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Ideology, oral traditions and the struggle for power in the early Zulu kingdom

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2015-01-23
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and was not deeply entrenched, particularly in the southern reaches shading into Thuli country.

Like the Thuli, the Cele had previously inhabited an area north of the Thukela, sandwiched between the Nyuswa and the Qwabe. Qwabe expansion in the later eighteenth century squeezed out first the Thuli and later the Cele. In two separate, but consecutive waves, the Thuli and the Cele crossed into Natal. Both groups migrated not as refugees, but as powerful chiefdoms, able to crush the resistance of the groups they found already living in the area.[1]

The Thuli paramountcy which was established first was highly heterogeneous in composition. The invading Thuli contingent was made up of members of the Thuli ruling lineage, a number of related lineages like the Zuba, Khomo and Shaba, and a number of other unrelated lineages such as the Khwela, Mbili and a Cele section.[2] From amongst the original inhabitants who they found in Natal, the traditions record that the Thuli incorporated sections of the Thembu, Jali, Vangane, Kanyawo and Nqondo, and drove out many others.[3]

The Thuli ruling lineage, and its' junior branches settled separately along the coastal plain between the Mngeni and Mlazi rivers. Those subordinate lineages which were not related to the Thuli settled amongst and around the Thuli, some as far afield as the Mzimkhulu. No centralized umkhosi was held by the Thuli ruling lineage. Policy decisions were taken at a local level, and military units were regionally based.[4] *In contrast to the emergence of proto-*state and state societies like the Qwabe, north of the Thukela, the Thuli polity was at best a 'loose confederation of lineages', largely unrelated, of

disparate origins and with different cultural identities.[5]

The decentralization which characterized the Thuli confederacy probably allowed the Cele, on their arrival in Natal, to impose their rule over the northern coastal plain, and the lineages which they found there.

The Cele, under Mkhokheleli, initially settled an area to the north of the major Thuli establishments, and built their capital between the Nonoti and Mdhloti rivers.[6] It is not clear whether the Thuli acknowledged Cele overrule prior to the arrival of the Zulu, although the two groups undoubtedly interacted closely. Intermarriage between the Cele ruling lineage and one of the Thuli lineages led to the Thuli being spoken of as 'abalanda' to the Cele, i.e. being 'of the wife's family'.[7]

Cele rule was formally extended over a number of the lineages settled in Natal, including the Ndhlovu, Nghathi, Ngangeni, Ntshangase, Nxamalala, Nhlôko, Somi and Hlongwa, and, the Mbili and Ndhlelu of the Thuli confederacy.[8] Incorporating in this way groups of widely disparate origins, the Cele paramountcy was, in its turn, as heterogeneous a polity as the Thuli.

Shaka acceded to the Zulu chieftaincy in the closing years of the reign of Mkhokheleli's son, Dibandlela, in what was a period of instability for the Cele paramountcy. It was with trepidation that Dibandlela observed the growth of Zulu power and the devastation wreaked on those who attempted to oppose Shaka. According to Mageza, one of Stuart's Cele informants, Dibandlela was convinced that submission to Zulu

hegemony was the only possible course if the Cele patrimony was to survive intact. He prepared to submit himself. Eschewing ubukhosi - the outward signs of kingship, such as an army or an establishment of girls along the lines of the izigodlo - he indicated his willingness to accept Zulu rule, but died before this was implemented.[9]

The impact of Zulu expansion on the Cele polity is generally represented in Cele oral history in terms of the succession dispute which followed, although the traditions, do suggest some of the wider issues at stake. It seems the dispute between Magaye, supposedly Dibandlela's heir designate who was brought up amongst the Qwabe, and Mande, his rival, revolved around the appropriate Cele response to the Zulu, and more particularly on the desirability of paying an extremely large cattle tribute demanded by the latter.[10]

The faction led by Mande argued that Cele interests and position of privilege south of the Thukela would be best served by opposition to the Zulu. It was felt that the acceptance of Zulu hegemony on the terms proposed by Shaka would drastically erode the material basis of Cele power, and Mande boldly rejected Zulu aspirations south of the Thukela, insulting Shaka as the 'Mntungwana who wears the shell of the itongwane fruit as a penis-cover'.[11]

As opposition mounted to the policy of submission, Dibandlela had been led in desperation 'to fetch back' Magaye from amongst his mother's people, the Qwabe, where he had been reared.[12] Magaye was suddenly billed as the rightful heir, and pushed into the forefront of the political struggle on a ticket of

Shakan appeasement.[13] In the meantime, support for Mande's position coalesced, and it was reported to Shaka that he enjoyed increasing backing from factions sceptical of Magaye and his Qwabe heritage.[14]

The Zulu king, well-informed as ever of distant events by his intelligence network, decided, on the death of Dibandlela, to intervene. Magaye's willingness to treat with the Zulu monarch, combined with the relative weakness of his position, and the dubiety of his claim to be the rightful heir, earned him this support against Mande. The Zulu ibutho, the iziYendane, was sent south, but failed to come to grips with the elusive and wily Mande who beat a strategic retreat into the coastal bush between the Mdhloti and Thongati rivers. This move was accompanied by the wholesale abandonment of his herds to the Zulu army, which saved him from a remorseless hunt and certain death. In the meantime, Magaye himself was obliged to sustain and provision the Zulu forces. The emphasis in the relevant traditions is overwhelmingly on the issue of cattle, either as tribute, or as beef for the consumption of the army - on the abundance of Cele cattle, and Zulu demands on them.[15]

The traditions suggest that henceforward Magaye found favour with Shaka, who addressed him as umnawe, (young brother). This patronage was sufficient to secure Magaye's position as chief of the Cele, and to render Mande impotent. Mande's only other attempt to intervene in Cele politics earned him a swift and conclusive reprisal from Shaka.[16]

Cele obligations, other than participation in Shaka's southern campaigns, and the carrying out of local police work, were confined to supplying provisions to the centre of the state, an obligation which

increased substantially with shift of the capital and associated establishments south of the Thukela, into the very heart of the Cele chiefdom. Cattle were primarily handled by the Cele imizi of Ngwazi, Nikhela, and Swazini, under the rule of members of the royal lineage with strong loyalties to Magaye. It seems that the continued pre-eminence and dominance of the Cele ruling lineage in the Natal area rested on the monopolization and manipulation of cattle given as tribute to the Zulu, in return for which Cele royal policies were bolstered from the centre.[17]

The major change which characterized the era of Shakan hegemony in Celeland was that the Cele ruling lineage no longer controlled the means of realizing surplus directly for their own benefit. Rather, they acted as agents on behalf of the Zulu, and depended on Zulu forces for military support. They 'ate up' the cattle holdings of groups like the Mbili, and organized an ever-tighter control over and rationalization of the cattle-keeping practices of the inhabitants of Natal. This took the form of the employment of the Ndhlelu as the herdsmen of Cele cattle, while the Thuli herded the cattle that had been seized from the inhabitants of Natal and from the Mpondo further south and which were kept in the Natal area, as the king's herds.[18]

Whether or not the Thuli recognized Cele overrule prior to their conquest by the Zulu as was claimed by Magaye is not certain.[19] However, after Shaka attacked the Thuli in c. 1821, it seems certain that Magaye ruled the country south of the Thukela.[20] Shaka destroyed the Thuli ruling lineage, and raised up in its place a junior section, designating a minor as the heir. As regent, he appointed one of his supporters, Mathubane, who belonged to neither the old nor the new Thuli ruling lineages.[21]

The result of these changes was not that the Natal coastal plain was denuded of cattle, but that they were appropriated by the Zulu king, and relocated and concentrated amongst people specially designated as herdsmen.[22] For the rest however, the common people fell into increasing straightened circumstances. It was the consequences of this process which confronted the first Europeans who stepped off the 'Julia' in 1824. Fynn evoked a depressing picture of their destitution and marginalization,

> Many of the inhabitants who escaped from the spear were left to perish by starvation. Their cattle having been taken and their grain destroyed, thousands were left for years to linger on the slender sustenance of roots - some even of a poisonous kind. One species could not be safely eaten until it had been boiled repeatedly for 24 hours; and if the cravings of starvation led to a disregard of caution, they knew the fate that awaited them. Insanity was the invariable consequence.[23]

Cannibalism was another feature of this destitution.[24] Numbers of Thuli were cattleless, and subsisted on a diet of fish, but the Thuli chiefs were in possession of cattle. Isaacs also described the people of Natal as 'timid and apprehensive'.[25]

The picture which emerges of the southern coastal periphery is one of the 'super-exploitation' of the area. The material basis of the lives of the majority of the inhabitants was destroyed with the removal of their cattle and their grain. Many became vagrants, others settled as refugees south of the Mzimkhulu or under the early traders at Port Natal. Some were re-employed in the care of the appropriated cattle - not in their homesteads as before, but under centralized control in the Zulu cattle posts. Zulu rule over the area was not direct, but was mediated through local chiefs supported in office by the Zulu. In this way,

responsibility for the well-being and the social reproduction of the Natal inhabitants was displaced onto non-Zulu local authorities.

It will be argued in the last section of this chapter that this situation was rationalized and underpinned by the manufacture of the perjorative category of amalala. This was an ethnic designation delineated by linguistic, cultural and historical markers. While the basis of such a common identity was undoubtedly present among some the coastal chiefdoms of Natal, it will be argued that it was remodelled in the reign of Shaka, and applied to a wider group of chiefdoms who were not linguistically, culturally or historically homogenous, to serve as the ideological basis of that groups' exploitation by the Zulu state.

In order to sustain this argument it is necessary to examine the chiefdoms of the mid-Thukela valley, who were also known as amalala. Similar relations of exploitation and incorporation by the Zulu state had been experienced by the mid-Thukela chiefdoms. These chiefdoms, the Mbo, Ngcolosi, Ngcobo and their subordinate lineages became part of the Zulu state considerably earlier than the coastal chiefdoms, possibly while Dingiswayo was still alive, but at least by the time that their Chunu and Cube neighbours came under Zulu sway, i.e. before the bulk of the Zulu amakhanda left the Zulu heartland in the Mkhumbane valley.[26]

This period, as has been argued in chapter five, saw the Zulu kingdom and amabutho undergo extensive and rapid expansion. This created an enormous demand for cattle, both for provisioning, but more importantly, for redistribution as largesse, a situation exacerbated by the loss of the greater part of the Zulu herds to the

Ndwandwe in their first encounter, c. 1817.[27]

Cattle could be acquired through raiding, but a more reliable and regular method was the extension of political control over cattle-producing areas close at hand. Moreover, as has already been noted, Zulu expansion rapidly outstripped Zulu resources, notably in terms of their pasture requirements,[28] while the growing numbers of raided cattle needed access to larger grazing areas on a regular basis.

Zulu options in terms of these needs were limited. Expansion to the north was inhibited by the looming threat of an Ndwandwe invasion, while the territory to the north-east was poor cattle country because of the presence of tsetse fly. The western uplands were inferior cattle country, and in the 1820s were in political turmoil, as was inland Natal.[29] Expansion into the excellent pastures of the south-east was delayed by sustained Qwabe resistance to Zulu domination.[30]

From a Zulu perspective, the nearest, the most accessible and the most suitable area capable of supporting a high density of cattle was the Thukela basin. The Thukela valley is deeply incised, but its base is extremely wide in places, and provides extensive winter grazing and all year water resources in close proximity to combinations of upland grazing best utilized in summer.[31] The area also offered an opportunity for the Zulu to gain control over the major Thukela fords. This would have permitted the Zulu to pasture their great herds south of the Thukela, from where they would have been easy to defend against Ndwandwe raids.[32] Lastly, it seemed that the Zulu aristocracy was not prepared to tolerate the existence of independent chiefdoms so close to the Zulu heartland

as the Thukela valley, at a time when Zulu dominance was by no means secure.

The extension of Zulu control over two of the Thukela chiefdoms, the Mbo and Ngcolosi, was easily effected, as both submitted without any resistance.[33] The neighbouring Ngcobo lineages, the Nyuswa, sections of the Qadi, Langeni, Ngongoma, Fuze and Woziyana initially resisted Shaka. However, a sustained Zulu onslaught ultimately forced them to surrender or to flee. Those that remained were gathered together and placed under the rule of Zihlandhlo, the Mbo chief.[34]

As was the case with the Cele and the other chiefdoms on the coast, a cattle tribute was levied by the Zulu, and large numbers of cattle appear to have been appropriated from the Thukela chiefdoms.[35] The responsibility for this was placed on Zihlandhlo. Some of the cattle were sent on to Shaka, but large numbers were kept in the Mbo country. A Zulu ikhanda, inTonteleni, was established in the area, at which large royal herds were based, and which was operated by local Nyuswa men.[36] Cattle posts were also erected in the area, although it cannot be established exactly when in the reign of Shaka they were built.[37] One of these was the 'Mnkangala cattle post', which Isaacs described as having over three thousand bullocks.[38]

This closely paralleled the demands made on the Natal coastal area, but the latter area appears to have experienced Zulu exploitation in a more acute and systematic form than the Thukela chiefdoms. One reason may be that at the time when the coastal chiefdoms were incorporated, the Zulu state was considerably more powerful than it had been when Zihlandhlo had first acknowledged Zulu hegemony.

The coastal plain south of the Thukela was, moreover, a superior tract of land, capable of supporting greater numbers of people and cattle.[39] Lastly, the settlement of the greater part of the Zulu army in the coastal area facilitated its harsher exploitation.

Nonetheless, the political relations established between the Thukela chiefdoms and the Zulu, and the Natal coastal chiefdoms and the Zulu, were very similar, and are represented in the traditions in the form of explicit parallels. The position of the Mbo chief was identical to that of the Cele chief. It was said of Zihlandhlo that 'he was liked by Tshaka and treated like Magaye'.[40] The subjects of neither group of chiefdoms were incorporated directly into the Zulu amabutho, but Shaka did appropriate a unit wholesale from both Zihlandhlo and Magaye. Both chiefs maintained their own police force, with which they carried out local raids, largely on the Zulu behalf, and which they used to administer the area.[41] Representatives of Zulu power were posted in both areas to monitor the Mbo and Cele administrations.[42]

Although the two chiefs, Zihlandhlo and Magaye, maintained personal links with the Zulu monarch, and cooperated closely with their Zulu overlords, *both groups of chiefdoms were incorporated into the* Zulu kingdom on the basis of clear social and political distinctions between themselves and the chiefdoms of the heartland. The form which these distinctions took was the categorization of both the chiefdoms of the Thukela Basin, and those of the Natal coast as the amalala. It is to the manufacture of this identity that this chapter now turns.[43]

Since the publication of Bryant's Olden Times in Zululand and Natal in 1929, the term 'Lala' has been used as a generic designation for a group of lineages who were supposed to share a common language and culture, and who claimed to have originated together in the north-east from where they migrated southwards along the coast into Natal.[44] The foregoing survey of the early history of the Thuli and Cele paramountcies gives lie to these claims of homogeneity. Analysis of the traditions of genesis of the individual lineages concerned does not corroborate Bryant's assertion that they shared a common origin. Nor did they have origins in common with the Thukela chiefdoms, their fellow amalala. Rather, the traditions are marked by a pattern of contradictions between their claims to all being amalala, and evidence of other highly disparate origins from one another.[45]

Such evidence as there is on the origins of the term amalala as an ethnic designation indicates that it was an invention of the Shakan period. Bryant himself records that the name was not one known to the inhabitants of Natal, but rather was one 'contemptuously applied to them by Shaka's people'.[46] He also notes that the peoples of the coastal regions of Natal and Zululand, the very ones whom he designates as 'Lala', 'were ignorant of any common family name peculiar to themselves'.[47] Two of Stuart's informants made similar statements. Madikane kaMlomowethole noted, 'these names Lala and Nyakeni [to be explained later] may have been and probably were in existence long before Tshaka's day, but it was in his day that they came to be widely known i.e. when all these people were incorporated into the Zulu empire'.[48] Mqayikana kaYenge likewise recalled: 'The name amaLala came from the Zulu, for they conquered the land. They then called us amaLala, just as you Europeans call us

amakafula, for people that defeat others insult them'.[49]

Indeed, there is no evidence to suggest that the word 'Lala' had currency as a generic designation before the emergence of the Zulu state. Rather, it seems to have existed as a term of contempt for individuals of real or ascribed lowly status. In Natal and Zululand, the word was used in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and presumably before, as a designation for a metal-worker and a rain-maker.[50] As specialists, metal-workers and rain-makers had the capacity to accumulate great wealth in cattle and to acquire prestige that could rival that of political rulers.[51] They were therefore subject to close social control. One aspect of this, as Hedges argues, was the paradox that their occupations were designated in pejorative terms in order to demean their social value.[52] An explicit example of this practice comes from the regions to the north of the Zulu kingdom, where the term umthonga, meaning a destitute person or outsider, was applied to iron-workers.[53] The term ilala may well have carried similar connotations and have been applied in a similar fashion in the Thukela-Phongolo region well before the nineteenth century. More explicit evidence that the word ilala had a pejorative meaning in the nineteenth century comes from outside the Zulu area. Among the Tswana, according to Stow, the word 'lala' meant 'the Poor Ones or the Sons of Slaves'.[54] More specifically, according to Moffat, the word referred to members of small, impermanent communities without cattle, and whose members were dependent for subsistence on gathering and on occasional employment in menial capacities.[55] In the early twentieth century Molema gave 'lala' as a Tswana term for 'vassal', 'serf', or 'minion'.[56]

Writing in the 1850s the early philologist, Bleek, who carried out the bulk of his Zululand research amongst the Mbo, claimed that ilala was a local word for famine or destitution.[57] Before the rise of the Zulu kingdom, it can be postulated, the word ilala as used in the Thukela-Phongolo region meant something like 'menial'. With the emergence of the Zulu kingdom, the word seems to have been taken up by the newly formed Zulu aristocracy and applied as a term of abuse to a particular category of the people tributary to the Zulu king, that is, to the partially incorporated peoples of the kingdom's southern periphery.

It seems likely that Shaka's manipulation of the amalala category involved two steps. The first was the invigoration of the existing term 'lala', imbuing it with added meaning, and its application to a group of people who did not previously call themselves amalala, but whom the Zulu king was concerned to subordinate and to denigrate. A section of this *group was probably already distinguished from other* groups in Zululand-Natal by differences of language, culture and history, and these markers were picked up and associated with the designation amalala.

The second step in the evolution of the amalala identity involved the extension of these markers to a wider group, whose numbers included people who did not speak that dialect or claim such origins, but whom the Zulu rulers were concerned to subordinate in the same way as those who did. The generic category amalala was thus made up of groups who were markedly different from the Zulu, and others who were not, but who were required to adopt the characteristics of being different. This is evidenced by the lack of

homogeneity in the amalala claims of origin discussed above. Even more persuasive is the evidence that certain sections of groups like the Buthelezi, which only split from each other in the reign of Shaka, were assigned different identities, with only those sections which moved into Natal being designated amalala.[58] Further evidence is provided by claims that certain of the groups, such as the Cele, who were designated amalala, did not originally speak the amalala dialect of tekela, but were required to adopt it.[59]

Conversely, there were groups and individuals who occupied high office and other positions within the Zulu heartland who shared the origins and dialect of the amalala chiefdoms, but whom, the Zulu, for historically specific reasons, were anxious not to stigmatize but to support. They were designated 'non-lala', and encouraged to relinquish their amalala attributes. This too is evidenced by contradictory data on origins.[60] It is further confirmed by evidence that there were tekela speakers at the Zulu capital who were forced to adopt the official Zulu dialect.[61]

Within both amalala speech i.e. tekela, and amantungwa speech i.e. that spoken at the Zulu court, there was considerable variety.[62] The division between the two forms of speech was by no means clear cut, and indeed in the 1850s it was recorded that the process of language realignment was known as the 'nkukulumanje' which Bleek translated as 'the slaughter of the languages',[63] which suggests a high level of awareness of the manipulation of language markers which occurred in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Further confirmation of the creation of derogatory identities for highly exploited tributaries of the Zulu state, which involved the reworking and manipulation of existing differences, is provided by the Ronga chiefdoms on the north-eastern periphery of the Zulu kingdom.

The Ronga chiefdoms appear to have experienced Zulu incorporation later, rather than earlier, in the reign of Shaka. Like the amalala, they entered into harsh tributary relations with the Zulu kingdom, although they gave tribute in the form of metals, beads, plumes and skins, rather than cattle, and their country was not directly settled on by the Zulu. However, they too were clearly distinguished from the chiefdoms of the heartland. They were designated the amanhlengwa by the Zulu.[64] Although the language spoken by the Ronga was slightly different to that of the amalala, both variants were described as tekela, while both groups were further denigrated as 'fish-eaters', something which the amantungwa expressly denied doing.[65] The Ronga case, in conjunction with that of the amalala chiefdoms, suggests that the identities of the peripheral chiefdoms were shaped both by existing markers amongst some of the peripheral chiefdoms, but also by the amantungwa identity that was emerging and assuming a particular form within the Zulu heartland. The identities of the peripheral chiefdoms were defined in linguistic, cultural and historical terms as being that which intungwa was not.

This form of definition in opposition to intungwa was particularly the case with the amalala. It was remarked by a ilala informant to Stuart that Shaka used to say that 'we were Lala ... We could not speak in the Ntungwa fashion'.[66] Similarly, it was claimed

by another informant, 'We are not Amantungwa who came down in a grain basket. We are Amalala.'[67], while *yet another remarked, 'The Ngcobos are not amaNtungwa; they are amaLala'.*[68] The reason for constant contrast between intungwa and ilala is probably a result of the movement of the predominantly amantungwa amabutho into the heart of amalala country.[69] It is likely that this was a period of direct confrontation of the privileged orders and the unprivileged in Zulu society, and that it was at this time that the two identities crystallized fully and in clear opposition to each other.

However, the ilala identity was not used simply to distinguish the chiefdoms of the southern periphery from the people of the heartland chiefdoms. It also had highly derogatory connotations. The amalala were 'those who sleep (ukulala) with their fingers up their anuses'[70] or those who 'farted on the mimosa tree and it dried up'.[71] It can be argued that this kind of categorization operated to inhibit mobilization for resistance to the Zulu among those to whom it was applied by inducing feelings of shame and inadequacy.

> He (Tshaka) used to insult us and frighten us by saying that we did not have the cunning to invent things out of nothing ... He said that we were Lala because our tongues lay flat (lala) in our mouths, and we could not speak in the Ntungwa fashion.[72]

One effect of this may well have been to induce the timidity and servility among the inhabitants of Natal commented on by white traders as early as 1824.

These epithets indicate a process at work in which *ethnic slurs as symbols of stereotyping and prejudice* were used ideologically to justify discrimination and exploitation. As Lewis Allen has noted in his work on the language of ethnic conflict,

> Name-calling is a technique by which outgroups are defined as legitimate targets of aggression and is an effort to control outgroups by *neutralising their efforts to gain resources* and influence values ... name-calling justifies inequality and discrimination by sanctioning invidious cultural comparisons. That is, nicknames are a device that helps produce and maintain social class and privilege.[73]

The category amalala should not be seen as developing solely in consequence of its *imposition from above:* an important factor in shaping the way in which it came to be used was the response of the amalala people themselves, or at least of their rulers, to being so categorized. To some extent the Cele ruling lineage was able to avoid the full social and political *implications of being* designated as amalala by imposing yet another derogatory categorization, that of inyakeni, on the lineages subordinate to it. The word may derive from inyaka, which Colenso gives as 'Commoner (term of contempt)', and Bryant as 'A thoroughly indolent person.'[74] The inyakeni were described as 'those who knew nothing', who had '... dirty habits and did not distinguish between what was good and what was bad. A person of the inyakeni did not pay respect to chiefs, nor did he wash or keep himself neat'.[75]

The effects of this categorization would have been to stratify the lineages of the coastlands still further, and make them yet more vulnerable to exploitation by the Cele in the first instance, and ultimately by the Zulu power. This extra division would, presumably, have also served to inhibit ilala being transformed into a symbol of local unity around which a resistence to Zulu rule could have cohered. *From* the point of view of the Cele, the extension of ideological controls over their subordinate lineages was becoming increasingly necessary as their Zulu

overlords stepped up their demands for cattle. If Zulu demands were to be met, and Cele pre-eminence in the coastal regions maintained, exploitation of their subordinate lineages had to be increased. This in turn, entailed making the mechanisms of Cele domination at once more effective and more sophisticated. Crude coercion alone was not enough: something more stable than a debilitating raiding economy had to be established if extraction of cattle from their subordinates over the long term was the aim. The Cele ruling lineage thus had good reasons of its own for resorting to ethnic discrimination within the polity which it controlled.

The inyakeni and ilala categories demonstrate the highly 'situational' nature of ethnic categories.[76] They are, by definition, fluid, because of the looseness of the criteria by which they are defined. These are usually, but not necessarily, common cultural features within a broad spectrum, a common language, and a sense of 'group history', often little more than a vague concept of common origin.[77] In consequence, ethnic groups often see changing membership and participation.[78] Their definitional ambiguity reflects fundamental struggles over content, and as such, it is clear that ethnic identities cannot be understood as simply being imposed on society by its rulers, but rather, as coming into existence through a process of struggle.[79]

It is precisely these characteristics which, Saul has argued, make ethnicity an appropriate response for a society in transition.

> Given the flexibility and fuzziness at the edges of ethnic divisions, and the fact that their activation is far from inevitable, it should not be surprizing that political processes are crucial to such activation as may occur.[80]

It is also appropriate, as Jewsiewicki pointed out, to see ethnic identities as becoming especially significant in periods of scarcity, and/or under circumstances of competition for resources.[81]

Thus, it was not surprising that in the Zulu kingdom, it was ethnicity that developed as the cognitive basis of the emerging system of social stratification. In this chapter, the focus has been of the process of what Saul calls 'political creativity', the manufacture of an ethnic category, in a precolonial context, but with the particular emphasis on the way in which such identities could be constructed to underpin relations of subordination. What emerges is a picture of a correspondence between the ethnic identity of _ilala_ and a lack of status, opposed to the correspondence between the _intungwa_ identity and privilege, which emerged in the process of the subordination of the former to the latter.

1. Hedges, 'Trade and Politics', pp. 167-70; Bryant, Olden Times, p. 188; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 248, evidence of Mmemi; J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 54, 58, 64, evidence of Mcotoyi; J.S.A., Vol. 2, pp. 114, 116, evidence of Mahaya; J.S.A., Vol. 2, pp. 68, 70, 72, 73, evidence of Mageza. For a discussion of the Thuli and Cele conquests of Natal, and a detailed review of this evidence see C.A. Hamilton, 'The amalala of Natal, 1750-1826', unpublished seminar paper, University of the Witwatersrand, 1982, pp. 7, 9, 11, 16.

2. J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 98, evidence of Oinya; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 269, evidence of Mmemi; J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 54, 58, 64, 65, evidence of Mcotoyi; J.S.A., Vol. 2, pp. 265, 274, 275, 281, 300, evidence of Maziyana; J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 30, 33, 38, 41, evidence of Mbovu; J.S.A., Vol. 2, pp. 114, 116, evidence of Mahaya; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 69, evidence of Mageza; Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 188, 561, 685, 688; Bryant, History, p. 85. For a detailed discussion of this evidence see Hamilton, The 'amalala', pp. 8-10. On the Shaba, see J. Wright, 'Political transformations in the coastlands south of the Thukela c. 1750 - c. 1820', unpublished paper, Pietermaritzburg, 1984, p. 5.

3. J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 54, 64, evidence of Mcotoyi; J.S.A., Vol. 2, pp. 274-78, 282, 284, 287, evidence of Maziyana. On the Vangane, see Wright, 'Political transformations', p. 7.

4. J.S.A., Vol. 2, pp. 275, 282, 288, 292, 299, 302; evidence of Maziyana; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 26, evidence of Mbovu; J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 54, 56, 65, evidence of Mcotoyi; Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 501, 502; Shooter, The Kaffirs of Natal, pp. 261-62.

5. Wright, 'Political transformations', p. 12; see for example Mcotoyi's discussion of Thuli speech differing from that of the inhabitants of Natal who were incorporated by the Thuli (J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 57); see also descriptions of differences in the practices of body markings between the Thuli and their subjects (J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 65, evidence of Mcotoyi; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 276 evidence of Maziyana).

6. J.S.A., Vol. 2, pp. 68, 70, 72, evidence of Mageza; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 235, evidence of Maquza; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 74, evidence of Malapi; Bryant, Olden Times, p. 538.

7. J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 30, 33, evidence of Mbovu; Bryant, Dictionary, p. 348. Also see J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 86, where the informant Malapi indicates that the Thuli had recourse to Cele ritual authority.

8. J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 69, evidence of Mageza; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 33, evidence of Mbovu. For a detailed discussion of the origins of the lineages, see Hamilton, 'The amaLala', pp. 7, 16, and p. 468 above.

9. J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 72, evidence of Mageza;
J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 33, evidence of Mbovu;
Bryant, Olden Times, p. 538.

10. J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 72, evidence of Mageza;
Bryant, History, p. 85; Fynn, Diary,
p. 70.

11. J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 72, evidence of Mageza;
J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 78, evidence of Melapi;
Bryant, Olden Times, p. 539.

12. J.S.A., Vol. 1, pp. 115-16 evidence of Dinya;
J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 71, evidence of Mageza;
J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 74, evidence of Melapi;
also see p. 77, evidence of Maziyana and Dinya,
in Melapi's testimony.

13. J.S.A., Vol. 1, pp. 155-56 evidence of Dinya;
J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 77, evidence of Mageza;
J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 77, evidence of Melapi.

14. J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 116, evidence of Dinya;
J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 77, evidence of Melapi.

15. Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 539-40;
J.S.A., Vol. 2, pp. 296, 302, evidence of Maziyana;
J.S.A. Vol. 3, pp. 78, 83, 92, evidence of Melapi;
J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 72, evidence of Mageza.

16. Mande first sought refuge amongst the Ndwandwe,
but later returned, and appeared to make his peace
with Magaye. Shaka was sceptical of his intentions,
and within a few months, had sent out a force to
kill Mande, and to raze his new homestead.
J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 72, evidence of Mageza;
J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 77, evidence of Melapi;
Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 539-40.

17. Ibid., J.S.A., Vol. 1, pp. 115-16 evidence of Dinya; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 77, evidence of Melapi.

18. On Magaye caring for royal cattle, see J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 106, evidence of Dinya. Also see p. 472 below, for Cele control of Thuli herdsmen of Zulu cattle. On Magaye's removal of cattle from subordinate chiefdoms, see J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 92, evidence of Melapi. Also see p. 83 of Melapi's testimony, and J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 237, evidence of Maquza; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 293, evidence of Maziyana; J.S.A. Vol. 3, pp. 65, 66, evidence of Mcotoyi. (The transfer of cattle between the Cele and the Zulu is symbolised in the traditions by Magaye's submission to Shaka through the presentation of a beast, see J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 72, evidence of Mageza; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 78, evidence of Melapi.)

19. J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 69, evidence of Mageza.

20. J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 73, 86, evidence of Melapi.

21. J.S.A., Vol. 2, pp. 265, 284, 292, 298, evidence of Maziyana; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 25, evidence of Mbovu; J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 53, 65, evidence of Mcotoyi; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 85, evidence of Melapi. *Regarding this date, see Stuart's note,* J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 301; Shooter, The Kaffirs of Natal, p. 260 and Bryant, Olden Times, p. 503.

22. Bryant, Olden Times, p. 505; Isaacs, Travels, p. 32.

23. Fynn, Diary, p.21.

24. J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 26-7, evidence of Mbovu; Fynn, Diary, p. 22.

25. Isaacs, Travels, pp. 25-6.

26. See above, p.350; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 81, evidence of Melapi; Bryant, Olden Times, p. 124. Also see Madikane's periodisation, J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 60.

27. See above, p.247.

28. See above, pp. 354-55.

29. Hamilton and Wright, 'The Making of the Lala', pp. 11-12.

30. See above, pp. 172-86.

31. This description draws broadly on the conclusions presented in 'The Agricultural Region of Natal', unpublished paper, produced by the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, Natal, n.d., and J. Philips, 'The Agriculture and related development of the Tugela Basin and its influent surroundings', Natal Town and Regional Planning Report, Vol. 19, 1973.

32. See, for example, Mmemi's account of the strategic retreat into this area of the Zulu, during a campaign against the Ndwandwe (J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 271).

33. Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 405-12; 507-8, 513; J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 115, evidence of Dinya.

34. Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 478, 481-82,489, 490-91; *Fuze, The Black People, p. 67;* J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 183, evidence of Jantshi; J.S.A., Vol. 2, pp. 60-1, evidence of Madikane; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 33, evidence of Mbovu; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 81, evidence of Melapi; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 245, evidence of Mmemi.

35. Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 412, 487, 491, 507, 511; J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 115, evidence of Dinya.

36. See above, p.344; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 252, evidence of Mayinga; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 81, evidence of Melapi.

37. J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 237, evidence of Maquza; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 245, evidence of Mmemi; Isaacs, Travels p. 89, where it is noted that Shiyabantu was near Zihlandhlo. Shiyabantu was the name of a cattle post, but its situation is a matter of debate. It is possible that, like Khangela, there were two cattleposts of this name, one under Zihlandhlo and the other under Magaye. (See above, p.360).

38. Ibid., p. 182. J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 249, evidence of Mayinga. Also see K.C., Essay Competition, 1942, 'Some Historical Records of Places' by S. Mbhele, p. 2, and 'Tribal History' by Mrs. Andrina.

39. Hamilton and Wright, 'The Making of the Iala', p. 17.

40. J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 118, evidence of Dinya. Like Magaye, Zihlandhlo was credited with being addressed as *umnawe (younger brother)* by Shaka, and as similarly enjoying his special favour.

(J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 279, 280, evidence of Maziyana; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 6, 7; evidence of Mbovu; Hamilton and Wright, 'The Making of the amalala, p. 17). Both chiefs had the authority to kill off subjects without consulting Shaka. (Fuze, The Black People, pp. 20, 58; J.S.A. Vol. 1, p. 117, evidence of Dinya; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 237, evidence of Maquza; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 280, evidence of Maziyana; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 73, evidence of Melapi).

41. See above, p. 472; J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 96, evidence of Dinya; J.S.A., Vol. 2, pp. 51, 52, 53, evidence of Madikane; J.S.A., Vol. 2, pp. 236, 237, evidence of Maquza; J.S.A., Vol. 2, pp. 266, 268, 296, 297, evidence of Maziyana; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 92, evidence of Melapi.

42. Zulu interests on the coast were supervised by Mbikwana kaKhayi,'Shaka's most tactful and imposing diplomat', who was based in an establishment on the north side of the lower Mlalazi river. (Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 569-70, 595; also see Kunene, Emperor Shaka, pp. XXXII, 210; Fynn, Diary, pp. 64, 65, 68, 70.) In the Mbo country, Shaka's representative was Sotobe kaMpangala, a Zulu notable of equal stature, who was responsible for the royal cattle amongst the Mbo. (See above, p. 294; J.S.A., Vol. 2, pp. 252, 257).

43. The following section draws on a paper written by J. Wright and myself, and presented at the History Workshop, University of the Witwatersrand, 1984, entitled 'The Making of the Lala - Ethnicity, Ideology and Class-Formation in a Precolonial Context.'

44. Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 7, 232-36 also see the discussion of Bryant's typology on p. 267.

45. For a close discussion of the claims of origin made by the various Iala groups, see Hamilton, 'The amaLala', pp. 4, 6-10, 12, 16. This discussion is not reproduced here because it repeats the overall approach adopted in the analysis of traditions of origin in this study.

46. Bryant, Dictionary, p. 26.

47. Bryant, History, p. 127.

48. J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 55, evidence of Madikane.

49. J.S.A., Vol. 4 (forthcoming), p. 14, evidence of Mqayikana.

50. J.S.A., Vol. 1, pp. 318, 342, evidence of Lunguza; Bryant, Dictionary, p. 346.

51. J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 233, evidence of Maquza; Bryant, Zulu People, pp. 385, 389; Krige, Social System, p. 247.

52. Hedges, 'Trade and Politics', p. 188.

53. Ibid.; P. Harries, 'Slavery, social incorporation and surplus extraction: the nature of free and unfree labour in south-east Africa', unpublished paper presented to the History Workshop, University of the Witwatersrand, 1981, p. 10.

54. G. Stow, The Native Races of South Africa, London, 1905, p. 425.

55. Ibid., pp. 425-27.

56. S. Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, Edinburgh, 1920, reprinted Cape Town, pp. 36, 37.

57. S.A.L., Bleek Collection, storage box marked 'Papers 2'.

58. See above, p. 285.

59. J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 53, 56, evidence of Mcotoyi; J.S.A., Vol. 3, pp. 75-6, evidence of Melapi; also see J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 107, evidence of Dinya, where it is claimed that initial effect on the Cele dialect was through close contact with the Thuli, but that this was resisted by the Cele, who wished to retain their Mthethwa speech. Ultimately, however, the change to tekela by the Cele was effected.

60. See above, chapter five.

61. Döhne, Dictionary, p. xv, S.A.L., Bleek Collection, storage box marked 'Papers 3'.

62. On variations in the tekela dialect, see J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 57, evidence of Mcotoyi; S.A.L., Bleek Collection, storage box marked 'Papers 2'. On variations within the official speech, sometimes called isiNtu see S.A.L., Bleek Collection, storage box marked 'Papers 2'; The Natal Diaries of Dr. W. Bleek, O.H. SPohr (ed.), Cape Town, 1965, p. 77; Faye, Zulu References, p. 63; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 28, evidence of Mabonsa; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 70, evidence of Mageza.

63. Bleek, Diary, p. 76.

64. Ibid., pp. 34, 36, 76; Fynn, Diary, p. 46; J.S.A., Vol. 1, pp. 24, 41, evidence of Baleni; J.S.A., Vol. 1, pp. 238, 240, evidence of Kumalo; J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 322, evidence of Lunguza; J.S.A., Vol. 2, pp. 143, 145, 147, 149, evidence of Mahungane; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 230, evidence of Maputwana; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 45, evidence of Mbovu; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 157, evidence of Mkando; Fuze, The Black People, p. 66.

65. Bleek, Diary, pp. 36, 76; S.A.L., Bleek Collection, MSB 71, notebook marked 'Africa'; J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 279, evidence of Maziyana; J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 144, evidence of Mkakwa.

66. J.S.A., Vol. 2, pp. 54-5, evidence of Madikane.

67. J.S.A. Vol. 3, p. 150, evidence of Mkando.

68. J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 279, evidence of Maziyana.

69. See above, pp. 358-63.

70. J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 118, evidence of Dinya.

71. J.S.A., Vol. 3, p. 158, evidence of Mkando.

72. J.S.A., Vol. 2, p. 55, evidence of Madikane.

73. J. Allen, The Language of Ethnic Conflict, New York, 1983, p. 431.

74. Colenso, Dictionary, p. 431; Bryant, Dictionary, pp. 462, 469.

75. The inyakeni were the Kabeleni, Mxamalala, Mapamulo, Hlongwa, Khuze, and Nhlangwini. Those

who were explicitly described as not being inyakeni were the Cele, Thuli, Makhanya and Nsomi. (J.S.A., Vol. 1, p. 118, evidence of Dinya; J.S.A., Vol. 2, pp. 53, 55, evidence of Madikane.)

76. J. Saul, 'The dialectic of class and tribe', Race and Class, XX, 4 (1979), p. 349.

77. A.D. Smith, Ethnic Revival, Cambridge, 1981, p. 71.

78. Saul, 'The dialectic'; F. Barth, Ethnic Groups and Boundaries, Farlaget, 1969.

79. I. Goldin, 'Coloured ethnicity and coloured politics in the Western Cape region of South Africa'; In paper presented to the International Conference on the History of Ethnic Awareness, Charlotteville, April, 1983, p. 5.

80. Saul, 'The dialectic', p. 352.

81. B. Jewsiewicki, 'Some preliminary reflexions [sic] on the study of the history of ideology and the experience of ethnicity in Zaire', paper presented to the International Conference on the History of Ethnic Awareness, Charlotteville, April 1983, p. 1.

CONCLUSION

In 1828, Shaka was murdered at his new capital Dukuza, in the lala country. Details of the palace coup by his half-brothers are well-known, and need not be rehearsed here.[1] The reign of his successor, Dingane, saw the kingdom in retreat northwards, back across the Thukela.[2] Thus the assassination of Shaka marked the end of the era of 'state formation' in south-east Africa.

The period c.1750-1828 had seen the emergence of two types of centralized polities: the trading states of Mabhudu, Ndwandwe and Mthethwa; and the essentially defensive states of the Thukela valley, the Hlubi and the Qwabe. The most persuasive arguments so far put forward to account for their emergence are based on the Smith-Hedges hypothesis that the initial dynamic, at least, was provided by the effects of international trade.[3] Growth in the ivory trade at Delagoa Bay in the second half of the eighteenth century probably prompted increased centralization and territorial expansion on the part of certain of the chiefdoms south of the Bay. In the 1790s, when the ivory trade was superceded by a trade in cattle, strong incentives arose for chiefdoms to raid cattle from their neighbours, and to gain control over areas of good grazing land. The political turbulence surrounding the emergence of the new trading states was increasingly felt by the chiefdoms on their immediate peripheries. Needing to defend themselves against aggressive expansion, these chiefdoms in turn responded with militarization. In circumstances of crisis, the rulers in both types of emerging polity were able to greatly entrench their positions of dominance, and to extend the social controls

at their disposal. Amabutho replaced circumcision schools, and were mobilised for longer and longer periods, largely at the expense of local lineage heads. The development of sizeable standing armies, demanding an increase in central authority and the accumulation of surplus for redistribution, in itself, would have set in motion certain transformations within the defensive chiefdoms - although generally not of the magnitude of those which characterized the chief trading states. One form which this was likely to have taken was a bid to enter the trade, but it was their failure in this respect which resulted in the continued existence of a crucial difference between the essentially 'defensive' states and those actively engaged in the trade, viz., the absence in the former of the kinds of social and economic stratification which were emerging in the latter.[4]

The contrast between the trading states and the defensive polities of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is illuminated in the early chapters of this thesis concerning the origins of the Mthethwa and the Qwabe, the pre-Shakan kingdoms of each type for which the greatest evidence is still extant and which, for historically specific reasons, was the least affected by subsequent events. It has been argued that signs of the systematic adulteration of Mthethwa oral traditions suggest that in the earliest phase of Mthethwa expansion a number of disparate groups were thoroughly assimilated by the Mthethwa ruling lineage - all of the groups incorporated by the Mthethwa at this time claiming to be the kinsfolk of the Mthethwa ruling lineage. The subsequent development of the amabutho in response to the expansion and changing nature of the trade provided the means for Mthethwa rulers to extend their control over new subject chiefdoms, extracting from them a regular tribute without extending to them

the full rights and benefits of Mthethwa citizenship. Unlike the groups incorporated earlier, the tributary chiefdoms were not assimilated by the Mthethwa and did not come to think of themselves as the kinsfolk of their rulers. By the late eighteenth century, a tribute-based society had emerged between the Mfolozi and Mhlathuze rivers, characterized by a dichotomy between, on the one hand, the hegemonic Mthethwa ruling lineage and its associated kin lineages, and, on the other hand, the Mthethwa tributary chiefdoms excluded from the benefits of trade and obliged to surrender to their Mthethwa overlords a large percentage of their surplus produce.

Immediately to the south of the Mthethwa, Qwabe expansion took a rather different form. The traditions of origin of the various component Qwabe groups did not evidence a similar dichotomy between early 'kin' lineages and later 'non-kin' additions. Other forms of evidence indicative of sharp social stratification and the existence of embryonic social classes are similarly absent in the Qwabe case. Likewise, the available evidence suggests scant involvement in the Delagoa Bay trade by the Qwabe. The early Qwabe amabutho system appears to have been concomitantly less-developed, ultimately to be overrun with relative ease by the Mthethwa. Left relatively intact, Qwabe was incorporated under the Mthethwa paramountcy as a tributary chiefdom.

One effect of the failure of Mthethwa fully to incorporate tributary chiefdoms like the Qwabe was that the Mthethwa polity remained relatively decentralized. Although the new tributaries were deprived of the symbols of an independent chieftaincy, they retained considerable local autonomy, notably their territorial integrity, their chiefships (although largely filled

by Mthethwa nominees) and their own military forces.

The failure of Mthethwa to develop resilient bonds of social cohesion amongst its component parts, and the continued decentralization of Mthethwa military resources were ultimately to be major factors in its undoing. The reluctance of the Mthethwa rulers to assimilate their new subjects facilitated the concentration of *wealth at the apex of Mthethwa society, but the lack* of integration made it difficult for Mthethwa to recruit soldiers from amongst their subjects for a centralized Mthethwa army.

Expansion of Mthethwa in the late 1810s brought them into conflict with their northern neighbours, the state of Ndwandwe. Bonner has argued that the Ndwandwe, living in the relatively low rainfall area around Magudu, were probably especially hard-pressed to reproduce the material basis of their existence following the Madlathule famine some time around the turn of the century.[5] Economic recovery for the Ndwandwe, he posits, was likely to have been more dependent on the forcible appropriation of vital resources. These circumstances probably stimulated Ndwandwe centralization and militarization, ultimately with self-sustaining effects, which continued into the 1810s and underlay the numerical superiority and military efficiency of the Ndwandwe army, and its defeat of the Mthethwa.

The collapse of Mthethwa allowed the Mthethwa tributary chiefdoms to reassert themselves in the sub-region. The groups which emerged as the most significant local forces at this time were the Zulu in the north-west in close proximity to the aggressively expanding Ndwandwe, and the Qwabe, further away in the south. The Zulu chiefdom, under imminent threat of being overwhelmed by their more powerful neighbours, also faced an internal crisis in the form of ongoing opposition to

the ruling Shakan party.

Political competition within the chiefdom had to be neutralized. One of the ways in which this was achieved, was through the murder of a number of Shaka's half-brothers, his rival claimants for the chieftaincy. The other way was through the excision (dabula) of certain highly placed sections of the Zulu clan to form *new clans, with their own izibongo* (clan-names). This had the effect of establishing ideological distance between Shaka's most powerful royal relatives and the kingship. Royal by birth and yet excised from the royal line, the members of the dabula'd clans retained a degree of authority sufficient to support them in high office, but in a diluted form, which ensured that they could not easily usurp the Zulu kingship. Elderly women of the royal house proper occupied a similar position; past the age of childbearing, they were free of the ritual constraints placed on menstruating women in Zulu society, and as the direct descendants of past Zulu kings, they shared in the Zulu ubukhosi (kingship). Thus they were invested with sufficient royal authority to occupy important positions as the king's representatives, but, they, in their turn, were prevented by their gender from usurping the kingship for themselves.

The reign of Shaka saw the placement of these women *in high office on a scale apparently unprecedented in* the early state societies. Likewise, it saw the coherence around the king of a core group of semi-royal male administrators, the men of the dabula'd clans, a situation which differed markedly from that of Dingiswayo's reliance on non-Mthethwa regional commanders. The dabula'ing of sections of the Zulu clan had the further effect of facilitating the practice of a form of endogamy within the clan, creating and constantly repeating bonds of alliance within a limited

group and permitting the concentration of wealth and resources at the apex of Zulu society.

Continued disaffection concerning the seizure of power by the Shakan party, and the looming threat of Ndwandwe attack also demanded the immediate expansion and reorganization of the Zulu army. Despite the limited expansion of the Zulu army which occurred under Shaka before the collapse of the Mthethwa paramountcy, the Zulu army was the numerical inferior of the Ndwandwe. Shaka was faced with an urgent need to expand the military strength of his chiefdom if it was to survive, and if he was to remain in power. This was achieved through strategic local expansion and the creation of a network of supportive alliances.

The early consolidation of Zulu power saw the incorporation of the Sibiya, the Zungu, sections of the Thembu, Sithole, Mabaso and Chunu, the Cube, and the Bhele. The Zulu also attempted to incorporate the populous and powerful Qwabe polity to the south, and the Khumalo chiefdom to their north. Although nominal rule was established in both areas, sustained resistance continued well into the 1820s. It has been argued in this thesis that this resistance was an important factor in shaping the hegemonic ideology of the emerging state, notably in the development of the amantungwa identity as the basis of unity amongst the core chiefdoms comprising the early Zulu kingdom. Close assimilation as amantungwa ensued of all the groups incorporated into the Zulu kingdom at this time, providing, in turn, for the incorporation of large numbers of men into the Zulu amabutho. This phase of expansion also saw the Zulu extend their cattle holdings, gain access to superior tracts of pasture and agricultural land, as well as control of areas important for the supply of amabutho attire and insignia, areas of local iron

resources, and the attainment of political sway over Zululand's most renowned iron smiths.

Access to these key resources enabled Shaka to undertake the extensive reorganization of the Zulu army and to impose on it a degree of centralization probably unprecedented in the sub-region. Internal reorganization of the Zulu amabutho system was designed as much to consolidate the position of the Zulu ruling lineage vis-a-vis the army as to increase military effectivity.

The initial hostility to Shaka's accession indicates that a powerful impulse was likely to have existed for Shaka to undertake the fundamental restructuring of the army itself. The process whereby loyalties of the veterans of Senzangakhona's army and the new recruits to the Zulu amabutho alike came to focus on the Zulu king were complex and extended over time, involving substantial shifts in the conceptions about society then current. At the same time, the new Zulu rulers were under great pressure to mobilise a large army in a very short time. To achieve this as rapidly as possible, a range of ideological elements already in existence in the society were mobilised and restructured to underpin the legitimacy of the new order. In particular, the training of the amabutho at the ritually important amakhanda served to focus the loyalties of new male subjects on the person of the Zulu king. The amabutho system also served to locate individuals and groups within the social hierarchy and to entrench divisions between the privileged and unprivileged in the society. Under Shaka, the range of controls exerted by a king over his amabutho, were widened and refined, most notably through the status conferring ceremonies of ghumbuza and thunga, and via the centralized state institution of the izigodlo.

Under Shaka, izigodlo were established at every ikhanda, housing large numbers of women, well above the levels necessary to fulfil the functions of diplomatic marriages and royal patronage, or those necessary to perform the domestic labour of the king's household. Close examination of provisioning at the amakhanda and of the local agricultural cycle suggests that the existence of the hugely expanded women's institutions played a crucial role in crop production for the people based in the amakhanda. The concentration of agricultural labour in the izigodlo under the aegis of the king, represented at every isigodlo by an eminent elderly female relative, facilitated the increased centralization of the amabutho and provided an added source of royal control. The izigodlo became thus a crucial power base for the amakhosikazi directly governing the amakhanda.

These reforms, together with the rapid expansion of the Zulu kingdom enabled it to defeat the Ndwandwe in c.1819. The collapse of Ndwandwe completely altered the circumstances in which the hitherto essentially defensive Zulu kingdom found itself.

The enormous degree of centralization of the Zulu army, under the immediate control of the king extensively underpinned the hegemonic position of the new power-holders in the kingdom. The continued rule of this grouping over the extended kingdom depended on the maintenance of the army. However, by its very existence, the Zulu army generated a dynamic for further expansion to ensure its maintenance and reproduction. Most notably, this entailed an insatiable demand for cattle for redistribution.

The Zulu state which emerged in the 1820s in response to these imperatives differed markedly from the

precursor trading states of the eighteenth century, and from the early Zulu defensive state. This period saw the Zulu extend direct rule over a wide range of tributaries, forcibly appropriating their land, labour and surplus products. Next the Zulu took control of the chiefdoms of the Thukela valley; then they entrenched and consolidated Zulu rule over the recalcitrant Qwabe, quartering the bulk of the Zulu amabutho in Qwabe territory. Subsequently, Zulu rule was extended south across the Thukela into the Natal lowlands. Zulu influence was also extended over the Ronga chiefdoms to the north of Zululand.

The incorporation of the chiefdoms on the periphery of the Zulu state was along very different lines from the chiefdoms incorporated in the early phase of Zulu expansion. On the peripheries of the kingdom, members of existing lineages tended to be incorporated less as subjects of the kingdom and more as super-exploited tributaries. Their chiefly houses were required to maintain identities clearly separate from the Zulu royal house, and their young men, far from being recruited into the ranks of the king's amabutho, were put to work at menial tasks like herding cattle at outlying royal cattle posts. Altogether, members of these lineages seem to have had fewer rights and heavier obligations than members of the lineages of the heartland.

In ideological terms, the exclusion of members of some lineages from the rights and benefits of Zulu citizenship and their subordination to others was effected through their derogatory designation as separate and inferior ethnic groups. The subordinate lineages on the southern periphery of the kingdom were denigrated as the amalala, while members of the commoner Ronga chiefdoms were called amanhlengwa by the Zulu. These categories operated both to distinguish these chiefdoms from the

amantungwa of the heartland, to justify their subordination and, by inducing feelings of shame and inadequacy amongst those thus denigrated, to inhibit mobilisation for resistance.

What emerged under Shaka was essentially a society of three tiers. At the apex were located the king and members of the royal and associated collateral clans. Immediately below, and closely interconnected with this group were the other privileged clans of the kingdom. Collectively designated the amantungwa, these two tiers constituted the aristocracy of the new society. The third tier of Zulu society comprised the majority of the people of the exploited peripheries, derogatorily referred to as the amalala, amanhlangwa and the like. This commoner class demonstrated further social stratification within itself, as well as regional variations in their status and relation with the core chiefdoms.

These divisions were underpinned by the state's sophisticated coercive apparatus, but they were also entrenched and legitimated through the development of an ideology of state. The state system and the associated ideology were largely shaped by economic and social forces, but to a remarkable degree, they were also shaped by prevailing perceptions of the world. In particular, the new ideology necessarily conformed to previous notions of legitimacy. These were derived from the social principles of the pre-state period, notably that of common descent typical of 'kinship' ideology. The new ideology was also shaped by the ideas current at the time of the emergence of the Zulu state, especially those located in resistance and opposition cultures.

Co-opted and rearranged, it is argued that these ideas developed into an ideology of ethnicity. The social *cohesion conveyed by ethnicity* developed out of residual notions of kinship insofar as ethnic identities imply common origin and descent for all the groups concerned, but it differed from an ideology of kinship in two ways. Within a lineage-based society, an ideology of kinship functions to unite all the members of that society or polity. In contrast, the coexistence of a number of ethnic groups within a polity allows for both exclusion and inclusion within the polity, fostering a corporate sense of the superiority of elites and inculcating a sense of common identity and obedience in inferiors, making it an especially appropriate response to a situation characterized by conflicts over resources. Ethnicity also differs from an ideology of kinship in failing to reproduce the rigidity of traceable (fictive or genuine) genealogical connections. The greater flexibility and highly situational nature of ethnicity makes it especially effective in societies undergoing transitions and in the restructuring of social relations.

However, the capacity of ethnicity to refer to complex and contradictory, shifting patterns of consciousness, renders the ethnic identities of historically remote societies elusive. In the case of the early Zulu kingdom, the problem is compounded by the relative briefness of Shaka's reign. While ethnic categories dating to that period continued to have a currency and relevance long afterwards, changing conditions in the 1830s, notably the incorporation of a large sector of the commoner echelon of Zulu society into the new colony of Natal, meant that the system of social stratification and the associated ideology which prevailed under Shaka was never fully systematized and universalized.

As a result, the reconstruction of precolonial ethnicity must take cognizance of the effects of subsequent events and ideological shifts in data which appears to refer to the Shakan period. The major exercise in this context lies in the exploration of the categories amantungwa and amalala. As was remarked by Maqandeyana of the Nthuli, reputedly a great sage, 'the secret of ancient wisdom lies in the names of things and their forgotten meanings'.[6] The unpacking of these terms, and the establishment of their meaning and application in the Shakan period, some eighty years prior to their earliest transcription, is an historical exercise requiring great sensitivity.

At the same time, extensive excurions into the pre-Shakan past are also necessary to reconstruct precursor ideologies and earlier ethnic identities so as to give full weight to the events and phenomena of the Shakan period. Consideration of the earliest origins and history of the subject chiefdoms is demanded by the important role in the legitimation of precolonial ideologies played by appeals to the past, casting a new light on the role of history in precolonial societies and on the manipulation of oral traditions in the creation of ethnic identities. The methods developed for the deconstruction of oral texts and the identification of latter-day interpolations push the period for which oral traditions can be used as historical sources well back in time, before the reign of Shaka.

In attempting to illuminate a conceptual framework for understanding Zulu views of politics and political change at a particular period, this study does not seek to describe the ideology of the Shakan period as a static, achieved phenomenon. Like all constructs of ideas, the ideology of state which prevailed was in the process of being modified and refined by historical

forces, necessitating a focus on the dialectical relationship between ideology and action over time. It is the signs of this process, characteristically contradictory, which speak of the struggles of the groups involved in the achievement of the hegemony of one group over others. As such, this study marks a move away from the writing of precolonial history from above, and a shift of the emphasis in the precolonial history of the Phongola-Mzimkhulu area away from the achievements of the Zulu kings and royal house, and onto the activities of the historic peoples of the region.

1. See for example Morris' accurate and readable account, The Washing of the Spears, pp. 105-8.

2. For a summary of the pressures on Dingane, see Bonner, Kings, pp. 40, 42-4.

3. See discussion, pp. 6-7.

4. The conceptualization of the different types of early states presented here owes much to extensive collaboration with John Wright of the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

5. Bonner, Kings, p. 23.

6. Kunene, Anthem of the Decades, p. ix.

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Author Hamilton Carolyn
Name of thesis Ideology, Oral Traditions And The Struggle For Power In The Early Zulu Kingdom. 1985

PUBLISHER:
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
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