in the specific relations of aggregation and incorporation (by means of an ideology of kinship) which characterized the pre-Shakan Qwabe chiefdom. It will be argued that the second antinomy owed its existence to the failure of the Qwabe ruling lineage adequately to secure and to underpin its position of dominance vis-a-vis the other Qwabe

lineages, and to the subsequent collapse of the ruling lineage after the assassination of Shaka. They allowed residual traditions of resistance not fully obliterated earlier to re-emerge. Finally, it will be posited that the third contradiction arose during the reign of Shaka, when the Zulu sought to assimilate the Qwabe chiefdom, on the ideological basis of manufactured claims of a common origin in the remote past. Exploration of these contradictions demands a closer look at the content and form of the traditions of the subordination lineages, and it is to their analysis that this section now turns.

Two of the subordinate Qwabe lineages which claimed to be related to the ruling lineage were the Ngadi and the Cineka. However, both groups maintained that they were not originally subordinate lineages. According to the traditions, a hunting competition was established to decide on seniority between the Qwabe, Ngadi and the Cineka. The Ngadi withdrew however. As the hunt proceeded a duiker was

> first stabbed by the Mcineka people. It went on and was killed by us (Qwabes) with knobsticks. We scooped up clots of blood and smeared them on the anus and the tail of the buck. We turned over the buck, laying it on that side on which the wound was. The Mcinekas came up, looked all over to find their wound, but finding none, decided they must have wounded the animal on the anus. They (Mcinekas) accordingly declared that to be their right for claiming the beast, the killing of which decided the seniority of the tribe.[4]

Bryant explains the trick more fully. The ones who had struck first misidentified their wound and so lost the chieftaincy.[5] Bryant, however, declares the story to be the tale of how the Chili[*], not the Cineka, lost the chieftaincy to the Qwabe. In some traditions it was even claimed that it was yet another Qwabe section, the Makhanya, who were ousted in this way.[6]

This story of how the Qwabe became the senior lineage is unusual in that it does not claim seniority in terms of descent, but rather as the result of a trick of dubious legitimacy. The form which the tale takes seems to have the capacity to acknowledge two realities. One would seem to be that the Cineka (or any other lineage concerned) were never genealogically subordinate to the Qwabe; the other a newer reality, was that of Qwabe dominance over the other lineage concerned.

The seniority of the Qwabe ruling lineage was also challenged by a number of other Qwabe lineages who claimed to be the kinsfolk of the Qwabe, such as the Khuzwayo, Makhanya and Ncwana, and who all also claimed origins more ancient than, and separate from, those of the ruling lineage. The Makhanya people claimed to have originated in the north around the Mkhuze, and asserted that 'The Makhanya chiefs jump over royalty ("eqa uselwa")'.[7] The traditions of the Ncwana (alias Yinda) lineage likewise directly challenged Qwabe hegemony. Discussing the status of the Ncwana with Stuart, Mkehlengana, himself an Ncwana informant, quoted the proverb 'You are making yourself out to be a great chief, as great as Dabula ka Ncwana'.[8] Mkehlengana claimed that this saying arose because '... we formerly used to be of importance. My father said Qwabe and Zulu passed by Ncwana and increased in importance',[9] suggesting that the Ncwana were once preeminent, but were superceded by the Zulu. It was further put to Stuart that 'There is reason for thinking Ncwana was once of greater importance than either Qwabe or Zulu.. They may be the parent clan, from which sprang the more notable offshoots.'[10] Stuart's informant, Mkehlengana, was the son of Zulu kaNogandaya, one of Shaka's greatest heroes and it is probable that he was echoing the aspirations of an ambitious father,

but the Ncwana traditions do, nonetheless, reflect a wider pattern of claims asserting precedence over the Qwabe ruling lineage. Mkotana, another Ncwana informant, observed in this vein,

> 'Mayandeya [Malandela the Zulu and Qwabe progenitor] cannot have been a man of any rank for he would not have had that name which merely means 'a follower', i.e. following others greater than himself.[11]

Both Mkehlengana and Mkotana suggest moreover, that the Ncwana were an immigrant lineage who, under Ndhlovu, entered Zululand, and joined the Qwabe with whom they amalgamated as close 'kin', becoming known as the 'isizinda'.[12] The word usually refers to the section of a homestead which remains behind once the other sections have split off with their heirs.[13] But the word also carries with it connotations of 'origin', 'essence'.[14] Similarly, Dinya, a Qwabe informant of another lineage, asserted that the Ncwana came from the north, from amongst the Mthethwa.[15] Indeed, such claims of origins separate from the ruling lineage typically characterize these Incel traditions.

The origins of the Chili lineage were equally ambiguous. On the one hand, it was claimed that the Chili were a lineage as ancient as the Ngadi and Cineka, themselves lineages which claimed a greater antiquity than that of the ruling lineage;[16] indeed, the Chili isithakazelo of 'Lushaba' suggests that the Chili may have been related to the Bhele people with whom they shared the address-name, and whose origins were entirely separate from the Qwabe.[17] On the other hand, the Chili were represented as having a connection with the ruling lineage.

These lineages seem to have been the original components which made up the Qwabe polity as it emerged sometime around the reign of Mahlobo. Hedges has argued that the initial impetus to Qwabe expansion came from the exchange of surplus corn for goats, and cattle.[18] This

explanation, with its focus on the careful husbandry of wealth fits ill with the assimilation and incorporation of outsider lineages which characterized the earliest phase of Qwabe expansion, and is, in fact, based on a misreading of Bryant, Hedges' primary source for this section. Bryant records that the cattle which were earned through the exchange of surplus grain were subsequently removed inland to the Mkhumbane valley, with Zulu, when the latter separated off from his brother Qwabe.[19] The story of the origins of the Ngadi and their eating of the izingadi melons which were usually only consumed in times of great dearth, suggests rather, that the phase of primary aggregation may have been a response to circumstances of diminishing resources, such as in a period of drought.[20] This proposition is born out by the pattern and direction of early Qwabe expansion in abandoning marginal areas in favour of some of the most highly productive areas in all Zululand.[21] It is likely, that in this early phase of Qwabe expansion, an initially small and vulnerable Qwabe ruling lineage sought to expand its nuclear strength. A period of intensive assimilation occurred which saw the incorporation of outsider lineages as kin.

Subsequently, the Qwabe ruling lineage seems to have sought to entrench its hegemonic position through intermarriage within itself, permitting considerable restriction of lobola wealth at the apex of Qwabe society. The prevailing rule of exogamy was circumvented by declaring sections of the ruling lineage to be separate groups. Known as ukudabula, this practice gave rise to the Mbhedu, the Gumbi, the Pahla, the Mgobozi and the Masabayi.[22] Qwabe informants indicated a strong appreciation of the beneficial effects which segmentation brought to an expanding lineage. As Mbovu remarked to Stuart, 'A tribe does not increase in my opinion, where there is only one chief. Growth

is brought by offshoots.'[23]

The expanding Qwabe chiefdom of the later eighteenth century was composed thus of numerous component lineages, some of which were genuine genealogical sub-sections of other lineages, and others which claimed to be related to the Qwabe ruling lineage but whose traditions of origins indicate that these claims were fabricated.[25] The Qwabe chiefdom therefore differed markedly from two of its contemporaries, the Mthethwa state discussed in chapter one, and the Ngwane state to the north studied by Bonner, both of which contained within them a sector of the population which was unrelated and in every way clearly separate from the ruling group.[26] Like both of these states, the Qwabe polity was at this time expanding steadily and was in the process of becoming increasingly militarized.[27] However, in the Qwabe polity the position of the ruling lineage was less firmly entrenched, and indeed encountered and failed to combat convincingly, ongoing opposition from powerful subordinate lineages. The reign of Khondlo, spanning the turn of the century, for example, saw the inauguration of period of internal political crisis as certain Qwabe notables refused to sanction the chief's choice of heir, ultimately resulting in civil war between the amaGolokoqo and Mthandeni factions.[28] Indeed, when Shaka came to power, the Qwabe polity was still in a state of internal political crisis, through the judicious exploitation of which, the Zulu king was able to win significant internal Qwabe support for his takeover bid.[29]

Competition within the Qwabe polity and these struggles for power led, not to the emergence of a strong ruling group and an increasingly subordinate group as happened among the northern states, but to the flight of certain groups, the expulsion of others and the meditated departure of still others.[30] One thesis which explains

the different relations of incorporation mobilized by the Mthethwa and Ngwane states in the north, to that of the Qwabe in the south, and which accounts for the failure of the Qwabe ruling lineage to secure its hegemonic position, is that which distinguishes between the emergence of states directly involved trading relations, and those arising as a defensive response to the trading polities. The Qwabe chiefdom seems to have been largely excluded from the Delagoa Bay trade. In contrast to the Mthethwa and Ngwane ruling lineages who owed their positions of dominance to their control to monopolise trade and its benefits, the Qwabe ruling lineage appears to have gained a more limited form of ascendancy as a result of its capacity to organize the co-operation of a number of lineages in defense against the increasingly militarized and predatory trading states.[31] In such circumstances, the emphasis would have continued to be on the close assimilation of component subject groups and their incorporation as kin, and no imperatives would have existed for the definition of a section thereof as outsiders, or non-kin.

Thus, the traditions of the subordinate Qwabe lineages differ markedly from those of the subordinate Mthethwa and Ngwane lineages by all claiming to be the kin of the ruling lineage. The emphasis on close assimilation accounts for the creation of the claims of kinship even where the groups' origins were manifestly separate. The relative weakness of the Qwabe ruling lineage accounts for the survival of separatist traditions and the challenges which they posed to the position of the ruling house. This situation would have been exacerbated by the post-Shakan fortunes of the Qwabe chiefdom. The claims of the subordinate lineages to a greater seniority would have been revived following the collapse of the Qwabe royal house in the 1830s.

Events of the pre-Shakan and post-Shakan eras thus appear to account for the first two contradictions identified, but, what of the third contradiction, between the evidence contained in the traditions of subordinate lineages and indeed those of the chiefdom as a whole, and the key tradition among Qwabe, that the Qwabe descended from Malandela, likewise said to be the progenitor of the Zulu clan?

The claim that the Qwabe and the Zulu peoples sprang from a common ancestor is widespread in the relevant oral traditions, and has become part of the conventional wisdom on Zulu history. That it has gone unquestioned for so long is probably a consequence of its unhesitating reproduction in Bryant's Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, where authority is lent to it by the immense scholarship of the publication. Nonetheless, and in spite of Bryant's own attempts to synthesise the tradition with later historical accounts, certain ambiguities remain which invite investigation.

Bryant relates that Malandela trekked from the 'up-country', over the Mthonjaneni heights, via the Mfule river, and down to the Mhlathuze river where he erected the first-known establishment, oDwini. The story goes on to describe extensive cultivation of the banks of the Mhlathuze by Nozinja, purportedly one of Malandela's wives, and the mother of his two sons, Qwabe and Zulu. Much ujiba (millet) was produced, and with the surplus corn, first goats, and then a herd of cattle were obtained. The cattle were coveted by the elder son, Qwabe. This led to dissension and ultimately to the flight of Nozinja, her younger son Zulu, and an attendant, Mpungose, to the Zungu people, from whom Nozinja and Mpungose had originally come. Bryant recorded that they finally found refuge amongst the Qungebeni people, and settled in the Mkhumbane valley, later to become the heart of the Zulu kingdom. Qwabe and his followers remained in situ, on the Mhlathuze,

from where they too developed into an independent political unit.[32]

Hedges' account of Qwabe incorporation implicitly accepts Bryant's view. He accepts uncritically the assertion that the Qwabe and the Zulu were related peoples, both being the offspring of a common founding ancestor, Malandela. This presumably is understood to be the basis of a shared identity between the Qwabe people and the Zulu monarch, and suggests that this was, in ideological terms, the way in which the incorporation of the Qwabe into the Zulu kingdom was effected, being the basis for the assertion of a common identity between the Zulu king and his new Qwabe subjects. In terms of kinship, the ancestors of the king were thus also the ancestors of the people.[33]

The Malandela tale of a common Qwabe and Zulu origin is not borne out by the notions of genesis contained in the traditions of the individual subordinate Qwabe lineages. Both Bryant and Hedges sought to blend the two types of genesis stories together in a complementary way, sometimes choosing to ignore their contradictions. Bryant, for example, suggested that one of the subordinate Qwabe lineages, the Ngadi, had accompanied Malandela from the uplands, but delayed on the banks of the Mfule river to eat melons (izingadi), from which occurrence the lineage derived its name.[34] While Bryant's version links the origins of the lineage directly to the tradition of a common origin with the Zulu through Malandela, the testimonies of Qwabe informants keep the two types of genesis story considerably more distinct from each other. The origins of groups such as the Ngadi were usually discussed by informants in an exclusively Qwabe context. Although the lineage claimed to be very ancient, it was never discussed with

reference to the Zulu, or to Malandela.[35] It was generally asserted that all the other Qwabe lineages only came into existence after the death of Malandela and the split between Qwabe and Zulu. If that were so, it would be expected that the subordinate lineages would have traced their origin to Malandela, which they fail to do, and in fact, negative corroboration of this point comes from the failure of other sources of evidence to connect the subordinate Qwabe lineages to the Zulu.

Neither of the Ngadi izithakazelo, Gumede (a common Qwabe address-name) or Ngema (the name of an early Ngadi ancestor of note), were shared by the Zulu.[36] Given the apparent flexibility of izithakazelo, this might have been the result of a later intervention, by either party to suggest genealogical distance, but this seems unlikely given the imperatives which prevailed in the nineteenth century amongst the Qwabe towards stressing the closeness of their connection with the ruling lineage. And indeed, we find elsewhere claims that the Ngadi founding figure was not Malandela,

> ... the amaNgadi are of Madhlakovu ka Byaba. He is their progenitor. He was their ancestor chief. Myaba is the son of Hlakahlayana.[37]

This informant went on to confess, 'I do not know how the Ngadi connect with Malandela'.[38] In the Ngadi instance, the traditions contain two different notions about origins which were not as easily amalgamated as Bryant hoped, and indeed, the phenomenon of contradictory claims of origin has been shown to extend through virtually all the Qwabe traditions.

Likewise, in the traditions of the individual Qwabe lineages, the Qwabe as a whole were unambiguously designated 'abas' enzansi',[39] and the local clan histories emphasise the lowland origins of the Qwabe people

in a way that rests uneasily wit' claims to a common origin with the Zulu, who were unambiguously 'abas'enhla' (uplanders). Hedges' work on Qwabe oral traditions has obfuscated the significance of these designations and their contradictoriness. Of particular significance in this respect is Hedges' interpretation of the traditions as describing the Qwabe as uplanders ('abas'enhla'), and the Cele and Thuli peoples as lowlanders ('abas' enzansi'). This section is referenced to four sources, all of which are the testimonies of one or other of Stuart's informants.[40] None of the references contain either of these word-phrases, although they do discuss Cele and Thuli relations with the Qwabe, Cele genealogical connections with the Mthethwa, and the areas occupied by the Cele and the Thuli. While the latter evidence indicates that the Cele and Thuli inhabited low-lying and coastal regions, it cannot be deduced from that, that these groups were known by the lowlander appelation 'abas'enzansi'. Rather, the traditions indicate that the term 'abas'enzansi' was usually applied to the Qwabe, whom Hedges erroneously designates uplanders. Hedges fails to cite a single instance or testimony where the Qwabe are called 'abas'enhla' as he claims. The confusion about the 'abas'enhla' and 'abas'enzansi' designations in Hedges' account is a consequence of the contradictory character of the evidence on this point, but his approach fails to reflect or to account for the contradictions.

On closer examination there is, in fact, little within the Malandela story which serves to sustain its historicity. The circular route of what was to become the Zulu migratory passage whilst under Malandela, from Babanango down to the Mhlathuze, and then back to the Babanango area, where the Zulu polity was to emerge, seems to be immediately suspect, and suggests that the Qwabe interlude may be little more than a

latter-day interpolation. The whole account is geographically fixed by only one other element, the oDwini establishment, but oDwini was, in fact, the name of a famous latter-day Qwabe royal residence, probably built by the Qwabe chief Khondlo kaMncinci.[41] Had oDwini actually existed in Malandela's time as his chief establishment, it was likely to have been the site of his grave. The ritual significance of such a site would have been enormous, and there would have been a powerful imperative for the preservation of memory of its exact location.[42]

It is a significant omission in the traditions that the grave sites of neither Malandela nor Qwabe are known. It is also surprising that they were never 'rediscovered' by later chiefs since they would have constituted an ideologically powerful resource because of their antiquity. Knowledge of the grave sites of other Zulu and Qwabe chiefs, was, in contrast, carefully preserved, right back over ten generations to the names immediately succeeding those of Malandela, Qwabe and Zulu. It seems unlikely that the lack of information about the latter graves was simply a function of evidence deterioration over time, since information on graves from a period only slightly later shows no similar wear, and indeed, was unlikely to, given the ritual importance of grave sites.[43]

A closer scrutiny of the Malandela tale shows that it shares many of the features of traditions of genesis analysed in other parts of Africa. Traditions of genesis have attracted considerable attention and have spawned their own particular methodology. This is a consequence of the complexity of their form, the characteristic proliferation of archaisms which occur, and the frequent collapse of their chronology into a single timeless moments in the past. Moreover,

it has been recognized that into these accounts of the past are constantly compacted the concerns of the present. Although it has thus been argued that traditions must be read as living cultural documents, historians have persisted in seeing in genesis traditions, the history of the remote past as it really happened.

One exception has been the work of Robert Harms on the Bobangi.[44] Harms suggests that traditions of origination usually take the form of a personalised metaphor (like the 'Malandela' tradition) for a sociological process. Disparate groups either identify with or are excluded from identification with the mythical founding figure, and in this way, traditions of origination are used to define and redefine changing group or ethnic identities. Thus, oral traditions seem to use the past to express symbolically and to legitimate the ideals of the present social order. The problem for the historian using genesis traditions apparently concerned with the remote past is to establish what 'present social order' is referred to. In the Qwabe case, the disintegration of the chiefdom in the 1830s provides an important marker for this question, and allows the historian to distinguish, at least in some measure, between the use to which the remote past was put by the Shakan regime immediately prior to the Qwabe collapse, and the use to which the same area of the past was being put at the time when the genesis traditions were recorded.

The Malandela myth seems to fall within this category of genesis tradition. A key pointer to this lies in the division in the Qwabe chiefly genealogies between the earliest figures listed and the remainder of the names which mirrors a break in the known grave sites of Qwabe chiefs. Likewise, what Vansina has called the 'floating gap',[45] and Miller the 'hour-glass',[46]

demarcates the traditions of genesis quite clearly from the rest of the body of historical data. A number of versions of the Qwabe chiefly genealogy are available for comparison. As the accompanying table demonstrates, Mbovu and Kambi, two Qwabe informants who, in their testimonies affirmed that the Qwabe and Zulu were connected through the figure of Malandela, did not include the names of 'Malandela' and 'Qwabe' in their genealogies. Even when pressed by Stuart to make the connection, Kambi could not 'trace the line up to the man Qwabe and so connect with the Zulus'.[47] Dinya, another Qwabe informant who did connect the name of Qwabe into the chiefly genealogy expressed reservations, 'I am not quite sure of the father of Mahlobo, but fancy that it must be Qwabe.' (my emphasis)[48]

In the version given by Baleka, the problem of the link between the names of Mahlobo and Qwabe is overcome through the introduction of two other names. Bryant does a similar thing in his (b) version, whilst in the (a) version there is an elision at precisely the same point. It would seem as though the two sets of ancestor names, the pre-Mahlobo names, and those which followed, were of a different order. Similar patterns emerge from consideration of royal Zulu genealogies, notably the same problems with the linkage of the name 'Zulu' with the rest of the names in the Zulu chiefly genealogy as occur in the Qwabe lists with the name Qwabe.[49] The variations which occur around the name of Mageba in the Zulu lists parallel the confusion in the Qwabe genealogies before the name Mahlobo, particularly in the interposition of extra names.[50] These problems and variations are surprising in the case of a ruling lineage, where one would expect there to be a strong imperative for consistency. Indeed, the separation between the two different sets of ancestor names is vividly evidenced by the fact

that whenever the Zulu kings were bonga'd (praised) on ceremonial occasions, only the kings as far back as Mageba were addressed.[51]

The remaining series of contradictions characterizing Qwabe traditions of origin appear to owe their existence to the different responses of various sectors of the Qwabe chiefdom to the imposition of Zulu rule, notably that of Qwabe resistance to Zulu rule, and to Zulu attempts to construct an ideological basis for the incorporation of the Qwabe. Chief amongst these are the anomalies surrounding the Malandela tradition, including the conflicting claims concerning the father of Qwabe. It was sometimes said that Qwabe was the son of Malandela, and at other times that he was the son of Nozidiya or of Tshiyampahla. In addition, Qwabe claims of group identity are confusing. It was variously said that 'the Qwabe are the abeNguni', 'The Qwabe as well as the Zulu are spoken of as amaNtungwa', '... the Qwabe and the Zulu,who are really amaNtungwa, speak of themselves nowadays as abeNguni', '... the Qwabe and the Zulu are freely spoken of as abeSutu', '... the Zulus came to be spoken of as Abesutu. This appellation was never used in respect to the Qwabes.'[53]

The division between the remote and the more recent ancestors puzzled early commentators who wished to establish clear continuity between the two periods and associated figures. Bryant observed,

> To which clan Malandela (the father of Qwabe) and hence Qwabe himself belonged is no longer known. But it is difficult to believe that the ancient tribe has entirely disappeared or the ancient tribal name fallen into absolute oblivion. Inasmuch as the word Gumede is still retained as the isiTakazelo or title of address among the whole group of Qwabe clans, it is possible that that was the appellation of the original tribe, which appellation, upon the splitting up of the family into the Qwabe and the Zulu branches, was appropriated by the higher of Qwabe house [sic]

BRYANT(A) 130	MMEMI 131	KAMBI 132	BALEKA 133	MBOVU 134	DINYA 135	BRYANT(B) 136
						MAHLOBO
						NTOMBELA
LUZUMANE						LUFENULWENJA
MALANDELA	MALANDELA		MALANDELA		MALANDELA	MALANDELA
QWABE	QWABE		QWABE		QWABE	QWABE
			NOZIDIYA			SONGEMASE
			TSHIYAMPAHLA			
	MAHLOBO	MAHLOBO	MAHLOBO	MAHLOBO	MAHLOBO	MAHLOMO
SIDINANE	SIDINANE	SIDINANE	SIDINANE	SIDINANE	SISHI	SIDINANE
	KHUZQAYO	KHUZWAYO	KHUZWAYO	KHUZWAYO		
SIMAMANE	SIMAMANE	SIMAMANE	KHANYILE	SIMAMANE		SIMAMANE
LUFUTA	LUFUTA	LUFUTA		LUFUTA		LUFUTA
	MNCINCI	MNCINCI		MNCINCI		MNCINCI
	KONDLO	KONDLO		KONDLO		KONDLO
		PAKATWAYO		GODOLOZI		PAKATWAYO

Where the last name in a genealogy is underlined, the name is not a variation, but the point at which a new line broke off from the chiefly lineage. For example, Godolozi and Phakathwayo were brothers, and the informant Mbovu traced his own descent through Godolozi.

> as its own particular name of address. *Or again*, the Ntombelas, still existing as a distinct clan may have been that from which both the Qwabes and the Zulus took *their rise, since the Zulus* as any rate [sic], do actually claim an intimate connection with those people. And yet, strangely among the Qwabes *we hear nothing of such a connection*, just as conversely among the Zulus we hear little if anything of a claim to any use of the title *Gumede*.[54]

Similarly, Stuart attempted to link the Qwabe lineages directly *and coherently* to Malandela.

> I [J.S.] suggest that Malandela himself was of the amaNgadi and amaCineka tribes, which were in actual existence as tribes *when Qwabe quarreled* with them... hence it is probably that Malandela was himself a member of the amaNgadi or amaCineka, especially *as the name of his own is* always absent or wanting in ordinary conversation.[55]

More recently, c.1940, Essery collated the two genealogies by giving 'Ntombela' (a name usually found only in Zulu king lists) as a Qwabe chief, claiming that both Qwabe and Zulu were sons of Malandela, who he gave, in turn, as the son of 'Lufenuluwenja', another name elsewhere reserved for the Zulu.[56]

If we turn now to look at the tradition of a common Qwabe-Zulu origin in Malandela from the Zulu point of view in the Zulu traditions, we find a similar absence of corroborative data, and a similar pattern of gaps between the tradition of Malandela and later Zulu history as characterise the traditions of the Qwabe people. Clans which claim to be related to the Zulu, or to have originated with the Zulu, do not claim connection with the Qwabe, nor are there elements in their testimonies concerning their genesis which echo anything in the various Qwabe tales. *Yet it should be* noted at the same time that the connection between the Zulu and the Qwabe was *widely acknowledged by Zulu informants*.[57]

In summary, *the story of a common origin for the Zulu* and Qwabe peoples in the person of a common progenitor, *Malandela seems unlikely to represent* literal historical

truth for a number of reasons. The story of Malandela's travels, and the associated historical details lend no strength or conviction to the tale. Later Qwabe history can only be linked to the genesis tales with difficulty, and with major problems where chiefly genealogies were concerned. Lastly, there is no data from the histories of individual lineages to confirm the tale, and there is much which is implicitly contradictory. If the origins of the tale are thus taken not to represent literal historical events, the question is raised as to what the tradition owes its existance. Clearly, its chief purpose was to suggest that the Qwabe and the Zulu were related. *In other versions*, it was further claimed that Malandela had a third son, 'Mchunu', from whom sprang the *Chunu people*, *another* clan claiming genealogical connection with the Zulu.[58] Likewise, it was claimed *by the Khanyile* that they too were descendants of the offspring of Malandela.[59] *There seems to be even less substance* to these claims than the Qwabe assertions, and no corroboration from a *wider set of historical sources.*[60]

It does not seem too great a leap to suggest that these claims, lacking in historical resonances as they *are, emanated* from the time when the Zulu clan first attempted the assimilation of a number of clans and the creation of a single nation under Zulu hegemony. If the proposition that the link between the Qwabe and the Zulu through the person of Malandela was a product of the Shakan era is to be lent substance, it is necessary to account for how and why Qwabe incorporation demanded to be realised in that particular form. To do that, the next section examines closely the form of incorporation experienced by the Qwabe.

Zulu conquest and Qwabe resistance

At the time of Shaka's accession, the Qwabe were, next to the Ndwandwe, the most powerful polity in south-east Africa, and indeed, the traditions depict the Qwabe chief, Phakathwayo, as a particular rival of Shaka.[61] He scorned the numerically inferior Zulu forces, and insulted the person of the Zulu inkosi (king) as

> 'The little Nguni who wears as a penis-cover the fruit-shell used for snuff-boxes. Where did he get an impi from? Is the impi from up-country like the rain? It is nothing but a little string of beads that doesn't even reach the ears' (meaning that his followers were so few). 'The Nguni, who, when mixing food, held it in his left hand and the spoon in his right and had to to hit the dog with his head'.[62]

The conquest of the Qwabe quickly became an issue of necessity rather than choice for the new Zulu king. Shaka's accession to the chieftaincy was followed by a gruelling encounter with the forces of the mighty Ndwandwe, in which the allied Mthethwa army was left reeling, and the Mthethwa sovereign was captured and killed by Zwide. The second Ndwandwe onslaught in c.1818 saw the Zulu embark on a desperate tactical withdrawal south, towards the forest fortresses of the eOlize and Nkandhla in the Qwabe territory, razing the ground as they went and burying grain where they could.[63] The scorched-earth policy effectively weakened the Ndwandwe army, and together with Zulu trickery in the famous 'Kisi' battle (so-called because the Zulu slipped in amongst the Ndwandwe forces under cover of dark, using 'kisi' as the password to distinguish friend from foe, and slaughtered many Ndwandwe as they lay sleeping), allowed the Zulu to survive the encounter. The victory was by no means decisive, but a respite had been won.

Shaka then appealed to Phakathwayo for protection, 'Ngi pakamisele iKwapa, ngi ngene', ('give me shelter in your armpit'),[64] and requested from him supplies of

grain for the hard-pressed Zulu.[65] Phakathwayo refused to help, and according to some sources, countered with a demand that the Zulu tender tribute to him in the form of cattle and beads.[66]

The traditions suggest that the Qwabe hoped to retain the Zulu as a buffer between themselves and the Ndwandwe, while Zulu actions seemed to have been shaped by the need to remove themselves from the Ndwandwe border, to augment their small fighting force, to secure for themselves strategic retreats, such as the Nkandhla forest, and, most immediately, to acquire grain, both for consumption, and as seed for the following planting season. The area occupied by the Qwabe was superb for the production of cereals, and multiple cropping was possible in the lowlands and broad river valleys. The upland Zulu area was in contrast poor agricultural land. The crisis in which the Zulu found themselves in the winter of 1818 led them to gamble everything on a single desperate ploy, cleverly conceived, with which they might yet overcome the Qwabe. Shaka's Qwabe intelligence had the appearance of being reliable, for sustained Qwabe civil conflict led to the flight of a number of senior Qwabe dissidents, like Zulu kaNogandaya and Nqetho kaKhondlo to the Zulu court. Disaffected elements within the Qwabe polity were mobilised and put to work in Zulu interests. Shaka gambled that a surprise attack, followed by the rapid submission of prominent Qwabe sympathetic to the Zulu cause, would earn him sufficient opportunity to root out resisters and to entr[illegible]'s rule.[67]

The Zulu proceeded cautious[illegible] Zulu ikhanda of the emBelebele ibutho, which h[illegible]en razed in the Ndwandwe campaign earlier that year, was reestablished on the Qwabe border, and Qwabe land was gradually encroached upon.[68] Engagement with the Qwabe was

avoided until the Zulu forces had recouped some of their strength after the last Ndwandwe engagement, and Nxumalo aid was enlisted on their behalf.[69] Then a single rapid attack was effected. Some traditions assert that the Zulu stealthily crossed the Mhlathuze by night and caught the Qwabe unawares. Other accounts relate that the Qwabe and the Zulu came together for a dancing competition (ijadu), and that afterwards, under cover of night, the Zulu warriors returned to massacre their hosts, and their sovereign.[70] The Qwabe army was then defeated in a battle at the Mlokohloko ridge, near present-day Eshowe, where, leaderless and stunned, they tendered their allegiance to the Zulu inkosi, and surrendered up their cattle. Those who would not khonza fled south amongst the Cele or north to join Zwide.[71]

Phakathwayo had no male heirs, and Shaka moved swiftly against his brothers, killing off most of the sons of Khondlo.[72] A tussle over the succession developed between Vukubulwayo and Nqetho. Shaka favoured Nqetho who had, in his individual capacity, khonza'd (tendered allegiance to) the Zulu king prior to the Qwabe campaign. With the installation of Nqetho and other Qwabe loyal to the Zulu cause like Mbokazi, a process began which was to characterize Zulu rule throughout the territory, of intervention in local successions to the Zulu advantage.[73]

After victory, Shaka's policy was to incorporate the Qwabe as closely as possible into the Zulu kingdom. The old Qwabe chiefdom was left intact, but the Qwabe were drawn into all the Zulu institutions - the army, the izigodlo, and the great Zulu establishments like Bulawayo.[74] Qwabe men who were drafted into the Zulu amabutho were not required to cut off their headrings if they were married. Although they thus retained the

senior status of headringed men, they were required to undergo complete resocialization and retraining, the Zulu way, to absorb the military ideology of the Zulu amakhanda, and to participate in rituals stressing the ideological preeminence of the Zulu king.[75] It seems that Shaka wished the yoke of conquest to rest lightly on the Qwabe so as to preempt any resistance. Qwabe cattle taken in battle were returned, and no attempt was made to dismantle the chiefship. Refugees who had fled at the time of the conquest were encouraged to return and to settle in the area of their old lands. Moreover, in special cases, Shaka showed himself willing to make concessions to the Qwabe over the marriage restrictions which were imposed on the amabutho, and even presented a certain Qwabe loyal to him.[76]

Shaka constantly bolstered the authority of his appointees amongst the Qwabe. Nqetho, the new chief, was especially favoured. He was accorded great public status and allowed many privileges.

> No-one used to spit in Tshaka's presence ... he said he was Tshaka's equal. He stood with Tshaka at the umjadu dance. Nqetho ka Kondhlo.[77]

But Shaka kept Nqetho close to him. He was obliged to live at the Zulu capital, Dukuza, and to be available at all times for consultations about matters of state. Shaka was not taking the chance that Nqetho might build up a following sufficient to challenge his overlord.[78] Another Qwabe renowned for his loyalty to the Zulu ruler was Mbokazi kaMaye, a descendant of the Qwabe chief Khuzwayo and one of Phakathwayo's izinduna (officers) who had supported Shaka, and who was renowned for having challenged the way in which Phakathwayo snubbed Shaka. Mbokazi was generously rewarded for his support.[79]

Perhaps the most famous of the Zulu king's adherents from the ranks of the Qwabe was the hero, Zulu kaNogandaya,

alias Komfiya. It is possible to construct from a number of sources a potted biography of his life, a fascinating glimpse into the fortunes of an individual in the Shakan era. Moreover, the story of Zulu kaNogandaya illustrates the all-important role of individuals loyal to the king in the control and administration of the vast kingdom. The 'heroic' genre of story into which the tales about Zulu kaNogandaya fall are also interesting because of the way in which they expressed the values of the new Zulu society in an old and familiar form, that of a battle tale.

Komfiya son of Nogandaya, of the chiefly house of the Ncwana section,

> Thunderclap that struck unexpectedly
> Where there was neither thorn trees nor wattle plants,
> The thunderstorm that overwhelms like Ntuna of Yimamane
> Great hero whose wounds are manifest on both sides
> Like the son of Jobe...[80]

was renowned as the greatest of Shaka's amagawe (heroes). His father was head of the Ncwana, and his mother was the daughter of Ndhlebe, of the Ngadi.[81] The young Komfiya was raised on the south side of the Mhlathuze, above the Ngoye, at Mabululwini.[82] One of three sons, he was not his father's heir. The traditions relate that he left the Qwabe country with a number of others after incurring the wrath of the chief, Phakathwayo. It was claimed that whilst in the company of some young men he had illegally consorted with the women of the isigodlo on a mountain top.[83]

The form of the tradition in referring to the isigodlo, suggests that their crime was in fact political, for violation of the women of an isigodlo was a recurrent motif throughout the traditions, and the izigodlo were key features of a chiefship.[84] The implication of this was that it was the chiefship that was violated. This impression is borne out by the statements of Komfiya's

sons, which, although made much later, indicate that the Ngwana challenged the dominance of the Qwabe ruling lineage.[85]

Komfiya and his associates were obliged by the discovery of their subversion to flee from the Qwabe territory. At this time, the star of the adventuring Shaka was just rising, and a career in a reorganized and highly militarised Zulu army offered opportunities for the advancement of ambitious and courageous individuals. Moreover, the emerging tension between the two powers suggested that the recalcitrant Qwabe would find a ready welcome amongst the Zulu.

The traditions pay great attention to the circumstances of their reception from Shaka, and to the details of their submission. Mandhlakazi relates that when they arrived to khonza at Bulawayo, Komfiya asked the izinduna to report their arrival to the king.

> They did so, saying 'Here is Komfiya ka Ngandaya'. Tshaka said 'Komfiya ka Ngandaya?', the izinduna replied 'Yes'. Tshaka ordered them to get him some food, which was done. The next day they sent for him and he went up to the isigodlo where he met Tshaka. Tshaka said 'So it is you Komfiya'. Zulu replied, 'Yes Ngasita, it is I'. 'What is it you want?' Zulu answered, 'Ngasita, I have come to konza'. 'You have come to konza?' Zulu said 'Yes Ngasita'. 'Who are the others?' Zulu named them, Situnga and his brother Magutshwa'.[86]

Shaka accepted them, and drawing Komfiya to him, said 'You will be a close friend, for you are of our people; we originated together with you. We are amaNtungwa together with you'.[87]

Initially, Komfiya and the other Qwabe who had khonza'd were sent to reside with some close allies of the Zulu, the Lembe section of the Ntuli people, under Tshoba.[88] Shaka began to use them for reconnaissance in the Qwabe country. The traditions relate how Shaka tested Komfiya

J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 241, evidence of Mmemi.

63. Accounts of this battle are numerous, see Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 193, 197; Slater, 'Transitions', p. 295; J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 17, evidence of Baleni; J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 103, evidence of Dinya; J.S.A., Vol. 1, pp. 183-86, evidence of Jantshi; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 209, evidence of Mangati; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 269, evidence of Maziyana; J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 270-71, evidence of Mmemi.

64. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 192.

65. Bryant, History, p. 135; J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 182, evidence of Jantshi.

66. Fynn, Diary, p. 16; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 177, evidence of Mandhlakazi.

67. J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 240, 247, 260, evidence of Mmemi.

68. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 197; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 177, evidence of Mandhlakazi; Bryant, History, p. 135.

69. Bryant, Olden Times p. 197.

70. Ibid., pp. 197-99; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 168, evidence of Makuza; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 242, evidence of Mmemi.

71. Bryant, History, pp. 61, 135; J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 194, evidence of Dinya; J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 209, evidence of Kambi; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 178, evidence of Mandhlakazi; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 100, evidence of Meseni; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 242, evidence of Mmemi.

The king said to him,

> ... are you prepared to go among your people, the Qwabe and kill?'. Zulu replied, 'Ndabasita, I am'. Tshaka ordered him to attack and bring back the cattle of Mbamgambi. He went off with Situnga, the two of them. While they were on the way, Zulu said to Situnga, 'I shall stab the people in each house, while you block off the doorway'. Zulu started at the end house. As a person came out he stabbed him, passed on to another house, stabbed another person and passed on. They did this with the whole umuzi. All the people fled from their homes. The two men opened up the cattle enclosure and drove off the cattle. The umuzi where they stabbed the people was a large one. They drove off the cattle and brought them to Tshaka who apportioned some to go to Ntshaseni while keeping the rest himself. It caused great admiration that only two men had captured so many cattle.[89]

Komfiya had demonstrated that he was Shaka's man, and that his loyalties were not divided. In turn, the escapade ensured that Komfiya could never return to the Qwabe fold. It was a measure of his trust in Komfiya that Shaka made him his inceku, a close attendant to the king in the royal household. Komfiya was responsible for smearing the hut floors of the isigodlo with dung. Again, the isigodlo motif is symbolic. Komfiya was being allowed access into the inner cabal of Zulu political life.[90] But Komfiya did not remain cloistered in the isigodlo for long. The Zulu king had more ambitious plans for him.

The occasion of Komfiya's advancement arose on the eve of the Ndwandwe battle of 1818

> ... the troops were vying with one another in displays of audacity in accordance with custom, Tshaka being present. Tshaka then took a stick and went with it into the council place where all the impi had assembled. He said, 'See now, I thrust this stick into the ground. My praises, when I was with the chief Dingiswayo at Yengweni, were "Heavens that thunder in the open, where there is neither mimosa nor thorn tree; willow tree which overhangs the deep pools". Let there come forward a warrior to pull out this stick. My praises will be given to him as the first

> attack in battle.' Komfiya no sooner heard this than he came in through the opening which Tshaka used in going to the isigodlo. He had been smearing the floor in Tshaka's hut, being an inceku. He went and pulled out the stick. Tshaka said, 'I shall now watch and see how my dark friend will conduct himself when it comes to the point to see if he will deserve the praise "The heavens that thunder"'.[91]

In the battle the next day, at Nomveve, Komfiya, fighting with the umnGqumahqa corps, excelled himself. The traditions relate that he slew many of the enemy, and even once he had lost his shield, he continued with the slaughter. He earned Shaka's own praises, and was known henceforward as 'Zulu' ('heavens'). Dinya, one of Stuart's informants who related stories of Zulu kaNogandaya, contended that Zulu must have been encouraged beforehand by Shaka to take the stick.[92]

Undoubtedly it was henceforward Shaka's policy to reinforce Zulu's status. His fame spread, and his personal wealth increased. It became Shaka's habit to offer ten oxen to anyone who would challenge Zulu, but no-one dared, and the cattle would go to Zulu. When Zulu's own acumen or cunning brought him cattle, however illegitimately, Shaka would refuse to intervene, saying 'A stick belongs to the one who cuts it'.[93] Zulu fought bravely in campaigns against the Mbatha, Chunu, Zungu, Ndwandwe and Mfeka, for which he was generously rewarded with cattle and promotion.[94] He was allowed to thunga i.e. to sew on the headring, and to marry, a privilege denied to most of the army. As a mark of especial favour he was given a number of wives by Shaka, and eventually had over eighty spouses scattered across a number of homesteads.[95] His first establishment, Ntshaseni, was built for him by the king. It was situated at Ndondakusuka, in the lowlands near the Thukela, and right in the Qwabe country, and for some while, was the southern outpost of the kingdom. Ntshaseni was placed under the command of one of Zulu's

original companions, himself a warrior of great renown amongst the Qwabe, Situnga kaMkenjiwa, whilst Zulu remained close to the person of the king, first as an inceku and then, when the ikhanda of the Black Mlomendhlini was built near Ntshaseni, he was posted there as the induna-in-charge. When his father died, the rightful heir to the chiefship of the Ncwana lineage, Voti, was ousted, and Zulu was installed in his place. Zulu was Shaka's man in the Qwabe country.[96]

It was claimed in the traditions that

> Zulu ate alone, not with the others, as there were none of his rank to eat with.[97]

and indeed, it seems that Zulu occupied a position of immense power. He had the ear of Shaka, and enjoyed his indulgence. On occasion, he was known to have gainsayed the wishes of the monarch, notably where Qwabe interests were concerned. Such concessions were won with little opposition from Shaka, as it appears that the Zulu king was concerned to bolster Zulu's position as far as possible and to allow him to build up credibility amongst the Qwabe over whom he had authority. At the same time, Zulu lived in constant fear of having overstepped the invisible limits of Shaka's indulgence. Whenever Zulu heard that an over wealthy or a recalcitrant homestead was to be 'eaten up', he would strategically retire from the court, or make a bolt for the bush, and would stay under cover until he was sure that he was not under threat.[98]

Stories about Zulu kaNogandaya seem to have been well-known throughout Zululand-Natal. Amagawe (heroes) tales were exceedingly popular and were recounted with relish along with the recitation of the praises of the heroes. The tales of the Shakan era reflected the new ideas about social organisation which the new regime was concerned to put into effect. The tales about Zulu kaNogandaya stress the potential for upward

mobility in Zulu society, through loyalty to the Zulu monarch. They also indicate the strong military inflection of the society. In particular, the tales emphasised the act of khonza which was the basis of the relationship between king and subject. As the Zulu kingdom entered a phase of great expansion, the old ideological framework of unity largely created through the assertion of kinship relations, either real or fictive, was quickly rendered inadequate, and it was in that gap that the khonza relationship developed a new significance.[99] If we return to the words of Shaka at the moment when Zulu kaNogandaya khonza'd, we find a clue as to the new kind of relationship that was to be defined. Shaka claimed that he and Zulu were 'related' because they were both 'Ntungwa', who 'shared a common origin'.[100]

It has been argued above th[illegible] circumstances in which Shaka found himself in 1818 demanded the close assimilation of the Qwabe, their incorporation into the amabutho and the izigodlo, and their employment in the administration of the kingdom as it expanded thereafter. The Qwabe were to be offered a share in power holding, but it had to be in circumstances which assured that they identified closely with Zulu interests. It was especially important that Qwabe men, serving in the Zulu army, recognized the ideological preeminence of the Zulu inkosi. The invention of a story of common origin through a figure like Malandela was a fairly typical device in such circumstances. Presumably however, relationships of that kind could not be arbitrarily invented and imposed on history as it then existed. It had to fit in with existing conceptions and ideas about the past, particularly given the speed with which Shaka needed to bring about the incorporation of the Qwabe.

Situated as it was, in the very most remote past, the Malandela tale did not conflict with the existing body of history, either of the Zulu or the Qwabe. The Qwabe were originally lowland people, and indeed the structure of the tradition allows that it was in the lowlands that the split between Qwabe and Zulu occurred and the Qwabe lineage per se came into existence. The Zulu were originally uplanders, claiming origin in the Babanango mountains, and indeed, the tale accounts for this, acknowledging that Malandela started out from there, and it goes on to relate that Zulu later returned there. The story, in essence, simply predated other ideas about the past and could be credited without too much difficulty, for it was situated in a realm beyond the reach of historical challenge. But, the story claimed more than a common ancestry and a shared history for the Qwabe and the Zulu, as we shall see.

The story can be further illuminated through a consideration of the Rev. Callaway's excellent set of interviews with informants in Zululand-Natal in the mid-nineteenth century on the subject of what he calls the 'Creator', for which the Zulu word is 'Unkulunkulu'.[101] Callaway discovered that the figure of Unkulunkulu, from whom it was believed that all men sprang, was not considered by his informants to be an omnipotent 'Creator' in the Christian sense, nor was he thought to be one of the amadhlozi, the spirits of the ancestors, who were prayed to for intercession in the present on the behalf of their descendants. He was rather, a progenitor. He was also known as 'Umdabuko', the one from whom the others broke off. 'Unkulunkulu', Callaway observed, was not credited with an isibongo.[102] Turning back to the discussion of Malandela, the perplexity of Bryant and Stuart over the fact that they could establish no isibongo for Malandela will be recalled. Likewise, it was noted that the grave of Malandela was not known.

This, it was remarked, was strange, given the ritual significance and power of the grave sites of ancestors. The absence in the historical record of the grave site suggests that perhaps Malandela was not invoked or worshipped in the same way as other Qwabe or Zulu chiefs. It was also noted that Malandela was not bonga'd after the fashion of other chiefs. Moreover, these same reservations applied to the figures Qwabe and Zulu as well.[103]

These points suggest that the character ascribed to Malandela, Qwabe and Zulu was in fact, not that of ancestors, but much closer to that of 'Unkulunkulu' figures. The tradition about Malandela was used to suggest that Malandela was the one from whom a much wider group of people emanated, even groups who, unlike the Qwabe, might not be able to trace a direct link to Malandela. This group seems to be those with whom the Zulu asserted a new, loose form of kinship in a non-specific way, viz., the amantungwa, the ones who, as Shaka said to Zulu, 'share a common origin'.

The amantungwa as we shall see in the following chapters, comprised numerous clans over and above the Zulu and Qwabe and it is with reference to them that the term and its significance can be fully elucidated. Nevertheless, a number of points related to this issue need to be made here, in order to illuminate the position of the Qwabe.

The data on the status of the Qwabe as amantungwa is particularly confusing. It was claimed in the traditions that the Qwabe were amantungwa, elsewhere that they were 'Nguni', and in some instances that they were both. It was claimed that they originated with the 'abeSutu', and elsewhere that that was not the case.[104] The significance of these ambiguities, and

the relationship of the term amantungwa to that of Nguni are the foci of the next section.

With the notable exception of Wright's recent paper analysing the term Nguni,[105] historians of northern Nguni-speaking societies have avoided confronting the data in its fullest complexity. Their reluctance has been determined by its contradictory character, and the triumphalist perspective of these writers on Zulu expansion, which prevents them from perceiving the context of social conflict which produced the contradictions in the data.

In the Qwabe case, a major omission in the existing studies is the persistence of Qwabe resistance to Zulu overrule. Zulu domination is conventionally represented as having been effective from the moment of military conquest. Bryant once again seems to be the source of these assumptions. He asserted that

> The overthrow of the large Qwabe clan, involving the death of their king, Pakatwayo, was the most significant of Tshaka's triumphs to date. At one stroke, he had removed excepting Zwide, his most formidable rival from the field, had by the incorporation of Pakatwayo's people into the new nation, increased his own fighting power...[106]

and his conclusions were readily and uncritically taken up by subsequent writers. Even the most recent and politically nuanced studies such as that of David Hedges' suggest that 'The effectiveness of Zulu domination resulted in powerful opposition being expressed only through members of the ruling lineage'.[107] Hedges' generalisation does not hold good for the Qwabe where a weight of evidence indicates rebellion, recalcitrance and ongoing repression throughout the reign of Shaka, culminating in the flight of the Qwabe from Zululand, after Shaka's death.

When the initial effect of their surprise attack on the Qwabe subsided, the Zulu faced strong resistance, sometimes sporadic, but never far below the surface. One form which this resistance took was flight to neighbouring powers, such as the Ndwandwe or the Cele.[108] The traditions indicate that an ongoing tension prevailed within the kingdom between the ruling Zulu and the Qwabe. When Nqetho was installed, the remaining sons of Khondlo were all killed, and for all Shaka's efforts to win the Qwabe over, his rule became harsher and harsher. Zulu kaNogandaya, the great Qwabe hero, himself increasingly came to be seen as a tyrant, and was remembered in the traditions for his cruelty and his forbidding manner,

> If called by him, one wondered what one had done wrong that one should be wanted. If sitting in a hut alone, fear would overcome an incomer, even though no words had passed; the very sight of him was enough. And if angry, sitting out in the open, catching flies and flinging them down on the ground one by one, people gazing at a distance woule be filled with misgiving.[109]

Shaka was obliged, with increasing frequency, to resort to informers, and Qwabe turncoats to provide him with information about local rebellion. Things seemed to come to a head in 1824 when Qwabe dissidents attempted to assassinate the Zulu king. Their efforts misfired, and Shaka escaped with only a minor wound.[110] Shaka's policy of appeasement was reversed as he ordered the massacre of all Qwabe then resident at his capital, and the elimination across the country of Qwabe known to be hostile to the Zulu regime. It was claimed that the numbers of Qwabe killed at this time filled a whole donga.[111] Many more Qwabe then left Zululand. Henceforward, all Qwabe who were suspected of subversive activities were dealt with in a brutal way. In a renowned incident at the Kabingwe umuzi, the eyes of three dissidents were gouged out.[112] Baleni, one of Stuart's informants commented, 'Tshaka said the

Qwabe people were to be killed because they caused strife'.[113] A measure of the effectiveness of Qwabe resistance is indicated by the fact that the bulk of the Zulu army was garrisoned in the Qwabe country, and that ultimately, it was claimed that one of the reasons that Shaka shifted his capital from Bulawayo near Eshowe in the Qwabe country, down to Dukuza in the south, was that he feared for his life amongst the Qwabe.[114] In his poem 'Emperor Shaka', Kunene gives the following lines to the king

> I am moving from the capital of Bulawayo.
> The grounds of Bulawayo have begun to smell of death...
> I want my capital moved from this fearsome place.
> Let it be far away from all the fears of yesterday'[115]

However, Qwabe response to incorporation into the Zulu kingdom was not uniform. Informants whose families had gone over to the Zulu side in the 1820s readily subscribed to the amantungwa ethnic identity in their testimonies to James Stuart.[116] In the testimonies of informants of lineages whose loyalties were less clear, or who had a history of active resistance to Shaka, the origins of the Qwabe, and their ethnic character were contested. One form which this took was the assertion that the Qwabe were not amantungwa, but Nguni.[117]

Today the term Nguni is more familiar than the seldom heard amantungwa, and is widely used as a collective term for the peoples of south-east Africa, distinguished in language and culture from the Thonga to the north, and the Sotho peoples of the interior. The generic use of the term in this way went unchallenged for much of this century, until questions about its connotation of 'timeless homogeneity' were first raised by Marks and Atmore in 1970.[118] Their comments elicited little response until recently when, using data from the Stuart papers, Hedges resuscitated the issue of the original meaning and usage of 'Nguni'.[119] This was

subsequently taken up more systematically by John Wright, in his paper 'Politics, ideology and the invention of the 'Nguni', in which he examines the history of the term and the development of its present extended meaning. Wright suggests that its modern meaning is the result of the appropriation and transformation over time of 'a concept that was previously used in a number of different ways for a number of different purposes, within certain of the African societies of south-east Africa'.[120] Wright's historical explanation of the phenomenon is highly nuanced and tightly periodised, and lends a new coherence to the daunting body of evidence on origins, and on generic designations. He skilfully unravels a number of apparent contradictions to distinguish three regionally distinct meanings of the term Nguni in the nineteenth century,

> South of the Thukela, the term designated primarily the Xhosa peoples. North of the Thukela, in the Zulu kingdom, it designated the dominant Zulu clan and closely related clans, to the exclusion of the great majority of the clans that had been incorporated into the kingdom. Among the Sotho and Thonga, the word designated the people of the Zulu kingdom as a whole.[121]

Wright notes that the claims of these lineages as to their 'Ntungwa' and/or 'Nguni' identities were often conflicting, but omits to give consideration to the claims of the Zulu and their supporters to an 'Ntungwa' identity for the Zulu. This, in my view, leads him astray. He seems to suggest that, in an effort to legitimize the lineage's newly achieved political dominance, the Zulu royal house sought to throw off the perjorative appellation 'intungwa' in favour of a claim to more ancient 'Nguni' origins. Wright considers the contradictions in the traditions recorded around the turn of the century to be a relatively recent consequence of the disarray of the Zulu royal house,

following the civil wars of the 1880s, such that a negative view of Zulu origins could be reasserted.[122]

Wright's formulation is probably correct for the opprobrious term 'Lubololwenja' (lit. the penis of the dog), the early Zulu isithakazelo, which, it was alleged, Shaka also caused to die out, but which surfaced again as a designation for the Zulu after the death of Cetshwayo.[123] The history and incidence of the term 'ntungwa' however, differed markedly from that of Lubololwenja. 'Intungwa', and the associated features of upland origins, the descent tradition of having 'rolled down in a grain basket', and the 'Sutu' connection claimed by the amantungwa, enjoyed far greater currency, survived with remarkable resilience, and were asserted not only by the subjects of the Zulu, but by Zulu informants, by informants of other lineages closely associated with the Zulu, and by lineages which were known Zulu loyalists.[124] The designation 'intungwa' was not eschewed by Shaka as readily as Wright supposes, for, as we have already noted, it was a pro-Zulu informant who attested that Zulu kaNogandaya was received by Shaka as a fellow intungwa.[125] Furthermore, Wright's formulation does not account for the occurrence of conflicting 'Nguni'/'Ntungwa' claims with regard to the Qwabe, as opposed to the Zulu[126] His argument suggests how and why the Zulu, who were originally 'Ntungwa' may have claimed to be 'Nguni', but it does not explain why the Qwabe, who were probably 'Nguni' or claimed that, also came to claim that they were 'Ntungwa'.

Finally, given that Nguni was a term with connotations of historical primacy, as Wright himself observes, the late nineteenth century, when the data on Nguni and 'Ntungwa' was recorded, would have been a period when 'claims to Nguni descent would have been proliferating'.[127]

of the same verb, their specific usages suggest an important distinction for two types of clan sub-division which can be usefully employed in their analysis in early northern Nguni-speaking societies.

In the context of clan division, dabula is the form reserved in its application to a particular process of clan segmentation, where the division of the clan was caused to happen through the agency of a facilitator, usually the king or chief,

> Mvundhlana was the great head of one branch of the Zulu tribe. As time went on and they became rather distantly related to the Zulu house, the Zulu chief dabula'd them seeing they had beautiful girls, upon which Mvundhlana's people became the Biyela.[14]

In contrast, clan fission, where the word dabuka is used, refers to the hiving off of sections of a clan of their own accord, often as the result of tensions or conflicts of interests.[15] Dabuka was usually meant to achieve an independent political existence for the sections concerned, while maintaining a residual genealogical connection between them through the continued use of a common isibongo. The process of dabula, on the other hand, typically involved the creation of additional izibongo, permitting intermarriage and suggesting genealogical distance, although without necessarily introducing the political, social, and sometimes geographical distance implicit in the dabuka form of clan fission. Dabuka would seem therefore to be a form of clan division characteristic of a disintegrating political unit, while the slightly different process of dabula appears to be associated with the emergence and entrenchment of a distinct and bounded ruling group in the context of an expanding polity.

The dabula'ing of clans is typically recorded in the traditions in the form of accounts of the marriage of a Zulu king to his clanswoman, and the separation of

This was a period of crisis for lineage leaders in which the 'claiming of Nguni descent would possibly have represented one means of attempting to shore up their crumbling power',[128] and one which would have been a natural response to the colonial emphasis on paramountcy of chiefs, and their historical primacy in their areas. If we look closely at the claims to Nguni and 'Ntungwa' origins which Wright quotes, 'The Zulu are not abaNguni, for they did not originally use this term in respect of themselves', 'the ama-Ntungwa (the Zulus, Qwabes and Cunus) have a keen desire to speak of themselves as abaNguni', '... the Qwabes and Zulus who are really amaNtungwa, speak of themselves nowadays as abeNguni',[129] we see that the emphasis of the informants is on the assertion of Nguni-ness in the present-time of the interview, i.e. around c.1900. It seems therefore, that the term Nguni gained in significance in the post-Shakan era. This would have affected the emphasis placed on the term for the early nineteenth century by informants looking back to that period from the early twentieth century. This suggests that the term Nguni may have been less important in the early period than is initially indicated by the traditions, and conversely, that greater significance may have been accorded to the 'Ntungwa' designation than there first appears to be.

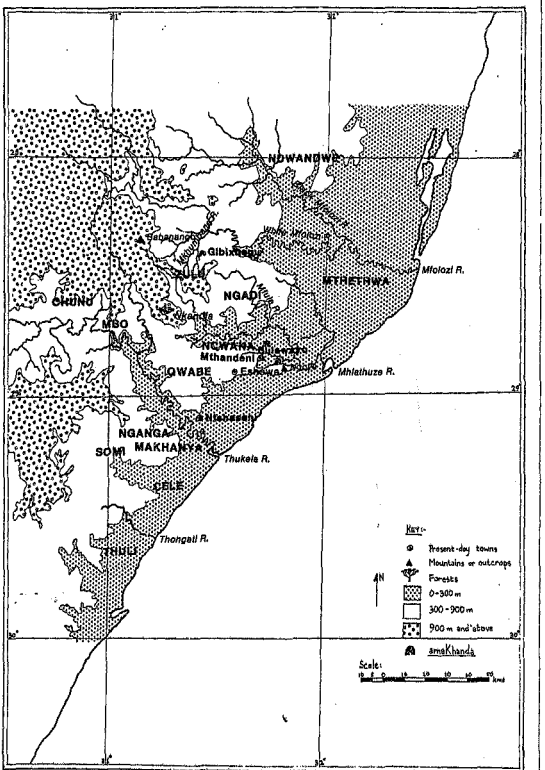
The Qwabe case suggests that what we see happening in respect of the Nguni and 'Ntungwa' identities is an attempt, principally through the device of the Malandela tradition, to marry two identities, to unite the very different abasezansi or lowlanders, with the abasenhla, the uplanders, and using the remote past, to join their histories in the person of Malandela, and through him, Shaka. This was necessitated, I would argue, by the degree of Qwabe resistance to an initial attempt on the part of the Zulu, to incorporate the Qwabe as

brother 'Ntungwa', in a common ethnic identity. While this idea was readily adopted by supporters of the Zulu amongst the Qwabe, in other quarters, it was rejected, through the counter-assertion of the lowland origins of the Qwabe, and their claim to be Nguni. Shaka's response was to adopt the Nguni identity for himself, in addition to the 'Ntungwa' identity to which he already laid claim, and to posit the union of the two identities, uplanders and lowlanders through the Malandela tradition. While the Zulu shared the 'Ntungwa' identity and the associated features, such as the 'Ndabazitha' isithakazelo, with the Buthelezi, Khumalo and others, it was not the only identity to which it ascribed. In claiming the Nguni appellation for itself, the Zulu developed a historical identity which allowed it alone to link together the many and disparate chiefdoms and lineages which comprised the kingdom.

To sum up, the contradictions in the body of Qwabe oral traditions recorded c.1900 were manifold. Some have been identified as being the effects of the post-Shakan and pre-Shakan periods; others, like the contradictions surrounding the Malandela tradition appear to be the product of the period of early Zulu expansion. The Malandela tradition functioned to link the Zulu and the Qwabe in an ideologically powerful way which slotted in with the emergence of the amantungwa ethnic category, but which allowed for both the greater identification between the Zulu and Qwabe, and for the existence of enormous cultural, linguistic and historical difference between them.

The use to which history is put in the service of ideology does not go unmarked. I have suggested that, for a number of reasons, the 'fault-lines' of such manipulation are especially accessible in the body of Qwabe oral traditions. This chapter has attempted to disentangle the intervention in oral traditions at

the level of ideology, designed to facilitate the integration of a subject group into the Zulu kingdom from both earlier and later interventions, and from the actual remote past of such a polity. The method by which this is revealed is that of focusing squarely on the contradiction - the very 'fault-lines' themselves, in the oral traditions and in other kinds of evidence, seeing them not as the inherent weakness of the evidence, but as the very means by which the historian can move beyond and behind expressions of a hegemonic ideology, and in so doing identify ideological change.



The Qwabe Chiefdom, c.1800

1. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 396. Also on the fate of the Qwabe see J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 105, evidence of Dinya; J.S.A., Vol. 1, pp. 209, 210, evidence of Kambi; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 70, evidence of Mageza; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 38, evidence of Mbovu; K.C., Essay Competition, 1950, essay by N.B.J. Sabelo, 'The Line of Succession of the Makhanya Chiefdom and events during their Rule', p. 16 ff.; D.H. Reader, Zulu Tribe in Transition, Manchester, 1966, chapter 1; Essery Papers, Riet Valley, letter from G.V. Essery to 'Harry', 14.05.42.

2. J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 33-4, (see p. 26 for informant's age), evidence of Mbovu.

3. Ibid., p. 38. Also see comments on matters that ought not to be discussed any longer, p. 227, evidence of Mkotana. Two points need to be noted in connection with the evidence of Mbovu. This informant was of the Makhanya lineage, which was one of the few Qwabe lineages to retain its coherence in the post-Shakan period, see Reader, Zulu Tribe, chapter 1. Secondly, Mbovu's remarks were made in the context of a discussion of the effects of colonial rule, shared by all the African peoples of Natal, only aggravated in the Qwabe case by the early fragmentation of the chiefdom. (I am indebted to John Wright for raising this point in an extremely useful discussion).

4. J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 238-39, evidence of Mmemi.

5. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 188.

6. K.C., Essay Competition, essay by N.B.J. Sabelo, p. 11.

7. Ibid., pp. 6, 8. This unusual phrase occurs in a number of Qwabe traditions. It was claimed that Shaka 'jumped over' Phakathwayo, and to have caused his death by so doing. It seems therefore to suggest a kind of mystical power. Also see J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 312, evidence of Lunguza; Van Warmelo, Matiwane, pp. 19, 105, where it was claimed that Shaka acceded to the Zulu chieftaincy by 'jumping over' his father and robbing him of his 'magical' powers. Likewise, van Warmelo notes, if a ferocious animal was jumped over once killed, the jumper acquired the attributes of the animal.

8. J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 214, evidence of Mkehlengana.

9. Ibid., p. 210.

10. Ibid., pp. 212-13.

11. J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 224, evidence of Mkotana.

12. J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 214, evidence of Mkehlengana.

13. Krige, Social System, p. 41.

14. C. Doke, and B. Vilakazi, Zulu-English Dictionary, Johannesburg, 1972. p. 338.

15. J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 101, evidence of Dinya.

16. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 188.

17. Ibid., pp. 681-97.

18. Hedges, 'Trade and Politics', p. 169.

19. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 19.

20. J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 238-39, evidence of Mmemi; also see J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 196, evidence of Mkebeni; J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 224-25, evidence of Mkotana.

21. Hedges, 'Trade and Politics', pp. 169-76.

22. J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 243, 249, 267, evidence of Mmemi; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 224, evidence of Mkotana; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 174, evidence of Mandhlakazi; Bryant, History, p. 133; Bryant, Olden Times, p. 188; Fuze, The Black People, p. 14. Also see J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 239, 240, 248, 251-52, 261, 262, 269, evidence of Mmemi; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 151, evidence of Mkando; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 213, evidence of Mkehlengana; J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 25, 26, 35, 36, evidence of Mbovu; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 55, evidence of Madikane.

23. J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 41, evidence of Mbovu.

24. Ibid., pp. 25, 28, 45; J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 6, evidence of Baleka; J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 175, evidence of Jantshi. See Callaway's discussion of the reed and of ukudabuka, (Religious System, section one.)

25. Lineages such as the Makhanya, Mvuyeni and Bongela were genealogical sub-sections of the main lineages discussed more fully in the text. (Bryant, History, p. 133; Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 187, 188, 685, 688; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 166, evidence of Mkando; J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 248, 250, 251-52, 269).

26. Bonner, Kings, pp. 24-37.

27. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 185; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 29, evidence of Mbovu.

28. J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 243-45,257, 266-67,271, evidence of Mmemi; J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 26, 29, 30, 36, evidence of Mbovu.

29. See below, pp. 175-78.

30. Bryant, History, pp. 55, 77; J.S.A., Vol. 2, pp. 68, 69, evidence of Mageza; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 300, evidence of Maziyana; J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 30, 35, 38, evidence of Mbovu; J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 53, 54, evidence of Mcotoyi; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 261, evidence of Mmemi; Bryant, Olden Times, p. 187.

31. Conceptualization of the differences between the trading states and the defensive states of south-east Africa owes much to ideas advanced by John Wright, and extensive discussions with him.

32. Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 18-21.

33. Hedges, 'Trade and Politics', p. 169.

34. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 17.

35. J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 224-25,evidence of Dinya, in the testimony of Mkotana.

36. Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 681-97.

37. J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 224, evidence of Mkotana. Also see J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 238-39,evidence of Mmemi.

38. J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 210, evidence of Kambi; J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 118, evidence of Dinya; J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 175, evidence of Jantshi; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 212, evidence of Mkehlengana; izibongo of Phakathwayo in Cope, Izibongo, p. 142.

39. J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 175, evidence of Jantshi; J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 42, 45, evidence of Mbovu; also see J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 262-63, evidence of Mmemi.

40. Hedges, 'Trade and Politics', pp. 167-68.

41. It may be of course, that Khondlo revived the name of his ancestor's establishment, but the name 'oDwini' meaning 'a hornet's nest' was of greater pertinence in Khondlo's reign than in Malandela's, given the succession disputes and internal wrangles which characterised the later period. It is equally probable that the very custom of keeping old establishments 'alive' by reusing old names may have had historical weight to the story of Malandela. The repetition of the name 'oDwini' through a number of generations of Qwabe chiefs, including Phakathwayo, served to emphasise the direct link between the Qwabe founder, and Malandela, the primogenitor. (J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 29, 30, 36, evidence of Mbovu; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 244, evidence of Mmemi.)

42. Bryant, Zulu People, pp. 515, 523-25; Krige, Social System, p. 271.

43. Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 21-41, 86; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 110, evidence of Mgidhlana; J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 239, 259, evidence of Mmemi; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 30, evidence of Mbovu; J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 175, evidence of Jantshi.

44. R. Harms, 'Bobangi Oral Traditions: Indicators of Changing Perceptions', in J. Miller (ed.), The African Past Speaks, Folkestone, 1980, pp. 178-98; Miller's introduction The African Past Speaks, 'Listening to the African Past' raises some related issues, see p. 33.

45. Vansina, 'Comment', p. 319.

46. Miller, 'Listening', p. 36.

47. J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 209, evidence of Kambi.

48. J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 95, evidence of Oinya.

49. Webb and Wright, A Zulu King Speaks, p. 3, where Cetshwayo fails to link the royal genealogy to the name Zulu; Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 32-4, quoting Colenso in Izindatyana Zabantu, 1859, p. 87; L. Grout, Zululand, or Life Among the Zulus of Natal and Zululand, London, 1863, p. 71; Callaway, Religious System, p. 49; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 110, evidence of Mgidhlana.

50. Fuze, The Black People, p. 88; L.H. Samuelson, Zululand, its traditions, legends and customs, Mariannhill, 1899, p. 84; J.Y. Gibson, The Story of the Zulus, Pietermaritzburg, 1903, p. 17; Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 32-4, quoting Rev. Wanger, Siteku, Dabulamanzi, Cetshwayo and Dinuzulu.

51. J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 169, evidence of Hoye.

52. J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 255, evidence of Mayinga; J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 4, evidence of Baleka; Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 186, 187; Cope, Izibongo, p. 146, FN. 4.

53. J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 177, evidence of Mandhlakazi;
J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 259, evidence of Mmemi;
J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 281, evidence of Maziyana;
J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 85, evidence of Magidigidi;
J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 208, evidence of Kambi.

54. Bryant, History, p. 132.

55. J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 224, in the testimony of Mkotana. Parentheses in the original.

56. Essery Papers, Riet Valley, 'The Genealogical Tree of Qwabe and Zulu Tribes, Lower Tugela District'.

57. Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 25, 29; J.S.A., Vol. 1, pp. 21, 29; evidence of Baleni.

58. J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 26, evidence of Mbovu;
J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 259, 262, evidence of Mmemi;
J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 84, evidence of Magidigidi.

59. J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 265, evidence of Mmemi.

60. J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 129, evidence of Mini;
J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 26, evidence of Mbovu;
J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 259, evidence of Mmemi.
Neither Bryant nor Fuze mention this relationship, nor is it born out by the Chunu and Khanyile izithakazelo in the list in Olden Times, pp. 681-97.

61. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 201.

62. Fuze, The Black People, pp. 23-4, 54; Cope, Izibongo, p. 88; Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 191, 196;
J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 180, evidence of Jantshi;
J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 168, evidence of Makuza;
J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 177, evidence of Mandhlakazi;

The confidence reposed in the descendants of Sojiyisa and the greater power extended to this section by the Zulu king derived from the fundamental tension in their origins. At once representative of the ruling lineage the descendants of Sojiyisa kaNgwabi were also, in ideological terms, not of the royal line. This meant that it would have been difficult for them to usurp the Zulu ubukosi for themselves. Their interests were thus tied to those of the Zulu rulers, and it was likely that they would have been concerned to support and entrench Shaka's rule.

The Qulusi were similarly not an excised section of the Zulu clan, but rather an agglomeration of refugees under Mnkabayi, a sister of Senzangakhona, who came to occupy a special position in relation to the Zulu ruling lineage. According to Guy, the Qulusi were the most important of the royal sections,[51] 'and represented the power of the Zulu royal house'.[52] Like Mapitha, Mnkabayi wielded enormous political power, and as the oldest surviving descendant of Jama could likewise supervise royal rituals at the remote Qulusini outpost. She was especially renowned for her role in the doctoring of amabutho for war.[53] Her rule was strong. She handled local administration, settled judicial issues, and like Mapitha, was empowered to administer the death sentence at her own discretion.[54] The reasons for her appointment to high office were similar to those governing Mapitha's appointment. As the senior surviving member of the ruling lineage she could carry out royal functions and impose royal rule. As a woman however, she was precluded by her gender from usurping the power and position of a monarch. She was, moreover, beyond the age of child bearing. This meant that in a ritual sense she could operate as a man, being free of the menstruation taboos and hlonipha restrictions placed on women. Having never yet married, this also

72. J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 210, evidence of Kambi.

73. J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 31, evidence of Mbovu; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 249, evidence of Mmemi; and pp. 240, 242, 247, evidence of Mmemi and Meseni.

74. Bryant, History, p. 61; Bryant, Olden Times, p. 391; K.C., Essay Competition, essay by Sabelo, pp. 6-7; J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 100, evidence of Dinya; J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 194, evidence of Jantshi; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 169, evidence of Makuza.

75. J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 270, evidence of Mmemi.

76. Ibid.; J.S.A., Vol. 1, pp. 8, 12, evidence of Baleka; J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 95, evidence of Dinya.

77. J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 31, evidence of Mbovu; also see J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 270, evidence of Mmemi and J.S.A., Vol. 1, pp. 210, 211, evidence of Kambi.

78. J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 116, evidence of Dinya.

79. J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 240, 242, 247, evidence of Mmemi.

80. Kunene, Emperor Shaka, p. 223.

81. Stuart, uBaxoxelo, p. 85; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 212, evidence of Mkehlengana; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 224, evidence of Mkotana. Both Mkehlengana and Mkotana were sons of Zulu.

82. Stuart, uBaxoxele, pp. 85-6.

83. Ibid., pp. 87-8; *also see* J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 225, evidence of Mkotana on whose testimonies the uBaxoxele *discussion of Zulu is based.*

84. C. Hamilton, 'The role of the izigodlo in the early nineteenth century Zulu kingdom', paper presented to the graduate seminar, Department of History, University of the Witwatersrand, 1981.

85. Ncwana aspirations are preserved in the proverb 'You are now making yourself out to be a chief as great as Dabula ka Ncwana on the sands of the sea.' (J.S.A. Vol. 3, p. 213, evidence of Mkehlengana, also see p. 212).

86. J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 175, evidence of Mandhlakazi.

87. J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 214, evidence of Mkehlengana; also see Stuart, uBaxoxele, p. 89, where Shaka seems to address Kofiyana as a relative.

88. Stuart, uBaxoxele, p. 89; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 226, evidence of Mkotana.

89. J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 180, evidence of Mandhlakazi.

90. J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 102, evidence of Dinya; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 222, evidence of Mkotana.

91. J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 103, evidence of Dinya.

92. J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 102; evidence of Dinya; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 180, evidence of Mandhlakazi; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 210, evidence of Mkehlengana; Stuart, uBaxoxele, p. 90.

93. Ibid., chapter 14; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 181, evidence of Mandhlakazi; J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 211, 212, evidence of Mkehlengana; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 229, evidence of Mkotana.

94. J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 210-11, 216, evidence of Mkehlengana.

95. Ibid., pp. 210, 215; J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 30, 43, evidence of Mbovu; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 225, evidence of Maziyana; Stuart, uBaxoxele, p. 90.

96. J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 102, evidence of Dinya; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 179, evidence of Mandhlakazi; J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 212-13, evidence of Mkehlengana; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 222, evidence of Mkotana.

97. Ibid., p. 223.

98. Stuart, uBaxoxele, chapter 14; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 182, evidence of Mandhlakazi.

99. Hammond-Tooke has suggested that ukukhonza occurred in relation to the establishment of chiefdoms and 'a fundamental change in ideology in which descent group autonomy gave way to a relationship between family heads and chief'. (Hammond-Tooke, 'Descent Groups', p. 311). Indeed, it is likely that the inception of the practice of ukukhonza was a corollary of fundamental ideological changes. However, Hammond-Tooke's assertions demand qualification in two areas. Firstly, the available evidence suggests that ukukhonza cannot be described baldly as being a political contract, but that it utilized a vocabulary of kin terms and demanded some assertion of kin connection, albeit over time, and in new and different forms. (See, for example, the stories of the khonza'ing of Zulu kaNogandaya, pp. 177-78, and Sompisi of the Bhele, p. 261). Secondly, Hammond-Tooke sees this change to a relationship between family-heads and chiefs as occurring at the same time as the establishment of chiefdoms.

In northern-Nguni-speaking societies, chiefdoms clearly predated the rise of the larger states. While ukukhonza may have been significant in the pre-state chiefdoms, it probably operated in a slightly different and possibly more significant manner in the larger and more heterogeneous state societies.

100. See note 87 above.

101. Callaway, Religious System, section one.

102. Ibid.

103. J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 169, evidence of Hoye.

104. J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 177, evidence of Mandhlakazi;
J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 259, evidence of Mmemi;
J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 281, evidence of Maziyana;
J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 85, evidence of Magidigidi;
J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 208, evidence of Kambi.

105. Wright, 'Politics'.

106. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 201.

107. Hedges, 'Trade and Politics', p. 200.

108. J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 209, evidence of Kambi;
J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 242, evidence of Mmemi.

109. J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 210, evidence of Mkehlengana.

110. J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 194, evidence of Jantshi;
J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 209, evidence of Kambi.

111. J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 8, evidence of Baleka;
J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 93, evidence of Magidigidi;
J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 169, evidence of Makuza;
J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 42, 43, evidence of Mbovu;
J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 80, evidence of Melapi;
J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 100, evidence of Meseni;
J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 246, evidence of Mmemi.

112. J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 7, evidence of Baleka;
J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 46, evidence of Madhlebe;
J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 43, evidence of Mbovu.

113. J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 16, evidence of Baleni. For other instances of the repression of the Qwabe, see J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 7, evidence of Baleka; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 180, evidence of Mandhlakazi.

114. J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 80, evidence of Melapi.

115. Kunene, Emperor Shaka, pp. 303-4.

116. See, for example, the testimonies of two sons of Zulu kaNogandaya: J.S.A., Vol. 3, testimonies of Mkehlengana and Mkotana, especially p. 215; and the testimony of Mmemi, a nephew of Mbokazi.

117. J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 262-64, evidence of Mmemi;
J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 215, evidence of Mkehlengana;
J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 29, evidence of Baleni;
Fuze, The Black People, p. 1.

118. S. Marks and A. Atmore, 'The problem of the Nguni: an examination of the ethnic and linguistic situation in South Africa before the Mfecane' in D. Dalby (ed.), Language and History in Africa, New York, 1970, pp. 120-32.

119. Hedges, 'Trade and Politics', appendix 1, pp. 253-57.

120. Wright, 'Politics', p. 19.

121. Ibid., p. 5.

122. Ibid., pp. 22-3.

123. Ibid., p. 23.

124. J.S.A., Vol. 3, see the testimonies of Mkehlengana, Mketana, and Mmemi; also see J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 104, evidence of Dinya.

125. See above p. 177.

126. J.S.A., Vol. 2, pp. 115-16, evidence of Mahaya;
J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 231, evidence of Maziyana;
J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 259, 262-64, evidence of Mmemi.

127. Wright, 'Politics', p. 25.

128. Ibid., p. 24.

129. Ibid., p. 23.

130. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 186.

131. J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 250, evidence of Mmemi.

132. J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 208, evidence of Kambi.

133. J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 4, evidence of Baleka.

134. J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 25, evidence of Mbovu.

135. J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 95, evidence of Dinya.

136. Bryant, History, p. 132.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESTRUCTURING WITHIN THE ZULU CLAN: THE CREATION OF THE COLLATERAL CLANS AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF ROYAL POWER AND RESOURCES

The faction centered around Shaka, which found itself in power following the death of Senzangakhona and the subsequent collapse of Mthethwa, faced considerable opposition from within the Zulu kingdom, notably from amongst powerful members of the Zulu royal house. One of the ways in which the position of the Shakan party was secured against this opposition was through the murder and banishment of Shaka's half-brothers. Another way was through the restructuring of the Zulu clan. This took the form of the dabula, or excision, from the royal house of certain of its sections.

The dabula of portions of the original Zulu clan had the effect of placing important members of the royal house at one remove from the kingship through the creation of new clan affiliations. This both reduced the threat to Shaka posed by his powerful royal relatives and had the effect of delineating within the original Zulu a sector which was at once royal and yet not royal. Members of the dabula'd clans derived authority from the circumstances of their royal-linked births, but, as excised members of the Zulu clan no longer even addressed with the Zulu isibongo, would have been hard-pressed to usurp the Zulu kingship for themselves. At this time, further sections of the Zulu clan were similarly delineated, although by different means which allowed them to retain their identity as members of the Zulu clan proper, but which also placed them at a distance from the Zulu kingship. Such forms of restructuring the Zulu clan will also be reviewed in

this chapter. It will be suggested that the distanced sections of the royal clan provided an important source for recruitment to the administrative corps of the new kingdom, as officials from these sections were imbued with a degree of royal authority and yet would have found it difficult to usurp power for themselves. The restructuring of the Zulu clan by such means not only secured the Zulu monarchy from powerful royal opposition, but also facilitated intermarriage within what was originally the Zulu clan, circumventing the prevailing social rule of exogamy through the creation of new clan identities. Intermarriage had the effect of concentrating wealth and status at the apex of Zulu society.

These arguments run counter to much of the prevailing scholarship on the internal social structure of the Zulu kingdom, notably that of Omer-Cooper and Mael,[1] which suggests that the chief power-holders in the new kingdom were largely commoners who had no hereditary claim to office. They argue that appointment to office depended on ability and that commoner office-holders were disqualified by their humble origins from seizing the kingship from its royal incumbent. Mael argues further that the Zulu state was characterised by enormous social mobility, noting that a 'lack of status, clan or social, placed no bar on promotion if a man was successful in war'.[2]

Marriages of kin: dabula and exogamy in the Zulu kingdom

Ethnographers of the northern Nguni-speaking societies, subscribe to the view that marriage in such societies is essentially a matter of groups and therefore of inheritance, and that succession, and indeed marriage practices, are prime indicators of property relationships.[3] They have further argued that the effect of

exogamous marriage practices was the constant redistribution of power and wealth and great social mobility, and northern Nguni-speakers have been firmly categorized as being exogamous. Thus, Krige writes

> There is no cross-cousin marriage among the Zulus, though their system of relationships is very similar to that of the Basotho and other tribes who practice this form of marriage; no marriage with blood relations of any kind is allowed. A person may not marry anyone having the same isibongo as his own (i.e. belonging to the same sib) nor anyone bearing the same isibongo as his mother.[4]

Similarly emphasising the importance of exogamy, Bryant suggested further that, as a result of Christianisation, urbanisation and the dispersal of many clans, the exogamy rule which he and other scholars observed in the twentieth century was probably a diluted version of what prevailed previously.[5]

The categorization of Nguni-speaking societies as exogamous, as well as extensively polygamous, has led anthropologists, following Lévi-Strauss, to develop a notion of Nguni-speaking societies as composed of a complex network of strategic alliances based on marriages between disparate groups.[6] Conventionally, this situation was contrasted with that of Sotho marriage customs and their effect on Sotho social organization. It was claimed that amongst the latter, endogamy had the effect of perpetuating particular alliances over time and of facilitating the emergence of political elites. Writing on the Tswana, Schapera noted that the ruling lineage tended to disperse itself geographically across its territory so as to maintain control over a wide area. The effect of this dispersal was to allow the local member of the ruling lineage to become the focus of a personal following of his own and to create a potential for the development of an alternative locus of political power. This tendency, Schapera suggested, was counteracted by agnatic marriage practices - the renewing of ties

between agnatic groups which showed signs of becoming politically distinct.[7]

The analysis in chapters two and three of intermarriage within the ruling Mthethwa and Qwabe clans suggests that the ethnographers simple dichotomy between the exogamous 'Nguni' and the endogamous Sotho needs to be reassessed. Likewise requiring revision are the associated notions of consequent social mobility and the constant redistribution of power and wealth in Nguni-speaking societies. Conventional notions of clan subdivision also need to be reconsidered. Hitherto, clan subdivision has been understood to be a seccessionist process, symptomatic of the disintegration of chiefdoms, polities or clans, and has been little investigated.[8] However, the tendency which has been noted towards intermarriage within ruling clans by means of the creation of collateral sub-clans in the typically exogamous, expanding polities of south-east Africa demands the development of a new perspective on clan segmentation and on the creation of new clan izibongo - a perspective which examines these phenomena in the context of social and political aggregation rather than disintegration.

In the Nguni-speaking societies of south-east Africa, the process whereby one clan split into two or more clans was commonly referred to as dabuka/dabula. Dabula is the transitive form of the verb dabuka, having the literal meaning of 'to be torn or rent', and is used frequently in a figurative sense to mean 'to spring to life'. By extension, it came to be translated by the early lexicographers like Döhne, Bryant and Colenso as 'originate', particularly where it occurred in the form 'sidabukile eluhlangeni' (We had our origin amongst the reeds').[9] The transitive form, dabula, is the more active form of the verb, and implies the existence of a facilitator of the action - someone to cause a thing

to tear, or to cause it to come into being. This distinction in the usage and in the implications of dabuka/dabula made by northern Nguni-speakers is apparent in the following extract from a conversation, recorded by the Rev. Wanger, between a Zulu mother and her curious child,

> 'No, my child, the uhlanga (reed) from which umVelingqangi (one of the Zulu God-names) made man come into existence of their own, (wadabula) was no more a mielie-uhlanga than a tribe is, from which a new tribe (is separated and thus) comes into an existence of its own (dabuka)'.[10]

Wanger was involved in the great theological debate of the late nineteenth century about the correspondence between the Zulu and Christian notions of deities, and in particular, the origin of mankind. Finding the most appropriate Zulu translation of 'creation' was a major associated concern of his, and underlay the extreme semantic care taken over the reproduction of the text quoted above, and in the emphasis on dabuka and dabula.[11]

The Rev. Callaway was similarly preoccupied, and while his conclusions about dabuka/dabula were at odds with those of Wanger, the extracts with which he was concerned bear out the ideas advanced here. It was said to Callaway that

> Unkulunkulu a s'aziwa. Yena muntu wokukqala; wa dabuka ekukqaleni. ... Si zwa ukuba ku tiwa. Unkulunkulu wa dabula iziwe ohlangeni.[12] (my emphases)

which Callaway translated as

> Unkulunkulu is no longer known. It was he who was the first man; he broke off in the beginning ... We hear it said, that Unkulunkulu br e off the nations from Uthlanga.[13]

Both textual examples indicate a difference in the processes implied in the employment of the terms of dabuka and dabula, the latter requiring the agency of a second party, in this case, 'Unkulunkulu'. While the difference between dabuka and dabula is finally a point of Zulu grammar, the two being but different forms

her family from the Zulu clan through the creation of a new clan - replete with a new clan name - with which intermarriage by the Zulu was then possible. In a number of texts, however, Bryant denies that the exogamy rule in Zulu society could ever be flouted in any way. In a list of marriages expressly prohibited among the Zulu, he noted that marriage was forbidden with any related clans, even where they might possess different izibongo. The example which he quoted was the possibility of marriage between the Qwabe and Zulu. Bryant claimed that such marriages were prohibited because of their common ancestry in Malandela. He further observed that marriage was prohibited between collateral clans, quoting as an illustration, the impossibility of marriage between the Zulu and a clan which had broken off from the Zulu, such as the Biyela. Bryant's bald assertions seem to have misled numerous subsequent scholars and his claims exist in direct contradiction of evidence on royal intermarriage which he himself advances elsewhere.[16]

James Stuart stands alone in his recognition of both the high incidence of the creation of sub-clans through dabula amongst the Zulu, and concomitant preferential intermarriage amongst the dabula'd clans. 'It so happens', he writes, 'that the Zulu tribe is remarkable among other tribes for the frequency with which new clans were formed, (especially during the last century) which amounts to saying that it resorted to endogamy in a manner somewhat more precipitate than was the custom in other tribes or what was the custom prior to Tshaka's day'.[17] The following section examines this phenomenon in greater detail and in particular the emergence of the collateral Zulu clans in the context of Zulu expansionism. Its focus is on the practice of dabula and its implications and effects on the relationship between the monarchy and high aristocracy

in Zulu society. Firstly, the circumstances surrounding the excision of the collateral clans and the dating of this phenomenon largely to the reign of Shaka will be discussed. The status of the collateral clans will then be analysed, as will that of similarly situated groupings such as the 'Mphangisweni', 'Mandlakazi' and 'Qulusi', within the Zulu clan. It will then be posited that a key element of their status lay in their ideological distance from the Zulu kingship, and that this underlay their placement in high office. In the last section, the implications and effects of intermarriage amongst the Zulu and collateral clans, notably in the creation of a closed ruling elite, will be discussed.

The collateral Zulu clans: non-royal relatives

Two clans which were *dabula*'d from the Zulu royal house are frequently confused because of the similarity of their new izibongo, viz., the eGazini and the emGazini. The root of both names is 'igazi' (blood). This choice of names was considered significant by Mangati, one of Stuart's informants. He suggested that the idea of blood, or of drawing blood, was an associated feature of the notion of dabula,

> In the separating off of a section of a chiefdom (dabula'ing) there must be shedding of blood, i.e. violence. As regards a girl, she is deflowered with the penis, which is regarded like an assegai, for it draws blood; the same, as regards the king or chief, when assassinated or wounded by some portion of his own tribe. In each case, there being an effusion of blood, there is dabula'ing or creation of new order, separation from the parent tribe after which intermarriage may lawfully occur.[18]

The link between marriage and stabbing is confirmed elsewhere, in the words used in the making of Zulu marriage arrangements, where the bride's father greets the news of the marriage with the words 'People of such and such a sib, Ye have stabbed me'.[19] Indeed, the emergence of the collateral clans was usually represented

in the traditions in terms of one of these ways of drawing blood, either as following attempted stabbings of the king, or as a result of marriages.

Thus it is claimed in the traditions that both the *eGazini and emGazini*, as well as a third collateral, the Biyela, emerged as the result of a Zulu king marrying a clanswoman.[20] In the case of the establishment of another Zulu collateral, the Ntombela, it is recorded that a beast was slaughtered to solemnise the marriage of the king to his *erstwhile clanswoman*. The association of the dabula'd clans with blood and or blood-letting seems to be well-established. It seems likely therefore that the choice of the names eGazini and emGazini, embodying the notion of blood, was meant to emphasise continuously that these clans were not of independent origin, but that they had been dabula'd.[21] This observation stands in direct contradiction to Bryant's claim that the collateral Zulu clans like any other new clans were 'caused by the descendants of any particularly great man therein calling themselves after him and hanging his name onto that of uZulu in their isibongo'.[22]

The naming of the collateral clans according to precepts different from those usually operative in the creation of new izibongo distinguished dabula'd clans from clans that had dabuka'd, ensuring that the very different status of the dabula'd collateral clans was emphasised every time the name was used. Likewise, the choice of names for the collateral clans which involved the blood metaphor was meant continually to indicate both their separation from and their connection to the Zulu royal house - having a new isibongo and yet one which by its very form stressed its dabula'd status. The blood metaphor also constantly emphasised the exclusion of the collateral clans from the kingship, for it was known that 'a man may not rule with a red

assegai, one which has stabbed a king'.[23] Clans which had dabuka'd, by contrast, adopted new izibongo which did not stress their relationship with their parent clan, usually the name of the person from which the break was traced, and over time, the dabuka'd clans would have allowed connections with their clans of origin to lapse.

Two exceptions to the characteristic tendencies in the naming of the collateral clans were the Ntombela and the Mdhlalose. It was claimed that the origins of their names were either not known or were the names of early ancestors. It was claimed, for example, that 'The Mdhlalose and Zulu meet in Ntombela'.[24] The name 'Ntombela' is closely associated with Zulu royalty, and differs from the names of the other collaterals in that it is a name derived from a supposed Zulu ancestor. 'Ntombela' sometimes occurs in royal genealogies, and appears to be of great antiquity. Mayinga, one of Stuart's informants observed,

> Ntombela may be a son of Malandela...
> Ntombela is spoke of as Zulu ka Ntombela.[25]

whilst an Ntombela informant commented,

> The Ntombela people are an off-shoot of the Zulus...
> We join the Zulu tribe with Zulu ka Mahlobo.
> I do not know the origin of the Ntombela name.
> We originated with the Zulu at Mahlabatini.[26]

Both the Ntombela and the Mdhlalose claimed to be the oldest and the most significant of the collateral Zulu clans.[27] The Ntombela was, moreover, differentiated within itself, having a number of 'sub-sections' like the Bahi, Oosi and Mahaye, indicative of long existence as a collateral clan separate from the Zulu royal house.[28]

While both the Ntombela and the Mdhlalose claimed to have been dabula'd by a Zulu king, the accounts of

which process assume the identical king-marries-clanswoman form of the other clans, the difference in the origins of their izibongo, and the antiquity of the figures from which the izibongo are supposed to derive, suggest that the Ntombela and the Mdhlalose were a different order of collateral clan to the eGazini, emGazini and Biyela. They appear to have been dabula'd earlier and under different circumstances to the others. Their apparently greater antiquity suggests that they might have been thrown up by the normal processes of the expansion of the little Zulu clan in the generations prior to the accession of Shaka.

The question of the periodisation of the formation of the remainder of the collateral Zulu clans is especially complex, and the evidence inherently ambiguous. In an essay on collateral Zulu clan formation, Stuart[29] argued strongly that it was under Shaka that the collateral clans emerged on a vastly increased scale, a view supported by his informant Mangati.[30] Bryant, on the other hand, situated most of the separations in the reign of Shaka's grandfather, Ndaba.[31] On face value, the genealogical record supports Bryant's claim for the collaterals trace their connection to the royal line back in time to the reigns of Shaka's predecessors.

However, at this stage, two reservations have to be sounded. Firstly, other detailed parts of Bryant's own account explicitly contradict this claim.[32] Secondly, for Bryant's proposition to hold, it has to be assumed that Ndaba designated his <u>own</u> sons as separate clans - at a time when each was then the only member of the new clan or at best, was the head of a small family. This notion is inherently implausible and is rendered all the more unlikely when the role of the king's children (the <u>abantwana</u>) at the royal court is considered.[33] The king's heir from amongst the <u>abantwana</u>

was often not selected until late in his reign, and the royalty of all the abantwana was hence very immediate. They fulfilled special duties at the royal court as the most important members of the ruling lineage after their father and his brothers. Furthermore, it would have been diplomatically counter productive for a king to excise some of his sons from the ruling lineage for they would have been accompanied by their mothers, and such actions would have alienated the mothers' clans - the very clans with whom the king had earlier sought alliances through marriage.

The corollary of this argument is, of course, that it would have been equally impossible for Shaka to have designated any of the abantwana at his court as a separate collateral clan. Moreover, Shaka was himself not married - the abantwana at his court were the children of Senzangakhona. Therefore, during his reign, his most powerful relatives who were not abantwana were sections of the royal family who traced their connections to the royal line back to Jama, or Ndaba, his grandfather and great grandfather. A process of deductive reasoning suggests both that a clan which traced its connection to a particular figure in the genealogy of the parent clan would only have separated from the parent clan some generations after the reign of that connecting ancestor, and that Shaka had sound political reasons for initiating this process in his reign. The views of Stuart, and the claims of other sources, that most of the collateral clans were dabula'd during the reign of Shaka consequently appear more worthy of credence than do those of Bryant who assigns the clan excisions to an earlier reign.[34]

Royal relatives

Under Shaka, sections known as the Mphangisweni, the 'Mandlakazi' and the Qulusi became attached to the Zulu

clan, enjoying a status in kingdom similar to that of the dabula'd clans.

Little is known about the Mphangisweni royal section, which apparently came into being under Shaka, and was based in an establishment of that same name at the sources of the Black Mfolozi river, under the rule of members of the royal family. Mphangisweni was built by Mthethwa subjects of Shaka as an ikhanda for the emBelebele ibutho on the very edge of the northern border of the kingdom, abutting on the recalcitrant Khumalo people, and until their defeat in 1826, acted as a watch out post against the Ndwandwe. Subsequently, members of Ndwandwe who remained behind after the defeat of Zwide were incorporated under the Mphangisweni. Little is known of the circumstances of the establishment of the Mphangisweni except that it closely paralleled that of the 'Mandlakazi' and Qulusini about which more data is available.[35]

In the relevant traditions, the genealogical relationship between the 'Mandlakazi' and the Zulu royal house is highly ambiguous, particularly when contrasted with the other collateral clans, whose royal links were unchallenged. It was generally asserted that the founder of the 'Mandlakazi' was Ngwabi, a boy captive reared in the Zulu royal household as a foundling grafted onto the royal family. Foundlings in Zulu society typically assumed the isibongo of their adopted family. Ngwabi grew up and married, but died before his heir was born. It was claimed that the ngena (levirate) rule was adhered to by his adopted family, and that Ngwabi's widow was taken to wife by an adopted royal brother, Mhlaba kaJama, who 'raised up seed' for Ngwabi. In due course a child was born, Sojiyisa. According to Zulu custom, Sojiyisa was considered to be the heir of Ngwabi, rather than of his natural father.[36] Nonetheless, Sojiyisa, and later his

son, Mapitha, were raised as members of the royal family, were accorded the full rank of abantwana, lived in the izigodlo with the other royals, and were addressed as 'mtanenkosi', a title reserved for royalty.[37]

According to the traditions therefore, Sojiyisa was the genealogical son of Ngwabi, a foundling originally from an outsider lineage. This aspect of his origins was subsequently emphasized at the time of the Zulu Civil War in an attempt to discredit his descendant Zibhebhu. At that time, it was suggested that Ngwabi's wife was already pregnant when he died - a claim which sought to deny the consanguinity of the Mandlakazi and the Zulu.[38] Simultaneously, other traditions claimed that Sojiyisa was both the biological son of a member of the Zulu ruling lineage and was raised as a true prince. These aspects of his origins have misled later scholars like Hedges and Guy, who have claimed unambiguously that Sojiyisa was the son of a Zulu king. They recognized the especially high status of the Mandlakazi, but have failed satisfactorily to account for the greater power and prestige allowed to accrue to Mapitha than any other of Shaka's royal relatives. Likewise, they offer no insights into how royal control was maintained over this mighty subject.[39]

These gaps are a result of two omissions: a failure to take cognizance of the essential ambiguities in Sojiyisa's origins and their crucial ideological significance; and the consequently very different status of the 'Mandlakazi' when compared to the collateral clans. Under Shaka, the ambiguities of Sojiyisa's origins meant that his son Mapitha was both royal and yet not royal - a tension located in the non-Zulu origins of the pater Ngwabi, and the consanguineal connection with the Zulu established through Mhlaba kaJama, the genitor, together with the extension of the

Zulu isibongo to the foundling Ngwabi. The ambiguities were the ideological basis of the great autonomy allowed to Mapitha who was royal enough to rule on his king's behalf, but lacked the status easily to usurp the kingship for himself. As such, the descendants of Sojiyisa differed from the collateral clans: the former were added to the Zulu clan, assuming and retaining the Zulu isibongo; the latter were excised from the Zulu clan, relinquishing the name 'Zulu' for new and different izibongo. It was noted by the informant Mangati that 'The Mandlakazi were not originally formed into a separate section (datshulwa'd) by the Zulu king'.[40] He claimed that the name 'Mandlakazi' was only first applied to the descendants of Sojiyisa after the battle of Ndondakusuka in 1856, in which they acquitted themselves valourously. Previously, the name Mandlakazi applied to an establishment of Sojiyisa's and was then used to refer to the territory under the command of Mapitha. The status of the descendants of Sojiyisa underwent a change much later, in the reign of Dinuzulu, when they were in fact dabula'd from the Zulu clan, with Dinuzulu marrying Mahayihayi, a daughter of Zibhebhu kaMapitha.[41]

Thus, under Shaka, while the descendants of Sojiyisa did not constitute a collateral clan, their status was very similar to that of the collateral clans, being at once royal and not royal, although for the opposite reasons. The reasons for the ideological manipulation of the status of Mapitha lay in the great power and responsibilities invested in the 'Mandlakazi' by Shaka. The area occupied by the 'Mandlakazi' was the highly strategic north-eastern reaches of the kingdom, commanding the Delagoa Bay trade. Until 1826, this area was under constant threat of invasion by the Ndwandwe. After the defeat of Zwide, the region under Mapitha was extended, and he was made responsible for

the government of the old Ndwandwe heartland, in which numerous Ndwandwe remained who needed to be integrated into the Zulu kingdom. Returning Thembu refugees were also sent by Shaka to settle in the region. Mapitha's province was, furthermore, the Zulu kingdom's outpost against the Swazi to the west, the dissident followings of Soshangane, Nxaba and Mawewe to the north-east, and the Nyawo, Mgomezulu and Thonga just beyond the Lubombo who recognized *Zulu hegemony.*[42]

The 'Mandlakazi' area was far from the centre of the Zulu kingdom, and became increasingly remote as the Zulu capital and amakhanda shifted steadily southwards, first to near present-day *Eshowe, and subsequently* around present-day Stanger.[43] This meant that central control over the north diminished significantly, to be replaced by the investment of ever greater autonomy in Mapitha. Mapitha erected four major establishments, '*Ekuvukeni*', '*Enkungwini*', 'Ebuxendeni' and 'kwaMandlakazi'. 'Ekuvukeni' appears to have been the establishment situated the furthest to the south, and was, presumably, the main contact point between the Zulu administration and Mapitha's chieftaincy.[44]

The 'Mandlakazi' outpost bore the trappings of the Zulu kingship, bringing to this extremity of the kingdom the immediacy of Zulu overrule. Mapitha's *position* within the Zulu ruling lineage meant that he could supervise rituals involving the invocation of the Zulu ancestors, unlike members of the dabula'd clans. Hedges has noted that this was a rare privilege, and *must be seen as an absolutely essential* ideological focus in hitherto hostile territory.[45] It appears to have been the basis of the great status enjoyed by Mapitha within the Zulu kingdom.

Like the royal amakhanda to the south, Mapitha's chief establishmen' was placed under the command of a powerful female figure, that of his mother, Bondile. Although Lunguza, one of Stuart's informants claimed that Mapitha did not have an isigodlo (a special establishment of women), there is evidence to indicate that there was an establishment of women in the area who had been assembled in the typical isigodlo manner, although it is not clear whether they belonged to the Zulu monarch or to Mapitha.[46] Other indicators of Mapitha's extraordinary status were that he had his own senior officers and had a wide scope to appoint people to office. He wielded significant judicial powers and had the prerogative of imposing the death sentence without prior reference to Shaka. His reputation for ordering frequent executions suggests that his rule of the north was harsh.[47]

But Mapitha was not simply a regional governor. He was himself a member of the amaWombe ibutho, and was renowned as a warrior of excellence, praised as

> Stabber that cannot be denied
> He who rolls back the mountain so that the sun appears
> Fierce piercer of the stomach.[48]

He was an important induna in the military high command, and the traditions accord him great influence in military planning and strategy. His izibongo recall his power and ruthlessness, and credit him with immense shrewdness,

> Jackal that escaped the trap
> When others had been caught the previous day.[49]

Other descendants of Sojiyisa came to occupy high positions under Shaka, including the brothers of Mapitha, Tokotoko and Dumba, and Mapitha's sons, who rapidly became izinduna.[50]

The confidence reposed in the descendants of Sojiyisa and the greater power extended to this section by the Zulu king derived from the fundamental tension in their origins. At once representative of the ruling lineage the descendants of Sojiyisa kaNgwabi were also, in ideological terms, not of the royal line. This meant that it would have been difficult for them to usurp the Zulu ubukosi for themselves. Their interests were thus tied to those of the Zulu rulers, and it was likely that they would have been concerned to support and entrench Shaka's rule.

The Qulusi were similarly not an excised section of the Zulu clan, but rather an agglomeration of refugees under Mnkabayi, a sister of Senzangakhona, who came to occupy a special position in relation to the Zulu ruling lineage. According to Guy, the Qulusi were the most important of the royal sections,[51] 'and represented the power of the Zulu royal house'.[52] Like Mapitha, Mnkabayi wielded enormous political power, and as the oldest surviving descendant of Jama could likewise supervise royal rituals at the remote Qulusini outpost. She was especially renowned for her role in the doctoring of amabutho for war.[53] Her rule was strong. She handled local administration, settled judicial issues, and like Mapitha, was empowered to administer the death sentence at her own discretion.[54] The reasons for her appointment to high office were similar to those governing Mapitha's appointment. As the senior surviving member of the ruling lineage she could carry out royal functions and impose royal rule. As a woman however, she was precluded by her gender from usurping the power and position of a monarch. She was, moreover, beyond the age of child bearing. This meant that in a ritual sense she could operate as a man, being free of the menstruation taboos and hlonipha restrictions placed on women. Having never yet married, this also

meant that there was no risk of her attempting to usurp power for her male heirs.[55]

Sections of the royal family which had not been dabula'd and whose power was not subject to the kinds of ideological restraints which operated in the cases of Mapitha and Mnkabayi, presented a very real threat to Shaka and his control over the Zulu ubukosi. One such section was the branch of the royal family under Mudhli (probably a son of Jama), a politically active figure.[56] Mangati relates how Senzangakhona married the daughter of his kinsman Mudhli,

> Upon doing this, Mudhli's section became the left hand house of the Zulu people, but took no special name.[57]

The designation of the family of Mudhli as the 'left-hand house' of the Zulu royal family is significant because Zulu custom prohibits the left-hand side of a family from providing a heir.[58] Nonetheless, after the death of Senzangakhona, Mudhli sought to oust Shaka, possibly in the hope of replacing him with a candidate of his own.[59] As a result of his scheming, Shaka was forced to kill his uncle, and indeed, others of his immediate family, notably Sigujana, Senzangakhona's heir designate, and to banish others of his brothers. Ultimately, the surviving brothers were to be responsible for Shaka's assassination in 1828.[60]

Excluding his brothers and uncles - his most immediately royal relatives who had to be dealt with more directly and decisively and who for practical reasons could not be dabula'd - the practice of dabula placed whole sections of Shaka's most powerful relatives outside of the royal house. This created an ideological distance between them and the kingship, and limited the threat which they posed to the monarchy. No longer 'Zulu' (the isibongo having the meaning of the heavens), they lacked the absolutely crucial abilities of the Zulu

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