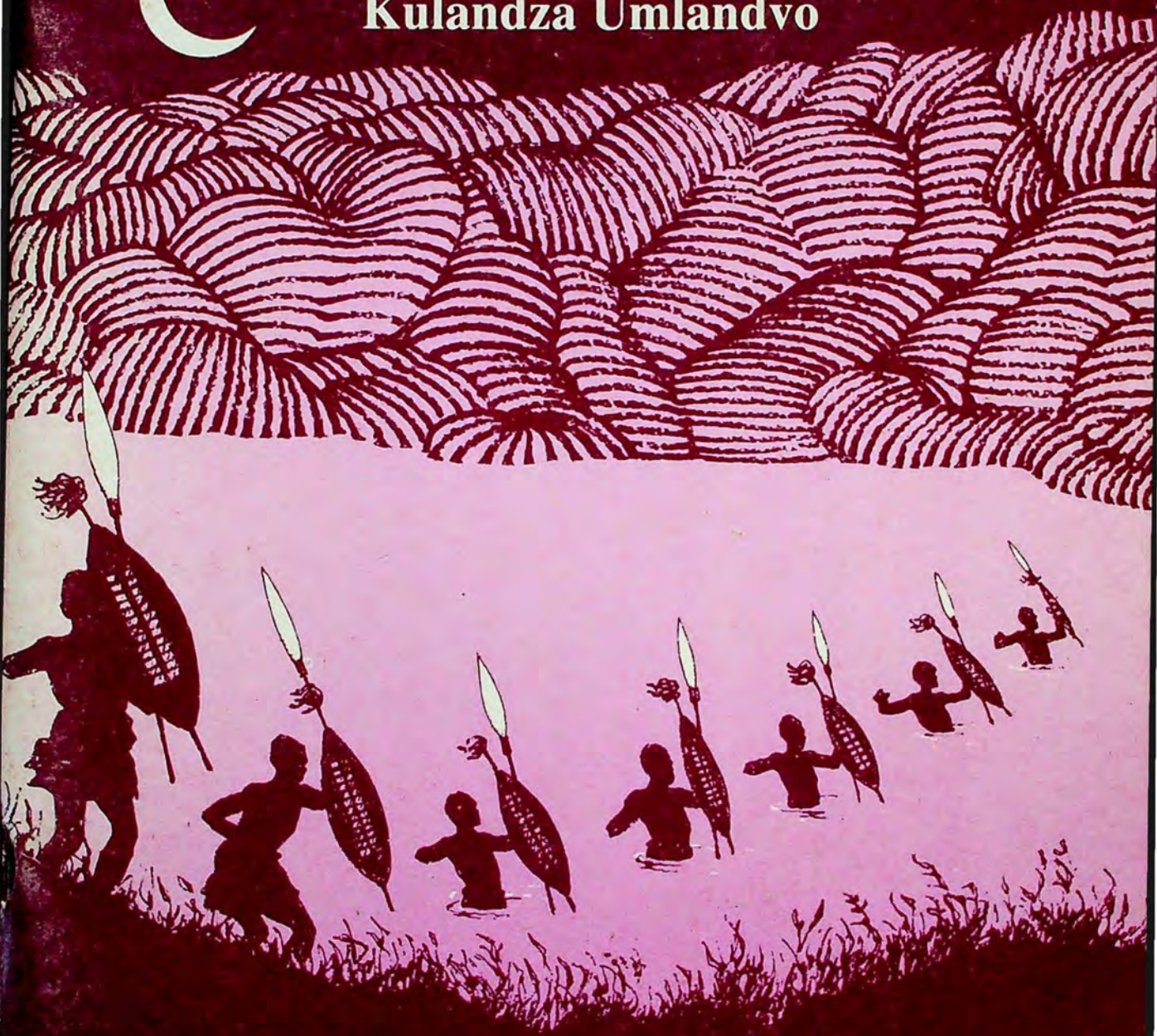


In pursuit of Swaziland's precolonial past

Kulandza Umlandvo



Editor: Carolyn Hamilton

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Swaziland's
precolonial past**

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Swaziland Oral History Project



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STONE AGE —

hunter-gatherers

IRON AGE —

early farmers

1700s —

times of Hlubi

times of Ngwane

1800s —

times of Ndvungunye

times of Sobhuza I

times of Mswati II



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Section A What is History?

Section A - What is History?

Part One Stories of the Past

Chapter One *What is History?*



'History is everything that happened in the past.'



'History is just a list of boring dates.'



'History is the story of great kings and heroes.'



'History is like a detective story. It is finding out what happened in the past, why it happened and how it happened. That is why history is exciting.'

1A. What do you think history is?

Make a drawing of yourself like one of the drawings above. Write down your ideas about what history is. Pass your picture around the class. Read what other students think history is.



Some history is about big changes; some history is about small changes.

Think of how we live today. Do we live the same type of life as our grandmothers and grandfathers? Many of the old people will tell you that they did not go to school. Yet you go to school. Also, many old people did not see

Historians can't study everything that happened in the past so they study the most important thing: the way things *change*.

motor cars, radios or television sets until they were grown up. You know of these things and you are still young. Our lives are always *changing*.

Exercise

Look at the following two pictures. The first photograph is of the early post office in Mbabane, taken in 1902. The second photograph is of Mbabane's post office in 1989. The pictures are very different.

- What are the differences? Make a list of them.
- What do the differences tell us about how people's lives have changed?



First post office in Mbabane, 1902



Modern post office in Mbabane, 1989

1B. What kind of change does history tell us about?

Think about Swaziland in 1938 (that is over fifty years ago) and let's compare it to Swaziland today. There are many differences.

Political Changes

In 1938 Swaziland was a British Protected Territory. It was ruled by a government from Britain. At that time, the ruler of the British Empire was King George VI. Britain called

Sobhuza II the 'Paramount Chief' of Swaziland and considered him to be a subject of King George's.

Swaziland became independent in 1968. After independence Sobhuza II was no longer called the 'Paramount Chief', and he was no longer a subject of the British king. He was called 'King' of Swaziland. Sobhuza II died in 1982. Today, the king of Swaziland is Mswati III.



Swaziland Governing Committee, Mbekeleweni, 1887



First Swaziland Government after Independence

We call these kinds of changes *political changes*. Political changes are usually about rulers and governments.

Social Changes

In 1938 there were only 150 000 people in Swaziland. In 1938 few of these people lived in towns. In fact, there were very few towns, few hospitals and no tarred roads. In the last fifty years many people have left the countryside and have moved into the towns. There are more towns now, more hospitals, and many tarred roads. There are also many more people in Swaziland today than there were in 1938. We call this an increase in population.

We call these kinds of changes *social changes*. Social changes are usually about the way people live.

Economic Changes

In 1938 most people living in Swaziland were farmers. They earned their living from their crops and cattle. Today many people earn their living by working in offices and factories in the towns. They no longer grow crops or raise cattle for food. Instead, they buy food with their wages.

We call these kinds of changes *economic changes*. Economic changes are usually about how people earn their living, or the way that countries become wealthy or poor.

So we have learnt that history can tell us about three kinds of changes:

1. Political changes
2. Social changes
3. Economic changes.

Exercises

1. Can you think of other examples of political changes in Swaziland?
2. Can you think of other examples of social changes in Swaziland?

3. Can you think of any other examples of economic changes in Swaziland? List some of the jobs that people do today for wages. Did people do these jobs in 1938?

History tells us stories about the past. It tells us *what changes* happened in the past, *how* they happened, and *why* they changed.

Chapter Two *When?: Dates, Calendars and Time-lines*

To study changes we need to know what happened *first* and what happened *next*.



hundred years before the birth of Christ). In other words, a person born in 200 B.C. would be older than a person born in 100 B.C.

2A. *When?: an important question for historians*

In the western world most people count time from the birth of Jesus Christ. An event is dated according to the number of years it happened before or after the birth of Jesus Christ.

B.C. stands for 'before Christ'. 200 B.C. means two hundred years *before* the birth of Christ.

A.D. stands for 'Anno Domini', a Latin phrase meaning 'in the year of the Lord'. A.D. 200 means two hundred years *after* the birth of Christ.

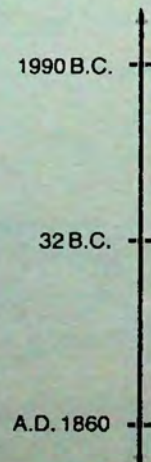
1990 or A.D. 1990 means one thousand nine hundred and ninety years after the birth of Christ.

Note: 200 B.C. (two hundred years before the birth of Christ) is *earlier* than 100 B.C. (one

Exercise

Arrange these dates on a line. Start with the earliest date and end with the latest date. Some of the dates have been marked on a line to help you. First mark the birth of Christ.

700 B.C.; A.D. 1000; 32 B.C.; A.D. 200; A.D. 1860; 1990 B.C.; A.D. 1990

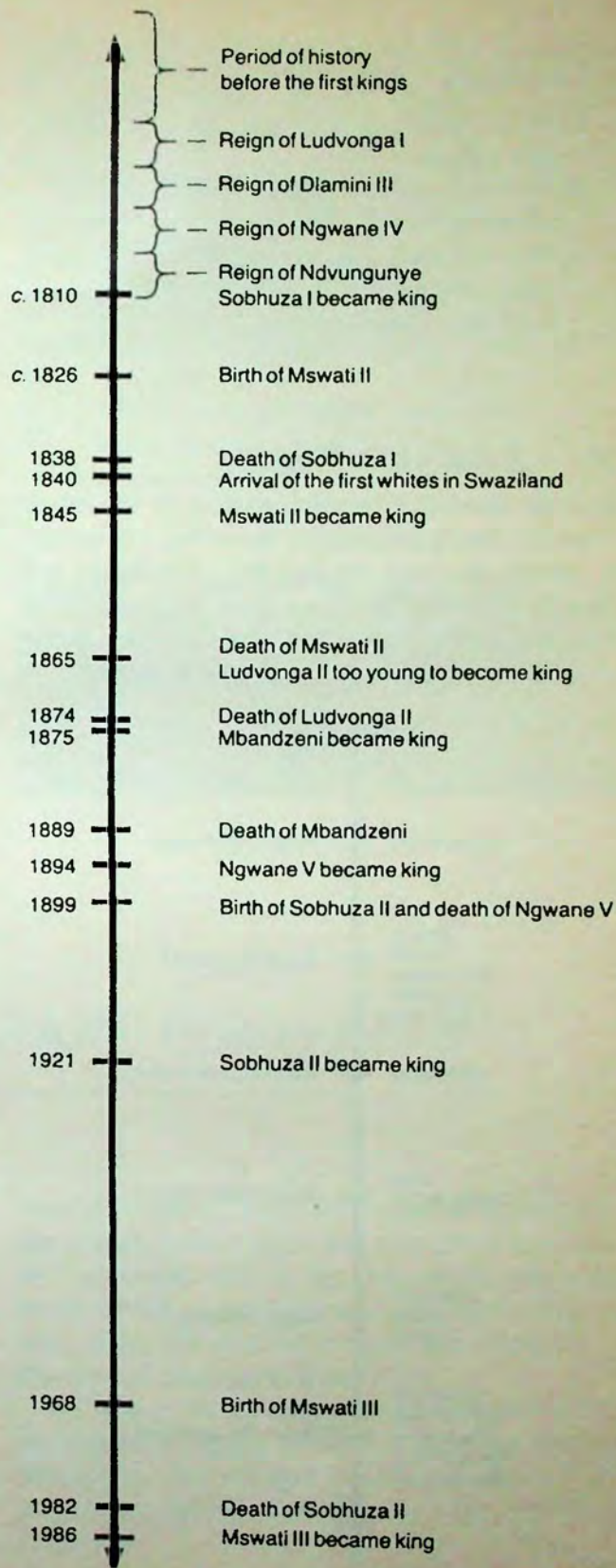
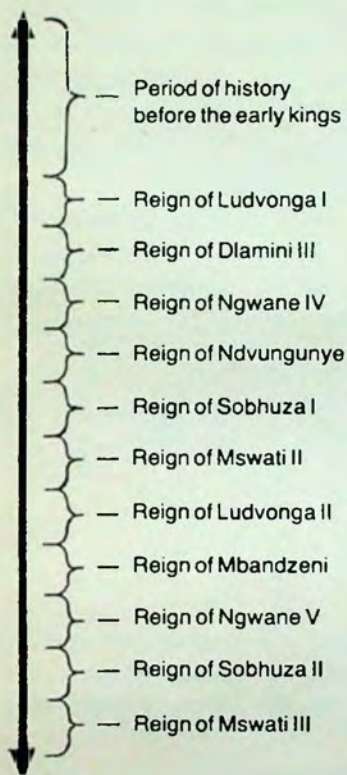


We call this a *time-line*.

2B. Calendar of kings

In Swaziland, before the arrival of the whites, people used to count time differently. One of the ways they did this was by using *the reigns of kings*. The reign of a king is the time from when he becomes king to the time he dies.

A time-line using the reigns of Swazi kings would look something like this:



We can add dates to this time-line for the period after the western calendar was introduced to Swaziland.

2C. Approximate dates

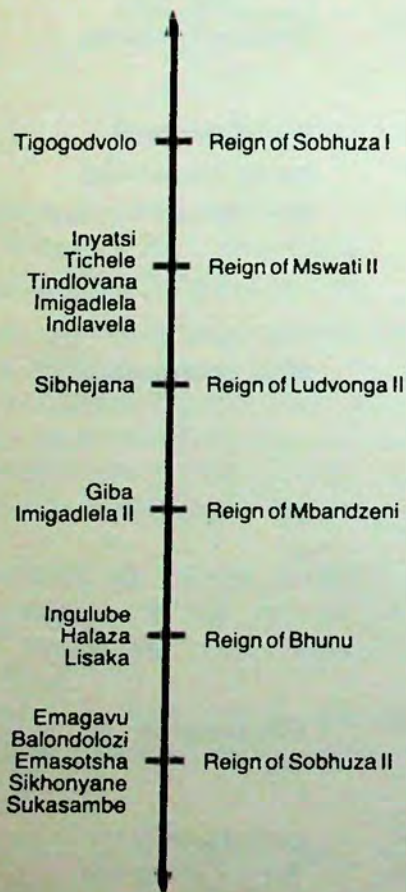
We can also add *approximate* dates for events which happened before the introduction of the western calendar. For example, we *think* that Sobhuza I became king in 1810. But we are not sure. So we write the date with 'c.' in front of it, like this: 'c. 1810'. The 'c.' stands for the Latin word 'circa' and means 'about'. 'C. 1810' means about 1810.

Exercises

1. Why are there no dates on this time-line before c. 1810?
2. Why are there arrows at each end of the time-line?
3. Why is there a 'c.' in front of the date of birth of Mswati II, c. 1826, and no 'c.' in front of his date of death, 1865?

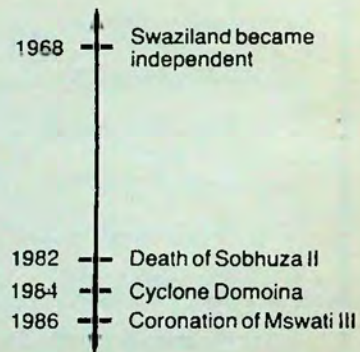
2D. *Emabutfo* calendar

Another way of arranging events in the order in which they happened is by using a calendar of *emabutfo* (age regiments). *Emabutfo* are usually formed every five to seven years. The time-line below shows the order in which some famous Swazi *emabutfo* were established.



Exercises

1. Look at the time-line of *emabutfo* and answer the following questions:
 - a) One man belongs to the Sikhonyane *libutfo*. Another man belongs to the Balondolozu. Which man is younger?
 - b) Is it possible that a man of the Indlavela *libutfo* is still alive today? Give a reason for your answer.
 - c) One man belonged to the Tigogodvolo *libutfo*. Another man belonged to the Sukasambe. Which man was born first?
2. Big events like Swaziland's Independence, or Cyclone Domoina, can also be used as calendar markers. Copy the time-line below into your books.



Now fill in on the time-line when:

- a) you were born
- b) you started school
- c) you entered secondary school.

You do not have to fill in the exact dates, but you must decide the *correct order of events*.

2E. Order of events

Dates help historians, but history is *not* 'just a list of boring dates'. A historian can write history without dates, so long as he/she knows the *order of events*.

Exercises

1. In the story below, the proper order of events has been muddled up. Read the story. Draw a time-line and mark on it all the events in the right order. Then rewrite the story. Begin with the event which happened first. End with the event that happened last. To make it easier for you, the first event is in the correct place.

At seven o'clock in the morning, Bongani jumped out of bed in a great hurry. By eight-thirty at night, Bongani was in bed asleep. School started at eight o'clock. At ten-thirty, Bongani went to the art class. When the final bell rang at two-twenty, Bongani walked home. He quickly got dressed and ate breakfast. Bongani waited for his sister to come home from work at five o'clock in the afternoon, so that

she could help him with his homework. Then Bongani ran and caught the seven-thirty bus to school.

2. Now answer the following questions. Look at the time-line and your answers to question 1.
 - a) Why did Bongani hurry in the morning?
 - b) Why did Bongani walk home at two-twenty?
 - c) Why did Bongani only start his homework at five o'clock in the afternoon?

When things happened is an important part of the stories of what happened in the past. Knowing when things happened helps us to understand why they happened.

Chapter Three *Who and What is History About?*



The calendar of kings and the *emabutfo* calendar make history look like the story of kings and soldiers. But these calendars are only *tools* to help us put events in the right order. In fact, history is about the important changes in the lives of all people. Even you!

Here is a grid showing some questions that we asked a young student of history, Philani Mkhali. We wanted to find out about Philani's past. We were interested in his personal history.

3A. Philani's personal history grid

Questions	Answers
1. What is your name?	1. Philani Mkhaliphi.
2. When were you born?	2. 11 July 1970.
3. Where were you born?	3. Manzini — Raleigh Fitkin Hospital.
4. What is your father's name?	4. Joseph Mkhaliphi.
5. What is your mother's name?	5. Phumzile Nxumalo.
6. Do you have any brothers and sisters?	6. Xolile (age 15, sister) Mganga (age 12, brother).
7. Do you still live in the same place where you were born?	7. No.
8. If not, describe where you live now.	8. Moved from Mhlakuvane Street in Manzini to a house in Ngwane Park in Manzini.
9. When did you start school?	9. Started school when I was seven.
10. Name the schools you have attended.	10. Nazarene Primary School, Central Primary.
11. What sports do you play?	11. Soccer.
12. Have you ever visited another country? If so, when?	12. Yes, Zimbabwe — school trip in 1986.

Now that you have read about Philani Mkhaliphi, look at the Personal History Grid below. Read through the questions and then follow the instructions.

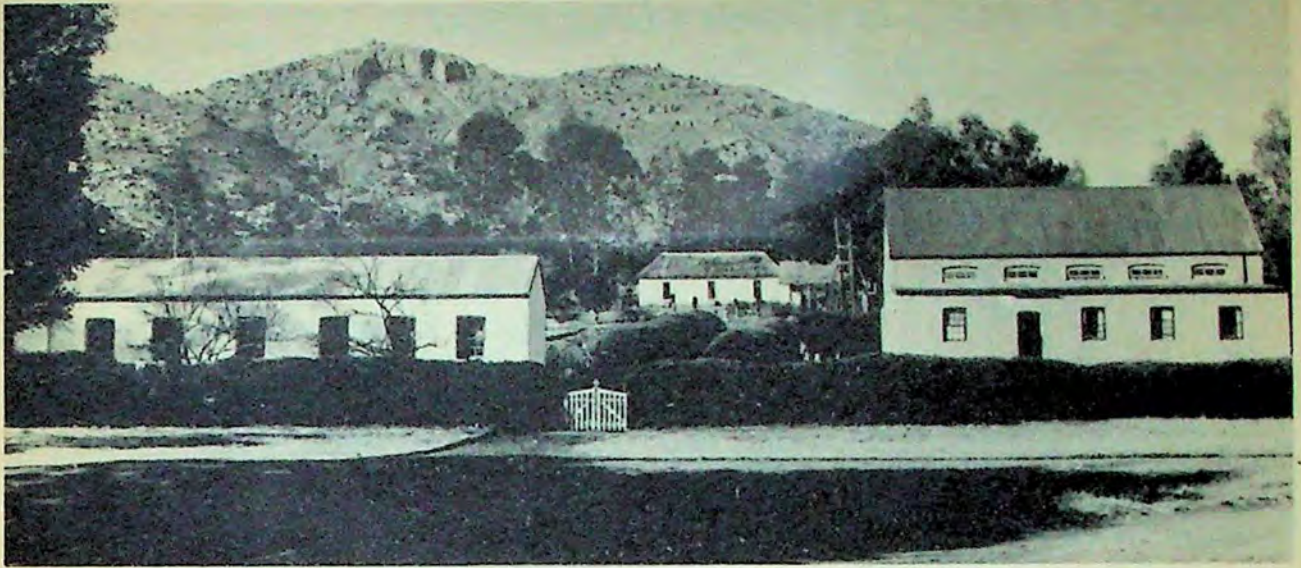
Questions	Answers
1. What is your name?	1.
2. When were you born?	2.
3. Where were you born?	3.
4. What is your father's name?	4.

Questions	Answers
5. What is your mother's name?	5.
6. Do you have any brothers and sisters?	6.
7. Do you live in the same place where you were born?	7.
8. If not, describe where you live now.	8.
9. Name the schools you have attended.	9.
10. What sports do you play?	10.
11. What hobbies do you have?	11.
12. Have you ever visited another country? If so, when.	12.
13. Name one important event in your life. When did it happen?	13.

Copy the Personal History Grid into your notebook. Swap books with your partner in class. Get your partner to fill in the grid with his/her personal answers. When you have both finished, each of you will be able to write a short history about each other. Start by drawing a time-line. Then write a paragraph about your partner's personal history.

3B. The history of the Mater Dolorosa School

History is not only about ordinary people like you and your partner. History is also about ordinary *groups* of people, big and small. History can be about events that happened in the smallest village, or the largest town. Soccer clubs, churches, and families can all be the subject of history. History can even be about a school.



Mater Dolorosa School, 1930

In 1987, history students at the Mater Dolorosa School in Mbabane decided to write the history of their school. Here is part of their history of Mater Dolorosa:

The History of the Mater Dolorosa School

The Mater Dolorosa Mission and School was opened in 1914. It was established by two Austrian Catholic priests, Father Gratl and Father Mayer.

Two weeks after their arrival in Swaziland, the two priests started a small school on the veranda of their house.

There were no classrooms. In the mornings they taught children. In the evenings they taught adults.

They first taught their students (the children and the adults) how to read and write. As Catholic priests they believed people had to be able to read the Bible.

In 1922, the first group of Catholic nuns, the Mantelate sisters from Italy, arrived in Swaziland. They came to help the two priests with the teaching and other missionary activities.

Before the arrival of the nuns, classes on the veranda were irregular because the

priests had many other things to do.

So it was in 1922 that the Mater Dolorosa became a proper sort of a school with classes every day. But in those days there were only a handful of pupils. And they didn't even wear uniforms!

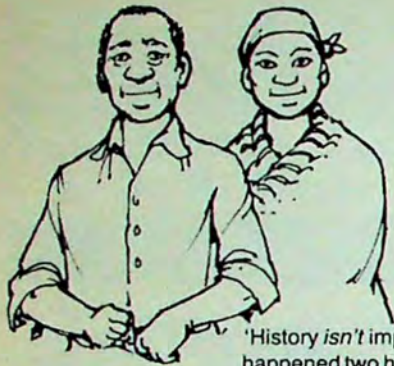
Adapted from: 'The History of the Mater Dolorosa School', by the Form II class, 1987.

Exercises

1. We have learnt that history is about changes. What changes did the students at Mater Dolorosa write about in the passage?
2. We have learnt that we need to know what happened first, and what happened next, when we study changes. What happened first and what happened next at Mater Dolorosa?

The history of ordinary people and ordinary things is just as important as the history of famous people and famous events.

Chapter Four *Is History Important?*



'History *isn't* important. Who cares what happened two hundred years ago to some king or queen? It is the present, what is happening *now* that is important.'



'History is important because it makes us proud of our families and our country. It tells us where we belong.'

'But history does tell us about what is happening *now*! It tells where we have come from, and why things are as they are today!'



'History is important because it helps us to understand ourselves *and* other people. For example, if we look at the United States today we see many black Americans. Why do they live in America and not Africa? By studying the history of slavery, we learn that those black Americans have ancestors who were taken by force from West Africa to work as slaves in America. That is why they are now Americans.'

4A. Why do you think history is important?

Make a drawing of yourself like one of the drawings on the left. Write down your ideas about why history is important. Pass your picture round the class. Read why other students think history is important.

4B. The thoughts of King Sobhuza II as to why history is important:

We usually look at the history of a person or nation, as well as where he is or it is going, if we are to judge or measure a person or nation. Today's ceremony tells of where we come from and where we are going. It marks us as a distinct Swazi nation.

From: King Sobhuza II's speech, Incwala Celebrations, December 1971.

Exercise

Why did Sobhuza II think history is important?

4C. The students of Mater Dolorosa also thought that history is important

'We wanted to know why Mater Dolorosa is a Catholic school. Not many schools are Catholic schools. We think that history can help us understand the world today. It explains why things are as they are,' said one student.

Another student said, 'We wanted to write the history of our school. We didn't want any one else to do it.'

And a third student said, 'Knowing about the history of our school makes us feel proud of Mater Dolorosa. It gives us a good school spirit. And, it was fun!'

3. You have read many different reasons why people think that history is important. Try to make a list of all the reasons. You can add any other reasons that you can think of.

Exercises

1. Read section 4C. What are the key words in each paragraph?
2. Why did the Mater Dolorosa students think that history is important?

History is important because knowledge of the past makes people proud and powerful.

Part Two Investigation of the Past

Chapter Five *Historians and Evidence*

Who are the historians? Anyone who *investigates* the past and who tells us what happened in the past can be a historian. Of course, some historians are good historians, and others are bad.

5A. How is history investigated?

Historians ask questions about the past. They ask:

- what happened first?
- when did it start?
- why did it start?
- what happened next?
- how did things change?
- why did things change?

To answer these questions historians need information about the past. Any information which helps them find out what happened in the past is called *evidence*.

5B. What is evidence?

Read the story below. It is all about evidence.

The burglary at Mrs Maseko's house

On the 16 March 1987, John Fakudze of the Mbabane police station got a telephone call. It was from Mrs Maseko. She said that her house in Thembelihle had been burgled. Mrs Maseko asked John Fakudze to come to her house and investigate. She wanted him to find out who the thief was.

John Fakudze went to Mrs Maseko's house

When John arrived at Mrs Maseko's house, she was crying. She said, 'My husband and I went to Zimbabwe on holiday. When we got back, we saw that someone

had robbed our house. Look at the mess!'

John asked for the dates of the holiday. 'We left Mbabane on the 12 March and returned today, the 16 March,' said Mrs Maseko. John Fakudze was trying to find out *when* the burglary happened.

John Fakudze's first question

The first question John asked himself was, 'Where did the thief break in?' He found that the glass from the kitchen window had been taken out. John had his first answer. The thief had climbed through the kitchen window into Mrs Maseko's house. John also had an answer to the question, 'How did the robbery take place?'

John Fakudze looked for the clues

John asked the fingerprint department to check if the glass from the kitchen window had any fingerprints on it.

John entered Mrs Maseko's house to look for anything else that might help him to find out who the thief was. He was looking for clues. Luckily, Mrs Maseko had not touched or moved anything in the house, so if the thief had left something behind, John would be able to use it.



John found a small soccer ticket on the floor. It was an entrance ticket to the stadium at Lobamba. The date was stamped on the ticket. It was 14.03.87.

John asked, 'Mrs Maseko, did you or your husband go to a soccer match on 14 March this year?' Mrs Maseko replied, 'No, my husband and I were in Zimbabwe.'

John Fakudze talked to Mrs Maseko's neighbours

He wanted to know if anyone had seen a person going into or coming out of Mrs Maseko's house while she was on holiday. John asked Mrs Maseko's neighbours if they had seen anything.



One woman said, 'Yes. Early Sunday morning, I saw a young man come out of Mrs Maseko's house. He was wearing a Lions T-shirt.'

John asked the woman to describe the man. He wrote down the description in his notebook.

John Fakudze returned to police headquarters

He drew up a time-line to show the order of events at Mrs Maseko's. This is what his time-line looked like:



The time-line showed him that Mrs Maseko could not have dropped the ticket, nor could any of her friends because she was away on holiday. The house was meant to be empty. It was locked. Whoever dropped the ticket must have entered the house through the kitchen window.

The soccer ticket was for a game between the Lions and the Warriors on Saturday. The man seen leaving Mrs Maseko's house on Sunday morning was wearing a Lions T-shirt. John was sure that the man in the T-shirt was the burglar.

At the police station, John waited to hear the results of the fingerprint test on the glass from the kitchen window and on the ticket.

When John got the fingerprint result, he looked through the files of all the known criminals. He wanted to know if any of the fingerprints in the files were the same as the fingerprints found at Mrs Maseko's house.



Many hours of hard work later . . .

After a long time, John found that the fingerprints from Mrs Maseko's house were the same as the fingerprints of one man in the police files. His name was 'Big-Talk' Sikhondze. 'Big-Talk' was well known as a burglar.

'Big-Talk' Sikhondze was questioned

John Fakudze visited Sikhondze and asked him a few questions. 'Where were you on Sunday morning, the 15 March 1987?', asked John Fakudze.

'At home, alone', answered 'Big-Talk' Sikhondze.

John Fakudze thought carefully about the burglary at Mrs Maseko's house. He decided to charge 'Big-Talk' with the robbery for the following reasons:

1. Sikhondze's fingerprints were found in the house.
2. Mrs Maseko's neighbour said that she saw a man like 'Big-Talk' Sikhondze leaving Mrs Maseko's place on Sunday morning.
3. Sikhondze denied this. He said he was alone at home that morning. But there was no one to confirm his story.

These reasons were what the police called *evidence*.

John Fakudze said that he had enough evidence to prove that it was 'Big-Talk' who robbed the house.

The Hearing

'Big-Talk' had to go to court. During the hearing a prosecutor presented all the evidence collected by the police. A lawyer came to defend 'Big-Talk'. A magistrate had to listen to everything the prosecutor had to say, and everything the lawyer had to say. After the magistrate had heard all the evidence, the magistrate had to decide whether or not 'Big-Talk' Sikhondze had robbed Mrs Maseko's house.

The prosecutor asked 'Big-Talk' some questions

One of the questions that the prosecutor asked 'Big-Talk' was if he liked watching soccer. 'Big-Talk' said yes. The prosecutor then asked which team 'Big-Talk' supported. 'Big-Talk' said he supported the Lions. He said he never missed a game that the Lions played.

The prosecutor asked 'Big-Talk' if he watched the game between the Lions and the Warriors. The Warriors were a visiting team from Kenya. 'Big-Talk' said that he had watched the game.

The prosecutor smiled. He said that there was only one game played between the Lions and the Warriors. The date of the game was 14 March 1987.

The prosecutor showed 'Big-Talk' the soccer ticket which John Fakudze had found at Mrs Maseko's house. The prosecutor asked if the ticket belonged to 'Big-Talk'.

'Big-Talk' realised that he could not lie anymore. The police, and now the prosecutor, had enough evidence to convict him. The magistrate found 'Big-Talk' Sikhondze guilty.

Exercises

1. Can you list all the evidence used to prove that 'Big-Talk' robbed Mrs Maseko's house? The first bit of evidence has been listed for you.

Evidence found at the house	'Big-Talk' Sikhondze
a) fingerprints	a) his fingerprints match those found at the house.
b) _____	b) _____

2. There were four people at the hearing of 'Big-Talk' Sikhondze.

John Fakudze: his job was to collect evidence for the case.

The prosecutor: his job was to argue that Sikhondze was guilty.

The defence lawyer: his job was to argue that Sikhondze was not guilty.

The magistrate: his job was to decide whether Sikhondze was guilty or not.

Which of the four people do you think is most like a historian?

- a) Do you think that a historian needs only to collect evidence, like John Fakudze?
- b) Do you think that a historian needs to believe only one side of the story and just write about one side? The prosecutor tried to prove only one thing: that 'Big-Talk' was guilty.
- c) The defence lawyer also tried to prove one thing: that 'Big-Talk' was not guilty. Is a historian like the lawyer?
- d) Or do you think the historian should be like a magistrate? The magistrate listens to both sets of evidence and then decides whether someone is guilty or not guilty.

Think about the questions above. Then vote for the person you think is most like a historian in the way he/she works.

Historians like policemen, collect *evidence*. They decide in what order events occurred.

Historians, like magistrates, look at all the evidence collected before they decide what happened in the past. Sometimes, however, historians only look at some parts of the evidence and not at other parts. We call this *bias*. When they do this, they are behaving like the prosecutor, who was trying to convict 'Big-Talk'.

5C. Bias

We always need to know who the historians are who tell us about the past. This is because all historians are a little bit biased. Whatever historians write about reflects their views. A historian from Swaziland writing about the past is often interested in the things that *Swazi* people did and said; a historian from Botswana is often interested in the things *Tswana* people said and did.

We should not be surprised to find that the students of Mater Dolorosa think that their school had the best history in Swaziland. That is their view. Probably the students at another school would disagree. When we read the history of the Mater Dolorosa School, we remember that the students are a little bit biased.

Sometimes bias can be a very serious problem. This happens when historians deliberately ignore or leave out some of the evidence. For a long time in South Africa, white historians said that South Africa was an empty country when the first whites arrived. We know that this is not true. The Zulu, Pedi and many other people were living in South Africa when the first whites arrived. The white historians claimed that the country was empty because they wanted the land. This is an example of serious bias.

When we know *who* the historian is, we are able to work out what his/her bias is. This helps us to judge how good his/her history is.

We now have an answer to the question 'What is history?'. It has two parts:

1. **History is the story of changes in the past.** We need to know *when* things happened, so that we can see what changed. And we need to look at the changes that happened to ordinary people as well as kings and heroes.
2. **History is the investigation of the past by historians.** Historians investigating the past collect evidence. Then they write history. Sometimes they are very biased and leave out some of the evidence. We must

always look at the way historians investigate the past to see how well they have done their job.

Exercises

Read these two newspaper articles and then answer the questions.

Massacre of Innocent Villagers

Tirian Times

Yesterday the Government of Mala showed its truly evil ways. It ordered a regiment of its most bloodthirsty soldiers to attack the village of Bornud which is well within the Tirian border.

Of the one hundred adults living in Bornud, the Malanese murderers killed at least fifty. According to one eyewitness, who survived by hiding in the roof of a hut, women were raped and helpless children tortured.

Bornud is a small agricultural village. The people are simple honest folk. The men make their living by looking after sheep and goats on the hillsides. The women and children keep chickens and grow whatever crops they can. Bornud is not fertile and life there is hard.

The Government of Mala claims that the Bornud villagers were smuggling weapons into Mala to help the rebels fighting against the Mala dictatorship. All Tirians know that the Malanese are lying when they say the villagers are helping the rebels.

Patriotic citizens of Tiria call upon their just and good Government to teach the murdering Malanese a lesson. Let the Tirians show the Malanese and the world that they will not stand idle while the Tirian border is violated and innocent men, women and children are massacred.

Loyal Mala Soldiers Teach Cross Border Raiders a Lesson

Mala Herald

Yesterday a group of guerrillas from the Tirian stronghold of Bornud were surprised by a crack Malanese commando. The Tirian guerrillas had penetrated at least five kilometres into Mala.

The Tirian guerrillas were well armed with automatic weapons, rocket launchers and missiles. There is no doubt that the guerrillas were on their way to rendezvous with the traitors fighting against the legitimate Government of Mala. After heavy fighting between the Tirian gunrunners and the Malanese soldiers, the Malanese won a decisive victory. The Tirians lost well over one hundred men. The Malanese soldiers suffered no casualties at all. The soldiers also did not take any prisoners.

1. The newspaper articles are reporting the same incident yet there are many differences between the two. List the differences.
2. Are there any similarities between the two articles? What are they?
3. Who do you think is telling the truth? Give reasons for your answers.
4. Imagine you are part of a United Nations investigation team who are trying to establish exactly what happened because Tiria and Mala have since declared war on each other. What would you do?

In other words, history is not only *what* we know about the past (the stories), it is also *how* we know it (the investigation).

Chapter Six *Writing Your Own History*

Now that you know what history is, and why it is important, perhaps you would like to write your own history, like the students at Mater Dolorosa.

How did the students at Mater Dolorosa start out?

1. They found a very old photograph of their school.
2. They compared it with Mater Dolorosa School today.
3. They were really surprised. How the school had changed! So they decided to write about these changes.



Mater Dolorosa, 1930



Mater Dolorosa, today

6A. Choosing a topic

You don't have to write about the history of your school. There are many other topics that you can choose. You can write about a person, family, or a club, but remember, you must try to look at important *changes*. Once you have decided on a topic you must begin your research.

The next step in writing history is to draw up a list of questions on your topic.

The questions which you start with in this way are not the only questions that you will try to answer. As you find out information, you will think of more questions.

Do you remember the questions that historians ask when they investigate the past? You need to ask those same questions about your topic:

- what happened first?
- when did it start?
- why did it start?
- what happened next?
- how did things change?
- why did things change?

6B. Collecting evidence

The next step in writing history is to collect *evidence*. In the next three chapters you will learn about the different kinds of evidence that historians use. As you read about each kind of evidence in this book, try to find that kind of evidence for your topic.

There are three kinds of historical evidence:



1. Written Evidence



2. Oral Evidence



3. Physical Evidence

Exercise

Make a list of questions for your topic.

Everyone can write his/her own history.

Chapter Seven *Written Evidence*

Written sources of evidence have writing on them which tells us something about the past. Think of some of the things that you use which have writing on them. Books, letters, newspapers, telegrams and even telephone directories, can help the historian to answer questions about the past. Where do historians find written evidence?

7A. Asking people for written evidence

Historians ask other people for old letters, diaries or other documents on their topics.

The students at Mater Dolorosa asked their headmaster for written evidence. He gave them old school reports. The reports told the students how many students there were at the school each year. From this evidence, the students were able to see how much Mater Dolorosa had grown over the years — from about 10 students in 1914 to 414 students in 1987.

7B. Archives

Historians use archives. Archives keep all kinds of written evidence about the past. They also keep old newspapers. The archives in Swaziland are at Lobamba.

The Mater Dolorosa students visited the National Archives at Lobamba. In the archives they found old documents which showed them that their school was founded in 1914. They found stories about Mater Dolorosa in the old newspapers at the archives. They also found old photographs of Mater Dolorosa (see p 19).

7C. Libraries

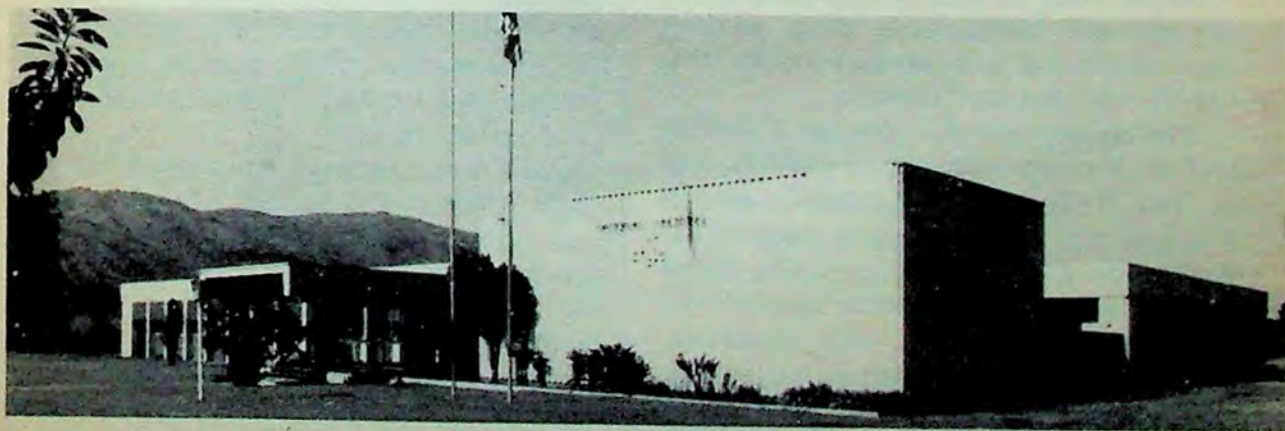
Historians use libraries to find books that have information on their topics.

The Mater Dolorosa students visited the Mbabane Public Library. There they found nothing about Mater Dolorosa, but they did find books on Swazi history which told them what else was happening in Swaziland at the time when Mater Dolorosa was founded.

7D. Using written evidence

Context

These books on Swazi history helped them to find out about the context in which Mater Dolorosa was established. Context refers to all the other things around the topic which you are studying which affect your topic. Knowing the



Swaziland National Archives, Lobamba

context of an event helps you to understand why the event itself took place.

If you are studying the history of Swaziland it is helpful to know what was happening to Swaziland's neighbours. That knowledge would give you a context for Swazi history.

The students studying the history of their school found it useful to find out about the history of Mbabane. As Mater Dolorosa is a Catholic school, they also found it useful to find out more about the churches in Swaziland. Mbabane and the spread of Christianity in Swaziland were two different contexts in which they looked at the history of their school.

Here is an extract from one of the books that the Mater Dolorosa students found in the Mbabane Public Library.

By the 1930s up to thirty small Christian missions had settled in the Swazi area. Methodists, Anglicans, Lutherans and Baptists had arrived before 1900. They were followed in the next twenty years by the AME Church, the (ex-pentecostal) Nazarene church, the first 'Zionists', the Roman Catholics, and the Seventh Day Adventists. Yet traditional religion clearly remained the national religion. Annual ceremonies, notably the *incwala*, were retained to link traditional religion with the health of the paramount chief and the welfare of the nation.

Royal schools were founded at Zombodze and Matsapha to avoid sending royal children to mission schools. By 1940 only two chiefs were Christians.

The Nazarenes, the Roman Catholics and the Zionists all began to grow rapidly in the 1930s. The Nazarene church founded the country's main hospital at Bremersdorp (Manzini) in 1928, from which medical services were spread over Swaziland hand-in-hand with preaching. The British colonial authorities fearing that American missionaries would spread dangerous democratic ideas, insisted that the hospital's superintendent be British.

The Roman Catholics meanwhile increased their educational work and appointed their first bishop in 1939.

From: Neil Parsons, *A New History of Southern Africa*, Macmillan, 1982, pp 265-6.

Exercises

1. What does the first paragraph tell us about missions like Mater Dolorosa?
2. In what way did this information help the Mater Dolorosa students write about the history of their school?
3. What change does this extract show us?

7E. Note-taking

The Mater Dolorosa students found a lot of historical evidence in the archives and the library. They found so much information it would have taken them weeks to copy it all out. Instead of copying it out, they took notes.

How do you know what to write down and what to leave out when you take notes?

Exercise

Read the extract about churches in Swaziland again. To take notes, first go through the extract and choose the most important words. Copy them into your notebook. Try not to choose more than about twenty words. Remember, you are only looking for the most important things that the extract says.

Now think of a heading for each of the paragraphs in the extract. For example, you could head the first paragraph 'The beginning of Christianity in Swaziland' or 'Christianity's small beginnings in Swaziland'.

Write each heading down, about five lines apart. You will use the five lines for more detailed notes. Keep your notes as

short as possible. Look only for the most important points.

We have done a heading and extra notes for the first paragraph to help you.

Christianity is small in Swaziland at first

1. Few missionaries in Swaziland before 1900.

2. Thirty small missions by 1930, but traditional religion still important, especially *incwala*.

7F. What about pictures?

People, archives and libraries all keep old photos or drawings. Pictures can be a good source of historical evidence, but they are not quite the same as written evidence. Look at these pictures. They both seem to tell us the

same story but what happens when you read the sentences under each picture? Do the pictures still tell the same story?



'Wait!' cried the old lady. 'You bought the chicken but you have forgotten your change.'

What does this tell you about the difference between pictures and writing?



'Help, help!' cried the old lady. 'The thief has stolen my chicken.'

Exercise

Collect written evidence and pictures for your project. Don't forget to look out for the bias of the writers of the evidence.

Written evidence tells us about the past from the view of a particular writer.

Chapter Eight *Oral Evidence*

All over the world, before writing became common, people *told* each other the news of the day.

In England and in many parts of Europe long ago a man used to go around the town *shouting* the news at the top of his voice. Sometimes he rang a bell to get people to listen to him.

People also *talked* about their history. Parents told their children about all the things that happened in the past. We call this *oral* information because it is spoken.

Now there are newspapers, radios and television. There is no longer any need for a man to go around shouting out the news to the people. However, not everything is written down. There are many important topics which people only *talk* about. For example, there are very few books written about precolonial times, but many people *tell* stories about what happened in those times.

When we investigate the history of Swaziland before *c.* 1844, we have to use *oral evidence*. There is no written evidence. Evidence was only written down after *c.* 1844 when the first people from Europe came to Swaziland and wrote down what they saw and heard.

We can also use oral evidence to find out about the history of Swaziland after *c.* 1844. We add that oral evidence to the written evidence.

The students at Mater Dolorosa first collected *written* evidence about the history of their school. Then they *spoke* to ex-pupils about the history of the school. They added this *oral evidence* to the written evidence which they had collected.

Oral evidence is collected by asking people for information. People may tell you about things that they heard from other people (traditions), or they may tell you about something that happened to them (testimonies).



Students at Mater Dolorosa learn the techniques of collecting oral evidence

Oral evidence can be collected using a tape-recorder and a cassette. It can also be collected by being written down.

8A. Oral traditions

At home you have probably heard stories about the things that your grandparents and great-grandparents did. Your grandparents told these stories to your parents, and your parents told them to you. Oral evidence which has been handed from generation to generation, like this, we call *oral tradition*.

Stories

Here is an oral tradition told by Mhabha Msane. It is a story which he heard from his father:

Mhabha Msane's story

Ngolotsheni was the leader of my people, the Msane. He lived a long time ago. The

Msane people lived with the Ndwandwe under King Zwide.

The Ndwandwe and the Msane were attacked by Shaka, the mighty Zulu king. Shaka defeated them. Zwide and Ngolotsheni were forced to run away. Ngolotsheni came to KaNgwane.

He arrived here, at eZikhotheni, where we Msane people live today. He found that Sobhuza I was the king at Shiselweni. Sobhuza's *induna* was Mgcoyiza. Ngolotsheni was sent to live under Mgcoyiza. He married one of Mgcoyiza's daughters. 'But,' said Mhabha Msane, 'I do not remember her name.'

One day, the Zulus attacked Shiselweni. They burnt the king's *umuzi* there and Sobhuza I was forced to flee. Mgcoyiza also ran away. Ngolotsheni was left behind.

Ngolotsheni had a special duty at eZikhotheni. He watched for the Zulu army. He watched from the top of Mkhwakhwa Mountain. He watched just like a person guarding a field of crops against birds.

Then one day, in the late afternoon, Ngolotsheni saw the Zulu army. It was coming to attack!

Ngolotsheni went home and slept. Early the next day, Ngolotsheni set off for Odi-



Artist's drawing of Ngolotsheni on his journey

dini, the home of the new Swazi king, Mswazi.

Ngolotsheni arrived at Odidini. He found that Mswazi was not there. He was at Hhohho. The *induna* at Odidini said to Ngolotsheni, 'Go on, you will arrive quickly and report to the king at Hhohho, at Ntonjeni.'

Ngolotsheni arrived at Hhohho on the second day. He found the king and reported to him. Mswazi said, 'Awu, go back to Odidini and tell the *induna* to gather up the army to go and meet these Zulu.'

On the third day Ngolotsheni returned to Odidini with the message. He gave Mswazi's message to the *induna*.

The *induna* said, 'You, Ngolotsheni, you go ahead and see where the Zulu army is. You will meet us and tell us where to find the Zulu. You will travel alone, and will take only one day to get there.'

Ngolotsheni left Odidini on the fourth day and travelled home. When he arrived at eZikhotheni, his knees would not bend. They were stiff because he had walked so far!

Water was boiled and Ngolotsheni's knees were heated. Then they were covered with fat. A soft porridge of sorghum was cooked and Ngolotsheni drank it while he was still standing.

Then he began to bend. He bent, and he was helped to bend. This is where the proverb '*Uyagotjwa amadolo njengo Ngolotsheni*' (you will be bent at your knees like Ngolotsheni), comes from.

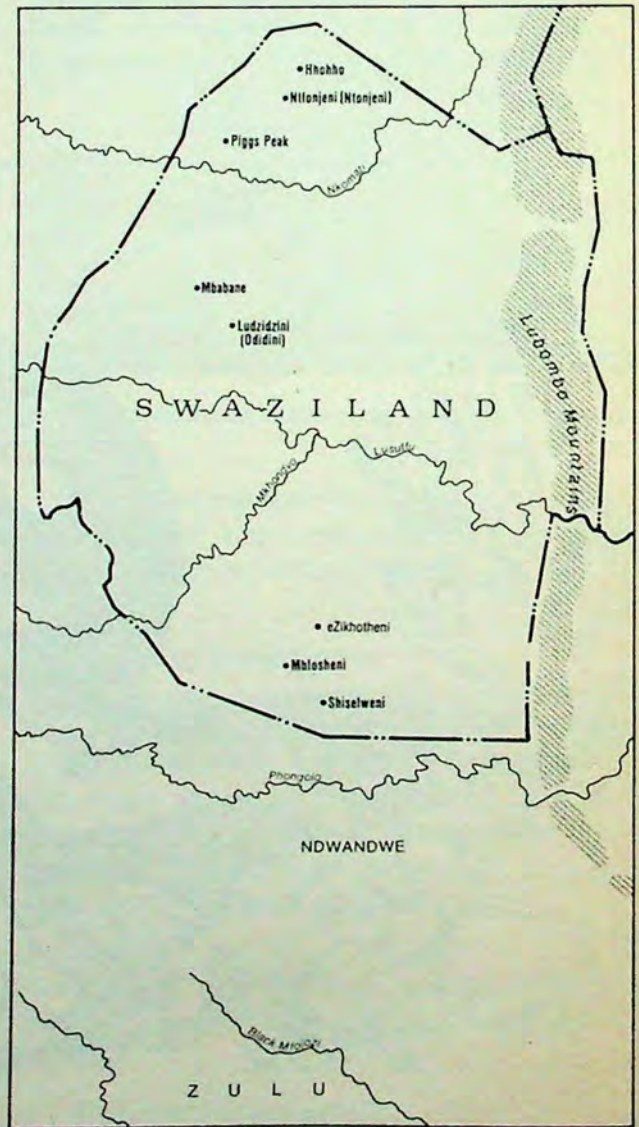
Ngolotsheni warned the Swazi of the Zulu attack. It was no surprise. And the Swazi were able to defeat the Zulu. Ngolotsheni was a hero!

Ngolotsheni *khonza'd* the Swazi king, and was given this place at eZikhotheni. Today we Msane people still live here at Zikhotheni.

Mbhabha Msane ended his story there. He was very proud of his ancestor, Ngolotsheni.

Exercise

Copy the map below into your books. Draw on the map the four days of Ngolotsheni's journey. Do each day in a different colour. How many kilometres did Ngolotsheni travel in four days? (Your answer need not be exact.)



Map of the area crossed by Ngolotsheni

Stories like the one about Ngolotsheni are not the only kinds of oral tradition. As you have seen, even proverbs can tell us about the past.

Tinganekwane

Tinganekwane (tales) are a kind of oral tradition. Do you know the story of 'Zim-Zim and Litje Likantunjambili?' Some of you will say 'That is not history' or 'Did it really happen?'. Of course, Zim-Zim is not a true story, but it can tell us about the past. Litje Likantunjambili is a famous place in Swazi history: it is the name of the grave site of a very early king, Mswati I. The story reminds us that at times in the past, people did not feel safe. There were many wars, and people hid away in caves from their attackers. You will learn more about this in Section B.

Songs and poems

Songs and poems are another kind of oral tradition. The *tibongo* of Sobhuza II tell us about past kings as well as about the things that happened during his lifetime.

*Sobhuza angeke achawule sandla
sa King George
Kepha uyawuchawula ngombane we Zulu
Kabili litulu liphatimulile
ekhatsi esigodlweni se Mangisi
bakubonga ngetimangaliso lotentako
'lobudvodza lobukhulu kangaka bufike-
njani?'*
*Nkhweletsheni ya Ngwane, ya Mahlokohla,
watsi, walitfolo enkhabeteni,
La, ku Ndvungunye,
La, ku Somhlolo.*

They said Sobhuza would not clasp the hand
Of George King of England
But he clasped the hand with lightning of heaven
Twice the heavens flashed
Within the palace of the English
They praised you with wonder

'This manhood so great, whence did it come?'

Rock thrush of Ngwane, of Mahlokohla,
You said, you inherited it from the navel,
Here, from Ndvungunye,
Here, from Somhlolo.

Lists

Lists of kings or places can be another kind of oral tradition. Here is a list of the kings of Swaziland:

The king of Swaziland is Mswati III,
the son of Sobhuza II,
the son of Ngwane V,
the son of Mbandzeni,
the son of Mswati II,
the son of Sobhuza I,
the son of Ndvungunye,
the son of Ngwane IV,
the son of Dlamini III,
who is the descendant of many other kings.

Lists like these are called *genealogies*.

Oral traditions are valuable to the historians because they tell about things that happened before people used writing.

Exercise

Draw up your own genealogy. Start with your name, then your father's name, then the name of his father, your grandfather, and so on. You could also start with your name, then write your mother's name, and then the name of her mother, your grandmother, and so on, as far back as you can go. Remember that if you do a genealogy through your mother, you must write down the *tibongo* (surnames) of your mother, grandmother, and so on, as these will be different for each name. See how far back you can trace your genealogy. You may have to ask someone in your family to help you. If you do this, you will be collecting oral tradition.

8B. Oral testimonies

Oral testimonies are the stories which people tell about the things which they have seen or done themselves.

Oral testimonies are important because they tell us about the history of people and things within living memory. Often, this is the only way we can find out about ordinary people, because they are seldom written about.

Exercises

1. Are the following *true* or *false*:
 - a) Oral testimonies are stories about famous people.
 - b) Oral testimonies tell us about the recent past.
 - c) Oral traditions tell us about the distant past.
 - d) Oral testimonies and oral traditions are both part of oral evidence.
2. Fill in the missing words:
 - a) Oral evidence which has been told from generation to generation is called _____.
 - b) Oral _____ are important: they tell us about the history of people and things within living memory.
3. Name at least three kinds of oral tradition.
4. Write a paragraph on the similarities and differences between oral traditions and oral testimonies.

8C. Using oral evidence

Collecting oral evidence is not simply getting the *story* down on tape or in your notebook. You also need to find out as much as possible about the *person* telling the story (the teller). This often helps explain why he/she remembers particular things.

Remembering and forgetting

You might be asking yourself 'How did Mbha-bha Msane remember the whole story of Ngolotsheni?'

Long ago, before things were written down, it was considered to be very important to remember a story properly. There were many ways to help people remember stories. For example, some stories had patterns which made them easier to remember. Poems, songs, lists and proverbs all have patterns which help people to remember oral evidence.

Sometimes special people were chosen to become the oral historians of a group. They had to work very hard at remembering the traditions. If they made mistakes they were punished. *Timbongi*, for example, make sure that they remember all the praises. They know that if they forget some, the people will notice.

Of course, people do sometimes forget parts of a story. Or they remember the parts of the story which they like, and forget the rest.

Changing oral evidence

Sometimes people change the stories which they tell. They may do this by accident.

Sometimes people add their own views and opinions to oral evidence. Sometimes they deliberately change the oral evidence to suit their own interests. Like written evidence, oral evidence can be *biased*.

Exercises

1. Play the Tray Game. This game shows you how easy it is to *forget* things even when you try very hard to remember them.
2. Play the Broken Telephone Game. This game shows you how easily people can *accidentally change* a story.
3. Play the Mock Fight Game. This game shows you how oral evidence can be *biased*.

8D. The person telling the story

Information about the person (the teller) telling the story helps you decide whether the story is reliable. For example, it is important to know how old the teller is. If you know that the teller of the story is very old and forgetful, you know that he/she may have forgotten part of the story. The teller may also have muddled up parts of the story.

Exercise

Mbhabha Msane was forgetful. What did he forget?

If you know how old the teller is, you can work out whether he or she was alive when the events of the story took place.

Exercise

Was Mbhabha Msane alive when Ngolotsheni warned Mswati?

It is important to know where the teller lives, and has lived in the past. A teller who has lived in one place for a long time will know many things about that place.

Exercises

1. Where did Ngolotsheni live?
2. Where did Mbhabha Msane live?
3. What does this tell you?

It is important to know if the teller is telling you the story for a *special reason*. If you know that the teller is telling you the story for a special

reason, you will also know that the teller may change a part of the story to suit that special reason. Knowing about the teller of the story can help you to recognise his or her bias.

Exercises

1. Can you recognise a bias in Mbhabha Msane's story?
2. Why do you think Mbhabha says 'Mswazi' instead of 'Mswati', 'induna' instead of 'indvuna'?

It is important to know whether the teller is an honest person or not. If the teller is known to be a liar, you can expect he/she may tell you something that is not true.

8E. The Mater Dolorosa students collected oral evidence

The Mater Dolorosa students discovered that collecting oral evidence was more difficult than collecting written evidence. The staff at the National Archives and at the Mbabane Public Library had helped them find the written material they needed. Then they just sat down and made notes.

Interviewing

Collecting oral evidence meant that they had to talk to people, to *interview* them. The students found that it is not easy to take notes when a person is talking quickly. The students tape-recorded one of their interviews, which made it easier to get all the information.

Questions

The students found that some people did not know what to say. To help them, the students prepared a list of questions on all the things they wanted to know about Mater Dolorosa.

Bias

They also asked the people whom they interviewed about themselves. This helped them

with the problem of *bias*. When they interviewed John Bongwe, an ex-pupil of Mater Dolorosa, all he talked about was soccer at Mater Dolorosa. It sounded as though the students did nothing but play sport in his day. Then they found out that John is a top sports administrator in Swaziland, and a keen soccer fan, and they realised that his information reflected *his* view. It was just a little bit biased towards sport. He loves soccer!

Exercise

Collect oral evidence for your project.

Remember to:

- prepare a list of questions on your topic to ask the people you are interviewing
- introduce yourself properly and explain your project clearly
- ask the people you talk to for information about themselves (age, jobs,

place of birth, place of residence etc.)

- take a notebook or a tape-recorder with you. A tape-recorder is not essential, but if you are using one you need a cassette and batteries
- try to find a quiet place for the interview
- ask people *when* things took place
- thank the people for helping you.

Oral traditions are stories about things that happened a long time ago, and which parents have told and retold to their children and grandchildren.

Oral testimonies are the stories which people tell about the things which they have seen or done themselves, in the recent past.

Chapter Nine *Physical Evidence*

When we talk about physical sources of evidence, we mean things which are *tangible*. Tangible means that we can touch the object, or even hold it.

We can touch books, diaries and letters but we still have to read them before they can tell us about the past. There are other sources of evidence which we cannot read, but which still tell us about the past.

9A. Environment

A historian may use the position of a river, mountain or a cave to answer a question about history. For example, the Swazi king Sobhuza I built his first capital in Shiselweni in southern Swaziland. Historians ask the question: Why did Sobhuza I build his capital in Shiselweni?

Good land

Shiselweni has many rivers and streams. There was plenty of water for people and cattle. There was good grazing land in Shiselweni. Cattle grew fat there. They did not have to travel great distances in search of winter grazing.

There may be other reasons why Sobhuza chose Shiselweni but the two reasons, plenty of water and good grazing, are what we call *physical evidence*. We can see and touch the rivers and streams and we can see and touch the grass.

Some parts of the environment do not change over time. Rivers and mountains are still in the same place as they were when Sobhuza I lived in Shiselweni. Other parts of the environment do change over time. In places where there are too many cattle, poor grasses



The environment at Shiselweni

grow instead of good grazing. This is called over-grazing. Over-grazing also causes soil erosion.

There is a lot of soil erosion in Shiselweni today, and it is difficult to farm there. But in the time of Sobhuza I, there was no soil erosion. It was easy to farm there. Some experts on soils say that one of the reasons for this soil erosion is because too many people farmed in this rich area for too long.

Sobhuza did not stay at Shiselweni. He moved his capital to KaPhunga. Historians ask the question: Why did Sobhuza move to KaPhunga?

A high mountain

Historians went there and they found:

- a) The new capital was on top of a very high mountain.
- b) Water was not easy to get because the streams are in the valleys, far below the mountain.

c) The grazing at KaPhunga was not as good as at Shiselweni.

d) From the top of the high mountain, you can see in many different directions for a great distance. The people on top of the mountain could see enemies coming from a long way off, and they had plenty of time to organise their defences.

So Sobhuza had to leave the open, rolling grassland of Shiselweni and move to the mountain fortress of KaPhunga because he needed protection from attack.

Looking at the environment helps us to understand why Sobhuza moved from Shiselweni to KaPhunga. *Environment* is one kind of physical evidence that tells us about the past.

9B. Old objects

Another kind of physical evidence is the *remains of things from the past*. Often these old objects were made by people.



The environment at KaPhunga

For example, in the Highveld areas of western Swaziland we find many old stone walls. Some of these stone walls are broken down. Others are well preserved. We can see that these stone walls are the walls of homesteads, and cattle and goat enclosures (see photograph on p 38). In some places, we can still see the old hut floors. These walls and floors are the *physical remains* of old homesteads. In some of the old homesteads, we find the bones of dead animals, old tools and pieces of broken pots.

9C. Archaeology

Often old objects, like hut floors, bones or pots do not lie on top of the ground. They are covered by sand. Sometimes the earth that covers them is very thick. To find these very old physical remains, people have to dig for them in the ground. This kind of investigation is called *archaeology*. Archaeologists dig up old objects in a very careful way. Sometimes, they work so carefully they use a toothbrush instead of a spade.

Historians use these physical remains (stone walls, hut floors, bones and pottery) to tell them about the way in which people lived a long time ago.

9D. The Mater Dolorosa students collected physical evidence

The students at Mater Dolorosa also found an old object which was part of the history of their school. They discovered the first crucifix from the Mater Dolorosa Church. One of the nuns had kept it safely for many years!

Exercises

1. Try to visit a site where there are the remains of old stone-walled enclosures, such as at Londolozzi in north-western Swaziland, or the stone fortress at Balekane.
2. Visit the National Museum at Lobamba to see their collection of old objects. In the museum you will see old pots, tools, skeletons and many other things.
3. List five kinds of physical evidence and say where you would find these.
4. See if you can find any physical evidence for your project.

Remember to check whether:

- the environment is important for your topic
- there are any old objects that are important for your topic. These may include old buildings, grave sites or caves. Make sure you don't remove anything. Make a drawing of the objects or places or photograph them instead.

When you have finished collecting evidence for your project turn to Appendix A at the back of this book for tips on how to organise your information.

Physical evidence can be information about the environment, or the remains of old objects.

Part Three Digging for the Story of the First People

Chapter Ten *History from Small Remains*

Sometimes archaeologists only find one bone, or a small piece of pottery. From these very small pieces of physical evidence they have to find out as much as they can. When archaeologists find old bones or pieces of pot they can work out roughly how old the object is. How do they do this?

10A. Radio-carbon dating

All plants and animals take in a gas called carbon. They take in two kinds of carbon, called carbon 12 and carbon 14.

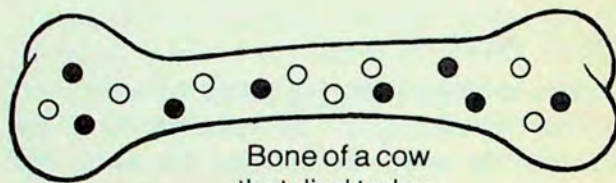
When the plant or animal dies, it no longer takes in carbon. In the dead animal or plant, the amount of carbon 12 stays exactly the same forever. However, the amount of carbon 14 gets less every year. It decreases the *same* amount every year.

The scientist looks at the amount of carbon 12 in the remains of a plant or animal. Then he/she looks at the amount of carbon 14. When there is very little carbon 14, compared to the amount of carbon 12, the scientist knows the remains are very old. In fact, by measuring exactly how much carbon 12 there is, and how much carbon 14, and by calculating the difference, the scientist knows how old the remains are.

If the bone is more than 40 000 years old, scientists cannot calculate its age because there is too little carbon 14 left.

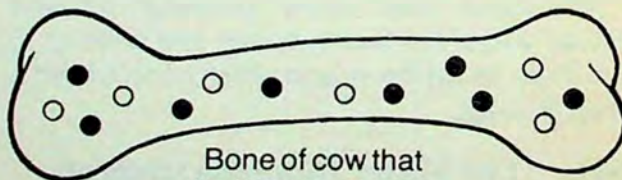
To help you to understand how radio-carbon dating works, study the different diagrams on this page.

carbon 12 ● carbon 14 ○



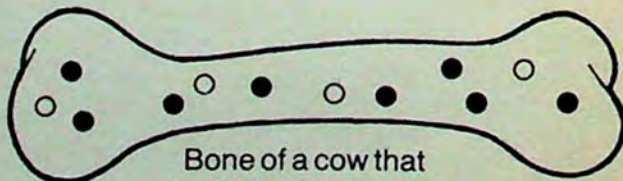
Bone of a cow that died today.

How many carbon 12s are there?
How many carbon 14s are there?



Bone of cow that died 500 years ago.

How many carbon 12s are there?
How many carbon 14s are there?



Bone of a cow that died 1 000 years ago.

How many carbon 12s are there?
How many carbon 14s are there?

10B. History in rubbish dumps

Archaeologists try to find the places where people of long ago left their rubbish. They call these rubbish dumps from long ago *middens*. Middens are very good sources of physical evidence because they contain many remains from the past all in one place. Middens can tell archaeologists and historians what people of long ago ate, what they wore and what they did during the day.

Exercise

Place a sheet of newspaper on a table. Now, empty the classroom dustbin on to the newspaper. What could the classroom dustbin tell an archaeologist about your class?

Archaeologists use physical remains (often very small ones) to find out about the past.

Chapter Eleven *Hunter-gatherers*

Archaeological evidence tells us about the first people who lived in the area that is today called Swaziland. These people lived here thousands of years before the birth of Christ. At that time, there was no writing in southern Africa. And, of course, people cannot remember oral traditions from so long ago.

The physical evidence which archaeologists collect tells us about periods of history for which there is neither written evidence nor oral evidence. Sometimes the remains collected by archaeologists are very small, but they tell a big story.

11A. The hunter-gatherers

The first people who lived in the area that is today called Swaziland lived a very different life to the one we live today. We call these early people 'hunter-gatherers'.

Food to eat

The hunter-gatherers moved about from place to place, and gathered wild vegetables and fruit. They also hunted animals. They made traps out of sticks and grass for catching birds and small animals. They hunted buck, but sometimes they killed elephants or even hippos. They used poison-tipped arrows with bows, and spears.

These people studied the habits of the animals they hunted. They also learnt a lot about the plants they ate. They knew which plants were poisonous, which plants were good for eating and which made good medicines.

A place to live

The hunter-gatherers were nomads. This means that they did not build homes that lasted for many years. They had to move about looking for animals to hunt and plants to

eat. It was a waste of time to build a house. Instead, they lived in caves or in the shelter of big rocks.

Hunter-gatherers owned few things. They carried everything that they owned with them in skin bags.

Sharing

In hunter-gatherer bands, everyone was equal. There were no rich people and no poor people. They had no chiefs. All the older people, men and women, decided what was best for the band.

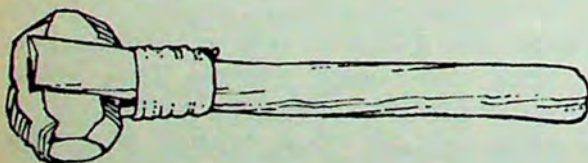
Tools

The hunter-gatherers used tools to hunt and to dig for plants and roots. The tools they made were arrows, spears, axes, knives and digging sticks. These tools had wooden handles and blades made of stone. Some tools were made of bone.

Because the hunter-gatherers made tools from stone, this period of history is called the Stone Age.



A Stone-Age arrow



A Stone-Age hammer

Protecting the environment

The hunter-gatherers also knew how to protect their environment. They took care not to kill all the animals in one area. They did not dig up all the important plants in one area.

Exercise

Write a paragraph on why the early people were called hunter-gatherers.

11B. Evidence on the hunter-gatherers

Perhaps you are wondering how we know the little we do about these people. After all, they lived a very, very long time ago. They lived in Swaziland for over 50 000 years. This is the evidence that historians use for this time:

- Archaeologists found bones of the hunter-gatherers and of the animals they hunted. They found a human skeleton which is 3 000 years old at Border Cave on the eastern border of Swaziland.
- Many of the hunter-gatherers' stone tools have been found. You can see some of these in the National Museum at Lobamba. You might find stone tools on the floors of caves, or along the banks of rivers.



One stone used against another to make a Stone-Age tool

- c) The hunter-gatherers painted pictures in caves and rock shelters. These pictures tell us about the hunter-gatherers' lives. They tell us what animals they hunted and what weapons they hunted with. They also tell us about the rituals of the hunter-gatherers. There are many rock paintings in Swaziland. You can visit these rock paintings.
- d) The Khoisan people who live in the Kgalakgadi (Kalahari) Desert in Botswana today are also hunter-gatherers. We think that their lifestyle may be similar to the hunter-gatherers who lived in Swaziland long ago. We can learn some things about the hunter-gatherers from these Khoisan people. But we must remember that the Khoisan in modern Botswana are also very different from the hunter-gatherers of long ago.



Time-line showing the period of hunter-gatherer occupation of the Swaziland area

Exercises

1. Read the following statements and say whether you think they are *true* or *false*. Give reasons for your answers.
 - a) We still find hunter-gatherers in Swaziland today.
 - b) The hunter-gatherers who lived in the Swaziland area thousands of years ago spoke siSwati.
 - c) The hunter-gatherers were able to hunt large animals like elephants and hippos.
2. There are similarities and differences between the Khoisan who live in the Kgalakgadi in Botswana today, and the hunter-gatherers who lived in the Swaziland area long ago. Try to think of some of the similarities and some of the differences.

Hints: the Kgalakgadi is a desert: Botswana is a modern country.

3. The hunter-gatherers who lived in the Swaziland area long ago left paintings on the walls of the caves and rock shelters in which they stayed. Try to visit one of these caves or rock shelters to see the rock art. There are rock paintings all over Swaziland.

The hunter-gatherers who lived in Swaziland long ago lived in a very different way to modern people.

Chapter Twelve *Early Farmers*

By about A.D. 200, a new group of people were slowly moving into the area which we call Swaziland. These people came from further north in Africa. This new group of people lived in a different way from the hunter-gatherers. They were farmers.

12A. Life of the early farmers

Planting crops

The new group planted crops, like sorghum, melons, beans and gourds. The early farmers only grew a small number of crops. They planted grains like sorghum and millet, and vegetables like beans and pumpkins. If there was a drought or flood, there was not enough food. Then they had to hunt more animals or gather more plants.

Cutting down trees

The early farmers cut down trees to make fields. Heavy tools were needed to chop down

trees, to dig in hard soil, to weed and to harvest the crops properly. Because the early farmers used tools made from iron, this period of history is called the Iron Age. The Iron Age began, in the area we now call Swaziland, around the year A.D. 200 and continued into the 1800s. Archaeologists have found many iron tools in this area.

Settling down

Crops took a long time to grow and harvest. So the farmers settled in one place for a longer time than the hunter-gatherers. The farmers made long-lasting homes out of reeds and grass. Later they made homes out of stone. Today we can still see the remains of these stone-walled homes in the Highveld areas of Swaziland. Look at the photograph below. The farmers lived in villages while the hunter-gatherers lived in nomadic bands.



Remains of stone-walled enclosures in the Highveld of Swaziland

Livestock

The early farmers kept animals. At first, the early farmers only kept sheep and goats. As the early farmers cleared more and more land, the amount of grazing land increased, so they started to keep cattle. Where did the cattle come from? They came from north-east Africa, and over thousands of years they spread southwards. Some of the early farmers started using the Highveld grasslands because they had good grazing for their cattle in summer.

Pottery

The early farmers also needed pots and bowls for storing their crops and for preparing food. Like the iron tools, we still find the remains of these pots today.



Iron-Age implements and tools

Trade

Another way to get food during times of trouble was to trade. Cattle or other goods, such as tools, or pots, or bangles, were exchanged for food. The people who went to live in the Highveld did not always grow enough crops. So they traded their healthy cattle in exchange for crops from the fertile low-lying areas where it was easier to grow mealies and sorghum.

People traded many different kinds of things. Some things were only to be found in one area and not in other areas. People from areas where these items were not found traded cattle and crops for things like iron or copper from other areas.

These are some of the goods that were traded:

Iron	(tools and weapons)
Copper	(bangles)
Pigments	(dyes and ochre for colouring skin and hair)
Food	(salt, honey)
Animal skins	(clothing, shields)
Beads	(ornaments)

Archaeologists have found copper bangles in areas where there are no copper mines; they have found the seeds of crops in places where these crops do not grow. They know that these items were traded. Oral traditions also tell us about trade with these items.

12B. Development of chiefdoms

People who had plenty of these trade items were able to trade with them, and become rich and powerful. For example:

A man who lived near an iron mine produced many spears. He exchanged these spears for cattle. He then exchanged the cattle for wives. The wives and their children worked in the fields and produced crops. Cattle were also used to reward people who helped with the mining of the metal for the spears.

In this way, this person who controlled the iron mine became rich and powerful. Many people lived under him. Chiefdoms under the

control of such a rich and powerful chief grew big.

There are many oral traditions that tell us about the rise of big chiefdoms. We will study these more closely in the following chapters.

Exercise

Turn to Appendix B at the back of this book and play the Trade Game.

12C. Relations between the hunter-gatherers and the early farmers

The hunter-gatherers and early farmers lived alongside one another. Although their way of life was different there were some similarities. The early farmers also gathered wild fruit and vegetables, as did the hunter-gatherers. When they hunted and gathered they used stone tools, as well as their new iron tools.

Some of the hunter-gatherers joined the early farmers. Other hunter-gatherers left the areas where the farmers lived.

Sometimes, the hunter-gatherers hunted the farmers' cattle, sheep or goats. This led to fights, and sometimes some of the hunter-gatherers or early farmers got killed.

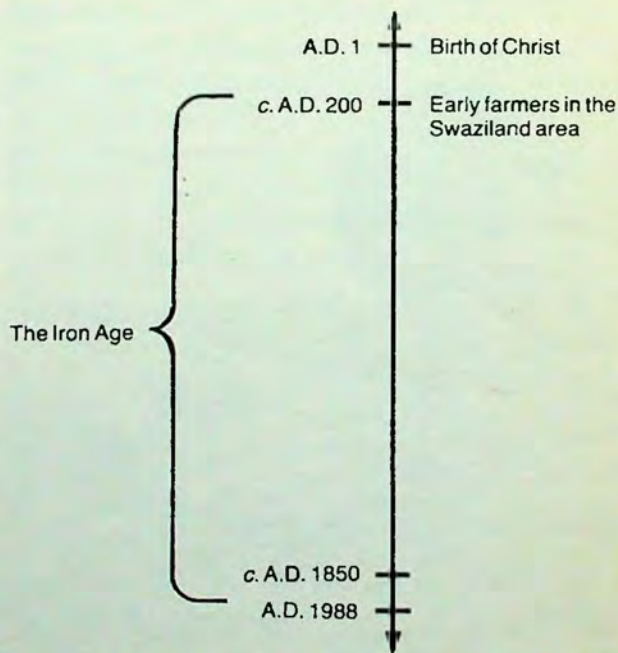
The rock art of the hunter-gatherers shows us that the early farmers and hunter-gatherers lived alongside each other. Oral traditions tell us the same thing.

Exercises

1. You have learnt that historians find out about the past using three kinds of evidence: oral, physical and written. What kind of evidence can historians use to find out about the early farmers? Is this

kind of evidence useful to historians studying the hunter-gatherers?

2. One kind of evidence is *not* at all useful to historians studying hunter-gatherers and early farmers. Which kind of evidence is this, and give reasons for your answer?
3. Some early farmers became wealthy. How did this happen?
4. Write a paragraph on whether you would prefer to be a hunter-gatherer or an early farmer. Give reasons for your choice.



Time-line showing the period of early farmer occupation of the Swaziland area

Early farmers who grew more crops and made more tools and pots than they needed, traded these items for other goods and became rich and powerful.

Section B The Precolonial Past
of Swaziland

THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON

FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE PRESENT TIME

BY NATHAN OLSZEWSKI

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I

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Part Four Investigating the Earliest Traditions: Mr Hlophe and the Swaziland Oral History Project

Chapter Thirteen *Philani's New Job*

In Chapter Three we met Philani Mkhali. Philani was born in 1970 and went to school at Central Primary in Manzini. Philani was lucky. He became an investigator of history. Let us find out more about Philani's history adventure.

Working at a furniture shop

When Philani left school he went to work in a furniture shop in Mbabane. Every Tuesday afternoon after work Philani went to soccer practice. Philani hoped to become a goalkeeper for the Mbabane Lions.

Mr Hlophe used to meet Philani at the soccer field. Mr Hlophe was a high school history teacher and a soccer coach. He was helping Philani to train.

Mr Hlophe had an exciting idea

One day Mr Hlophe said to Philani, 'I think I've got a job for you, Philani.' Philani looked surprised. He already had a job.

Mr Hlophe explained, 'I'm the president of the Swaziland Oral History Project. The project wants a group of young people to help write a book on Swazi history.'

'Why?' asked Philani, 'there are already a lot of books written on Swazi history.'

'This book will be different from the others,' Mr Hlophe explained. 'It will use mainly oral traditions.' Philani did not know what oral traditions were.

Mr Hlophe explained

Mr Hlophe explained to Philani, 'People seem to have forgotten what oral traditions are. Oral traditions, Philani, are stories about our past. They are very important to Swaziland and other African countries. Oral traditions tell us about the time before whites came to Africa. Our history did not start when the British made Swaziland a protectorate. It started long, long before that.'

Philani nodded.



Mr Hlophe continued, 'Some people think that because Swazi history was not written down before the British came, it is not important. But, our history before the British came is important. Unfortunately people don't often hear the oral traditions.'

Mr Hlophe warned of a danger

'Our society is changing quickly. One day we might find that all the people who know the oral traditions have died. A big part of our history will then be lost. We must record the oral traditions now. Then we can write a better history of Swaziland.'

13A. Plans for the new book

'Tell me about the new book,' asked Philani.

Mr Hlophe said, 'We want to collect many traditions about Swazi history before the whites came. Then we'll study these traditions and write a history of *precolonial* Swaziland.'

'But how can I help you?' asked Philani.

Mr Hlophe asked Philani to be a researcher

Mr Hlophe replied, 'We want you to be part of a group who ask people about oral traditions. You will visit people and ask them to tell you the oral traditions they know. You will record what they say on a tape-recorder. You will be a researcher, an investigator of the past!'

Philani looked worried. 'I'd like to be a researcher,' he said, 'but what about my job at the furniture shop?'

Mr Hlophe replied, 'You can collect the traditions over the weekends and in your holidays.'

'Great!' said Philani. 'It sounds very, very interesting.'

Exercises

1. Which European country made Swaziland a protectorate? When did this happen?
2. What is a *protectorate*?
3. What does *precolonial* mean? What does *post-colonial* mean?
4. Draw a time-line. Mark on it the pre-colonial period, the colonial period and the post-colonial period.
5. Mr Hlophe feels that oral traditions need to be *preserved* in Swazi society. Preserved means kept safely. Do you agree with Mr Hlophe? Give reasons for your answer.

Oral traditions are an important source of evidence about precolonial Swazi history.

Chapter Fourteen *Simbimba Ndlela's Story*

Mr Hlophe was particularly interested in the very early history of the Swazi in the eighteenth century (1700–1800). 'There is almost nothing written down about this,' he told Philani. 'So try and find out what you can.'

Philani heard that a man named Simbimba Ndlela knew a lot about Swazi history. So Philani went to visit him. Simbimba Ndlela lived close to the Ngwedze River, near Mhlosheni in southern Swaziland.

14A. Philani's first interview

Philani's first interview was at Ndlela's home. He was very nervous. He did not want to make any mistakes in front of the old man. Carefully he put the tape-recorder and microphone on the ground close to Ndlela. He then explained to Ndlela how the tape-recorder worked. The old man exclaimed. He had not seen a tape-recorder before. 'Babe,' said Philani, 'you Ndlela people say, "Ndlela, wena wa Hlubi?". Why is the name "Hlubi" used in your *tinanatelo* (praise name)?'

This is the story that Simbimba told Philani. As he listened, Philani made some notes in his notebook.

Simbimba told the story of four brothers

A long, long time ago there was a young boy called Hlubi. Hlubi was the son and heir of the early king, Ludvonga. Ludvonga had four sons. Their names were:

Loziyingile, Mamba, Dlamini and Hlubi.

Hlubi's mother was Lomakhetswa. Lomakhetswa's sister was Dzambile. Both Lomakhetswa and Dzambile were married to the king, Ludvonga. Dzambile was an *inhlanti* (co-wife).

Dzambile's bad news

One day Dzambile told Lomakhetswa some bad news. She said that they were going to be killed.

Lomakhetswa cried out, 'What wrong have we done that we are going to be killed?'

Dzambile said, 'Hlubi, your son, is heir to the kingship. Some people are jealous of Hlubi. They want to kill him. They do not want him to become king. But if we hurt Hlubi's right hand he will be safe. A person who is left-handed cannot become king. We must make Hlubi hold a burning coal in his right hand.'



Artist's drawing of the burning of Hlubi's hand

Lomakhetfwa said angrily, 'I would rather die than hurt my child!'

Dzambile started crying. She said that she too would be killed.

Dzambile burnt Hlubi's hand

Lomakhetfwa picked up her pot. She said, 'I will go to the river to fetch water. You burn Hlubi's hand. I do not want to see it.'

When Lomakhetfwa came back from the river, Hlubi ran to her. 'My "little mother" has burnt my right hand,' he cried.

Dlamini was chosen to become king

Hlubi grew up to be a left-handed person. When his father, Ludvonga, died, he could not become king because he was left-handed. Hlubi's brother, Dlamini, was chosen to become king instead of Hlubi. Many people were angry that Hlubi did not become king.

Hlubi and his people left their home

Hlubi's people decided to look for a new home. They left Dlamini at the old home on the eastern side of the Lubombo Mountains.

Simbimba Ndlela stopped talking. Philani was very interested in what Ndlela had told him. He asked, 'Babe, how did the Ndlela people get their name?'

How the Ndlela got their name

First Hlubi and his people moved along the Ngwavuma River. They then went up into the Lubombo Mountains. They stayed there with the Myeni people. Ndlela was born then. We, the Ndlelas, got our name from this man.

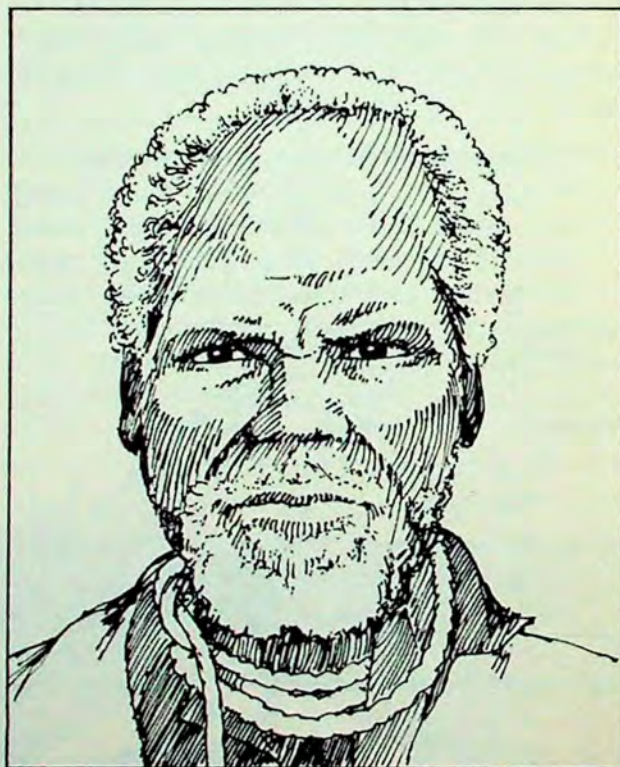
Exercises

1. Test your memory:

- What is the name of Philani's informant?
- What is the name of the king in the story?

- Try to remember the names of the sons of the king.
- Which son had his hand burnt?
- Which hand was burnt? Why was his hand burnt?
- Which son became king?
- Where were they living at this time?

2. Why do you think Hlubi and his people decided to leave their home?



Simbimba Ndlela

14B. Philani reported back to the Swaziland Oral History Project

It was Saturday morning. The lecture room at the Mbabane Public Library was full of people.

'It is my pleasure,' said Mr Hlophe, 'to welcome all the history researchers together. Firstly, the researchers will report on their

work. Then the group will discuss the research. After that, we will send the tapes to the National Archives at Lobamba to be kept safely.'

Philani's research was about early Swazi history. He reported back first. He told the group everything that Simbimba Ndlela had said.

Thami showed Philani his mistake

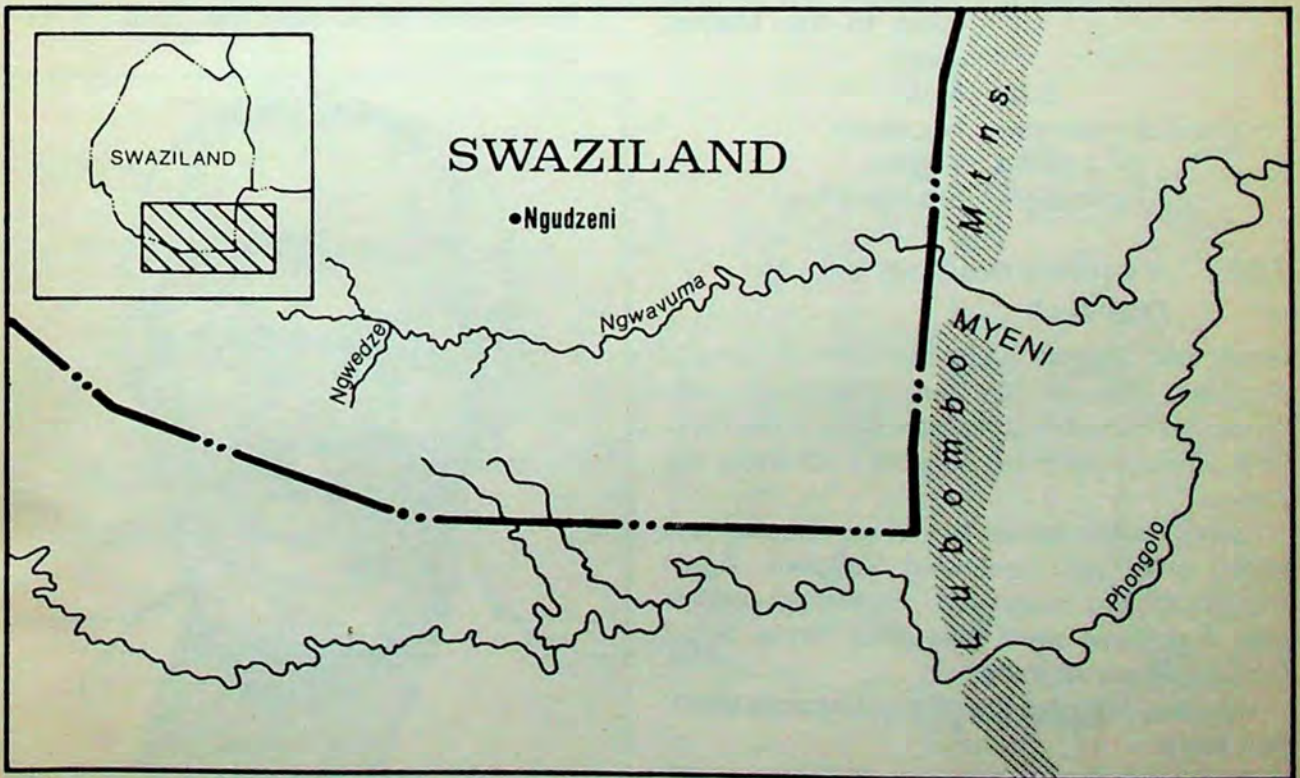
When Philani had finished, Thami Mkhonta stood up. He said, 'Philani, I think your work is great. But you have forgotten one very important thing. You should have found out more about your informant, Simbimba Ndlela. One of the most important things about collecting oral evidence is to find out as much as possible about the person who is *telling* you the story!'

'What questions must Philani ask Simbimba Ndlela?' asked Mr Hlophe. 'What must he find out about his informant?'

These are the questions that Philani wrote down:

- a) What is the informant's full name?
- b) What is the date on which the interview took place?
- c) Where did the interview take place?
- d) When was Simbimba Ndlela born?
- e) What *libutfo* does Simbimba Ndlela belong to?
- f) Where was Simbimba Ndlela born?
- g) Has Simbimba Ndlela always lived near the Ngwedze River?
- h) Has Simbimba Ndlela worked anywhere else?
- i) Can Simbimba Ndlela read and write?
- j) Did he attend school? If he did, what school? For how long?
- k) Who told Simbimba Ndlela the oral tradition?

Members of the Oral History Project agreed that the last question was very important.



Map of the area where Hlubi and Dlamini lived

Exercises

1. Why is it important to know as much as possible about the *teller* of the story?
2. How will the answers to each of the listed questions about the informant help Philani?

Simbimba Ndlela told the story of Hlubi and Dlamini in a way that favours the Ndlela people.

Chapter Fifteen *Logwaja Mamba's Story*

Vuyelwa Nsibandze had not made the same mistake as Philani. She knew a lot about her informant.

Informant: Logwaja Mamba (related to the Mamba chief)

Sex: Male

Place of interview: Ngudzeni

Libutfo: Tibawu

Education: Standard Four

15A. Vuyelwa read out her research

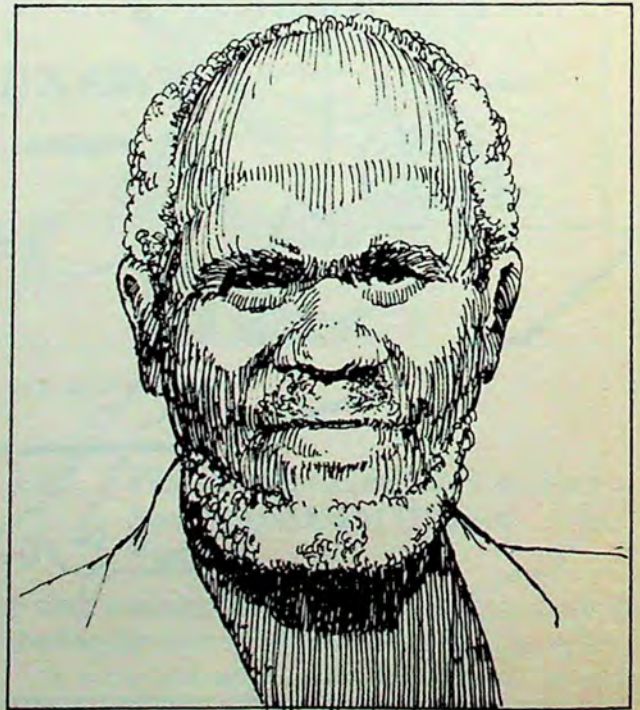
'Hlubi and Dlamini were the sons of Langa,' she said. When Philani heard this he was very surprised. Simbimba Ndlela told him that Hlubi and Dlamini were the sons of *Ludvonga*, not *Langa*.

'Langa watched his two sons, Dlamini and Hlubi, grow up,' continued Vuyelwa. Again Philani looked surprised. Simbimba Ndlela said that there were four sons. What about Loziyingile and Mamba?

Vuyelwa read out the rest of Logwaja Mamba's story.

Langa watched Dlamini and Hlubi carefully. Dlamini was the elder son. Langa

saw that Dlamini was not wise. He decided that Dlamini was not the right person to become king. So Langa thought of a plan to take the kingship away from Dlamini. He wanted his younger son, Hlubi, to become king.



Logwaja Mamba

Langa's plan

Langa gave a group of people to Dlamini and said, 'Here are your people, Dlamini.'

Langa also gave a group of people to Hlubi and said, 'Here are your people, Hlubi.'

Then Langa killed two oxen and said, 'Here are two beasts. Hlubi must skin one beast. Dlamini must skin the other beast. The son who finishes skinning the beast first, will be my heir. He will be the king when I die.'

Dlamini's knife was blunt

But Langa had a plan. He gave Dlamini a blunt knife. Langa wanted Dlamini to be slow at skinning the beast.

Hlubi's knife was sharp

Langa gave Hlubi a very sharp knife. Hlubi would easily finish skinning the beast first.

The competition

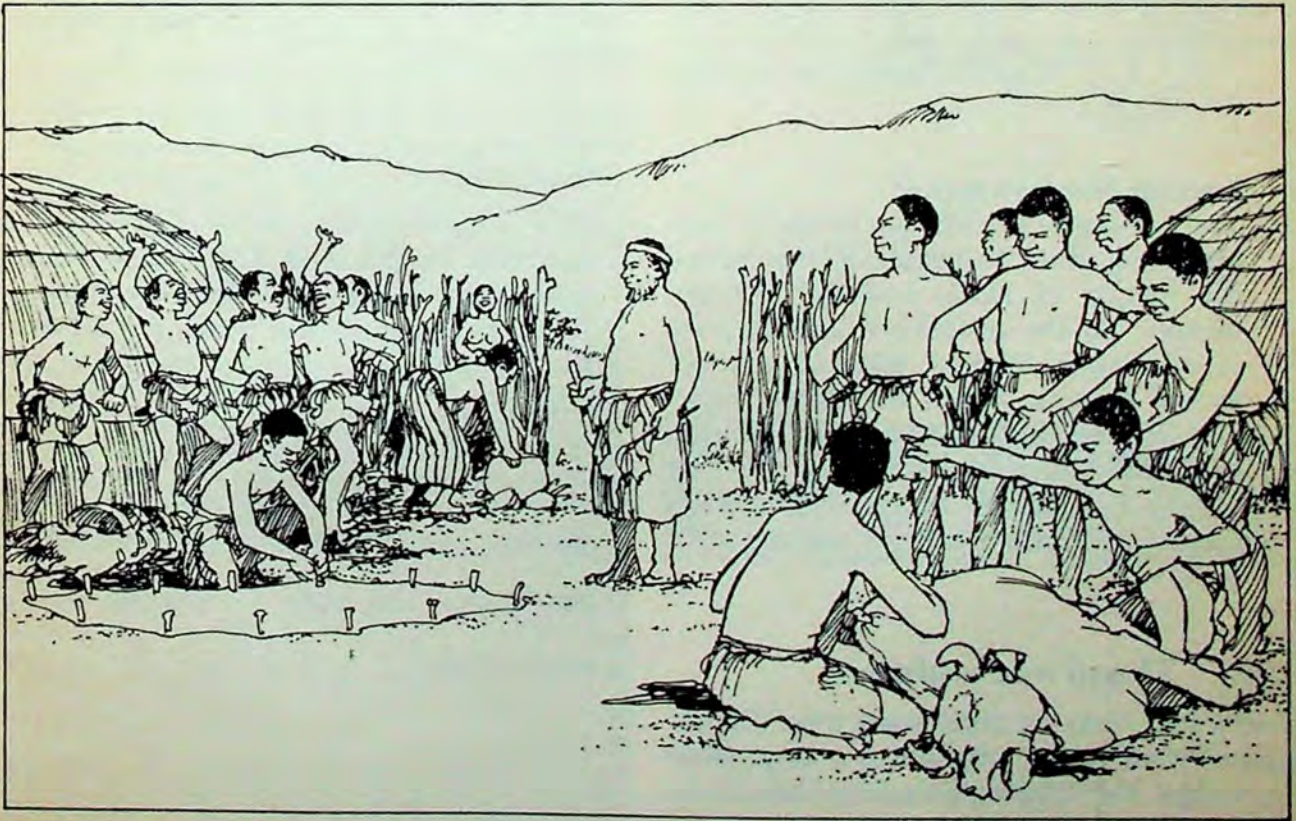
First Dlamini used the blunt knife. Then he tried to skin the ox by using his thumb to press away the skin from the meat. But it was no use. Dlamini was too slow.

Hlubi was the winner

Hlubi skinned quickly using the sharp knife. Soon the skinning was finished. Smoke rose from Hlubi's fire. His followers cooked the meat.

Some of Dlamini's people went to join Hlubi because Hlubi was the winner. The people shouted, 'Hhule! Hlubi reigns.' In this way Hlubi became king.

Then the two groups left the place where they were living in the east. One group was under Hlubi and the other was under Dlamini. They travelled inland. The elder brother Dlamini was now under his younger brother, Hlubi.



Artist's drawing of the beast-skinning competition

Vuyelwa's question

Vuyelwa asked her informant, Logwaja Mamba, why some of the descendants of Dlamini are called Mamba.



Logwaja Mamba's answer

The naming of the Mamba people is a recent thing. Both the people of Dlamini and the people of Hlubi had the *sibongo*, Nkhosi. So the people of Dlamini were called Nkhosi Mamba, after an ancestor named Mamba. When the British came, they said we could not be Nkhosi Mamba and Nkhosi Dlamini. The British said they wanted our names to be simple. They wanted to collect taxes from us more easily.

15B. Thami was confused

Thami said, 'I do not understand this. The tradition Philani heard talks about a king called *Ludvonga*. Yet Vuyelwa's tradition talks about a king called *Langa*. Philani's story has *four* sons. Vuyelwa's tradition only talks about *two*.

Philani's story is about the *burning of a hand*. Vuyelwa's is about a *competition to skin cattle*. How can there be two stories about the same history?'

Thami's mistake

'I think that you are making a mistake, Thami,' said Mr Hlophe. 'You think one tradition must be right, and one tradition must be wrong?' Thami nodded.

Mr Hlophe continued, 'We have only heard two traditions for this period of Swazi history. For the moment we do not have enough evidence to say if Philani is right or if Vuyelwa is right. But, be prepared. We may discover that both traditions are good historical evidence!'

Thami asked, 'Well, what use can two different traditions be to us?'

Mr Hlophe answered, 'There are many things that we can learn from these two traditions. Let's write down a list of the differences between the traditions. Then we'll write down a list of similarities between the traditions.'

Exercise

Here is the table that Thami wrote in his notebook. In this table Thami listed the differences in the two traditions. Help Thami to complete the table. We have given you the first difference to help you along.

<i>Differences in the two traditions</i>		
<i>Differences</i>	<i>Simbimba Ndlela</i>	<i>Logwaja Mamba</i>
1. <i>Name of king</i>	<i>Ludvonga</i>	<i>Langa</i>
2. <i>Number of sons</i>		
3.		
4.		

15C. Vuyelwa thought of a similarity in the traditions

Vuyelwa said, 'I've thought of a similarity between the two stories. Both stories seem to be saying that the Ndlelas and Mambas are *related* to each other. Also both stories seem to be saying that the Ndlelas and the Mambas are important people *related* to the early kings.'

Philani thought of another similarity

Philani said, 'Both the Ndlela and Mamba stories talk about a *fight* over the kingship. This fight happened when they were on the eastern side of the Lubombo Mountains. Then both stories say the people left and travelled inland.'

Exercise

Philani and the rest of the researchers tried to find things that are the same in the two stories. Try to help Philani, Thami and the others by holding a class discussion on the similarities between the two stories. Philani has already thought of one similarity. Philani says that both stories talk about fighting over the early kingship. What other similarities can you find? We have given you the first similarity.

Similarities in the traditions

1. *Fight over the early kingship*
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

15D. Vuyelwa's question

Vuyelwa said to the members of the Swaziland Oral History Project, 'Is it possible that there has been a mistake in the telling of the two stories? In Philani's story, Hlubi loses the kingship. In my story, Dlamini loses the kingship. Perhaps Hlubi should have been the same name in both stories? Or perhaps the correct name of the king who lost the kingship is Dlamini? Maybe one of the informants got the name wrong?'

Many of the Project members nodded their heads. They knew it was easy to make mistakes when telling a story.

Mr Hlophe closed the meeting

They had been talking for a long time. Everybody was tired. Mr Hlophe thought that this was a good time to end the meeting. He thanked all the researchers for their hard work. 'We'll meet again in two weeks time,' he said. 'Then we will hear some of the oral traditions about what happened after Hlubi and Dlamini went on their journeys.'

Logwaja Mamba told the story of Hlubi and Dlamini in a way that favours the Mamba people.

Part Five Origins, Migrations and Settlement in Shiselweni, mid 1700s — early 1800s

Chapter Sixteen *Migration and Settlement: the Times of Hlubi, mid 1700s*

Two weeks later the investigators returned to the Mbabane Public Library. Mr Hlophe again opened the meeting. 'I am eager to hear what the researchers have found,' said Mr Hlophe, 'so I think we must not waste any time. Philani, will you begin?'

16A. Another interview with Simbimba Ndlela

Philani said that he visited Simbimba Ndlela again at the weekend. Ndlela had told him what happened to Hlubi and his people on their journey inland. This is the story Simbimba told.

A place to settle

When Hlubi and his followers left the east side of the Lubombo Mountains they looked for a place to settle. They lived with the Myeni. Then they travelled south. When they tried to cross the Mkhuze River the mighty Ndwandwe army attacked them.

The battle at the Mkhuze River

The battle between Hlubi's people and the Ndwandwe was so fierce that the water in the Mkhuze River turned red with blood. This is why we praise Hlubi, 'Blood of men that made the Mkhuze turn red with blood.'

Crossing the Phongolo River

Hlubi was still not safe from his enemies. He moved westwards to Magudu.

From Magudu, Hlubi sent out spies to look for a good place to stay. The spies slipped quickly and quietly across the Phongolo River. They went as far as the caves of Godlwako.

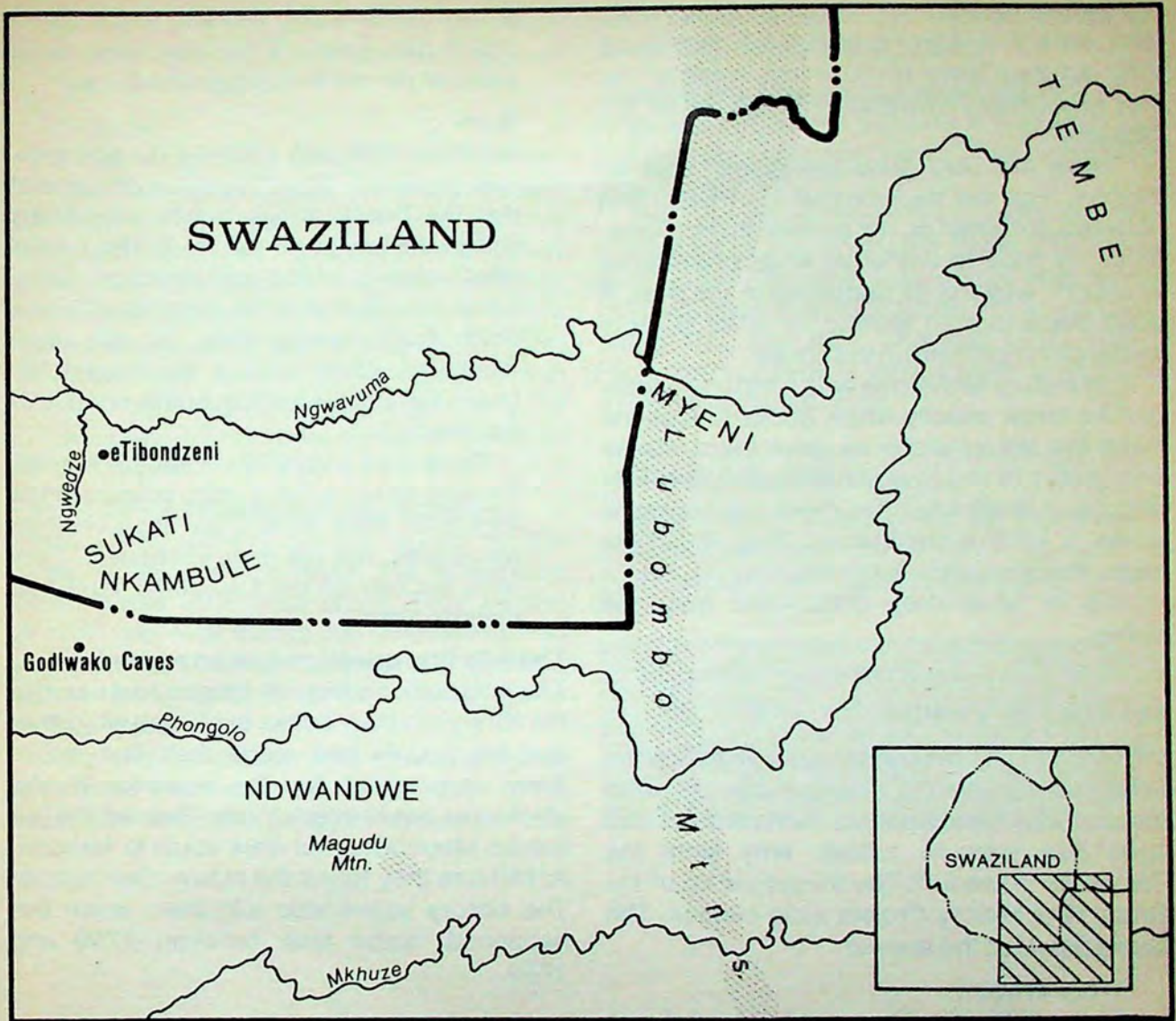


Artist's drawing of Hlubi's *imphi* crossing the Phongolo River

The spies returned to Hlubi. They told him of the fertile Phongolo River valley and the caves at Godlwako. The caves were a good place to hide.

Moving to Godlwako

Hlubi decided to go and settle at Godlwako. Hlubi and his *imphi* travelled by night. They used the light of the moon to guide them.



Map of the country crossed by Hlubi

The Nkambule and the Sukati

The Nkambule and Sukati people were already living in the Godlwako area. They bowed and said to Hlubi's soldiers, 'We are not going to fight you.'

Hlubi and his people move to eTibondzeni.

Hlubi and his people lived with the Nkambule and Sukati. Then Hlubi went north up the Ngwedze River to eTibondzeni. Hlubi stayed there for many years.

Exercise

Copy the map above into your books. Using lines with arrows, trace Hlubi's journey from the Lubombo Mountains to eTibondzeni.

16B. Why did all of this happen?

Mr Hlophe thanked Philani for his talk. Thami looked puzzled. He asked, 'Why did Hlubi and

his people leave the Lubombo Mountains? Why were they fighting with the Ndwandwe? Why did they leave Mkhuze and come all the way to southern Swaziland? When did all this happen?’

‘Those are very good questions,’ said Mr Hlophe. ‘But the traditions which Philani and Vuyelwa collected do not answer them. Sometimes we have to use other kinds of evidence to explain why things happened in the past. A good place to start looking for other kinds of evidence is right here in the *library*.’

Fortunately Mr Hlophe was a history teacher and he knew exactly which books to look for. From the books which he gave them, the investigators of the Swaziland Oral History Project discovered what had been happening to some of Hlubi’s neighbours. They found out about the *context* of Hlubi’s journey.

This is what they discovered from the books.

16C. The Tembe

When Hlubi and his people went to live on the Lubombo Mountains, their neighbours were the powerful Tembe people, living around Delagoa Bay (Maputo today). Why were the Tembe so powerful? The investigators of the Swazi Oral History Project were curious. The books provided the answer.

Ivory Trade

In the 1700s the Tembe chiefs traded with the British, Portuguese and Dutch ships which visited Delagoa Bay. The chiefs exchanged ivory for brass and beads. Ivory comes from the tusks of elephants, and hunting elephants was difficult. It took many hunters to kill one elephant. Only the wealthy and powerful chiefs were able to organise large hunting parties to collect ivory.

The ivory trade helped these chiefs to become even more wealthy and powerful. They used the beads and the brass which they received in exchange for the ivory to

reward the hunters who had helped them collect the ivory. They also used these goods to pay soldiers to fight for them.

Wars

Between 1750 and 1770 the Tembe grew *very* powerful. The history books showed that the Tembe attacked their neighbours and pushed them off the land. The Tembe chiefs also attacked one another. Some Tembe chiefs wanted to stop other Tembe chiefs from trading ivory. At this time, there were many wars in the country between the Lubombo Mountains and Delagoa Bay.

These wars *forced* Hlubi and his brother Dlamini to leave the Tembe country. First they built their homes on the Lubombo Mountains, but the wars continued. They were not safe on the Lubombo. They had to move again.

Thami’s first question was answered

The information which Mr Hlophe had found in the library’s history books explained why Hlubi and his people had made their first move. They were afraid that the powerful Tembe chiefdoms would attack them. They left the Lubombo Mountains and went south to Mkhuze. At Mkhuze they found the Ndwandwe people. The history books also told them *when* this happened, some time between 1750 and 1770.

16D. The Ndwandwe kingdom

The Ndwandwe kingdom was a chiefdom to the south-east of the Tembe. It became big and powerful in the late 1700s. The investigators of the Swaziland Oral History Project were curious about this too. Again, the books provided an answer.

Ivory

Like the Tembe, the Ndwandwe chiefs grew wealthy through the ivory trade. The Ndwandwe chiefs organised elephant hunting and sent the ivory to the Tembe chiefs.

In exchange, the Tembe chiefs sent them some of the beads and brass which they got from the Europeans.

Drought

There were many droughts at this time. The Ndwandwe, living in a low rainfall area, suffered more than any of their neighbours. They needed wet river valleys to plant their crops. This led them to attack their neighbours living near rivers and in wet areas, and to seize their land. They attacked their neighbours more often than the Tembe did. The Ndwandwe army became one of the most powerful in south-east Africa.

Thami's second question was answered

When Hlubi and his people arrived on the banks of the Mkhuze River, the Ndwandwe were worried about their crops. They wanted to keep the river banks for themselves. So they attacked Hlubi and his people, and 'the waters of the Mkhuze turned red with blood from the battle'.

Hlubi and his people were forced to leave. They knew that they could not go south. In the south lay another powerful chiefdom, the

Mthethwa under Jobe, and later his son Dingiswayo. So they travelled inland.

Thami's third question was answered

Hlubi and his people stopped first at Magudu. But they could not stay there. They were still in Ndwandwe country.

They moved northwards to Godlwako, and the banks of the Phongolo River. Their new fields in the Phongolo valley were very fertile, but the Ndwandwe wanted the Phongolo River valley too, and they attacked Hlubi again. Hlubi and his people were forced to move to eTibondzeni in the north.

Exercise

What kinds of evidence did the members of the Swaziland Oral History Project use to find out about Hlubi's journey?

Hlubi and his people were forced out of the Tembe country and the Phongolo valley by the powerful Tembe and Ndwandwe kingdoms. They settled at eTibondzeni.

Chapter Seventeen *Migration and Settlement: the Times of Ngwane, late 1700s*

Mr Hlophe was pleased with all the information that the investigators had found out about Hlubi's neighbours. He was pleased that they had used the evidence about environment and drought as well as oral and written evidence. Then he asked the members of the Swaziland

Oral History Project another question.

'Do any of you know why the name "Ngwane" is important in Swazi history?'

Philani felt proud. He could give more information to the group. His informant, Simbimba Ndlela, had told him all about Ngwane.

17A. Ngwane's journey

This is what Simbimba Ndlela told Philani:

Lubombo

Hlubi's brother, Dlamini, also went to live on the Lubombo Mountains. Ngwane was the son and heir of Dlamini. Ngwane was born at Nkhanini on the Lubombo.

Dlamini died when Ngwane was still a child. Ngwane and his people left the Lubombo and settled in the Phongolo valley.

Matsapha

An *umuti* was built for Ngwane at Matsapha, between the Ncotshane and Mzimvubu Rivers.

As a young boy Ngwane had two favourite places. He liked to bathe in the hot water pools near Godlwako. Near the pools there was a large rock on which he used to play.

Litshe laNgwane

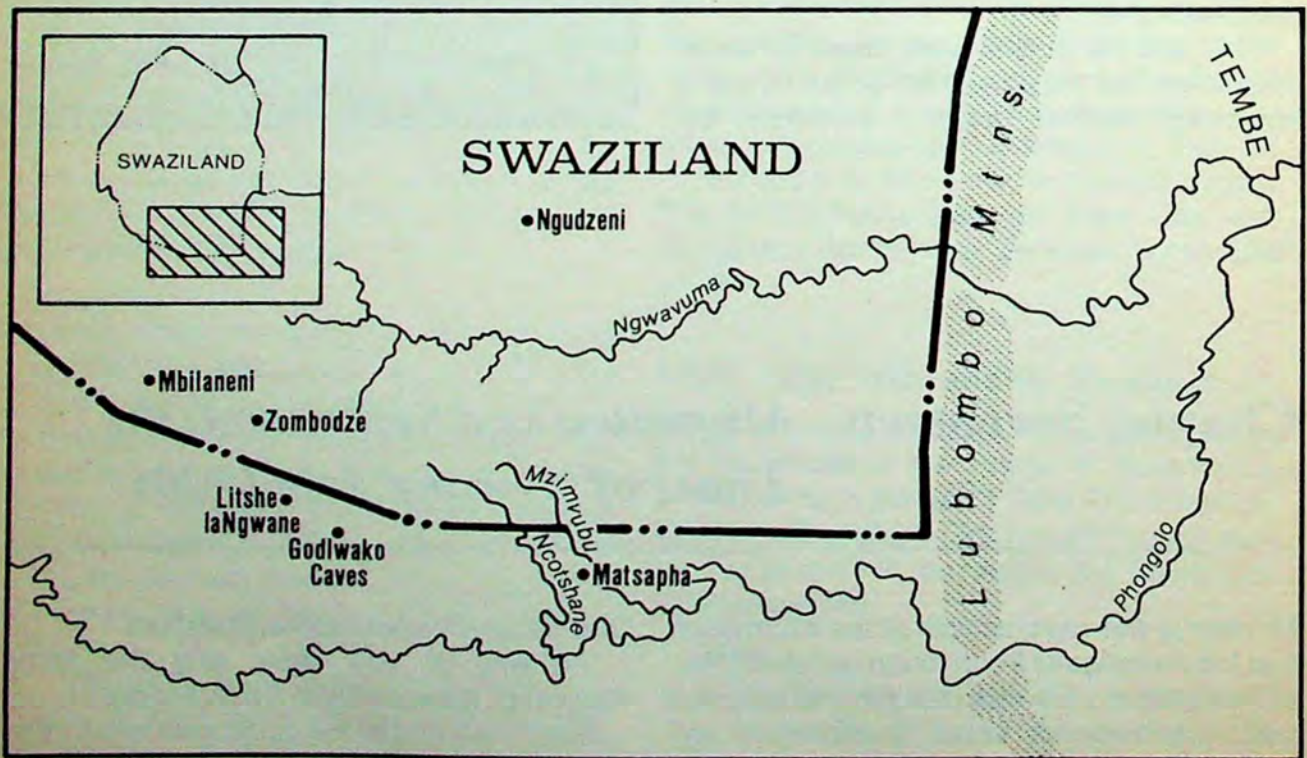
Ngwane liked to climb up the steep sides of

this rock. When his people saw him climbing the rock, they shook their heads and said, 'What is wrong with our king? He is climbing a rock that is so difficult to climb!'



Litshe laNgwane

They watched Ngwane to see what he did on the top of the rock. Ngwane gathered together a pile of small stones of different shapes and sizes. He was playing *emagwadla*.



Map of the area in which Ngwane settled

In this game, the stones were like soldiers. Ngwane arranged them in *emabutfo*. 'Gwa! Gwa!', the stones banged together. Ngwane pretended that the *emabutfo* were fighting. He was practising for the time when he was old enough to lead the *emabutfo* in battle.

Zombodze

When Ngwane became king, his *umuti* moved from Matsapha to Zombodze. At first, Ngwane did not have many followers.

17B. Mdluli's journey

At that point Thami interrupted Philani. 'But Ngwane was not alone,' he said. 'I discovered that the Mdluli people came with Ngwane. I spoke to Msweli Mdluli in Nhlangano just yesterday. He told me that the Mdluli people are *bemdzabuko*, the ones who came here with Ngwane. This is the story that he told me.'

Origins of the Mdluli People

There was once a man named Mdluli. He came from Embo, somewhere in the Tembe country. There were many wars in the Tembe country. In one battle Mdluli was captured by Dlamini, the father of Ngwane. He worked for Dlamini as a *sigcili* (captive) and later he married a woman from Dlamini's family. In this way, the Mdluli people were *tselela*'d (poured) into the people of Dlamini. In fact, the Mdluli people today still use the *sinanatelo* 'Tselela' today.

Mdluli had two sons, Bhekiswako and Lukhele. Bhekiswako and Lukhele left their father's home and established their own homes.

Tinyanga

Mdluli stayed with Dlamini. He was responsible for the preparation of medicines of war. When Dlamini died, Mdluli and his family travelled with Ngwane to the Phongolo.

Mbilaneni

At first they lived with Ngwane in the royal *umuti* at Matsapha, and later at Zombodze. Then the Mdluli were placed in charge of the royal graves at Mbilaneni near Zombodze. They left Zombodze and built their own home at Mbilaneni.

'The Mdluli are still living at Mbilaneni today,' said Thami. 'They are still in charge of the royal graves there!'

17C. The Mamba's journey

Then it was Vuyelwa's turn to speak. 'Of course, Hlubi, Ngwane and Mdluli were not the only people to migrate into the south at this time,' she said. 'We must not forget the Mamba.'

She continued, 'Logwaja Mamba told me that the Mamba people also settled in the south at this time. After the beast skinning competition, the Mamba people left the Tembe country. They travelled east to the Lubombo Mountains. They crossed the Lubombo at the place where the Ngwavuma River cuts through the mountains. On the other side of the mountains they settled near the Ngudzeni Hills.'

Exercises

1. Copy the map on p 56. Now draw lines with arrows showing where these people travelled:

- a) Ngwane
- b) Mdluli
- c) Mamba

Use different colours for each journey.

2. Write a short paragraph explaining why Hlubi, Dlamini, Mdluli and the Mamba people left the Tembe country.

3. Look at your map with all the journeys marked on it. Now try to explain the famous Dlamini praise '*Lowacedza Lubombo ngekuhlehetela*' (the one who completed the Lubombo by skirting it).

Ngwane, Mdluli and their people left the Lubombo and went to the Phongolo valley; the Mamba people also left the Lubombo but they went to Ngudzeni.

Chapter Eighteen *The Hlophe People, late 1700s*

Mr Hlophe was extremely pleased with the information about the Mdluli and the Mamba people.

'Sometimes people think that the history of a country is just the history of its kings. Of course, what the kings did is very important. After all, the kings were usually the most powerful people.

'But the history of other people is just as important. I am very glad to see that you remembered to find out what all the other people were doing as well. We need to know about the history of *everyone* in Swaziland.

'To make things a little easier for you, let me tell something about the history of my people, the Hlophe.'

18A. The origins of the Hlophe

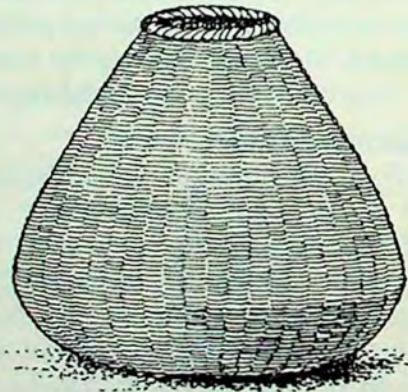
'The Hlophe people originated at Ngogweni. Today, Ngogweni is in Zululand.

'My grandmother told me that the Hlophe people arrived at Ngogweni by rolling in a *silulu*.' Mr Hlophe laughed. 'Yes, that is exactly what she said, *ngesilulu*. Do you know what a *silulu* is?' he asked.

'A small basket for chickens to nest in,' Vuyelwa answered.

'How could the Hlophes travel in a chicken basket?' asked Thami, shaking his head doubtfully.

Mr Hlophe answered, 'Before the British introduced metal tanks for grain storage, our people used to keep their grain in large *tilulu*.



A *silulu*

These *tilulu* were shaped like the chicken baskets, but they were much bigger. My grandmother said that at least two people could fit into a big *silulu*. But, of course, people didn't really travel in them. I asked her what this meant, *ngesilulu*, but she could not explain it.

'Lots of other people know this story. The Mndzebele and the Mkhabela also say that they originated in a *silulu*. All the people who say this know that they were once related to each other.'

Mr Hlophe stopped talking to give the members of the Swaziland Oral History Project time to take notes. Then he continued.

'There is another story which shows that the Hlophe, Mkhabela and Mndzebele are related. It is the story of how the Hlophe, the Mndzebele and the Mkhabela people got their *ti-bongo* (clan names).' Mr Hlophe told the researchers this story:

There was once a man named Mabhengu who had three sons. His first son was born during a time of famine. Mabhengu cried out that he had no food for his son. He said '*Maye ngimhlophe*' ('Alas I am white', meaning he had no food to feed his son). His son was then named 'Hlophe'. This son grew up, married and had children. His family became the *bakaHlophe*, the Hlophe people.

Mabhengu's second son was born after a good harvest. Mabhengu's relatives and friends went to him to ask him to help them, to give them food. Mabhengu shared his food with them. They said, '*Uyendzelisa*' (he caused them to be satisfied) and he named his second son 'Mndzebele'. This son grew up, married and had children. His family became the *bakaMndzebele*, the Mndzebele people.

Mabhengu's third son was born after an excellent harvest. Mabhengu had plenty of food to share with his relatives and friends. They said '*Bese alawula asanenala, sewuya khapela*', (he had prospered, had a good harvest, and a large surplus). He gave them food generously. He named his son 'Mkhabela'. This son grew up, married and had children. His family became the *bakaMkhabela*, the Mkhabela people.

When the three brothers left Ngogweni in Zululand, they went to the area that we call southern Swaziland today. They quarrelled and separated.

'My people, the *bakaHlophe*, settled near the Phongolo River,' said Mr Hlophe.

'But what about the Ndwandwe?' asked Thami. 'Did they attack the Hlophe in the same way that they attacked Hlubi?'

18B. The Hlophe and the Ndwandwe

At the end of the eighteenth century, the Hlophe were under my ancestor, a famous chief called Tigodvo. Tigodvo was praised as "*Uhlabela emakhosi lamabili uhlabela uZwide kaLanga*" (he who fought for two kings, Zwide, son of Langa [and Ngwane]). So it seems that long ago the Hlope recognised the power of the Ndwandwe and helped them.

Meeting Ngwane

When Ngwane arrived, however, it was Tigodvo who showed him the caves at Godlwako. Tigodvo helped Ngwane, and recognised Ngwane as king. Later when the Ndwandwe attacked Ngwane, the Hlophe were also pushed north of the Phongolo valley.

'But,' said Mr Hlophe, 'the Hlophe people were not the only ones who joined Ngwane at this time. I want the members of the Swaziland Oral History Project to try and find out who else lived near the Phongolo River at this time. Go home and ask your families if they know anything about this period of history. If your family was living near the Phongolo River at this time try to find out what happened to them when the Ndwandwe attacked! Bring your information with you when we meet again next week.'

Exercises

1. Do you think this story of the Hlopes is a biased story? If so, why do you think that?
2. Draw a family tree for the Hlopes, using the information given by Mr Hlophe on pp 58–59.

Some of the people who are Swazis today came from Zululand in the south.

Chapter Nineteen *Other Early Residents in the Phongolo Area, late 1700s*

At the next meeting of the Swaziland Oral History Project some of the researchers were very excited. They had spent the week finding out about their *own* families, and what they did long ago. Thami Mkhonta discovered that the Mkhonta people arrived at the Phongolo River at this time; Vuyelwa Nsibandze discovered that the Nsibandze, too, were part of this history. Other researchers reported that the Nkhonyane, the Vilakati, the MkhaliPhi and many others were also living near the Phongolo River at this time. Everyone was excited and they were all talking at once.

'Order,' shouted Mr Hlophe. 'This meeting must come to order. Last week I told you that when Ngwane arrived at the Phongolo River, he found the Hlophe people there. The Hlophe chief, Tigodvo, showed him the caves at Godlwako. The Hlophe people, however, were not the only ones living in this area. Who else did Ngwane find when he arrived in the southern Swaziland area?'

There were a lot of answers to Mr Hlophe's question. As usual, it was Philani who began.



19A. **Origins of the Vilakati and the MkhaliPhi**

My people, the MkhaliPhi, are *emakhandzambili* (original inhabitants of the Swaziland area). At that time, the MkhaliPhi people were part of the Vilakati people.

At the time of the early Ndwandwe wars, the Vilakati people lived near the place where the Ngwedze River meets the Ngwavuma River. The chief of the Vilakati people was Nongombili. He was famous for his ability to make rain fall.

Iron was mined in the Vilakati kingdom, and was made into spears at a place called Mabhudlweni, on the banks of the Ngwedze River.

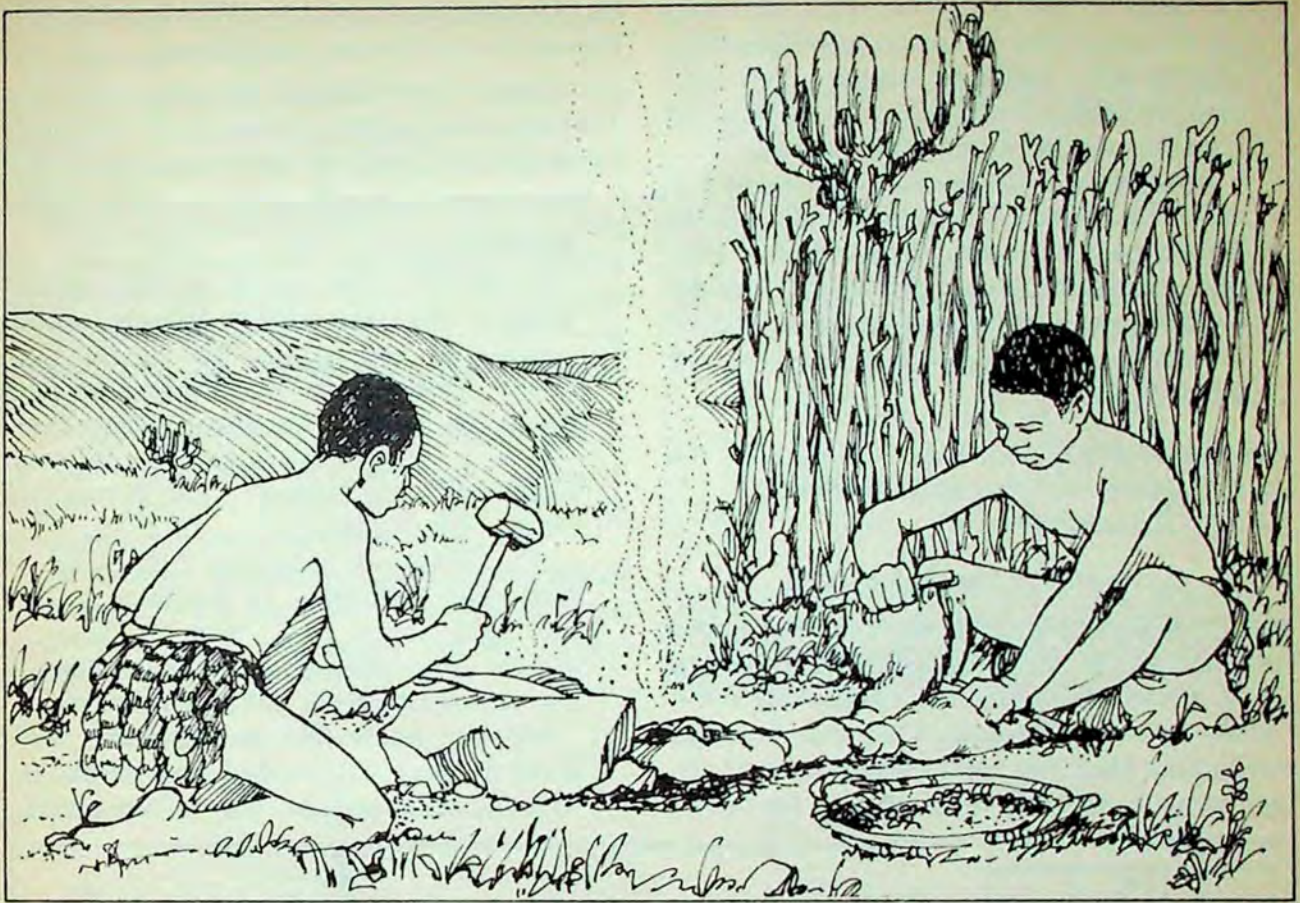
'In fact,' said Philani, 'if you go to this place today, you can still see the forge where the spears were made. I used to play there when I was boy.' Philani continued:

The person who made the spears was my ancestor. He was the first Vilakati person to be called 'MkhaliPhi'. He got this name because the Vilakati chief used to call him '*Ndvodza lekhaliphako lekhandza tikhali*' (man who is sharp, who forges spears).

Meeting Ngwane

The Hlophe were threatened by the Ndwandwe. The Ndwandwe also threatened the Vilakati and their relatives, the MkhaliPhi. When Ngwane arrived, they decided not to fight with him and his people. Instead they joined him. They become important *tindvuna* (officers) of the new king. They helped Ngwane to make rain, and to manufacture spears.

But they were not the only people living there when Ngwane arrived. There were



Artist's drawing of spears being forged

other people who were forced to leave as the new kingdom under Ngwane, and the Vilakati *tindvuna*, grew powerful. I heard that the people who left were the Sotho.

The Nkhonyane

Some Vilakati were given the task of slaughtering *tinkhonyane* (calves) for the king. As a result this section of the Vilakati people became known as the 'Nkhonyane'. The Nkhonyane were also famous for their skill in carving.'

Philani stopped there, but before Mr Hlophe could say a word, Vuyelwa jumped up.

'I also found out about the Nkhonyane people,' she cried. 'The Nkhonyane people used to be in charge of Ngwane's residences, but then my people, the Nsibandze, arrived in

the Phongolo area. The Nsibandzes took over the work of the Nkhonyane. The Nkhonyane were then sent to look after the royal graves at little Mbilaneni (at Mlokotfwa). Let me tell you the story.'

19B. Origins of the Nsibandze

The Nsibandze people come from Ngca-gca, in the Tembe country, east of the Lubombo Mountains. Lohhiya was the first Nsibandze man to come to the Phongolo area. He came to visit his cousin, Ndzata Mkhonta.

Meeting Ngwane

Ngwane heard that Lohhiya was in the area. He called Lohhiya and asked him to stay and serve him. Lohhiya agreed, and

he became the king's *umfana* (literally meaning boy but more broadly speaking, attendant). Lohhiya made beautiful wooden plates for Ngwane. He served the king the meat of buck on these plates.

Ngwane was so pleased he made Lohhiya his *indvuna*. Lohhiya replaced the Nkhonyane *indvuna*. When Ngwane built his residence at Zombodze (Zombodze *emuva*) just north of the Phongolo River, Lohhiya's son, Masenjana, became the *indvuna* there.

'Ever since then,' said Vuyelwa proudly, 'my family have been in charge of Zombodze.'

It was Thami's turn next.

19C. Origins of the Mkhonta

'My people, the Mkhonta, say that they come from Manyiseni,' said Thami, 'but I am not sure where this is. I think that it is somewhere in the Tembe country. Vuyelwa said that Lohhiya and Ndzata Mkhonta were relatives. And Lohhiya came from the Tembe country. So I think

that we Mkhontas come from the east as well. This is the story I heard,' said Thami.

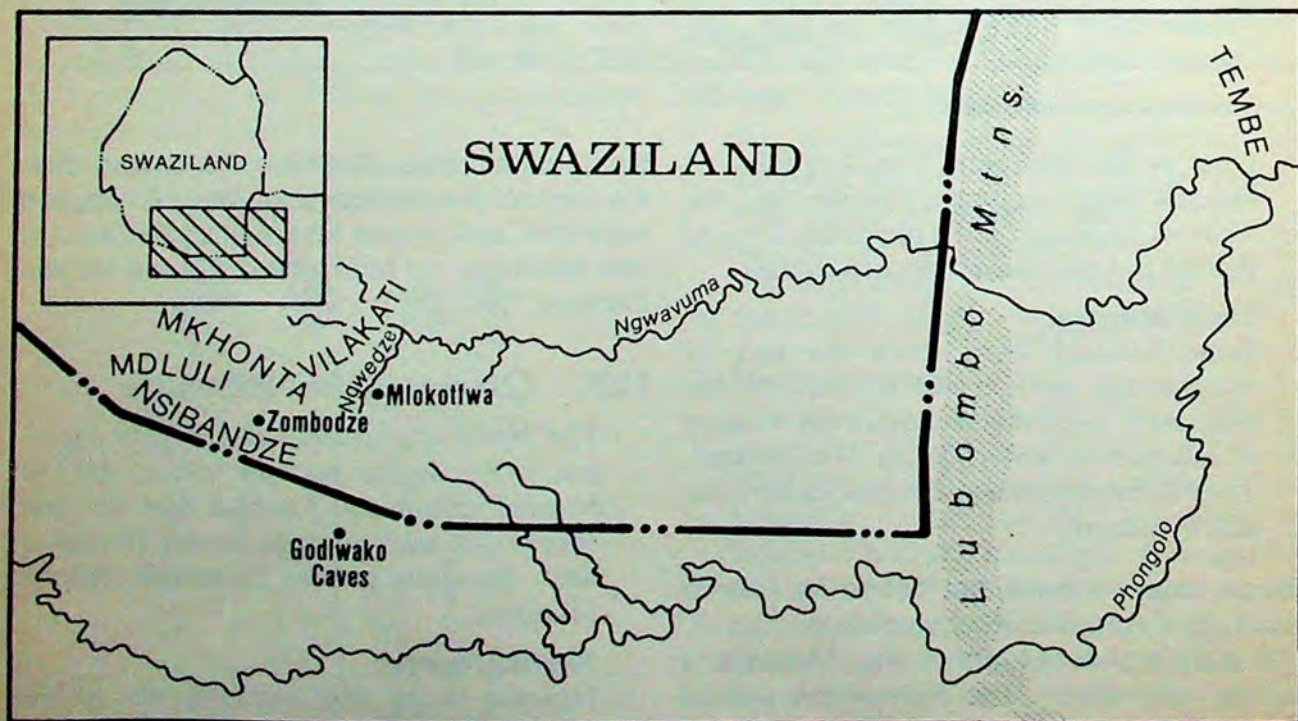
At first, the Mkhontas joined the big Mthethwa kingdom in the far south. Later they were ruled by the Ndwandwe, but they were not happy under the Ndwandwe.

Meeting Ngwane

The Mkhonta were very good *tinyanga* (diviners). They were able to tell what would happen in the future by 'beating the bones'. One day, they beat the bones, and found that trouble lay ahead. They knew that the Ndwandwe were fighting with Hlubi and with Ngwane. The bones told them to join Ngwane.

The Mkhonta prepared fifty head of cattle and took them to Ngwane. 'Let us not fight,' they said. 'We are here to *khonta* (give allegiance) to you.' That is why we are called the 'Mkhonta' people.

Ngwane knew that the Mkhonta were good diviners. He needed their skills. He took the cattle and gave the Mkhonta land.



Map showing early residents of the Phongolo area

'In fact,' said Thami proudly, 'the Mkhonta are still famous diviners today.'

This time, it was Mr Hlophe who took notes while the researchers spoke. Then he said, 'Let us go over what we have discovered today.'

'When Ngwane arrived in the Phongolo area he was not alone. He had followers like the Mdluli with him. He found people living in the southern Swaziland area. Some of these people, like the Vilakati and the Mkhonta, joined Ngwane.

'Those who did not join Ngwane were forced to leave the area, like the Sotho people. Others, like the Nsibandze, arrived after Ngwane was settled here and joined him.

'In this way, Ngwane's kingdom grew bigger and stronger. It was able to defend itself against powerful neighbours like the Ndwandwe.'

Exercises

1. Where did the following peoples originate?
 - a) Hlophe
 - b) Mkhaliphi
 - c) Nsibandze
2. What jobs did the following peoples do in the new kingdom under Ngwane?
 - a) Vilakati
 - b) Mkhaliphi
 - c) Nkhonyane
 - d) Nsibandze
 - e) Mkhonta

The history of all the different people in Swaziland is important.

Chapter Twenty *Crisis and Conflict: the Times of Ndvungunye, early 1800s*

When the members of the Swaziland Oral History Project next met, they talked about the reign of Ngwane's son, Ndvungunye. They discovered that Ndvungunye was king for only a short time.

20A. Ndvungunye's reign

Ngwane died in the 1790s. The new king was the son of Ngwane's chief wife, laMndzebele. His name was Ndvungunye.

When he became king, Ndvungunye sent a messenger to the Simelane people to ask for a wife. The Simelane people sent two women: Nojiba Simelane and Somnjalose Simelane.

The birth of Somhlolo

Somnjalose became pregnant, but she miscarried. She then became pregnant again. This time she gave birth to a boy, called Somhlolo.

20B. Growing conflict

Ndvungunye's reign was a time of growing conflict between the peoples of south-eastern Africa. A terrible drought struck this whole area just before 1800. This is remembered in the oral traditions as the Madlathule famine, ('Madlathule' meaning literally, 'let them eat and go hungry').

Thousands of people starved at this time. Many only survived by digging for roots. Kingdoms in the area like those of the Ngwane and the Ndwandwe fought with one another as they competed for cattle, grain and water supplies.

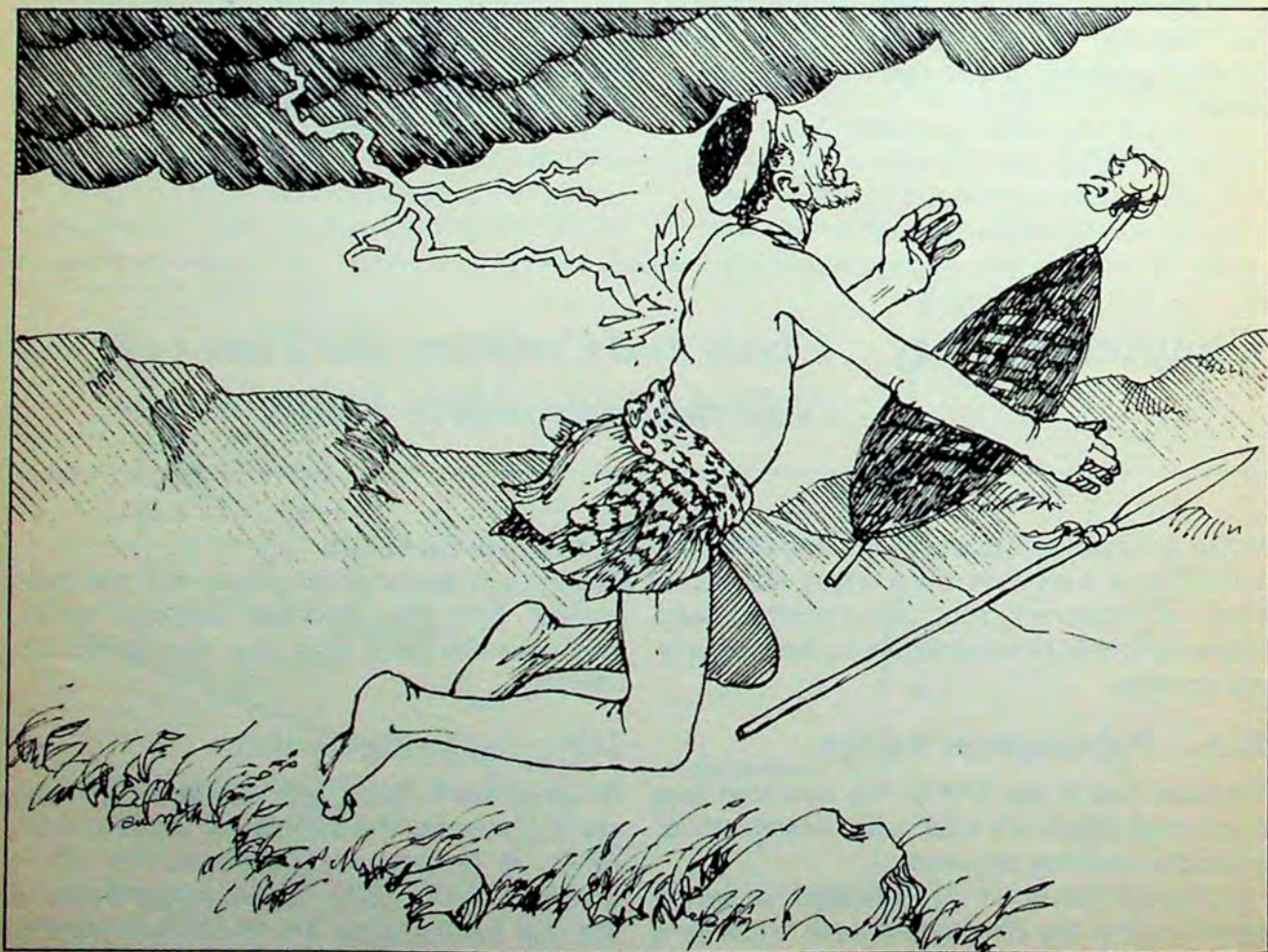
It is probably for this reason that Ndvungunye is remembered for the violence and harshness of his rule. Oral traditions record that Ndvungunye expanded the *emabutfo* and made new conquests.

The death of Ndvungunye

Ndvungunye did not rule for a long time. Soon after he became king, he was struck dead by lightning.

Mr Hlophe said, 'We know very little about the short reign of Ndvungunye, but we know a great deal about his son Somhlolo. There are many oral traditions all over Swaziland that tell us about the life of this famous king.'

However, Mr Hlophe did not need to tell the researchers to go out and collect the traditions. They had already done the work! He was most surprised!



Artist's drawing of King Ndvungunye being struck by lightning

Exercises

1. Do you know the history of *your* family? If you do, write a paragraph on what you know.

or

Do you think that the new kingdom under Ngwane and later Ndvungunye was strong or weak? Write a paragraph giving reasons for your answer.

2. Put the following names of people who joined the new kingdom into the correct columns in the chart:

Vilakati, Mkhaliphi, Mkhonta, Hlophe, Nsibandze, Nkhonyane, Mkhabela, Bhekiswako, Mamba.

Column A — the people from the Tembe country

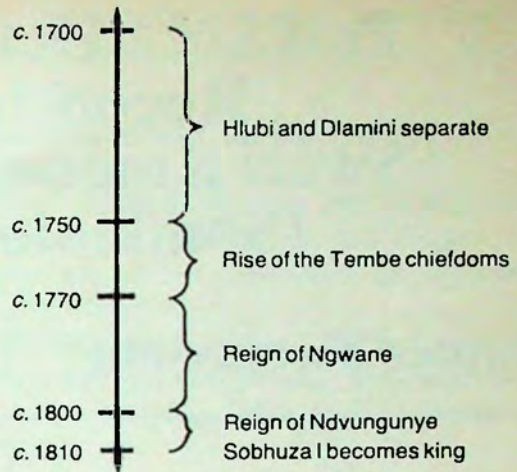
Column B — the people who were already living in or near the Phongolo valley

Column C — the people from places other than the Tembe country or the Phongolo area

A	B	C

3. Look at the time-line drawn up by members of the Swaziland Oral History Project on this page. Compare it with the time-line on p 15. How does it differ? Why did the investigators of the Swaziland Oral History Project use brackets (})?

4. What does c. 1750 mean?



Time-line drawn up by the Swaziland Oral History Project showing the early history of the Swazi royal house

In the early 1800s there was much conflict in south-eastern Africa. People fought with one another for cattle, grain and water supplies.

Part Six Defeat, Flight and the Reconstruction of the Swazi Kingdom under Sobhuza I (Somhlolo), c. 1810–1838

Chapter Twenty-one *The Early Years, c. 1810–1815*

'We found many oral traditions about the times of Somhlolo,' said Thami. 'There are some traditions that tell about the king. Other traditions are about the Swazi people. So it was difficult to put together a picture of the past, but we talked with each other and eventually managed to put this story together.'

21A. Somhlolo became king

'Somhlolo spent the early years of his life at Lobamba in the south of present-day Swaziland. This was the king's main village or capital. From here he ruled over his people. We do not know exactly when Somhlolo became king, but we know that it was some time between 1810 and 1815.'

Philani asked a question

Philani was unhappy. Thami was not giving an accurate date for when Somhlolo became king. He put his hand in the air and asked Thami, 'Why do you say that Somhlolo became king "some time between 1810 and 1815"?''

'Well, all that people can tell us is that Somhlolo became king a few years before Shaka ruled Zululand,' said Thami, 'and we know from other books that Shaka began his reign in about 1816.'

'Yes,' said Mr Hlophe, 'with oral traditions it is very difficult to find exact dates. People sometimes forget the exact time when an event happened. Or they were not told when

the event occurred. Sometimes they only know a rough date. It is only when we have written documents that we can begin to give accurate dates to an event.'

Thami continued the story

'Somhlolo was given the name of King Sobhuza. Swazi kings are given a different name when they become king. Our present king's name is Mswati III, but before he became king he was called Makhosetive.

'Maboya Fakudze, one of Swaziland's leading oral historians, told us why Somhlolo was named Sobhuza: "There was a lot of argument after Somhlolo became king. The royals asked many questions among themselves. Hence his praise 'Sobhuza'. This means 'asker of questions' ".'

21B. Conflict with the Ndwandwe

'Sobhuza I's greatest problem was conflict with the Ndwandwe kingdom on his southern border. The conflict began during the reign of Sobhuza's grandfather, Ngwane III. Ngwane fought with the Ndwandwe over the fertile lands of the Phongolo River valley.

'Why did they fight over this piece of land?'

'The Ndwandwe wanted the fertile lands of the Phongolo valley for themselves. There was a lot of water there. However, the people of Ngwane were in control of the area. So the Ndwandwe started fighting Ngwane and his people to gain control of the valley.'

'This conflict became worse during the reign of Sobhuza I. Some chiefdoms changed sides. The Simelane people, for example, fled from the Ndwandwe king, Zwide, to join Sobhuza I. The Ndwandwe sent more and more armies against Sobhuza.'

Sobhuza tried to make peace

'Sobhuza tried to make peace with the Ndwandwe king, Zwide. He went to visit Zwide. Many stories are told about this visit. This story comes from Mandlenkosi Nxumalo:

One day Sobhuza I visited Zwide. At the first meeting, Zwide fell down. That night there fell torrential rains. But on the following morning, it was sunny.

Zwide plotted to kill Sobhuza. But Zwide's mother protested. She pleaded with Zwide to allow Sobhuza to go in

peace. Zwide listened to his mother's pleas and Sobhuza was allowed to leave unharmed.

'This story shows us that Sobhuza I was a powerful man.

'The traditions also say that at this meeting Zwide agreed to Sobhuza's peace plan. He allowed one of his daughters to become Sobhuza's chief wife.

'Zwide agreed to the plan, but he was not happy with it. He warned, "This will not stop me from attacking Sobhuza if I want to in the future."

'Soon afterwards Zwide's daughter, Tsandzile, travelled north to meet her future husband, King Sobhuza. Sobhuza treated Tsandzile with respect. She became Sobhuza's chief wife or *inkhosikati*. Tsandzile was a very clever woman. All the other wives were jeal-



Artist's drawing of Shiselweni in flames

ous of her. So Sobhuza built a home for her to live and work by herself in the Lubuyane area.'

The burning of Shiselweni

'Zwide did not wait for long before he attacked Sobhuza again. There was a new fight over grain fields on the south side of the Phongolo River.

'Zwide wanted to destroy the Ngwane for good. In about 1817 the Ndwandwe attacked the Swazi capital. "Then came Zwide spilling out of Zululand," said one informant, "and Sobhuza fled when he heard of the advance of the *imphi*."

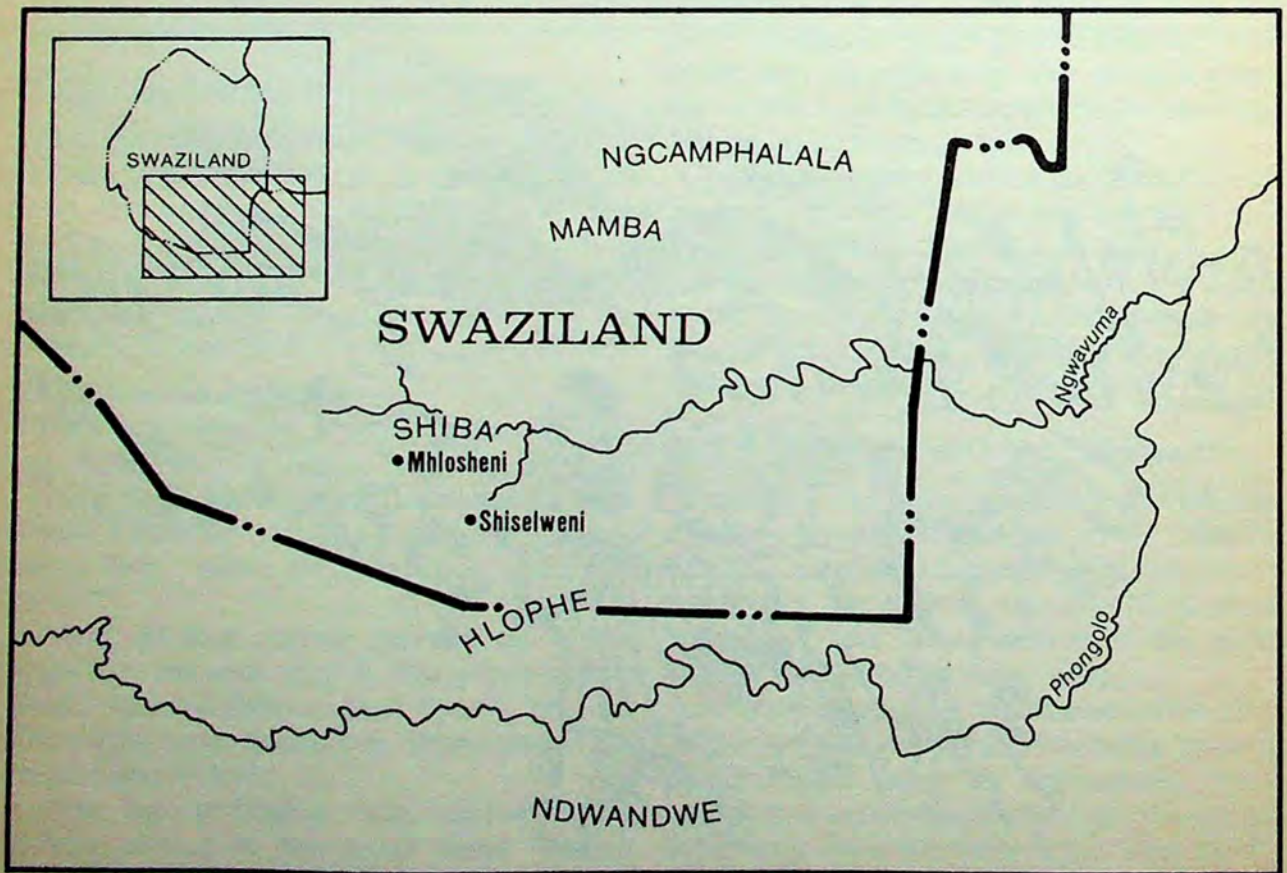
'Sobhuza's capital was burnt to the ground. The area became known as Shiselweni from *kushisa* (to burn). Even today, some of the old people who live in the area remember that

when they were young they found ashes when they tilled the soil. For this reason Shiselweni is sometimes called "eMlotseni" (the place of ashes).'

Remaining behind

'Groups like the Madonsela, Kunene, Mamba, Ngcamphalala and Khumalo all remained behind in the south when Sobhuza fled north. Their lives were threatened by the Ndwandwe invaders. They hid from the Ndwandwe. The Hlophe hid in the Mhlosheni caves until the Ndwandwe attacks stopped. As we shall see later only the Mamba people were strong enough to resist the Ndwandwe attacks.

'Other groups were left by Sobhuza to guard against attacks. The Shiba were one of these groups. "Sobhuza told my grandfather to look



Map of the area occupied by Sobhuza I in the early years of his reign

after this place so as to guard against *imphi*," another informant, Msila Shiba, told Thami. "He was given a place on top of a hill to spy far away."

Exercises

1. When did Somhlolo become king?
2. When historians use oral traditions, why is it difficult to find *exact* dates?
3. Why did the Ndwandwe and the

Ngwane fight over the land of the Phongolo River valley?

4. Sobhuza tried to make peace with Zwide. Was Sobhuza successful? Give reasons for your answer.

In about 1817 the Ndwandwe pushed Sobhuza I and some of his people right out of the south of Swaziland.

Chapter Twenty-two *The Journey North, c. 1815–1819*

Mbulungwane

'Sobhuza left Shiselweni and travelled north to Mbulungwane. Among those who travelled with him were the Mavimbela, Bhembe and Nhlabatsi.'

22A. Journeying

KaPhunga

'Sobhuza did not stay at Mbulungwane for long. He moved on to KaPhunga, also called KaPhungalegazi. KaPhunga is a very high place. You can see a long way from the top of the mountain. On a clear day you can even see Manzini which is thirty-five kilometres away (see photograph on p 32). So Sobhuza was able to see his enemies from far away.

'Here is a story of how KaPhunga was named. It was told to the investigators of the

Swaziland Oral History Project by Sam Mkhonta:

We arrived at KaPhungalegazi. Sobhuza stretched himself out. When he was feeling relaxed he smelt something strange. He sent his *emabutfo* to check what was smelling. They checked, but saw nothing. So the place was named "KaPhunga" (the place of the smell).

'Sometimes KaPhunga is called 'Phungalegazi' (the smell of blood). People say that it was called this because Sobhuza could smell the killing done by the Ndwandwe amongst his people.

'KaPhunga was not safe enough for Sobhuza. The Ndwandwe were still chasing him. He was forced to move on. He needed a place to hide from the enemy.'

22B. Hiding in caves

Buseleni

'At Buseleni, Sobhuza found a cave fortress. He fought with the Sotho people who lived in the area. It is said that Sobhuza pushed the Sotho, and the Ndwandwe pushed him. And the Ndwandwe did push him. Sobhuza was forced to move further north.

'When Sobhuza reached the Lusutfu River valley he met a group of Sotho people called the Maseko. The Maseko had their own king, known as Mgazi. Under Mgazi the Maseko were the most powerful group in central Swaziland at that time.

'Sobhuza's army was very weak. They were not strong enough to fight against the Maseko. So Sobhuza went to the Maseko chief and asked for help.

"I will help you," said Mgazi, "because your mother was Somnjalose Simelane. We Maseko are related to the Simelane."

Nqabaneni

'The Maseko showed Sobhuza another cave hide away known as 'Nqabaneni' (little fortress). The Maseko, however, did not want trouble from the Ndwandwe, so when the Ndwandwe army threatened them, they asked Sobhuza to leave. Mgazi gave Sobhuza and his people a guide, Lanqabane Mnisi, to show them another hiding place.'

Mdzimba

'Lanqabane Mnisi took Sobhuza and his people to the Mdzimba Mountains. When Zwide found out that Sobhuza was at Mdzimba, he sent his armies northwards to attack the mountain fortress. The Ndwandwe attacked but they failed to find the king or his followers. There were so many caves on the mountain slope that they did not know which ones to enter.

'It was very difficult to attack people hiding in the caves. When the Ndwandwe attacked a cave they were driven back.

'Sobhuza knew it was not wise to stay in the

Mdzimba caves for long. In the end Zwide would find him, and his people were too weak to fight the Ndwandwe. So he once again travelled northwards.'



Map of the area crossed by Sobhuza I

Dlodlomo

'Sobhuza asked another Sotho chief, called Magoboyi, to help him. Magoboyi lived with his people high up in the Dlodlomo Mountains, north-west of present-day Swaziland. Magoboyi allowed Sobhuza to stay on his land. He even let him establish a royal residence called Ncakini.'

Thami ended his report

Thami stopped his report there. It was time for a tea break. Over tea the members of the Swaziland Oral History Project carried on talking about Sobhuza I.

'It seem that Sobhuza was a refugee during the early years of his reign,' said Mr Hlophe.



The Mzimba Mountains

'Yes,' agreed Vuyelwa, 'we can see that from his journey northwards. He moved from cave to cave, shelter to shelter.'

'We think that he was not powerful at this time,' said Philani, 'but he became a great king later. As soon as tea is finished, we'll tell you how it happened!'

Exercises

1. The names of people and places remind us about their history. Write a paragraph about how the name of a person or a place that you have read about in this book reminds us of its history.

2. Copy the map on p 70. Draw lines with arrows between the places where Sobhuza stopped on his journey northwards.
3. How many mountain fortresses did Sobhuza I stay in? Why did he stay in the mountain fortresses?

In the early years of his reign, Sobhuza I was a refugee, looking for a place where he would be protected from Ndwandwe attacks.

Chapter Twenty-three *The Time of Recovery,* c. 1819–1826

After tea Vuyelwa read out the next part of the report about the times of Sobhuza.

23A. The Zulu kingdom

'Under the protection of Magoboyi, Sobhuza and his followers began to recover their strength. The Ndwandwe attacks also stopped. Zwide had problems of his own. He was under attack from the Zulu.

'The Ndwandwe were trying to dominate the whole of south-east Africa. We have seen how they attacked their northern neighbours, Sobhuza's people.

'In 1818 they attacked their southern neighbours, the Zulu, but the Zulu king, Shaka, was clever. He tricked the Ndwandwe.

'Shaka knew that the Ndwandwe army did not carry food on its raids. When the Ndwandwe forces entered the Zulu kingdom, they found no food to eat. The Zulu had burnt or buried all their grain and vegetables. The Zulu army had gone into hiding with all the kingdom's cattle. The Ndwandwe army grew hungry and weak.

'Then, one night, the Zulu surprised the Ndwandwe. They attacked the Ndwandwe camp in the Zulu kingdom. They killed the Ndwandwe as they lay sleeping. The Ndwandwe who woke up in time could not see their enemies in the dark. The Ndwandwe killed their own people by mistake. The Zulu attackers did not have this problem because they had a password, "*kisi*". They knew that whoever said "*kisi, kisi*" was a Zulu, not an Ndwandwe.

'In this way, the small and weak Zulu army defended the Zulu kingdom against the powerful Ndwandwe. Zwide was forced to give up the attack and return home.'

The Zulu fought the Ndwandwe

'Although the Zulu had managed to drive the Ndwandwe back, they had not defeated them. The Ndwandwe were still a threat to the Zulu and neighbouring chiefdoms. The Zulu joined forces with their neighbours. By 1819 the *amabutho* under Shaka's command were strong enough to meet the Ndwandwe in battle.

They fought on the banks of the Mhlathuze River. Although the two armies were evenly matched, the Zulu triumphed.'



Early drawing of Shaka, king of the Zulu

23B. The Zulu kingdom extended

'Soon the Zulu became the greatest power in south-east Africa. Shaka now became the ruler of the largest kingdom in the region. How did he manage to keep this large kingdom together?

'People from a large number of subject chiefdoms joined the *amabutho* under the direct authority of the Zulu king. Loyalty to their *amabutho* and to the Zulu king replaced earlier loyalties to local chiefs. These people began to think of themselves as Zulu. A military administration spread across Zululand, uniting its most remote corners.

'But the Zulu rulers needed a vast supply of cattle and land to reward the administrators of their huge kingdom and the people in the *amabutho*. The land and cattle were seized from the Zulu's neighbours.'

23C. Rebuilding power

'The collapse of the Ndwandwe kingdom gave Sobhuza a chance to rebuild his power. He attacked small Sotho chiefdoms near the Dlodlomo Mountains. They were forced to submit to him.

'By 1819 Sobhuza had enough power to attack the large Mkhize kingdom. The Mkhize kingdom stretched from the Dlodlomo Mountains to present-day Mbabane. Sobhuza was growing powerful again.

'Back in the south of the country, at Shiselweni, people had suffered a great deal from the Ndwandwe attacks. They lived in caves, hiding from the Ndwandwe.'

23D. Maloyi Mamba and the return to Shiselweni

'Only the Mamba people resisted the Ndwandwe invasion. Their chief, Maloyi, led the fight against the Ndwandwe.

'While Maloyi was fighting the Ndwandwe, a brother of Sobhuza, named Nkwekazi, took control at Shiselweni. Maloyi did not accept Nkwekazi as king. He said "No, I do not want

this one. I will fetch back Sobhuza, my brother."

'Maloyi brought Sobhuza back to Shiselweni in 1819. Together, Maloyi and Sobhuza defeated Nkwekazi. Sobhuza became king in the south again.'

Maloyi Mamba rewarded

'Maloyi was greatly rewarded by the king. Logwaja Mamba told the story of his reward:

Sobhuza said "Awu! My brother, I had given up all hope of returning to my kingship. You have brought me back. You are now the left arm and I am the right arm. Build an *inhlambelo* (a ritual cattle byre).

"You will cover your penis with left-hand ivory and I will cover my penis with the ivory of the right hand. You will call up and send out an *imphi* when you want to. When a person wants to hide with you because I want to kill him, I will not search for him at your place. I will never enter into the area you rule."



Map showing the break-up of the Ndwandwe kingdom

'In this way Sobhuza gave Maloyi great power. He allowed him to celebrate his own rituals, to have his own army, and to rule his own territory without interference by Sobhuza.'

23E. The end of the Ndwandwe kingdom

'The Ndwandwe kingdom broke up after Shaka finally defeated Zwide. Different groups of Ndwandwe sped northwards to escape from the powerful Zulu armies.

'One section, under Soshangane, travelled to the Delagoa Bay area. Here they began to build up a new kingdom with the Tembe chiefdoms in the area.

'Other Ndwandwe leaders, like Zwangendaba and Nxaba, went north west. They took with them those of their people that had survived the wars.

'Many smaller bands of refugees also moved hastily northwards. Their only hope was to get away from Shaka and to find a place where they could live in peace.

'Some of these people crossed the Phongolo and entered Ngwane territory. They begged for land and protection from Sobhuza.

He took them under his 'armpit' and gave them protection.

'Sobhuza was only too pleased that he was gaining more followers to defend his land from attack. Zwide's heir, Shemane, was one of the people who came to Sobhuza to seek protection.'

Exercises

1. Write a paragraph explaining how the Zulu state became large and powerful.
2. Why did Maloyi Mamba call Sobhuza his brother? (Hint: go back to Chapters Fourteen and Fifteen.)
3. When Sobhuza returned to the south, he began to build a new kingdom. Write a short paragraph describing how he did this.

The kingdom of Sobhuza I began to grow again when he returned to Shiselweni, and after the Ndwandwe were defeated by Shaka.

Chapter Twenty-four *The Time of Growth, 1826–1838*

Between 1826 and 1838, the small chiefdom under Sobhuza I expanded and became more powerful. How did this happen?

24A. The Zulu threat

Although Ndwandwe power was broken, Sobhuza still faced big problems. There was now a new, strong power in the region — Shaka and the Zulu. The Zulu had destroyed the

Ndwandwe. Sobhuza feared that it was only a matter of time before his kingdom went the same way as the Ndwandwe. Sobhuza planned to stop this from happening. To do this he had to build up the strength of his kingdom.

Sobhuza and his *tindvuna* tried to extend their control over as many people and as much land as possible. They wanted a large

united army to fight the Zulu. Like Shaka, Sobhuza also needed land and cattle to reward his officers and his warriors.

Sobhuza thought it wise to move the centre of his kingdom northwards as he wanted to be far away from Shaka. He and his officers decided to return to Mdzimba and to build a new capital near the safety of the mountain fortresses. There were, however, a number of Sotho chiefdoms living in the Mdzimba area. They had to recognise Sobhuza's authority before the new capital could be built. Sobhuza went north with an army. They were prepared for a fight.

How did the Sotho chiefs respond to Sobhuza? Some people fled. Some fought. Others saw what happened to those who opposed Sobhuza and accepted his rule without putting up a fight.

Let us have a look at two chiefdoms that Sobhuza brought into his kingdom: the Magagula and the Maseko.

24B. The Magagula

Philani and Vuyelwa did research on the Magagula and Maseko so they told this part of the history.

'The Magagula were Sobhuza's strongest opponents,' said Philani. 'They lived in a large chiefdom. The Magagula say that much of present-day Swaziland was once called "Ka-Magagula". When Sobhuza met the Magagula, their chiefdom included the Mnisi, Malaza, Mncina and Masilela people.'

Mnjoli and Moyeni

'The Magagula were very different from the Ngwane. They spoke a different language, se-Sotho, and had different customs. They did not eat animals killed by hand. They farmed differently.

'The Magagula chiefdom was divided into two districts. One district was known as Ncabane. It was centred in the Mdzimba Mountains and was ruled by Mnjoli. The other was known as Mliba. It was in the Nkomati River area and ruled by Mnjoli's brother, Moyeni.

'Sobhuza wanted to settle in the eZulwini valley where Mnjoli lived. There were caves in the area for protection and the soil was very fertile.'

The rain-making charms

'The Magagula people were famous for their rain-making charms. These charms gave the Magagula a lot of power. Many people asked the Magagula to make rain for them.

'Sobhuza also wanted to get the famous rain-making charms from the Magagula. He sent messengers to ask Mnjoli for the charms, but Mnjoli beat the messengers.'

Sobhuza played a trick

'So Sobhuza had to think of another plan to get the charms. He decided to use a trick. His warriors put cow hides on their backs and hid themselves amongst the Magagula herds. When the cattle were brought into Mnjoli's mountain fortress for the night, Sobhuza's warriors entered as well.

'When Sobhuza's army entered the mountain fortress at Ncabane they found Mnjoli and killed him, but they did not find the charms.

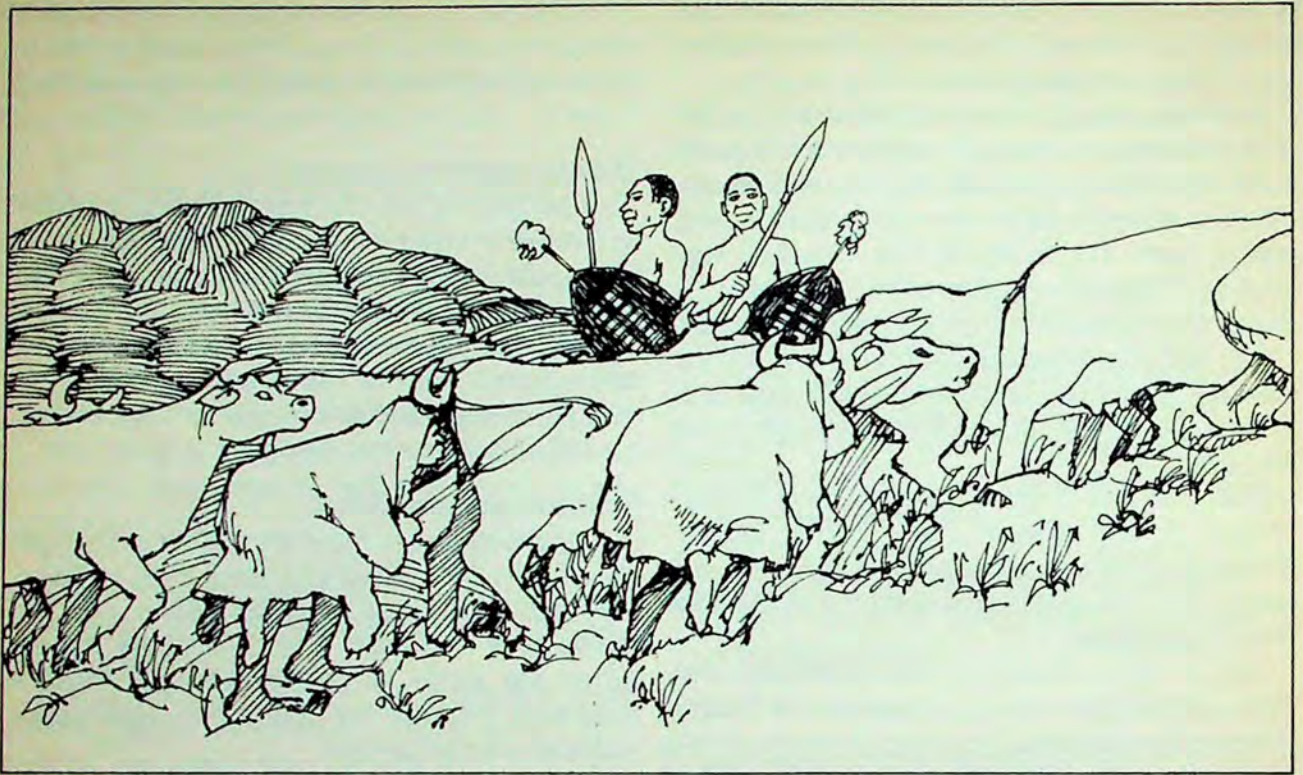
'Mnjoli had guessed that Sobhuza was going to try something. So he had given the charms to his son, Dvokolwako, and told him to flee. Sobhuza chased Dvokolwako to Mliba Mountain. At Mliba, Dvokolwako was protected by Moyeni. Sobhuza could not defeat them. So he had to make another plan.'

Sobhuza played a second trick

'Sam Mkhonta told the investigators from the Swaziland Oral History Project about the plan that Sobhuza made:

Mawandla, the Mkhonta chief, was famous for beating the bones for Sobhuza. He said that the only way for Sobhuza to defeat Dvokolwako was to get his *umvunulo* (penis sheath).

Sobhuza chose a pretty girl and a handsome young man. He sent them to steal the *umvunulo*. The girl stayed with Dvokolwako.



Artist's drawing of Sobhuza I's warriors sneaking into Mnjoli's fortress

She watched to see where he hid his *umvunulo*. One night she found the hiding place. When Dvokolwako was asleep she stole the *umvunulo* and crept out of the hut. She wakened the young man and the two of them went back to Sobhuza.

The *inyanga* then made a powerful *umutsi* (potion) with the *umvunulo* to defeat Dvokolwako. While Dvokolwako was away fighting, Sobhuza's army came and destroyed his residence.

When Dvokolwako returned and saw the destruction he fled, but the rain-making charms were hidden away. Sobhuza did not find them. It is said by some people that to this day the Magagula still have the charms.

Moyeni's Magagula

'Meanwhile Sobhuza's army also attacked the Magagula under Moyeni at Mkhutsali. This was a huge mountain fort. Sobhuza's army

surrounded the fortress but did not take it. It was too high and big for his armies to climb.

'So Sobhuza's army surrounded the fort and did not let anyone out. As time went by, Moyeni noticed that Sobhuza's forces at the bottom of the mountain were getting bigger.

'One night, while Sobhuza's army slept, Moyeni and his people escaped. Moyeni was chased by the army and his child was killed. Moyeni escaped, but he decided that he had had enough. So he journeyed back to Sobhuza's residence and surrendered himself. He asked for refuge and this was granted. He was allowed to settle at Mliba.

'Sobhuza therefore used three methods to subdue the Magagula: trickery, force, and diplomacy.

'Even after Sobhuza had defeated the Magagula he did not take full control of the Magagula chiefdoms. Dvokolwako was given a place to settle and allowed to rule the area. There was no control from the royal family. All

that Sobhuza had were military commanders in the territories.'

Philani, who had finished telling how Sobhuza subdued the Magagula, now handed over to Vuyelwa to tell about the Maseko.

24C. The Maseko

'With the Maseko people Sobhuza knew that he had to be very careful,' Vuyelwa began. 'They were the most powerful group in central Swaziland. Sobhuza had maintained good relations with the Maseko. Remember how they helped him on his flight north.'

LaMbombotsi

'Sobhuza offered a wife to the Maseko leader, Mgazi. He sent his daughter, LaMbombotsi, to marry Mgazi. This was when the trouble began.'

Maloba Maseko told Vuyelwa what happened:

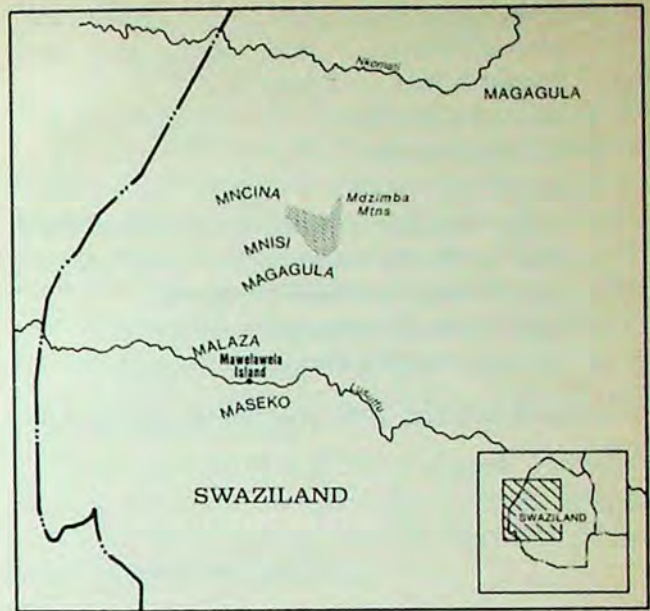
There was a good understanding between Sobhuza and the Maseko until Sobhuza offered a princess to be wife of our chief and therefore our queen.

Trouble developed over this act because our elders had already named LaNdzi-*mandze* as our queen. She came from our grandmother's family.

The Masekos built a new home for Sobhuza's daughter, just to get her away from our royal residence. This also was to ensure that she did not become our queen.

But LaMbombotsi complained that she was badly treated. She dipped her leather skirt in the water so that it became badly creased. When she went home she showed her father the skirt as proof of how badly the Maseko treated her.

When Sobhuza heard the news that his daughter was badly treated and had been denied the position of a queen of the Maseko kingdom, he got annoyed and sent an army to fight us.



Map of the area in which Sobhuza I expanded his power 1826-1838

Mawelawela Island

'Sobhuza then invited the Maseko chief to go on a hunt with him. They went to Mawelawela Island in the middle of the Lusutfu River where there were a lot of animals. The Ngwane waited until the Maseko were all on the island. Then they attacked them.

'The Maseko were taken by surprise. Many of the Maseko died, including their chief Mgazi. Those that survived were scattered far and wide.

'The Maseko who helped Sobhuza in his plan were rewarded. They were given a place to settle and allowed to rule over the area. Sobhuza did not try to rule the Maseko directly.

'And that,' said Vuyelwa, 'was how Sobhuza became the most important chief north of the Phongolo River!'

'Well done,' said Mr Hlophe. 'You are excellent historians. You collected different kinds of evidence, then you arranged your evidence chronologically. You asked all the important questions that historians ask. You asked:

- what happened *first*? (You discovered that Sobhuza I was weak and was forced to flee northwards.)
- *when* did he flee?
- *how* did he flee?
- *why* did he flee?
- what happened *next*? (You discovered that Sobhuza became the most powerful chief north of the Phongolo.)
- *how* did things change for Sobhuza?
- *why* did things change for Sobhuza?

'You have proved that you really are historians.'

Exercise

Go through the list of questions which Mr Hlophe said the researchers asked and answered. Can you remember what answers the members of the Swaziland Oral History Project found for each question? If you cannot remember, look back over the last two chapters for answers.

Sobhuza I conquered some people; he offered shelter to others; he tricked some people; and with still others, he used diplomacy to make his kingdom strong and powerful.

Chapter Twenty-five *Consolidating the Kingdom, 1826–1838*

The next time the Swaziland Oral History Project met, Philani stood up. He had a question.

'Last week we heard how Sobhuza became the ruler over many different people. How did he rule such a large country? After all, he didn't have government ministries, cars or telephones.'

25A. Ruling a large country

Mr Hlophe answered, 'Of course, Sobhuza I did not have all the modern things that our Government today has. But he and his advisers began to make laws to control what people did. They appointed officials and messengers to send out orders to the people. They organised the *emabutfo* to make sure that the laws

were obeyed, and the orders of the officials were carried out.

'But Sobhuza had to reward the officials, the messengers and the men of the *emabutfo* just the same as the government today has to pay



all its employees. To do this he needed great wealth.'

Becoming wealthy

'Sobhuza collected tribute in cattle, crops and labour from all of his subjects. He used the tribute to reward the administrators, the messengers and the *emabutfo*. Any tribute that was left over he kept, or gave to his closest supporters as rewards for their loyalty.

'The royal family and its closest supporters preferred to marry into each other's families. This meant that they paid *lobola* only to each other, and not to the people whom they had conquered. In this way the new rulers gradually became very wealthy.

'These are some of the ways in which Sobhuza extended his rule and strengthened his kingdom,' said Mr Hlophe. 'Can you think of any other things that the king did to govern his kingdom?'

The members of the Swaziland Oral History Project checked their notes. There were many things that Sobhuza did to try and make himself stronger.

Culture and language

The new rulers tried to make the Sotho groups practise their customs and obey their laws. 'After we had been conquered by the Swazi, we practised and obeyed all their laws,' said Mbhuduya Magagula, one of the Swaziland Oral History Project's informants.

The siSwati language was spoken by Sobhuza and his supporters, but Dvokolwako did not speak siSwati. He spoke seSotho until he died. IsiZulu was also used as a language by many who did not speak siSwati.

However, the new rulers slowly began to make people speak siSwati. Another informant, Magangeni Dlamini, said, 'People listened closely to the way in which a person was talking. This was to see if he spoke siSwati in the correct way. If anyone happened to mispronounce the siSwati it was seen that he was a spy and he was killed.'

25B. Sobhuza I and the Zulu kingdom

The investigators of the Swaziland Oral History Project discovered that although Sobhuza became stronger and more powerful, he still feared Shaka. After conquering the Sotho clans, Sobhuza moved the centre of his kingdom from the south to the eZulwini area. This was further away from the threat of the Zulu in the south. The Zulu, however, were not yet interested in Sobhuza's country. Shaka was fighting other battles.

Sobhuza was taking no chances. Families loyal to him were placed in the south to protect him from Zulu attacks. These were the Nhlabatsi, Simelane, and Shiba.

Zulu attacks

The Zulu army then began to make attacks into Swaziland. But in Shaka's time they were only small raids. In 1828 Shaka was killed by his brother, Dingane. Dingane became the new Zulu king.



Early drawing of Dingane, king of the Zulu

Under Dingane, the Zulu started making northern raids into Sobhuza's kingdom more often. In 1836 the Zulu army invaded the kingdom, but they were defeated.

In 1838 the Zulu attacked again. A mighty battle was fought on the banks of the Lubuya River. The investigators of the Swaziland Oral History Project were told a sad story by Ndambi Mkhonta:

It was a tragic scene. The Lubuya River remained red with blood for a long time, and the place was littered with bones for years. The Zulu nearly swept away all the Swazi army.

The Swazi army managed to hold out, and Dingane lost two whole regiments in this battle. Fearing rebellion at home, because of his losses, Dingane ordered his forces to withdraw.

The cost of the battle of Lubuya was very high. Sobhuza's army was very nearly destroyed. It needed to rebuild itself.



Map showing the site of the battle of Lubuya

25C. Sobhuza's death

Soon after the battle of Lubuya, Sobhuza died. He died in 1838 while still fighting the Zulu. Another informant, Loncayi Hlophe, told the story of Sobhuza's death:

Sobhuza and the army decided to move out of reach of these Zulu. On the way Sobhuza was pricked by the stem of a fern-like plant, the *umfuku*. This was near the mountain called eMampondweni.

At that time Sobhuza was with his attendant, Sokhukhuza Hlophe. Sokhukhuza used his assegai to cut off a long thorn to get the stick out of the king's flesh.

This done, both men went into the Ngome forest. The king had contracted a fever. Sokhukhuza planned to hide the king. He found that the bush was not thick enough to cover the king.

Sokhukhuza carried the king to the top of Mndlanku Hill where he found a cave. Here they sat and started rubbing sticks together to make fire. But Sobhuza died soon afterwards.

25D. Dingane's death in the south-east of Swaziland

The Zulu king, Dingane, died soon after Sobhuza I in 1840. Dingane did not die in Zululand. He died in the Lubombo Mountains on the eastern border of Sobhuza's kingdom.

What was Dingane doing in the Lubombo Mountains? After the battle of Lubuya, Dingane's brother, Mpande, rebelled. There was a huge battle in the Maqonqo Hills not far from present-day Magudu. Dingane was beaten.

Dingane fled north across the Phongolo River into Sobhuza's kingdom. He took refuge in the Hlathikhulu forest in the southern Lubombo Mountains.

This was the area where the Nyawo people lived. Together with the Ngwane rulers, the Nyawo planned to kill Dingane. They blamed Dingane for the great losses at Lubuya.

Dingane was surrounded early one morn-

ing. He tried to escape, but was stabbed in the thigh. The Nyawo then questioned him about his plans. Then they ordered that he be killed. He was buried a few yards away from where he was killed.

Dingane's cattle, as well as some women and children, were seized. This made relations between the Zulu and the Ngwane worse. As we shall see, the new Zulu king, Mpande, attempted to get the cattle back by attacking the Ngwane.

25E. Conclusion

At the beginning of Sobhuza's reign he faced many threats. He had enemies south of the Phongolo. His kingdom was nearly destroyed by the mighty Ndwandwe nation. And then the Zulu kings, Shaka and Dingane, attacked him.

In the north Sobhuza had huge problems. Here he faced resistance from the Sotho people who had been living on the land before his father, Ngwane, crossed the Phongolo into southern Swaziland.

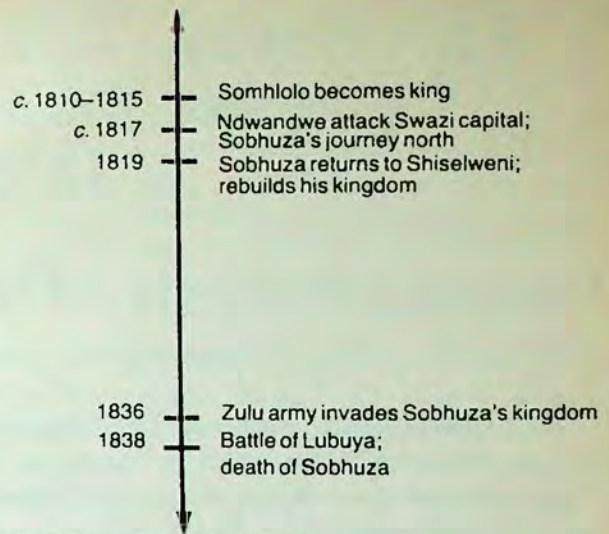
But Sobhuza and the kingship survived. The centre of his kingdom moved towards the north. Sobhuza gained power over the Sotho groups. And, in spite of huge losses, the Zulu invasion was beaten back.

Mr Hlophe closed the meeting

Mr Hlophe thanked the researchers of the Swaziland Oral History Project for their presentation. He was very impressed with the way they used the oral traditions to find out about the times of Sobhuza I. He arranged another meeting for the next week to hear about what happened in the time of Sobhuza's son, Mswati II. He made a suggestion to the members of the Swaziland Oral History Project:

'You are doing very well. Why don't we invite an audience to come and hear you next time? I'm sure that there are many people who want to know about the past.'

The researchers all agreed with Mr Hlophe, but they felt a little nervous about having an audience. They knew that they would have to prepare themselves very well.



Time-line of the reign of Sobhuza I

Exercises

1. In this chapter we found that a lot of different people influenced Swazi history. Go through the chapter and draw up a time-line showing the main events in Zulu history that are mentioned. Compare this time-line with the time-line in the book about the times of Sobhuza I.
2. We saw in this chapter how people ruled in the times of Sobhuza I. Draw up a list of ways that people rule today. Then go through the chapter and find out how Shaka ruled and how Sobhuza I ruled. Compare these three lists and discuss how they are different and how they are similar.

Sobhuza I built a large and powerful kingdom in two ways: he expanded the size of the kingdom externally through conquest, tricks, and diplomacy; and he reorganised the kingdom internally by establishing a large administration, by making people speak siSwati and by making them observe Swazi laws and customs.

Part Seven Challenge, Control and Conquest: the Times of Mswati II, 1838–1865

Chapter Twenty-six *The Early Years, 1838–1840*

The Mbabane Public Library was packed with people. They had come to hear members of the Swaziland Oral History Project talk about the times of Mswati II.

26A. Mr Hlophe opened the meeting

Mr Hlophe opened the meeting. 'We all know that the name of the king of Swaziland today is Mswati III,' he said. 'But over a hundred years ago there was another king with the name Mswati. His name was Mswati II. It is from Mswati II that our present king takes his name. Our kings take the names of kings who ruled before them. We use the name of Mswati a lot when we talk. For example, we sometimes say "*NgiliSwati*, I am a Swazi", or "*Ngikhuluma siSwati ngitsi*, I speak siSwati". We call our country Swaziland.

'I am going to ask the Swaziland Oral History Project to tell us about the times of Mswati II.'

What do you know about Mswati II?

The first thing that the members of the Swaziland Oral History Project did was to ask their audience a question: 'Mswati II was a famous king. What do you know about him?'

This is what the audience said:

Lomathobi Mavimbela said, 'I remember what my father told me about the reign of Mswati when I was young. Mswati was a very cruel king. He killed many people.'

Paul Dlamini said, 'Mswati was a fighting

king. He fought wars to make all the people living in Swaziland his subjects.'

Ndzabambi Dlamini also said that Mswati was a cruel king. 'When the white man came Mswati sold some of his people to them for western things,' he said.

Mrs Ginindza did not think that Mswati was cruel. 'He was an outstanding king. He was powerful and intelligent,' she said. 'Today his descendants are the chiefs not only at Hhohho. They are chiefs all over the country.'

'Everyone has different opinions about Mswati II,' said Philani, 'and everyone we interviewed told us a different story. We also found that Mswati did not control events on his own. Many different people and events influenced Swazi history at that time. To find out about these people and events we tried to use as many different pieces of evidence as possible.'

Different kinds of evidence

'We had to travel far and wide to find evidence about the times of Mswati II. We first used *oral traditions*. People had heard a lot about Mswati's reign. Members of the Project interviewed many informants.

'But there are other types of historical evidence for this period as well. There are *written documents* of church people, hunters and Boers who entered Swaziland at the time, as well as reports by colonial officials.

'These written documents are kept in different places. The documents of the church

people are kept in the town of Grahamstown in South Africa. Vuyelwa was on holiday there so she went to look at these documents.'

Philani continued, 'Thami and I also found documents. Thami knows Afrikaans so he read the documents of the Boers which are kept at the Swaziland National Archives in Lobamba. I travelled to Pietermaritzburg where I read the documents written by colonial officials.'

'With more evidence it was easier to find information about Mswati's reign than Sobhuza's reign, but now we also found that there were even more *versions* of events.'

'Most of the documents were written by whites. They wrote down the events from their point of view. The oral traditions were told by people in Swaziland. They were also told from their own point of view.'

'We had to fit the different stories together to work out what happened. This is the history of Mswati's reign that we put together,' said Philani. 'I will begin to tell the history.'



26B. Mswati II became king

'In 1838 Sobhuza I died. His son, Mswati, became king. Mswati II ruled from 1838 to 1865.'

'Mswati became king at a very difficult time. His father Sobhuza had started building the Swazi kingdom, but it was still smaller and weaker than its powerful neighbour, the Zulu.'

'This is how the first whites in Swaziland described the country at the time:

The people subject to Mswati extend from the River Mkhonto in the west to the top of

the Lubombo Mountains in the east. The country stretches from the River Phongola in the south to the sources of the Lesotho (Lusutfu) in the north.

The whole area contains 42 petty chieftanships. Some of these have from 5 000–6 000 people. We concluded that the whole population amounts to about 80 000 people.

From: The Wesleyan Methodist Mission Archives

'Many of the chiefdoms were not closely controlled by the Swazi king. They made their own laws and carried them out themselves.'

'There was still no single national language. Many people continued to speak their own Nguni or Sotho languages. They had their own separate customs.'

'Mswati's capital was very small. A white visitor to the capital wrote that it had "about 300 houses around a circular kraal 1 000 yards in circumference" (from the Wesleyan Methodist Mission Archives). Only 1 500 people lived at the capital. At the same time 5 000 people were living at the Zulu capital.'

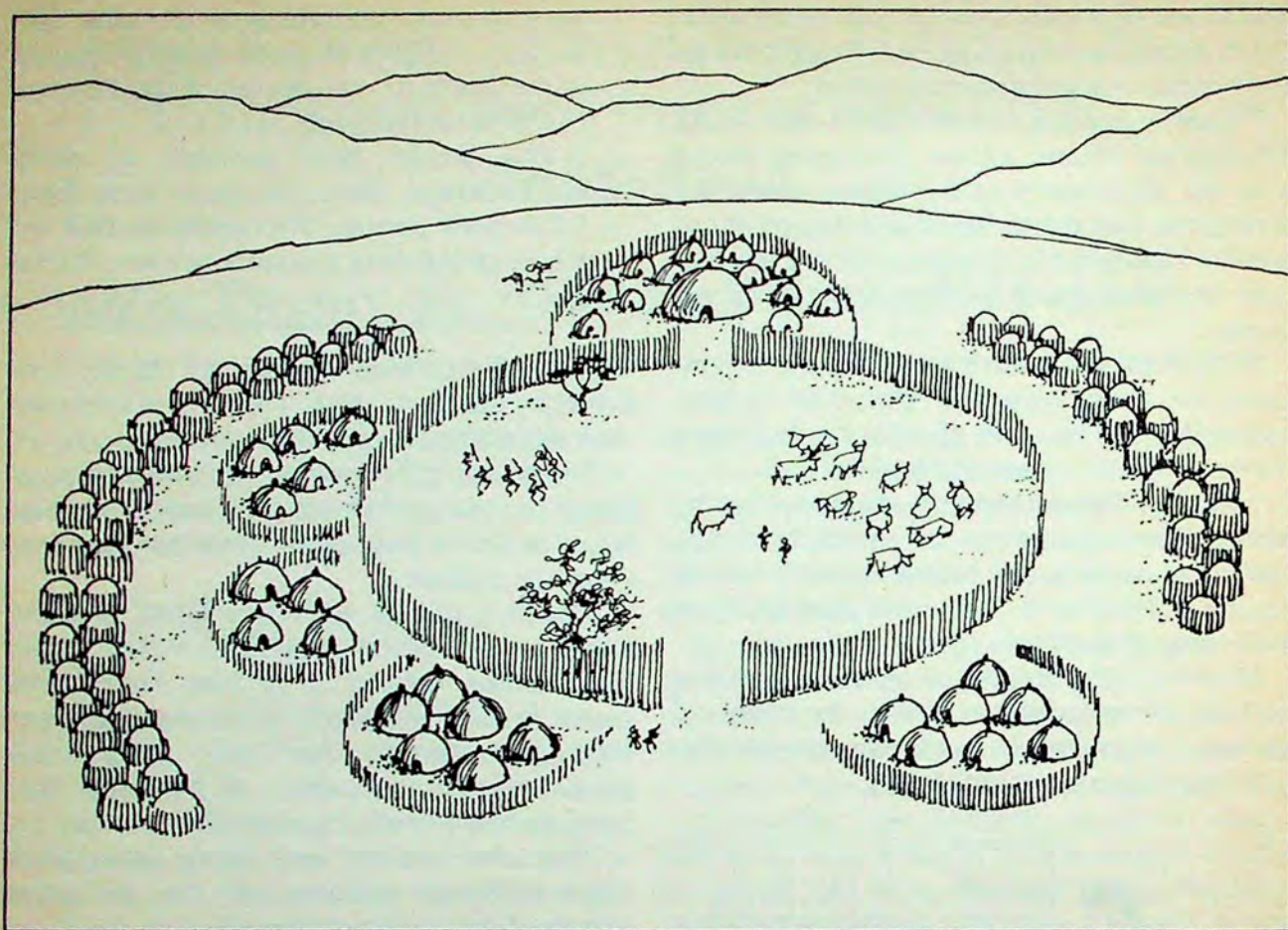
'The army was not very strong either. Hundreds of Swazi warriors had died in battles with the Zulu in Sobhuza I's reign.'

'To make matters worse, Mswati was only thirteen years old when his father died. He was surrounded by brothers who wanted to become king themselves. They mocked Mswati and called him the "herd-boy king".'

26C. The Fokoti rebellion, 1840

'Until Mswati was old enough to become king his uncle, Malunge, and the old queen mother, Somnjalose, ruled. One of Mswati's brothers, Fokoti, was not happy with this situation. He wanted to become king. In 1840 he rebelled. Fokoti got help from some people living in the south. Sihalahala was one person who helped Fokoti.'

'Sihalahala had fled from the Zulu kingdom in the 1830s. With the help of Fokoti he and his followers had settled in the south of Swaziland.'



Artist's drawing of Mswati II's Hhohho residence

A plot

'When the investigators of the Swaziland Oral History Project asked people about Fokoti, they were told this story:

Fokoti asked Sihalahala for a favour: "Help me my son. My men are not sufficiently strong. Come, give us a hand. Come help me catch the leopard." By the leopard he meant Mswati.

'Sihalahala at first did not want to help Fokoti. He had suffered a lot in Zululand already.

Fokoti was bitter. "I had placed my confidence in this man and he refuses to accept my proposal," he said. After a while Fokoti persuaded Sihalahala to help him.

But Fokoti's army was not strong

enough. Another of Mswati's brothers, Malambule, led the king's army against Fokoti. Malambule defeated Fokoti and captured 500 cattle.

'After this Mswati was made king. Somnjalose no longer had any say in the affairs of the nation.'

The regents

'Mswati's mother, Tsandzile, became the queen mother, but Mswati was still too young to rule. He was not yet circumcised. This meant that he was not considered to be an adult. Together with Mswati's uncle, Malunge, and his elder brother, Malambule, Tsandzile controlled the affairs of the nation until 1845. These three were known as the regents.'

Exercises

1. Write a short paragraph explaining what is meant by 'regent'.
2. The Swaziland Oral History Project used many different pieces of evidence to find out about the times of Mswati II. Where did Philani get the evidence for his part of the story?

In the early years of Mswati II's reign the Swazi kingdom was small and weak.

Chapter Twenty-seven *The First Whites, the 1840s*

It was now Vuyelwa's turn to make her presentation. She had read the documents of the first whites in Swaziland. She began to tell the audience what she had found out.

27A. Hunters and missionaries

The hunters arrived

'After Mswati was made king, the first whites arrived in Swaziland. Many of the whites who came in the 1840s were hunters. They wanted to hunt for wild animals in Swaziland.

'There were a lot of wild animals in Swaziland at the time. In his diary one hunter wrote that he saw these animals in Swaziland: "Elephant, rhino, buffalo, hippo, lion and all sorts of buck" (from the diary of James Forbes).'

Missionaries

'There was another group of whites who entered Swaziland at the same time. They were church people or missionaries.

'A missionary is a person who tries to spread a religion among non-believers. In the 1800s many missionaries came to southern Africa to spread the Christian faith and way of life.

'The missionaries came from countries like Britain, France, Germany, Norway, Switzer-

land and the United States of America. They also came from different churches. There were Methodist, Roman Catholic, Congregationalist, Lutheran, Anglican and Presbyterian missionaries. The first missionaries were invited to Swaziland by Sobhuza I, but he died before they arrived.

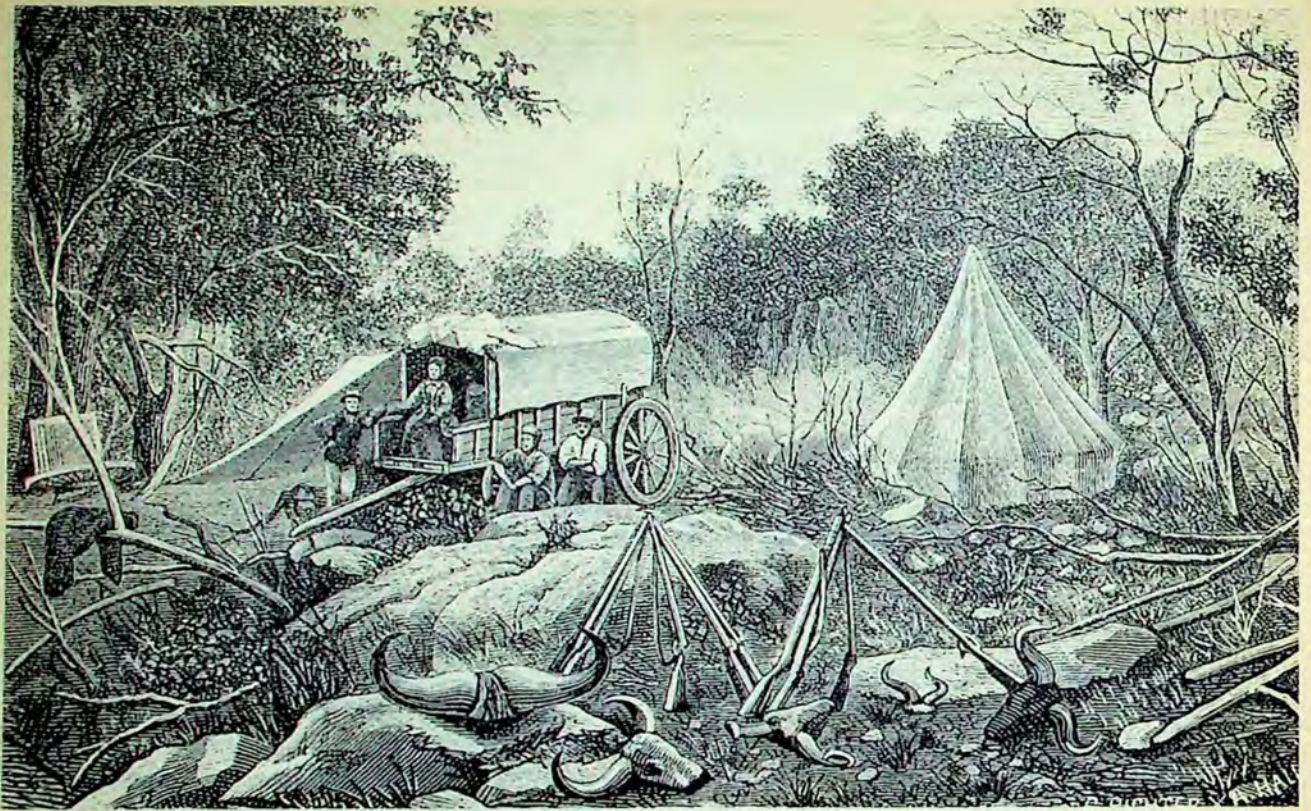
'When the missionaries arrived in Africa they set up mission stations. At the mission stations they built churches, schools and houses for the priests to stay in. At the missions a hospital was built for sick people. Land was also cleared for people to farm on the mission.'

The mission station at Mahamba

'The first missionaries to Swaziland were Methodists under the Reverend James Allison. They arrived in 1844. The missionaries set up a mission at Mahamba. They began converting Swazis to Christianity. They also taught Swazi people to read and write.'

27B. Malambule's rebellion

'At this time Mswati was still a boy and the country was ruled by the regents. Mswati's regents believed the missionaries were powerful. They hoped the missionaries would help



An early picture of a Boer hunting party

them against their many enemies. Malunge told the regents that he was glad to see them. "We have many enemies who are too strong for us," Malunge said.

'Other people in Swaziland also had the same idea. This led to conflict between the missionaries and Mswati.

'One of the people who also believed that the missionaries would help him was Mswati's brother, Malambule. Malambule wanted to become king. He did not want to be ruled by the "herd-boy king" any longer.

'When Mswati demanded that Malambule return the 500 cattle he had captured from Fokoti in 1840, Malambule became even angrier.'

Another plot

'Malambule refused to hand over the cattle. Instead he sent messages to the Zulu king, Mpande, to ask him for support.

'Mswati sent out his army to find and defeat Malambule and the rebels. In 1846 Malambule fled. He followed a group of elephant hunters to the mission station at Mahamba. There he hid from Mswati.'

The mission attacked

'Mswati decided to attack Malambule at the mission station. With the help of four white hunters, Mswati's forces attacked the mission station.

'Mswati ordered the army not to harm the missionary, James Allison. Mswati did not hold the missionary responsible for Malambule's actions.

'In a letter Allison described the attack by Mswati's forces on the mission station on the 14 September 1846. He said that Mswati's army surrounded the mission station and set fire to some of the huts. The army also burnt the grass around the mission to stop Mala-



The Reverend James Allison

mbule and his people escaping during the night. After twenty-six hours, and the death of fifty people, the rebellion was over.

'Among the rebels were two more of Mswati's brothers, Mfipha and Ndlaphu. Mfipha was killed in the battle but Ndlaphu managed to escape.

'Makhosini Dlamini, an ex-prime minister of Swaziland, described how his ancestor Ndlaphu escaped:

Ndlaphu had a spear in his stomach. So he pulled the spear out and threw it away. After this the insides of his stomach dropped out. He held them and jumped into a pool of water. There he hid himself behind the grass. Soldiers did not find him. They thought that crocodiles had eaten him.

'Malambule fled from the mission station. He crossed the Phongolo to get the help of the Zulu king, Mpande. Those who remained in the area watched this group running towards the south. They decided to call the place "Mahamba", which means "the runaways".

'Mswati accused Allison of hiding his enemies. So Allison was expelled from Swaziland. Thirty-five years went by before the Methodist Church restarted its work in Swaziland.'

Exercise

The Swaziland Oral History Project used many different pieces of evidence to find out about the times of Mswati II. Where did Vuyelwa get the evidence for her part of the story?

In the 1840s Mswati II became more powerful, and defeated his elder brother, the regent Malambule.

Chapter Twenty-eight *The Zulu Threat, the 1840s*

Vuyelewa was finished with her presentation. She knew that Philani and Thami had found out about the next period in the documents at the Natal and Swazi archives. So she handed over to them to continue with the presentation.

28A. Mswati in great trouble

'With the missionaries gone and Malambule running away, Mswati's troubles did not come to an end. They became even more serious. Now Mswati had to face a stronger enemy: the Zulu led by Mpande.



Early drawing of Mpande, king of the Zulu

'Mpande demanded that Mswati hand over the cattle and children that the Swazi had captured when they killed Dingane in 1838. Mswati refused. In a message to the British in

Natal on 7 February 1846 Mpande said: "The feet of my messengers demanding redress and restoration are worn out in vain."

'Mswati was in great trouble. He knew that Mpande was going to attack him. Alone he was not able to defeat the combined strength of Mpande and Malambule. He needed help. Where was he going to find it?'

Mswati looked for help

'There were three possible places where Mswati could look for help. The first was from Natal. Natal was a British colony. A colony is a country that is ruled by another rich, powerful country. Britain conquered Natal in 1836 and controlled the colony until 1910.'

The British refused to help

'Even though the British were powerful they did not want to help Mswati. They knew that if they helped Mswati it would mean a fight with Mpande and the Zulu state. Britain was not prepared to make enemies with Mpande at the time.'

Neighbouring chiefs refused to help

'The second possibility was help from the independent African chiefdoms in the area, but these chiefdoms were not very strong. They also did not want to be enemies of the Zulu state.'

The Boers helped Mswati

'There was one group of people who were prepared to help Mswati. These were Boer farmers who had settled to the north west of present-day Swaziland at Ohrigstad.

'The Boers had originally come from the Cape in the 1830s. In 1845 they established a settlement at Ohrigstad. When they settled, the Boers needed the help of African chiefdoms in their area. They first wanted permission to hunt for elephants on the land belonging to the chiefdoms.

'The Boers also needed people to work for them. They always tried to buy young children from the black societies in their area. Finally the Boers wanted to sign agreements for the land with their neighbours. This would show that they had a right to the land.

'So when Mswati needed help in 1846 the Boers were prepared to listen to him. Mswati sent his brother, Somcuba, to talk to the Boers.

'Somcuba offered the Boers a large amount of land in the eastern Transvaal. He also said that Mswati would co-operate fully with the Boers when they needed his help. In return the Boers would help Mswati fight against

Mpande. They would also pay the Swazi 110 head of cattle for the land.

'The Boers accepted the agreement. So when Mpande sent his forces to invade Swaziland they were not able to defeat the Swazi. The Swazi had taken refuge with the Boers. In July 1847 Mpande was forced to withdraw from Swaziland.'

28B. Somcuba's rebellion, 1850-1855

'The withdrawal of Mpande's army did not mean, however, that Mswati's problems came to an end. Now he faced a revolt from his brother, Somcuba.

'Somcuba was the eldest son of Sobhuza I. His mother was LaMndzebele. After Somcuba had negotiated the treaty with the Boers he refused to hand the cattle from the Boers over to his brother, Mswati.

'Mswati sent his army to capture Somcuba. Somcuba hid in a cave near the Nkomati River so Mswati's forces did not find him. Somcuba then fled to the Boers who promised to protect him against Mswati.'

The Boers helped Somcuba

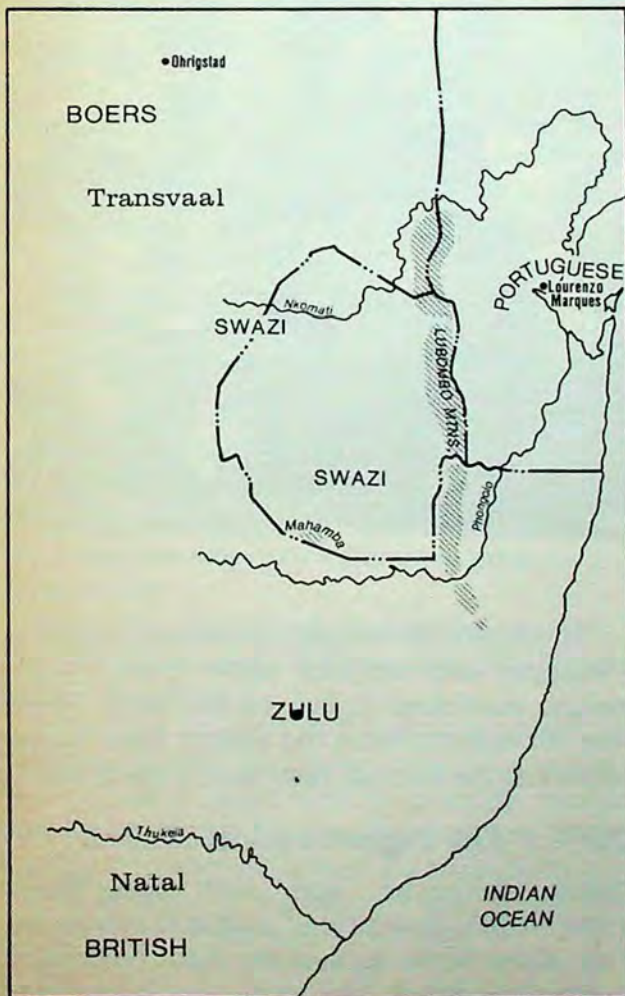
'Why did the Boers decide to help Somcuba? They knew that Mswati would be angry with them, but the Boers thought that Somcuba was stronger than Mswati.

'They wanted Somcuba to help them with a strong army and guides to spy on their enemies. The Boers wanted him to send people to work on their farms. For six years Somcuba stayed with the Boers and defied his brother. He murdered Mswati's messengers who went to talk to the Boers.'

Mswati attacked

'Mswati decided the time had come to attack the Boers. In September 1853 he surrounded the Boer settlement with his armies. He wanted to end Boer support for Somcuba.

'The Boers started to realise that Mswati was not so weak. They saw that they had made a mistake in supporting Somcuba. In



Map showing the Swazi in relation to their allies and enemies in the reign of Mswati II



Early photograph of a Boer family

July 1855 the Boers signed another treaty with Mswati.

'The Boers agreed not to protect Somcuba any longer. Mswati also sold the Boers a piece of land along the Phongolo River for the price of 70 cattle. The Boers promised to settle on this land. Mswati wanted the Boers to live between him and the Zulu.'

Somcuba defeated

'Without Boer protection Somcuba was very weak. Mswati's forces found and killed him. After Somcuba was killed the Boers and Mswati got on well again.'

'The Boers did not pay for the land along the Phongolo and did not settle there. Swazi people continued to live on this land. There was no reaction from the Boers. They recognised that the land still belonged to the Swazi.'

28C. The Zulu invasion of 1852

'While Somcuba was with the Boers (1850-1855) Mswati was unable to rely on the help of the Boers against the Zulu. To prevent a new Zulu attack, Mswati agreed to *khonta* to the Zulu king, Mpande. In return the Zulu king promised to protect Mswati.'

'But even this did not save Mswati. Mpande was a determined man. He wanted Swazi cattle for himself. He also wanted to seize the southern part of Swaziland. In July 1852 he made an unexpected attack on Swaziland.

'The Swazi were taken completely by surprise. Huge numbers of cattle were captured by the Zulu. Many Swazi were killed. In September 1852 a Swazi messenger to the British in Natal reported:

Many of our tribe were killed mostly with firearms. Some were burnt in the caves to which they had fled. Our crop was burned and the greater portion of our cattle taken. Our tribe is fast dispersing.

From: the Natal Archives

'A hunter called Captain Garden made a trip to Swaziland at the time of the Zulu invasion. He recorded in his diary the destruction he saw.

'He wrote that Swazi refugees told him that Mswati was hiding in a hole. The Zulu had tried to smoke him out but had been unsuccessful. Two weeks later he wrote in his diary that near the Mkhuze River he came across "some Swazi women, half-starved", who were fleeing to Natal.'

Mswati looked for help in Natal

'The destruction caused was so great that Mswati decided to ask the British in Natal for help. He asked the Government of Natal to allow people fleeing from Mpande to take refuge in the colony.

'Natal did not want refugees in their territory. They sent messages to Mpande to stop his attacks in Swaziland.

'Mpande's position in the Zulu kingdom at the time was not strong. His son, Cetshwayo, had gained a great deal of prestige in the Swazi campaigns. He was trying to take away the kingship from his father. So Mpande found it wise to listen to the request from Natal. He withdrew his forces from Swaziland.'

Exercises

1. A lot of events happened in the early years of Mswati's reign. We have given you the dates of some of these events in Chapters Twenty-six to Twenty-eight. Go through these chapters and make a list of these dates in the order that they happened. Next to each date write the event which happened. Here is an example to start you off:

Date	Event
1838	<i>Sobhuza I dies</i>
1840	<i>Fokoti rebellion</i>

Sometimes you will find that there was more than one event in a single year. Do not worry. You can include both events on your table. Keep your table so that you can add more dates and events to it at the end of Chapter Thirty.

2. Mr Hlophe was very pleased with Vuyelwa, Thami and Philani. They proved that they knew how to use both oral evidence and written evidence.

Go through the chapter and see how many times the researchers used written evidence. Make a list of some of the documents that they used. Why were the researchers able to use more written evidence to find out about Mswati II than about Sobhuza I?

In the 1840s, Mswati II became more powerful and defeated the rebel Somcuba, and he stopped Zulu attacks into Swaziland by appealing to the British in Natal.

Chapter Twenty-nine *Building the Swazi State Internally, 1856–1865*

By 1856 Mswati II was in a far stronger position than he had ever been in his reign. Many of the troubles at home had disappeared. The Zulu were not strong enough to attack Swaziland, and Mswati had agreements with both the Boers and the British. In the last years of his reign (1856–1865) Mswati expanded the Swazi state.

Mrs Ginindza asked a question

At this point in the presentation, a member of the audience raised her hand. 'I have a question,' said Mrs Ginindza. She asked exactly the same question that Philani had asked Mr Hlophe. 'How did a king rule in those days? How did he get things done?'

Philani was ready with the answer: 'What do we mean when we talk about a state?' he said. 'A state is an area where a central government controls important activities. To keep control the government has to:

- make laws to control society
- have state officials who will send out the orders of the government to the people
- have a well-organised force like a police or army, to make sure the orders of the officials are carried out
- take a certain amount of produce from the people to pay for the government. This is called tribute.

'Sobhuza I began to build a state and Mswati II continued with the task. He made big progress after Fokoti was crushed in 1840.

'Most of these changes we can only find out about in the oral traditions. The whites were not interested in writing about internal changes. They only wrote about events that concerned them. So I will tell about the changes that were made to the Swazi state which we found out about from the oral evidence.'

29A. Early changes to the Swazi state

'Several changes had already been made by Mswati's regents to strengthen the central state against enemies. So Mswati already had something to build on in the last ten years of his reign. These are some of the most important changes that were introduced:

- Mswati put an end to circumcision. His *libutfo*, the Inyatsi, was the last Swazi age regiment to be circumcised.

'The uncircumcised young men were not considered to be adults. They were not allowed to start their own families or homesteads. The young men had to work for the state. Mswati decided at which age people could marry.

- All the young men joined *emabutfo* or age regiments. They:
 - a) lived together in their own large settlements
 - b) worked for the ruler, on his lands
 - c) grew crops for the ruler and for themselves
 - d) herded and protected the ruler's cattle.

'The men in the *emabutfo* became totally committed to the Swazi state. They learnt that their duty was to the king. They spoke the siSwati language and considered themselves to be Swazi. These are the names of some of the *emabutfo* in Mswati's reign:

Inyatsi — (the Buffaloes –
Mswati's *libutfo*)

Indlavela — (the Swarmers)

Imigadlela — (the Strikers)

'Mswati decided when a *libutfo* had served for long enough. Some *emabutfo* served until the men were forty years old. This new system

gave the state a great deal of power. There was now a strong army directly under the control of the king. Above all the *emabutfo* made more and more people think of themselves as Swazi.



Early sketch of one of Mswati II's generals

- Royal villages were set up across the whole country. Royal officials stayed at these villages and they told the king what was going on across the country. Isiah Dlamini told us how one of these villages was set up:

The village of Ekupheleni was set up by Mswati. Mswati sent his scout Sobhiyose to come and establish a village here. It was to be known as "Ekupheleni" (at the end). It was at the end of the land.

- The ceremony of the first fruits or the *incwala* ceremony became very important. No one was allowed to eat from the harvest before this ceremony was performed. Only the king could *gidza* (dance) the *incwala*. This meant that the king was in control of all the crops that were produced from the land.

'The ceremony was also meant to be a gathering of the Swazi nation. Like the *emabutfo*, the *incwala* ceremony made more and more people think of themselves as Swazi. More people came under the control of the central Government or the king. The king now controlled the army, the officials and the produce from the land.'

Women leaders

'Sobhuza I had begun to build a kingdom. The kingdom continued to grow after his death, while Mswati II was still very young, but Mswati played little part in these events. It was Mswati's mother, Tsandzile, who was responsible for a lot of these changes. When people write history they sometimes forget that women, like Tsandzile, have played a major role in our past.

'In Swaziland women are very important. The queen mother, the *indlovukati*, has a central role in ruling Swaziland. She rules together with the king. They call the people together, give out land to people, organise important events, and discuss important matters. She also has *emabutfo* in her own village. Queen mothers, like Tsandzile, have greatly influenced our history.'

29B. The move to Hhohho

'Once Mswati took control after Malambule's rebellion of 1845 he strengthened the state that his mother and uncle were building. He moved his capital northwards to Hhohho.

'The capital was called Hhohho because it was in a valley with hills and mountains all around it — "Eluhhohhwani" (see drawing on p 84). Hhohho was close to Mswati's allies, the Boers. It was also far from his main enemy, the Zulu. However, Mswati knew that he still needed to strengthen his power in southern and central Swaziland. It was here that he was weakest.

'Many chiefdoms in these areas were still independent of the king. They wanted to remain that way. So they resisted attempts by Mswati to control them.'

Tighter control

'There were two ways in which Mswati managed to crush the resistance of these chiefdoms. In some cases he attacked the chiefdoms with his army and defeated them. The Thabedze, Gamedze, Mngometulo, Sifundza and Mavimbela chiefdoms were all attacked by Mswati's armies.'

'In other cases Mswati replaced the chief with people who were loyal to the king. Wives and officers of the king were placed in charge of chiefdoms like the Ngwenya, Dladla, Mncina and the Magagula.

'The Magagula had been defeated by Sobhuza's army, but he still allowed them to control their own affairs. Here is an oral tradition of how Sobhuza's son, Mswati, now brought Moyeni's Magagula directly under his control. A Madlangampisi informant said:

Khambi, the king's bodyguard, was travelling from Hhohho. He stayed overnight with the king's relative, Madzanga. Madzanga's neighbours were the Magagula. They were led by chief Moyeni.

Khambi threw a jealous eye on the riches of Moyeni. Moyeni's village was well-to-do. There were many warriors. The jealous bodyguard remarked that the place smoked day and night. This meant that the people in the village were never without food.

Khambi told Madzanga that the king was going to kill Moyeni. When Madzanga heard this he went to plead with the king to spare Moyeni's life. The king agreed. But he made Madzanga the chief of the Magagula in place of Moyeni. Madzanga was a relative of the king. Then the warriors who used to stay at Moyeni's home were transferred to Madzanga's.

'Khambi, Mswati's chief *inceku* or councillor, did a lot of the work of replacing chiefs with royal officials. Khambi was very powerful. Khambi once said, "Mswati is the sun and I am the moon."

'In the chiefdoms that were brought under Swazi control the speaking of siSwati was encouraged. More and more people began to speak siSwati rather than the other Nguni languages or seSotho.'

Captives in Swaziland

'Finally Mswati made more and more use of children as workers for the state. Some of

these children were taken from people who had fought against Mswati. Others came from attacks on Swaziland's neighbours. As these children were captured, they were known as captives or *tigcili*.



Map showing the distribution of some of the clans under Mswati II

'Since the days of Shiselweni, captives had been used to do work for the Swazi state, but with the move to the north more workers were needed. Fields had to be tilled and harvested.

'When queens and princes were sent to royal villages they often took *tigcili* with them. The children were captured to work but they were able to rise up in society. This is what the author, Hilda Kuper, says about *tigcili* in Swazi society:

A *sigcili* was allowed to complain against his master. No *sigcili* could be killed without the permission of the king. The men

were entitled to speak on the council and to marry, provided they had the cattle to obtain a wife. The girls received as high a *lobola* as the owner's daughter.

'The Swazi also traded slaves with the Boers. The Boers needed workers to look after their cattle and to help on hunting trips. A few hundred slaves were traded with the Boers every year. Most of these slaves came from the areas that the Swazi conquered.'

Exercises

1. How did Mswati's Government keep control?

2. List the changes Mswati II made to the Swazi state.
3. Mswati II continued with some of the changes begun by his father, Sobhuza I. What were these changes?
4. Why did Mswati move his capital to Hhohho?
5. What were *tigcili*? Why did Mswati want them?

Under Mswati II, the Swazi kingdom became a large and centralised state.

Chapter Thirty *Expanding the Swazi Kingdom Externally, 1856–1865*

After Mswati gained tighter control over his subjects in Swaziland, he felt strong enough to attack his neighbours. He also knew that he had the support of both the Boers and the British.

For this period of expansion the researchers found evidence in both documents and oral traditions. So Vuyelwa, who had looked at many documents, told the story together with Philani.

30A. Attacking the neighbours

Southern attacks

'In 1855 Mswati moved against the chiefdoms in the far south of the country who were still independent. He attacked Nyamayenja and the

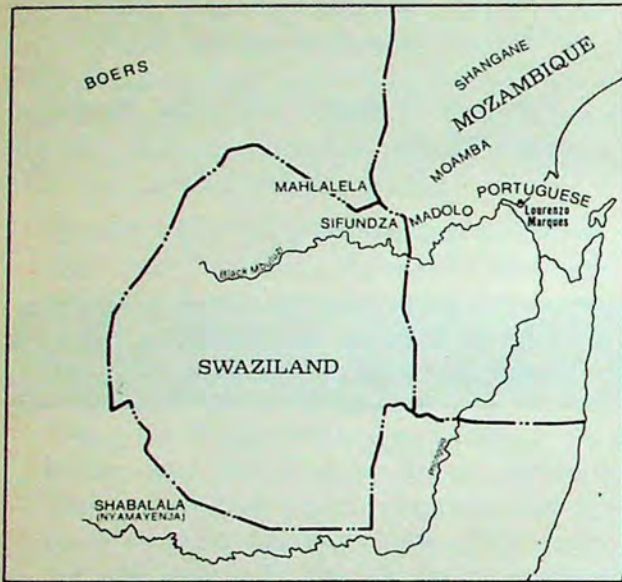
Shabalala people, who fled to Natal and then the Nhlapo who submitted to him.

'People in Swaziland thought that these attacks would anger the Zulu. They feared that the Zulu would attack Swaziland again, but the Zulu did not attack. Mpande and Cetshwayo were too involved in their own fight to put too much effort into an invasion.'

Northern attacks

'In the north of Swaziland Mswati's expansion was even greater. Here the Sifundza and Mahlalela chiefdoms became independent of the Swazi during the Zulu invasion of 1852. But after the Zulu withdrew from Swaziland, Mswati attacked them. The Sifundza fled north to find refuge in the Madolo kingdom.

'The Madolo were a powerful independent kingdom north of Swaziland. Mswati wanted to subject them to his control. From 1855 to 1858 he attacked the Madolo and by 1858 they were under his control.'



Map showing Mswati II's allies and enemies in the later years of his reign

30B. The Shangane kingdom

'While Mswati was involved with the Madolo important events were happening in the same area. On 11 October 1858 the king of the powerful Shangane state, Soshangane, died. There was a fight over who should become the new Shangane king. Mawewe won after fierce fights with his brothers.

'One of Mawewe's brothers was called Mzila. He continued to fight Mawewe for the kingship. The Portuguese at Lourenço Marques (the new name for Delagoa Bay, now known as Maputo) supported Mzila.

'Mswati, however, helped Mawewe so that he could expand the Swazi kingdom. He hoped to gain cattle, children and ivory with which he could trade. By this time most of the elephants in Swaziland had been killed by hunters.

'In February 1862 Mswati attacked Mzila's homestead at Makotene. Mzila and the Portuguese were taken by surprise. Mzila was forced to flee deep into Mozambique. Mawewe, without Mswati's support, chased Mzila



Delagoa Bay in the nineteenth century

but it was a long journey and many of his army died of thirst and hunger. By the time they reached Mzila they were very weak and were defeated.

'Mzila now turned on Mawewe and in August 1862 defeated him at a battle on the plains of Moamba. Mawewe fled to Mswati once again.

'In 1863 Mswati decided to turn his attention to the Portuguese. In September Swazi armies attacked Lourenço Marques.

'The Swazi got within cannon range of the Portuguese fort at the harbour of Lourenço Marques. One of Mswati's *emabutfo* was named after the noise of cannons — the "Mbaimbai".

'The Portuguese did not have a big army at Lourenço Marques. So they had to agree to the demands of the Swazi. The Portuguese agreed that the Swazi were in control of the area as far as the Tembe River in the south.

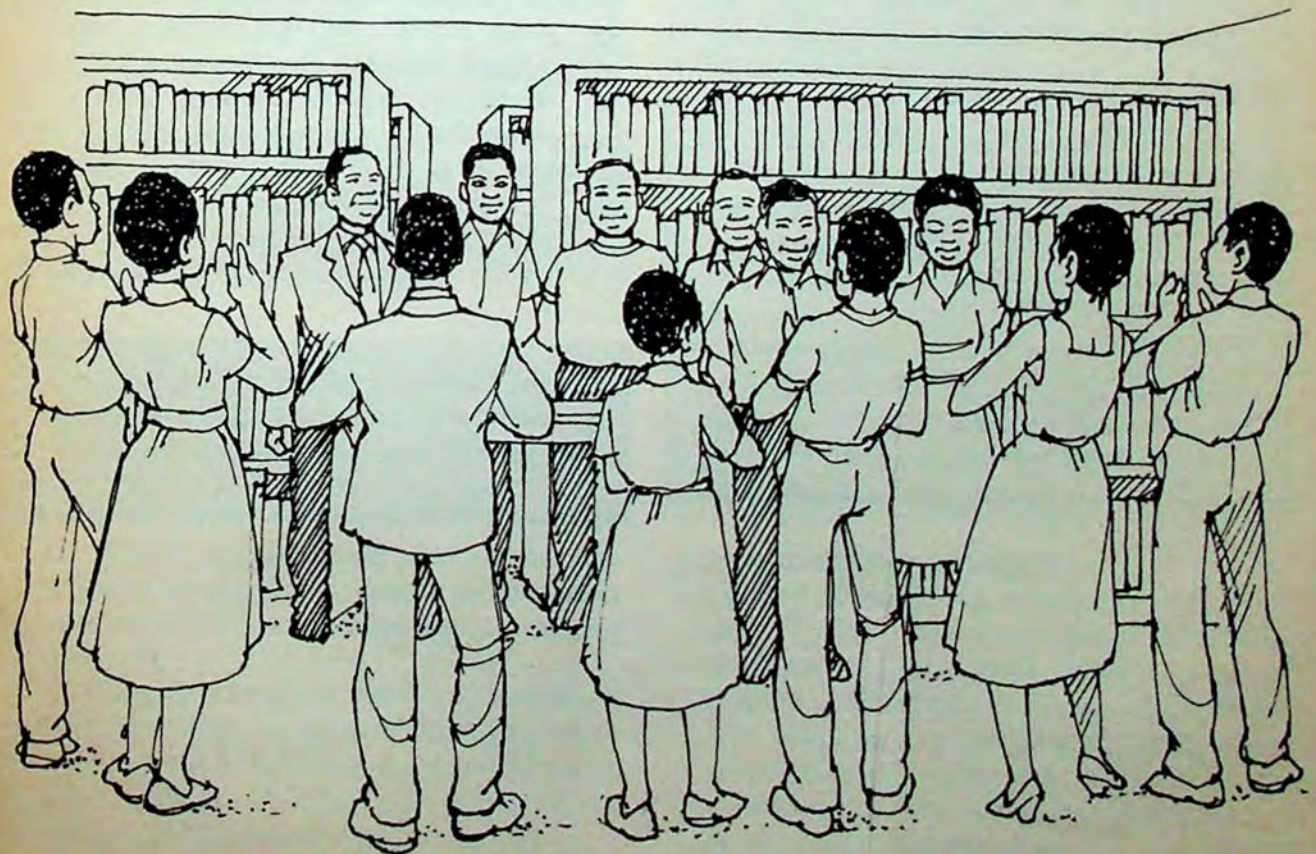
The Swazi were now the strongest power in the area. Portuguese power was very, very small.'

Mswati's death

'In August 1865 Mswati II died. He was still very young but during his reign the Swazi people had achieved a lot.

'Mswati became king in a very weak position. By the end of his reign Swazi control was extended far and wide. It can be said that by the end of his reign the Swazi nation was established.'

Philani and Vuyelwa closed their notebooks, feeling quite exhausted, and with that the researchers of the Swaziland Oral History Project finished telling the story of Mswati's reign. The audience applauded. Some of them stood up to tell what they knew about the times of Mswati. History was being made in the Mbabane Public Library that day.



Exercises

1. There were a lot of rebellions in Mswati's reign. How many *rebels* did Mswati have to deal with? Write a paragraph explaining what a rebel is. Use examples from the times of Mswati to illustrate your answer.
2. At the end of Chapter Twenty-eight you started drawing up a list of dates and events in Mswati's reign. In Chapters Twenty-nine and Thirty we found out what happened between the years 1856 and 1865. Add these events and dates to your table.

Once you are finished you will have an outline of the main events in Mswati's reign. Write your table on a chart and put it up at the back of your class.

3. Let us compare the situation in Swaziland at the beginning of Mswati's reign in 1838 with the situation in 1865. Try to answer the questions set out below:

Questions	In 1838	In 1865
a) Who was in control of the chiefdoms?		
b) Where did tribute go?		
c) Were there state officials to carry out the orders of the Government?		
d) Was there a well-organised force like a police or army, to make sure the orders of the officials were carried out?		

Questions	In 1838	In 1865
e) Was Swaziland threatened by many enemies?		
f) What language did the people speak?		
g) Were there whites in Swaziland?		
h) Were there a lot of wild animals?		
i) What territory was under Swazi control?		

4. Now that you have found out more about Mswati's reign have a discussion in your class. Go to the beginning of Chapter Twenty-six and read again what the different people in the audience said about Mswati. Do you agree with them? Do you think that Mswati was a vicious and cruel king? Or do you think that because of the weak position he was in at the beginning of his reign that he had to assert himself strongly if he was to remain in power? Why not ask other people as well what they think about Mswati II? Perhaps they will also be able to tell you stories about his reign.

Under Mswati II, the Swazi kingdom grew very large and the Swazi became one of the most powerful states in south-east Africa.

Appendix A *Writing up your Project*

Once you have collected your evidence, you will need to *organise* it.

1. **Time-line**

Your first step is to arrange your evidence in the order in which events happened. Draw up a time-line. Put as much information on the time-line as you can.

2. **Check your questions**

By looking at your time-line and your notes, see how many of your original questions you can answer.

3. **What happened first?**

The Mater Dolorosa students saw that the first thing that happened in their history was the *establishment* of Mater Dolorosa by two Catholic priests. Students writing the history of a club or any other group may also want to begin with the establishment of the group.

Students writing the history of a person may want to start with the *birth* of that person. Students writing the history of a family (or *sibongo*) may want to begin with the earliest *origins* of the family.

4. **When did it happen?**

The Mater Dolorosa students were lucky. The documents which they found in the archives gave them an exact date. Mater Dolorosa was established in 1914.

You might not be as lucky. You may only be able to find an *approximate* date. Remember to use the 'c.' before a date when you are not absolutely sure that it is correct (see p 7).

Students doing the history of a person may find that the person does not know his/her date of birth. But he/she may know his/her *libutfo*. This can help you work out an approximate date of birth (see p 8).

5. **Why did it start?**

This question is usually more difficult to answer. Sometimes your evidence may provide an easy answer.

Usually you need to look at the *context* of the start of what you are studying to answer this question properly. The Mater Dolorosa students found out more about churches in Swaziland. They found out why missionaries wanted to start schools. Go back to p 21 and revise the section on context.

Remember that books about subjects close to your topic can help you to find out about context.

If you are doing the history of a person you do not need to ask why he or she was born!

6. **What happened next?**

You may have one answer to this question, or you may have many answers.

The Mater Dolorosa students had one big answer, and many little answers. The big answer was 'Mater Dolorosa School grew and grew, into the large school that it is today'. The little answers were all the *steps* in the growth of Mater Dolorosa.

The students wrote about all of the steps. They arranged them into the order in which they happened. To do this they used their time-line as a plan.

7. **How did things change?**

Look at all the things which you put down under '*what happened next?*' What big changes can you see? Write two paragraphs about these changes. Remember that *changes* are the most important part of a history project like this.

When you write about the changes, describe *how* they happened.

8. Why did things change?

To answer this question you will need to think about *context* again. But your evidence may give you some ideas as well. Try to talk to as many people as possible about your topic and see what answers they have to this question.

9. Other questions

As you go through these questions, you may see that you need to ask *other* questions. You must do that. These questions are just to help you get started.

10. Extra evidence

As you go through these questions you may find that you need *more* information. You can go back to the library and the archives. You can also go back to the people you spoke to, and interview them again.

11. Draw up a plan

Take your time-line, the answers to the above questions, and your notes, and draw up a *plan* for your project.

The easiest way to plan a history is to write it in the order in which events happened.

But you may also want to have paragraphs on special topics. The students at Mater Dolorosa wanted to have a special paragraph on 'Sport at Mater Dolorosa'. They placed their special topics at the end of their history of Mater Dolorosa.

Your plan should include headings for all the paragraphs or sections that you want to write about.

12. Start writing

- Try to write simply. Try to be exciting.
- Divide your work into paragraphs. Give each new idea a new paragraph.
- Use plenty of headings.
- Put your drawings and pictures next to the paragraph where you talk about the things that you have drawn.

- Remember that you are writing history and not a composition. You must tell the readers about your *evidence*. You must tell them where you got your evidence.

When the Mater Dolorosa students wrote their paragraph on sport at the school they told their readers that they interviewed John Bongwe. They told their readers who John Bongwe was — a sports administrator. They wanted to make it clear to their readers that he was a little bit *biased*.

There are two ways of telling your reader about evidence. You can write a *short paragraph* about evidence before each section of your project, or you can use *footnotes*.

The Mater Dolorosa students used both ways. When they used oral evidence, they wrote a paragraph about the person who they interviewed before they wrote what he or she said.

When they used written information they used footnotes. They put a number in brackets [like this (1), (2) etc.] at the end of each paragraph. At the end of their project they had a list of all the numbers. Next to each number they listed the evidence used in that paragraph, and where it came from, like this:

- (1) Evidence about churches in Swaziland from N Parsons, *A New History of Southern Africa* p265.
- (2) Evidence about the establishment of Mater Dolorosa from Box 33, National Archives.

Be sure that your project has a good clear introduction. It must also have a conclusion which sums up what you have found out, especially the changes.

Have fun!

Remember that history is not only about *what* happened in the past (the story), it is also *how* we know it (the investigation). You must write about your topic *and* your investigation.

Appendix B *The Trade Game*

Rules

Before you play the Trade Game read all the squares on the board.

1. Between 2 and 4 people can play the Trade Game.
2. All players begin the game with 5 cattle of their own. You may use bottle tops as cattle, or you can draw pictures of cows and cut them out. Keep your cattle next to you.
3. Set up a *sibaya* next to **Go**. Put another 5 cattle in the *sibaya* for every player. Thus if there are 4 players there must be 20 cattle in the *sibaya*.
4. Each player must choose a different colour. Each player must make one round counter and four *umuti*—shaped counters in that colour. The player moves the round counter around the board according to the number which he/she spins. The round counter does not leave the board until the player is out of the game.
5. To begin, place all the round counters at **Go**. The first player spins the bottle. He/she then moves as many squares along the board according to the number spun. He/she must read and follow the instructions given on the square on which he/she lands. Every time a player passes **Go** he/she collects a new cow from the *sibaya*. If there are no cattle left in the *sibaya* the player does not collect a cow.
6. A player is out of the game as soon as he/she does not have enough cattle to exchange for spears, crops or whatever else is needed. It is possible that some players may be out of the game in the first round.
7. If a player lands on an *umuti* square he/she may build an *umuti* there. Only one player may build an *umuti* on a square. The player must place an *umuti* counter on the square that is the same colour as

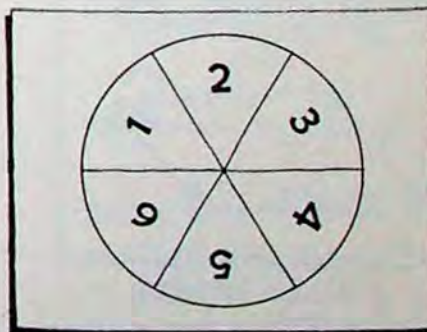
his/her counter, so that the other players will remember who the head of the *umuti* is.

Whenever other players land on that square they will have to give, or take from, the head of the *umuti*, a number of cattle specified. Players may build as many *imiti* on the board as they can. If a player lands on a square where he/she already has an *umuti*, no cattle exchange hands.

8. The winner of the game is the player who has the most cattle when you stop playing. You may want to play until all the players except one (the winner) have lost all their cattle and have been forced out of the game.

Spinning

1. Draw a circle on a large piece of paper. Divide the circle into six sections like this:



2. Place an empty cold drink bottle in the middle. Spin it. Whatever number the top of the bottle points to will be the number of squares that a player can move that turn. You may want to use dice instead of spinning a bottle.
3. To decide what order to play in, every player spins the bottle. The player who gets the highest number goes first. The player with the second highest number goes second, and so on. If two players get the same number, spin again.

**1. START
HERE**

GO

2.



3. IRON MINE

Every time a player lands here, the head of the UMUTI must give the player one cow for helping to mine iron.

**BUILD AN
UMUTI HERE**



4. NEW LAND

You need tools to clear the land. Give two cows to the head of the UMUTI at the Iron mine on 3 in exchange for more tools and spin again. If there is no UMUTI on 3, move back one space and build your UMUTI there.



20. CHIEF

You have been made chief. Every time a player lands here, collect two cows in tribute.



**BUILD AN
UMUTI HERE**



19. Your cow has calved. Take one cow from the Sibaya



18. RAIDING

You are a powerful raider. Attack the chief on 20 and burn the UMUTI there. Take over and build your own UMUTI



**17. WOUNDED
IN BATTLE**

Miss a turn while you recover



16. IVORY

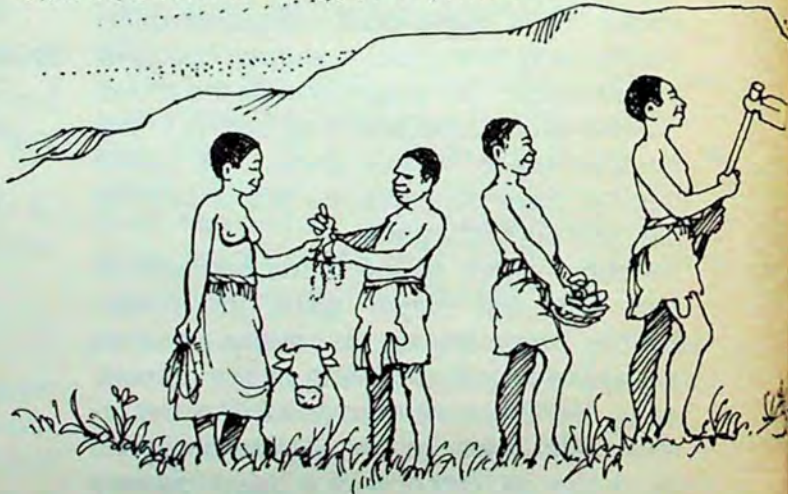
You have hunted an elephant. Take the tusks to the chief on 20 and exchange them for two cows. If there is no chief, you can go to 20 and become the chief.



15.



THE TRADE



5. MAHLANYA

Give two cows to any other player as LOBOLA for a wife (or for your son to marry a wife), and you may settle here and grow good crops.

BUILD AN UMUTI HERE



6.



7. ATTACK BY ENEMIES

Exchange four cows for iron spears from the head of the UMUTI at the Iron mine and spin again to get yourself out of trouble. If there is no UMUTI at the Iron mine or if you do not have four cows, you get NO spears and you are out of the game.

8.



GAME



9. DROUGHT

All your crops have died. Give half of all your cattle to the head of the UMUTI at Mahlanya at 5 in exchange for food. If there is no UMUTI at Mahlanya at 5, give one cow to the Inyanga at 14 in exchange for rain making charms. If there is no Inyanga you are out of the game.

10. Your cattle have calved. Draw three extra cattle from the Sibaya



11. THE PHONGOLO CORNFIELDS

Grow crops in the Phongolo Valley. If another player lands here while you are here, she/he will seize all your cattle.

14. INYANGA

You have learnt to be a diviner (INYANGA). Every time a player lands here collect one beast for helping them by divining.

BUILD AN UMUTI HERE



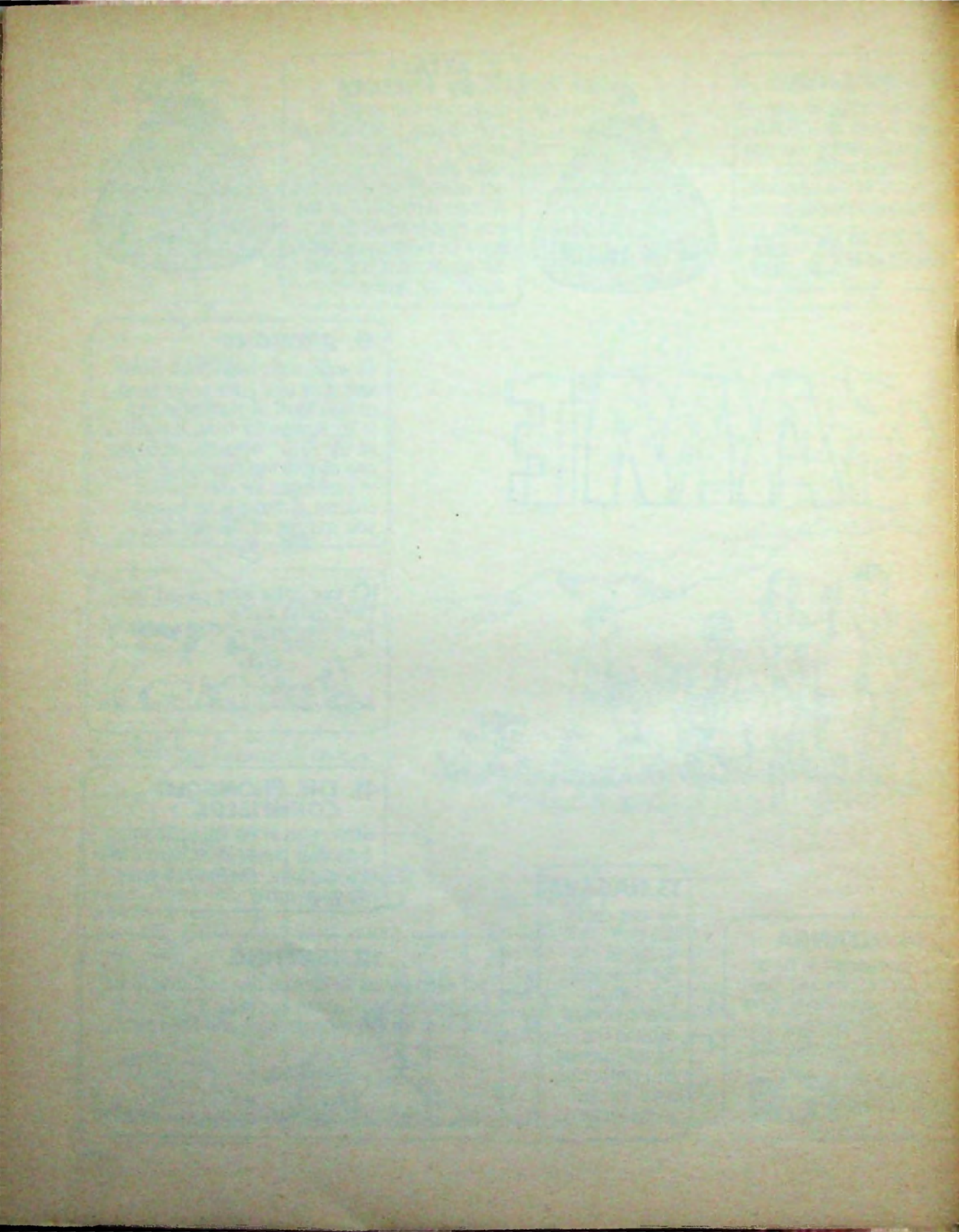
13. NAGANA

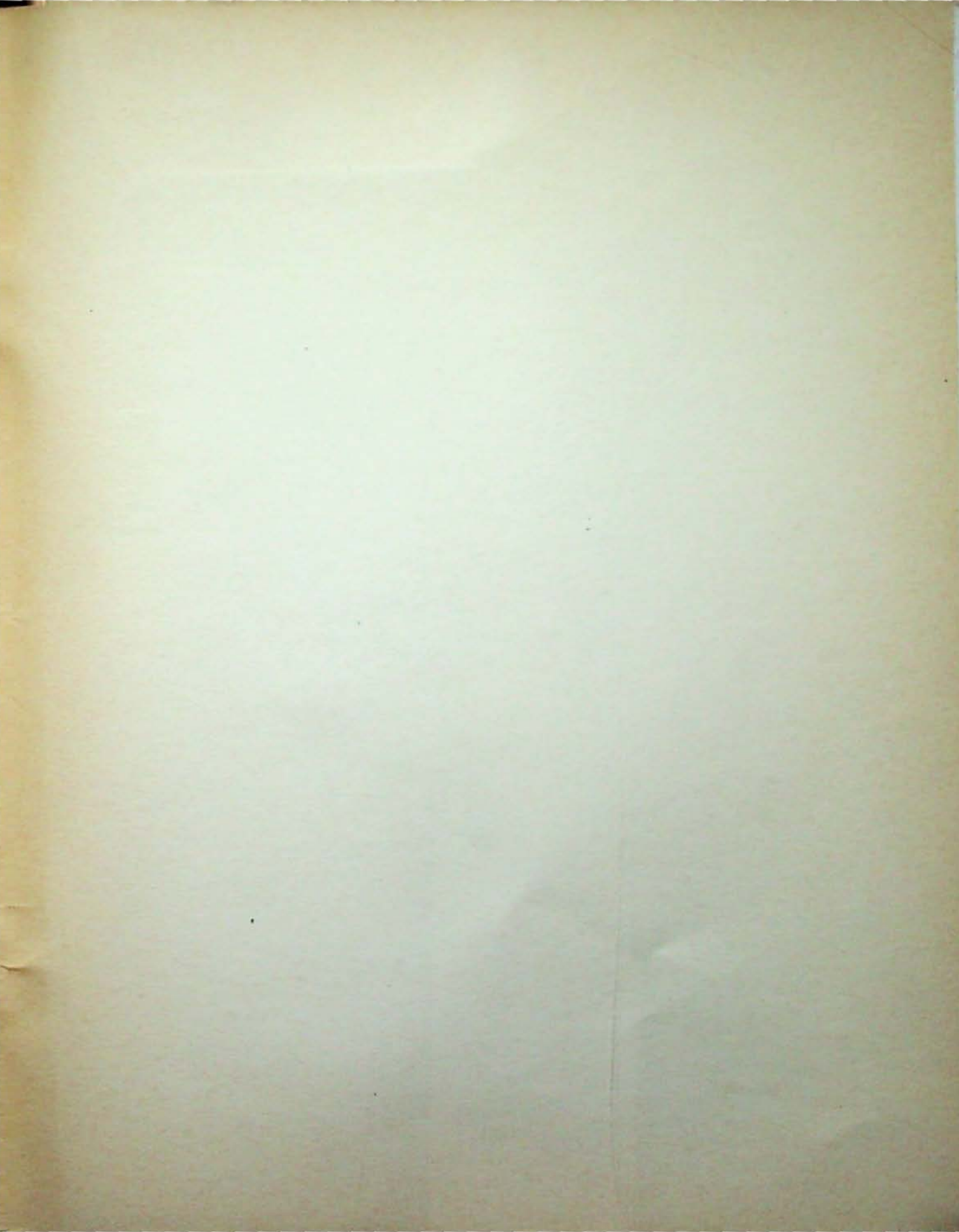
All your cattle die from NAGANA. Put them into the Sibaya and continue around the board, hunting and gathering until you get more cattle.

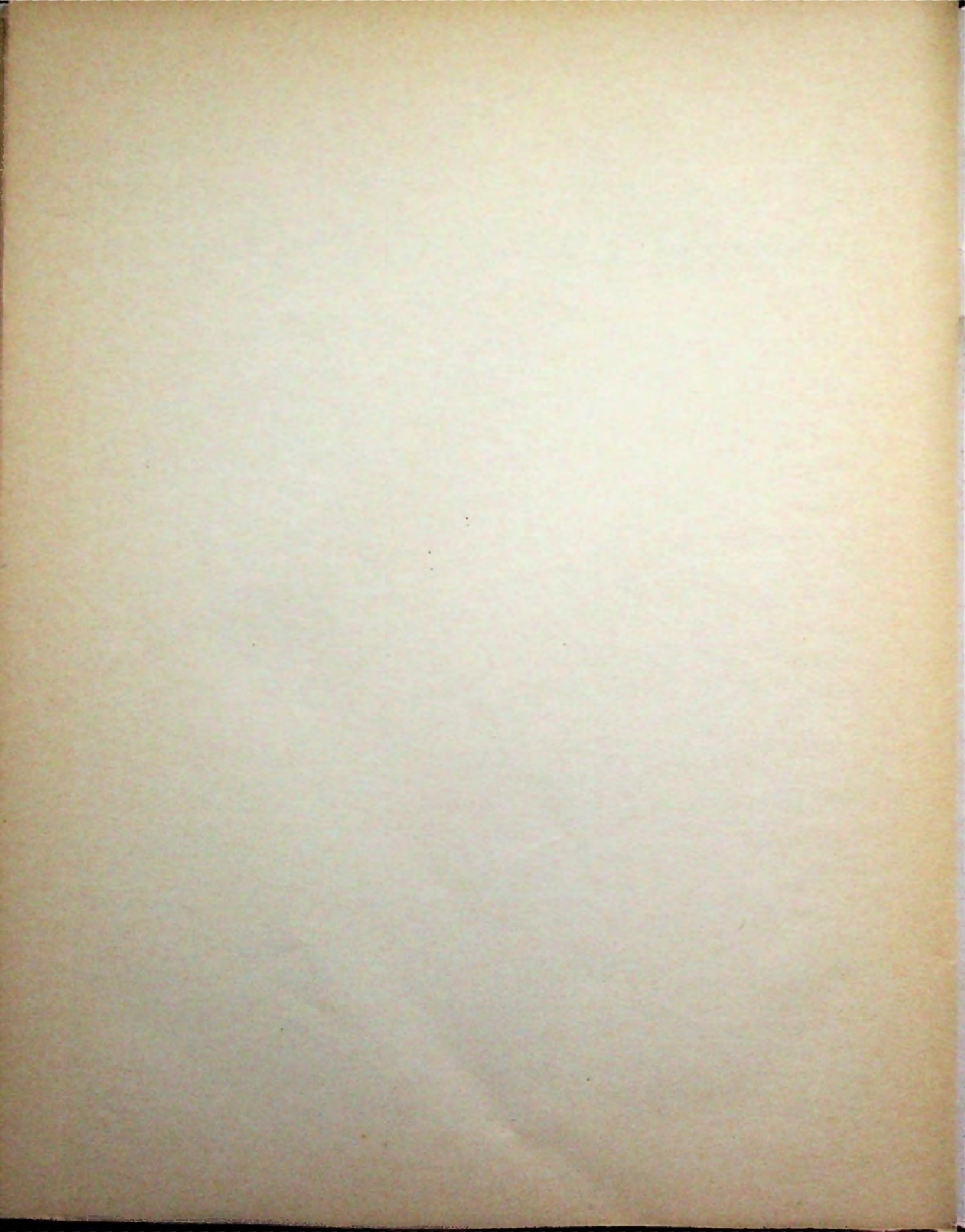
12. HUNTING

You need spears for hunting. Give two cows to the head of the UMUTI at the Iron mine. If there is no UMUTI at the Iron mine, go there and build one.











In pursuit of Swaziland's precolonial past takes a fresh look at the early history of Swaziland. It uses oral tradition in a completely novel way to reconstruct

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- the histories of the many and varied peoples whom they incorporated in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries;
- the struggles of the early kings against powerful neighbours like the Tembe, the Ndwandwe and the Zulu;

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