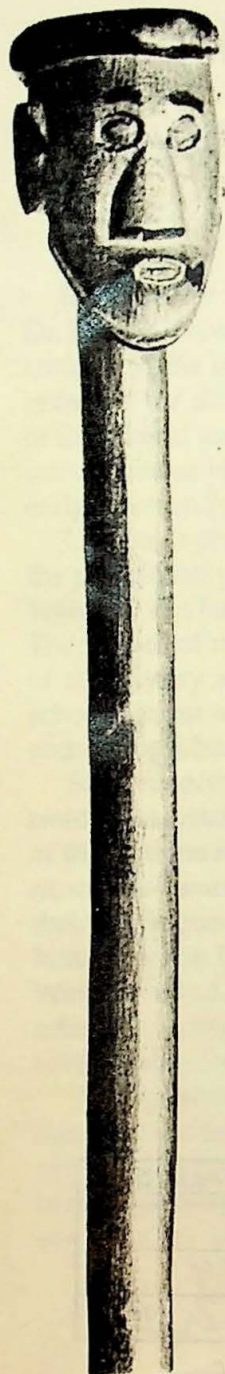


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# THE 'MFECANE' AFTERMATH

towards a new paradigm

6-9 September 1991

University of the Witwatersrand

Afrika-Studiecentrum



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# The 'Mfecane' Aftermath: towards a new paradigm

In a number of papers presented at intervals over the last decade, Dr. Julian Cobbing and others have advanced a radical and sweeping critique of the concept of the 'mfecane'. This work suggests that the 'mfecane' (or 'difaqane') must be seen as a myth lying at the root of a set of interlinked assumptions and distortions that have seriously skewed our understanding of the main historical processes of late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century southern Africa.

Cobbing's provocative interventions set a new agenda for scholars of the precolonial past, and oblige students of later periods to rethink the 'mfecane' as a base-line from which to trace subsequent developments. The critique of 'mfecane' theory marks the beginning of a fresh rendering of the history of precolonial southern Africa, with implications for scholars from a range of disciplines, notably history, anthropology, archaeology, history of art, and African languages.

Students of the period are beginning to acknowledge that what is now needed is a systematic attempt by scholars to grapple with the implications of this critique for their respective areas of study. In some instances the new ideas have already been picked up and developed further in a way that has begun to reinvigorate precolonial studies. The colloquium, hosted by the Department of Social Anthropology, University of the Witwatersrand, will seek to encourage this development, and to provide a forum for area specialists and scholars from a range of disciplines to review one another's responses to the critique of 'mfecane' theory.

The implications of this debate are not confined to the regionally-based reconceptualisation of the precolonial past. They extend to a host of more general questions: the southern African slave trade; the making of colonial myths; the use of eighteenth and nineteenth-century historical sources; the making of group identities; and the politics of the

production of history. The colloquium will address these issues as well.

Dr. Cobbing will deliver an opening address on the evening of Friday 6 September, 1991. Papers will be grouped into sessions to be held on Saturday 7 September and the morning of Sunday 8 September. It is planned that the colloquium culminate in an extended plenary session in which the various contributions and micro-studies can be drawn together in an attempt at overall re-assessment of 'mfecane' theory and of the critique initiated by Cobbing.

In response to enormous interest shown by teachers in the debate around the 'mfecane' History Workshop has decided to hold a special teachers' day on Monday 9 September on the problems of teaching this period of history at secondary and tertiary level. Colloquium participants are encouraged to stay on for the extra day, and contributions to the teachers' day's events are invited.

Copies of the final papers (25 pp. A4) must be supplied by 1 August, 1991, for pre-circulation to participants. Participants who will not be offering papers must make formal application to attend the colloquium.

*Witwatersrand University Press and Natal University Press are interested in the joint publication of a selection of revised papers from the colloquium.*

To arrange participation in the colloquium, or for further information, please contact:

Department of Social Anthropology  
University of the Witwatersrand  
Johannesburg, WITS 2050.  
Tel. (011) 716-4196/2766

## ACCOMMODATION

Unfortunately Wits University is unable to offer on-campus accommodation during the mid-term holidays. Special arrangements for conference participants requiring accommodation have been made through Wildlife Travel Services.

Two types of reasonably-priced accommodation are available:

- Bed (en suite bathroom) and breakfast in private homes near Wits or on Wits bus routes. Cost: approx. R50.00 per person.
- Bed (en suite bathroom) and breakfast at the Milpark Holiday Inn, near Wits. Cost: approx. R65.00 per person sharing.

Transport twice a day between this hotel and the colloquium will be provided.

A wide range of restaurants are to be found within easy walking distance of Wits.

Participants requiring accommodation should make their arrangements with Wildlife Travel Services (contact person: Anne-Marie Berger) as soon as possible, indicating clearly their status as conference participants. Travel companions of participants are welcome to avail themselves of this arrangement.

Address: Wildlife Travel Services, Shop 3,  
101 Lancaster Ave., Craighall Park, 2196.  
Johannesburg, South Africa.

Postal: PO Box 81192,  
Parkhurst 2120. Johannesburg, South Africa.

Telephone: (011) 442-8007/8036

Fax: (011) 442-8015

Telex: 422894 SA

## DRAFT PROGRAMME

Please note that the Wits Spring Festival "Cultural Identity in a New South Africa" coincides with the colloquium, and colloquium participants will be able to attend its evening events. These have been marked for your information on the programme below.

### Friday 6 September, 1991

- 5.00pm - 6.00pm: Registration  
Foyer of John Moffat Building,  
East Campus, Wits.  
Fee: R70.00 (R45.00 Full-time  
students) - covers conference  
administration, papers, teas, lunches, cocktail  
party
- 6.00pm Opening Address by *Dr. Julian Cobbing*  
Dorothy Susskind Auditorium,  
John Moffat Building.
- 7.00pm Cocktail Party  
Foyer, John Moffat Building
- 8.00pm Wits Spring Festival Gala Concert  
featuring *Amjat Ali Khan*  
Great Hall.

### Saturday 7 September, 1991

- 8.30am - 10.00am: Session One  
John Moffat Building.
- 10.00am - 10.30am: Tea  
Foyer of John Moffat Building
- 10.30am - 12.00pm: Session Two  
John Moffat Building
- 12.00pm - 1.30pm: Lunch  
Function Room, Students' Union Building.
- 1.30pm - 3.00pm: Session Three  
John Moffat Building

- 3.00pm - 3.30pm: Tea  
Foyer of John Moffat Building
- 3.30pm - 5.00pm: Session Four  
Gertrude Posel Gallery, Senate House
- 5.00pm - 6.00pm Preview of the W. Burton Exhibition  
Gertrude Posel Gallery, Senate House

### Entertainment

- 6.00pm - 10.00pm Wits Spring Festival Films

### Sunday 8 September, 1991

- 9.00am - 11.00am Session Five  
John Moffat Building
- 11.00am - 11.30am Tea  
Foyer of John Moffat Building
- 11.30am - 1.00pm Session Six  
John Moffat Building
- 1.00pm - 2.00pm Finger Lunch  
Foyer of John Moffat Building
- 2.00pm - 3.30pm Plenary Session  
John Moffat Building
- 3.30pm - 4.00pm Tea  
Foyer of John Moffat Building

### Entertainment

- 4.00pm - 6.00pm Wits Spring Festival Panel Discussion  
South African Resistance Politics in the  
Forties and Fifties.
- 6.30pm Wits Spring Festival Film Premier  
'Eleven Miles' with Ruchir Joshi and The  
Bauls of Bengal.

### Monday 9 September, 1991

Teaching the mfecane

## Provisional List of Participants

- Austen, Ralph A. (University of Chicago)  
Becker, Rayda (Wits)  
Bonner, Philip (Wits)  
Chisholm, Linda (Wits)  
Cloete, Laura (Wits)  
Cobbing, Julian (Rhodes)  
Cope, Richard (Wits)  
Coplan, David (UCT/UWC)  
Cuthbertson, Gregory (UNISA)  
Delius, Peter (Wits)  
Dowson, Thomas A. (Wits)  
Du Bruyn, Johannes T. (UNISA)  
Etherington, Norman (University of Western Australia)  
Gewald, Jan Bart (Netherlands)  
Gorham, Cathy (UCT)  
Gray, Stephen (RAU)  
Greybe, Shelley (Sached/Wits)  
Gump, Jim (University of San Diego)  
Guy, Jeff (University of Trondheim)  
Hall, Simon (Wits)  
Hamilton, Carolyn (Wits)  
Hammond-Tooke, David (Wits)  
Hartley, Guy (UCT)  
Horwitz, Eve (Wits University Press)  
Huffman, Thomas (Wits)  
King, Robert H. (University of Zululand)  
Kinsman, Margie  
Klopper, Sandra (UCT)  
Kros, Cynthia (Wits)  
Krige, Sue (Wits)  
Kuper, Adam (Brunel University)  
Lambourne, Brigid (Wits)  
Louw, Stephen (Wits)  
Lucas, Justine (Wits)  
Macallister, Patrick (ISEP, Rhodes)  
Malaba, Mbongeni (University of Zimbabwe)  
Mamba, Sicheme R. (UNISWA)  
Manson, Andrew (University of Bophutatswana)  
Maylam, Paul (University of Natal, Durban)



Mazibuko, Edward Z (UNISWA)  
Meintjies, Shiela (Wits)  
Monteith, Mary (Centaur Publications)  
Omer-Cooper, John (University of Otago)  
Parsons, Neil  
Peires, Jeff (UNITRA)  
Richner, Jurg (Rhodes)  
Sandrock, Jo (Wits University Press)  
Saunders, Christopher (UCT)  
Shell, Robert (Princeton)  
Sieborger, Rob (UCT)  
Vail, Leroy (Harvard University)  
Webster, Alan (Rhodes)  
Wells, Julie (University of Zimbabwe)  
Wilmsen, Edwin (University of Chicago)  
Wright, John B. (University of Natal, PMB)  
Wylie, Dan (Rhodes University)

**Participants who are interested in receiving copies of papers in advance of registration should use the abstracts as a guideline to request advance copies of selected papers. Please quote the author and the name of the paper given when placing your order with us. Advance orders must reach us by 15 July, 1991.**

The following abstracts were received by 1 June, 1991  
(Please note that promised abstracts received late  
will be made available in July)

Advance copies will be posted out in the first week in August.  
Please allow time for the papers to reach you.

- "This King who sows no corn and breeds no sons": -  
THE "MONSTROUS" REPRESENTATION OF SHAKA IN NGUNI  
AND COMPARATIVE AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

Ralph A. Austen • University of Chicago

Shaka is presented in almost all the earliest sources available to us as a witchlike figure whose rise to power is based upon the "eating" of the reproductive capacities of his own people and those whom he conquers. I will review briefly the philological issues surrounding specific statements of this kind about Shaka. The main body of the paper will attempt to defend the plausibility of such statements on the basis of similar patterns found in the representation of strong rulership in other parts of Africa. The equation of witchcraft and political authority has a basis in both internal and external political economy. The internal basis is a zero-sum view of the relationship between reproduction and individual ascendancy and is articulated in rich discourses of sexuality, gender, agriculture and politics. The external basis is the experience of the slave trade as well as the colonial and post-colonial state which, in many parts of Africa, have been incorporated very intricately into the discourses of witchcraft. Thus it seems unreasonable to argue that the most disturbing ideas surrounding the mfecane are European inventions, since they appear to draw upon widespread and deeply held African systems of representation. On the other hand, the interpretation of these ideas and the political processes they comment upon as purely indigenous is also problematic. Nguni representations of Shaka thus require an effort of research and analysis which simultaneously parallels, supplements and depends upon more positivist studies of South African history.



OF CANNIBALS AND KINGS:  
Myth, History and Folk Genres in the Construction of Shaka

David Coplan • University of Cape Town

*Of Cannibals and Kings: Myth, History, and Folk Genres in the Construction of Shaka.* One of the greatest difficulties facing those who would separate myth from history in the career of Shaka Zulu is the paucity of written sources, and the unsupported and necessarily idiosyncratic readings of the ones we have. In such a situation, oral traditions and folk genres, some of which exist in documentary form, might seem to provide a valuable supplementary source of illumination. Structural anthropologists such as Luc de Heusch, however, have cautioned strongly against the overconfident use of legendary chronicles, which are constructed not as an alternative rhetoric of history but as myths; statements about cosmic order (Schoffeleers 1985). Such statements, however, are neither timeless nor uniformly composed or distributed, any more than are the societies and contexts that produced and reproduced them. This paper examines certain historical metaphors or mythic tropes, specifically those of cannibalism and witchcraft, that appear in various settings and periods as glosses on Shaka and the *Mfecane* in the folk genres of southern Africa. The question addressed is to what extent such metaphoric tropes may have injected the discourse of African cosmology and social structure into historical representations of Shaka. By extension, the idea of myth as history may cause us to consider the ways in which our own Western preconceptions, not only of Shaka, but of ourselves and our societies as colonisers both in and of history, shape our construction of the *Mfecane*.



HUNTERS, TRADERS & SLAVERS:  
The 'mfecane' impacts on Bushman ritual and art  
*Thomas Dowson • University of the Witwatersrand*

Although most archaeologists have taken into account cultural interactions of the last 2000 years, some still present Bantu speaking farmers as moving into unoccupied territory; the Bushmen who worked for them, with whom they traded, with whom they came into conflict, with whom they intermarried and from whom some groups absorbed distinctive linguistic features are invisible. Historical research has, in this respect, fallen prey to apartheid's cultural divisionist ideology. Despite acknowledgment of contact the social and ideological foundation of this interaction has essentially been ignored.

While critical theory today continues to demythologise Southern African history, the position of the Bushmen should not be overlooked or downplayed. And, if studies are to move towards the ideology of contact, neither should Bushman rock art be ignored.

For the last decade Bushman art has been regarded as simply communicating religious experiences of medicine men and women. Bushman art, however, actively negotiated power relations, which during the last 2000 years must also have involved those relations between hunter-gatherers and farmers. How impervious were the Bushmen to events at the beginning of the last century? And, how caught up were their ritual and artistic traditions in these events? By asking questions like these rock art research can contribute to critical paradigm building of the mfecane.



UNTAPPED SOURCES:  
Slave exports from southern and central Namibia  
up to the mid-nineteenth century

*J.B. Gewald • Netherlands*

Slave exports from southern and central Namibia up to the mid nineteenth century

It is a generally accepted historical thesis that no slaving for the transatlantic or Cape colonial trade ever occurred in pre-colonial central and southern Namibia. However, the publication of new material and the critical re-examination of previous material make it unacceptable for one to continue to believe and postulate this thesis. The paper to be presented argues that central and southern Namibia did not proceed through history unaffected by the demands of the Cape colonial and transatlantic slave trades. It provides evidence to substantiate this line of argument and suggests further avenues of investigation.

The paper notes that as the Cape colony grew so to did its demand for cattle, slaves and other commodities. The paper argues that Namibia not only supplied cattle but also slaves to satisfy this demand. The paper notes the increasing export of cattle from the Namibian coast from the 1700s onwards and argues that by the last quarter of the eighteenth century it had become common for captives to be sold to passing ships. The paper notes the emergence and development of Commando raiding polities in central Namibia which, in an effort to supply the ever increasing demand for cattle, carried the raiding frontier ever further North. The paper argues that the unceasing raids to supply the trade led to the growth of an ever increasing number of dispossessed and impoverished ex-pastoralists; it was these people who, if captured, were exported as slaves either to the coast or the Cape colony.

The paper concludes that slaves were indeed exported from southern and central Namibia. However, it would appear that the traded slaves were at all stages exported as the by-product of raided cattle.



PORT NATAL: A 'BLIND' DARKNESS  
speculation, trade, the creation of a vortex  
of violence and the 'mfecane'

*Cathy Gorham • University of Cape Town*

Mbuyazi (Henry Francis Fynn) told me he would have been a rich man, and would not have required to be in this part of Africa, had it not been for certain specie that ought to have been shipped at Cape Town but wasn't"

William Bazley, James Stuart Archive, vol 1, p.58.

In 1822 Captain W F W Owen of the Royal Navy received orders to survey the south east coast of Africa. This he did, in command of HMS Leven and assisted by the Barracouta and Cockburn, his voyages taking him, as far as this paper's concern will extend, from Britain to Brazil, Cape Town, Algoa Bay, from Mozambique Island to Inhambane, Quillimane, and Delagoa Bay, not forgetting Port Natal. Between 1822 and the completion of his mission along the south east coast of Africa, a rapid explosion of interest amongst Cape Colony based merchants in the possibilities to which Owen's explorations pointed, resulted in the scheme which saw H F Fynn and F G Farewell extend the commercial frontier well beyond colonial borders. Their search for a trading port to facilitate communication between their base, Cape Town (and, later, Grahamstown) and the inhabitants of the virtually unexploited interior created a nexus at Port Natal, a vortex of power and violence which swirled with the currents driving socio-political upheavals amongst the inhabitants of the sub-continent. This murkiness, from whence the spectre of the Zulu state rises large, has, through a double tradition of settler and Africanist history, become known as the "mfecane".

This paper aims to analyse the effects of this commercial expansion from its inception, through the establishment of a trading base, to the point where it began to behave as a hybrid "state", creating its own rules for trade, commodity supply and demand, and diplomacy. Until 1828-9 the Natal traders relied upon coastal shipping for their contact with the commercial metropole, the Cape Colony, but as a consequence of losses and schisms amongst the group, and an increased knowledge of regional ethnology and geography, were able to promote and open up overland routes between the eastern frontier and, furthermore, Delagoa Bay. Instead of the idiosyncratic, hermetic entity portrayed by conventional "mfecane" literature, Port Natal and its hinterland acted as a link between the Cape Colony and Delagoa Bay, as well as an avenue to trade in the immediate hinterland, and must be viewed historiographically as such. It is therefore toward a contextual and geographical reintegration that the paper will work.

Certain critical questions need to be asked if the Natal traders, their activities, relations with surrounding polities, and effect on local and regional upheavals is to be properly understood, for example: what was the configuration of power amongst the traders, black and white; what commodity (commodities) were imported to Natal, and what was this traded for; where lay the respective sources of these goods; how were they transported and by whom;

and what regulated supply and demand? Furthermore, what dictated the axis of trade, and where lay the emphasis in interest, at the Cape or at Delagoa Bay?

Indeed what drew the traders to this precise location? This, seemingly, is a simple question with, according to Bryant, Mackeurtan, Omer-Cooper, Thompson et al, an even more simple answer: ivory. However, no direct reference to an express wish of the mission to Natal to establish a trade in ivory can be found in the accounts of Henry Francis Fynn and Nathaniel Isaacs, the pivotal sources in the early (hence subsequent) literature. Instead, Isaacs writes in his Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa of Captain King's "voyage of a speculative nature" (vol. 1, p.xxx). What, then, were the traders in search of? And what was the nature of the certain "specie" which failed to arrive at the Cape, prompting Fynn to join Farewell's expedition? According to the Cobbing-hypothesis, this would be related to the abolition of the slave trade in the Colony and the resultant quest for an alternate source of labour. Again, a set of critical questions needs answers: to what extent, if at all, were the traders involved in the ivory trade; how did they procure this commodity; and to what extent were their trade interests diversified?

Once these issues are placed firmly within the context of socio-political developments of the period - economic factors at the Cape, the Portuguese presence north of Port Natal, and the expansion of British interest in and knowledge of the south east coast of Africa, set against moves to implement Abolition - the activities of Europeans in and around Port Natal from 1824 onward appear in a new light. The paper aims to focus this light on the destabilising impact of the white traders and their umizis, adding to the revision of "mfecane" literature which recognises a need to point out and explore the pitfalls and their raison d'être in the conventional theory that the Zulu state was solely responsible for most of early nineteenth century South African politics.

Since it is my belief that much of these activities has been obscured by the "production" of history, it will be necessary to review these issues from the point of their inception, hence the paper will explore these "mercantile speculations" against the background of their historiographical origination: history needs to be reunited with reality, in spite of the alluring powers of fantasy. In examining the mechanisms of trade at Port Natal between the umizis and surrounding areas, it will be demonstrated that their impact was sufficiently deleterious to contribute significantly to an "mfecane" of another type: slave raiding, gun running, greed, and the redistribution of "refugees".



ORIGINS OF THE 'MFECANE' –  
an ecological perspective

*Jim Gump • University of San Diego*

One who engages in the history of precapitalist Zululand confronts a relative dearth of primary evidence. It follows that conclusions concerning the nature of pre-Shakan state formation are, and will likely remain, speculative. Nonetheless, it seems probable that the Zulu kingdom did not emerge in a revolutionary outburst, as much of the traditional literature on the "mfecane" would suggest. State formation among the northern Nguni-speaking peoples of southern Africa began as much as a half-century before Shaka, and entails rather more than the battles and famines of the 1820's and 1830's. This proposed paper, which relies in part on evidence from the James Stuart papers, argues that the process began among lowland chiefdoms as a defensive response to the incursions of upland pastoralists, who had exceeded the limits of their resource ecology by the eighteenth century. Lowland chiefdoms transformed traditional circumcision sets into multifunctional amabutho for better defense and productivity. When the Madhlathule famine occurred in the early 1800's, the ruling houses of the Mthethwa, Qwabe, Ndwandwe, and Ngwane, made use of disciplined age-set regiments to compete for desirable ecological zones. The Zulu leader Shaka (ca. 1787-1828) based his expansionary program on these versatile amabutho and from them forged a centralized state.





## 'DIFAQANE' CAVERNS:

A preliminary assesement of age, content and structure

*Simon Hall • University of the Witwatersrand*

Most archaeological enquiries into the Late Iron Age (LIA) of the Transvaal and Orange Free State end in the first third of the 19th century because of the wholesale destruction of the Highveld LIA stone wall settlements which is attributed to the turmoil of the 'difaqane'. Extreme settlement fluidity and fragmentation of defensive and offensive communities has left us with an ephemeral and a seemingly unpatterned archaeological record which is difficult to access. While we recognise the destruction of sites, detail of life during episodes of disruption remains obscure.

As part of a wider enquiry into the archaeology of 19th century LIA transformations in the Transvaal, an examination of an assumed 'difaqane' refuge site at Gatsrand, near Potchefstroom, has been started. The site consists of two distinct components; one below and one above ground (upstairs and downstairs). Downstairs comprises a small entrance into a large dolomitic cavern system which preserves about seventy stone and daub huts; literally a whole village underground. The upstairs site consists of over forty hut floors and several small stone cattle byres which cluster directly around the cavern entrance. The two components were undoubtedly contemporary. The upstairs component is atypical of 18th century LIA settlement preferences and the downstairs site is completely aberrant. The labour evident in the construction of the cavern village suggests a considerable investment in providing a relatively permanent hideaway or defensive position against sustained stress. The assumption that this stems from early 19th century turmoil is examined. A further aspect of the study is spatial and seeks to relate the spatial order/reorder/disorder of both components to the social and economic disruption of the period.

The 'difaqane' revisionist debate provides a broad spectrum of ideas within which the archaeology of that period can be interpreted, and at the same time assess the utility of these frameworks in accounting for the data as they become available. Extrapolating, as has been done, a traditional 'difaqane' concept into deeper Iron Age time is dangerous given the current revisionism and the fact that we have no secure knowledge of what the archaeology of the 'difaqane' actually looks like.



## JAMES STUART AND THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN 'CIVILISED AND UNCIVILISED'

*Carolyn Hamilton • University of the Witwatersrand*

James Stuart's collection of oral evidence from the Zulu and neighbouring peoples, constitutes one of the major sources for the history of early nineteenth-century Zululand and Natal. Stuart has alternatively been hailed as a man ahead of his time because of his meticulous recording methods, and villified as "a representative and influential product of an unpleasant generation", whose "thought exemplifies the pathologies of colonial society..." (See Julian Cobbing's review article on the published James Stuart Archive, entitled "A Tainted Well. The Objectives Historical Fantasies, and Working Methods of James Stuart, with Counter-Argument", Journal of Natal and Zulu History, XI (1988), pp.115-154)

Through a reading of Stuart's publications and investigation of the vast residue of the unpublished Stuart papers - his private correspondence, draft manuscripts, and his notes to himself - the paper will show that in significant ways, Stuart was painfully at odds with the prevailing sentiments of his fellow colonists: he was disenchanted with official "native policy" of the time; he objected to isibalo labour levies and the dispossession of Africans from their lands; and he evinced a powerful commitment to giving Africans a say in their own affairs as well as to allowing them to be heard in their own words. As he put it,

This question of the contact between the civilized and uncivilized races receives its expression almost entirely from the civilized themselves. The whole controversy is an ex parte affair - conducted by the civilized against one another, instead of by civilized and uncivilized. The uncivilized man's voice is never heard. In any case, it cannot be detected amidst all the Babel of talk that is constantly going on... In a question of this kind surely the voice of the people primarily concerned is of the greatest importance. (KCAL, Stuart Papers, file 42, item xxi)

One of the tasks of the paper will be to assess to what extent and in what form "the uncivilized man's voice" can be heard in Stuart's notes.

In seeking to take account of the complexity of Stuart's career, the highly contested development of the "native policies" of the early twentieth-century, and the tremendous ambiguity of the positions of their formulators, the paper aims to facilitate the reading and assessment of the historical material contained in the testimonies recorded by Stuart.



# THE BATTLE OF DITHAKONG AND 'MFECANE' THEORY

*Guy Hartley • University of Cape Town*

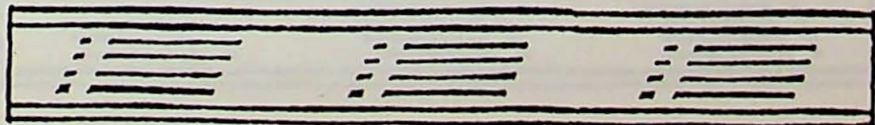
This paper will attempt to explore the relationship between the battle of Dithakong and 'mfecane' theory in connection with the growing critique led by Julian Cobbing. The events at Dithakong on 25-27 June 1823 stand at a critical juncture to the latest debates and are catalyst to the very heart of the issues at stake.

In the past, Dithakong has been viewed as a defense against the threatening advance of a numerous and destitute 'mfecane' migratory grouping. However, latest versions interpret the events in terms of a slave and cattle raid on an unprovoked and non-aggressive people. Julian Cobbing, Jurg Richner and Jan-Bart Gewald have presented these alternative analyses which although similar in broader intention are distinct in detailed explanation.

Ever since Cobbing has questioned the fundamental tenets of 'mfecane' theory and suggested rather that the destabilizations within black society during the 1820's sprang from European penetration, there have been efforts both by himself and his students to give his ideas academic credibility. Although noting the advances made by Cobbing and others, it will be argued that with regard to Dithakong the analyses are forced and suited to meet the demands of the larger suppositions of "European" expansionism and labour demands.

The first section of the paper will focus on Dithakong itself. All the alternative analyses show extreme scepticism towards the eyewitness narratives of the events and pay little attention to the reports about the "Mantatee horde." It will be suggested that such an approach is unwarranted and that a correct understanding of the "Mantatee" would validate the traditional accounts.

The second section will address the broader implications of Dithakong with particular reference to the upheavals west of the Drakensberg. Without completely returning to the traditional 'mfecane' model, a synthesis approach will be proposed whereby the conflicts need to be viewed as a complex interplay of "European" and Afrocentric forces. It is hoped that such an approach would provide a more adequate framework for further historical research in this area.



# THE WESTERN TRANSVAAL 1500-1800

*Margaret Kinsman*

Julian Cobbing's work has offered a variety of new propositions about change in 19th century southern Africa. Most scholars would agree with at least parts of his critique of the Mfecane, especially the way in which it has been used to rationalise the expropriation of land from blacks. Yet, the reconstruction of historical events which he proposes to replace the Mfecane is highly problematic. He argues that the growing ties to international trade were catastrophic. Yet his vision of white, Griqua and Korana slavers widely displacing black communities takes away the possibility of African agency. Africans are relieved of the capacity to direct historical change and become simple victims of wider historical forces. This is reflected in his periodisation: his study focuses on the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. He ignores the possibility that African communities were caught in the process of profound change at the time of increased involvement in international trade networks. We are given no historical context to help us assess the impact of the changes he describes.

My paper will focus on the western Transvaal from about 1500 to 1800. Archaeological studies of the area are still superficial, and oral traditions not yet systematically collected in the area. So the first part of my paper will be a set of proposals about socio-economic changes happening in the area from about 1500 to 1750. It will argue that growing inequalities in wealth and shifting relationships between men and women worked to reshape Tswana society and set in motion geo-political shifts which saw the rise and fall of the Rolong chiefdomship. The second part of the paper will focus on the arrival of refugee groups from the Cape Colony from about 1750 to 1820. They did to some extent destabilise local communities. Yet, I will argue that when placed within the context of ongoing changes in the region, the "Korana" and Griqua accelerated rather than initiated change. The third part of the paper will query whether or not we can speak of a "Mfecane" in the region.

All in all I will argue that if we are to overcome the deficiencies of the old Mfecane argument, we must do so by better pursuing the pre-colonial African past in southern Africa than by constructing simplistic but in many ways equally biased alternatives.



*White  
Griqua  
Korana*

## 'TEACHING IN THE AFTERMATH'

*Cynthia Kros • University of the Witwatersrand*

*Shelley Greybe • SACHED*

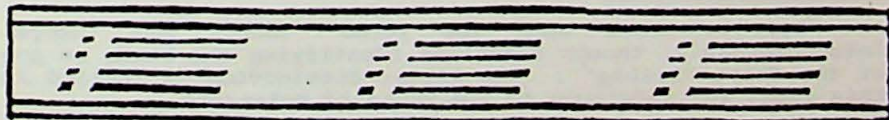
This paper will provide an account of its authors' experiences in working towards a revised narrative of the so-called "mfecane" with a group of fourth year university students training to be secondary school history teachers, and in developing teaching materials suitable for use in general South African high school classrooms.

The paper will argue that it is absolutely essential to reconstruct a narrative for the early nineteenth century in South Africa. In high schools there is a sense of history in transition and the danger exists that the "mfecane", which has served to legitimate some of the basic premises of Apartheid as Julian Cobbing has argued, may yet be appropriated by those who have a political interest in demonstrating that the "Zulu nation ... has a very special history". (Buthelezi quoted in Vrye Weekblad, 10-16 May, 1991.) The authors contend that it is not enough simply to present high school teachers with the academic debate over the dimensions of the "mfecane". The new school of historical writing on the early nineteenth century has shattered long held perceptions and in many instances, as interviews with teachers have revealed, their self-confidence. Hence, we have felt compelled to provide a reconstructed narrative which might serve as a new framework for studying, what we have provisionally called, raiding and trading in the early nineteenth century.

The paper will be divided into two sections:

One: An account of reconstructing early nineteenth century history in the "aftermath" with fourth year students.

Two: Moving the narrative into classroom practice.



A CHIP OFF THE OLD BLOCK:  
Moletsane's Taung and the false history of the  
early nineteenth-century 'Interior'

*Brigid Lambourne • University of the Witwatersrand*

The mfecane myth misrepresented the Taung as one of four large tribes<sup>1</sup> in Transorangia set in motion as marauding hordes by Tlokwa "devastation" and Hlubi and Ngwane invasions, forced to take refuge across the Vaal and "to live by plunder and traverse the land as devastating hordes"<sup>2</sup>. Once energised as a predatory band<sup>3</sup>, the Taung are supposed to have carried famine and anarchy as far as the the Molopo River, preying on, amongst others, the Hurutse, Ndebele<sup>4</sup>, Seleka-Rolong and a number of Griqua, Bergenaar and Kora communities. Accounts differ as to the duration of this energisation - Ellenberger has the Taung alternate, in two year periods, between pillage north of the Vaal and peaceful settlement, back "home" to the south, while most stabilise his marauding career between 1822 and 1829, after which he and his remaining 150 followers "took refuge" with the Griqua at Phillipolis. Here they had the good fortune to come under the influence of the gospel and, unable to return to former territory (between the Sand and Valsch Rivers) as Boer farmers had taken over the area, were resettled under the missionary Rolland as part of the congealing "Sotho" kingdom. Subsequently dispossessed Taung, and those returning from periods of labour in the colony, were also resettled here. As an old man, Moletsane developed a firm friendship with Ellenberger, who together with Theal and others were largely responsible for the creation of Sotho history (and the above version of Taung history). Here then the story has come full circle, and we can begin to re-examine the history of the Taung from eye-witness accounts with a view to unravelling the lies and distortions.

The abortion of the (settler- and missionary-inseminated) mfecane has left the raider image of the Taung intact in the new history. Cobbing describes a fusion of the Taung and Ghoya, who became Koranna-ised, and formed a revolutionary accretion which was part victim, part aggressor. This paper, however, suggests that the Taung were overwhelmingly victims, on the defensive, in this "chain of violence". The nexus of violence in this area saw power relations rapidly determined by access to horses, guns and missionaries - of which the Taung had none. Eye-witnesses recorded that the Ghoya had had all their cattle stolen, and all the children over walking age captured by 1824. Missionaries and

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<sup>1</sup>Eye witnesses used the terms "Taung" and "Ghoya" interchangeably, though sometimes identifying the Taung as one of the Ghoya "tribes". The latter distinction is implied in this paper in reference to the Taung of Moletsane.

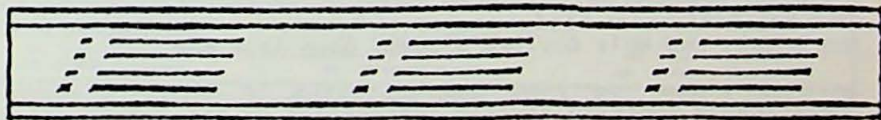
<sup>2</sup>See Omer-Cooper, J.D., The Zulu Aftermath, p.88, 94-7.

<sup>3</sup>By "emulating Nguni military formations and tactics", such as "adopting short stabbing spears" (Rasmussen, Migrant Kingdom, p.51)

<sup>4</sup>Raiding the Ndebele "at least seven times" (Ibid.)

travellers recorded that people in this area fled in terror at the approach of hat-wearers, and dwelt largely in hidden caves or on defensible hill-tops. Such references suggest that the Taung are far better characterised as a community repeatedly subjected to large scale raids by agents of both the Portuguese slave trade, and the colony's labour seizing network - raids from which, without armed assistance, they had little defence.

The resketching of the history of Transorangia in the early nineteenth-century provides a backdrop against which to reconceptualise the Taung. This paper is concerned with detailing what or who the Taung were originally, prior to the "re-creation" of a conceptually different community with a different history by missionaries. The value of studying what might be regarded as a marginal or insignificant community is that of a case study which provides insights of a far broader application. The Taung are particularly revealing of the forces at work in the northern "interior" as their location exposed them to the ravages of competing labour and cattle raiders. The dynamics of that complex network of fluctuating alliances in which the Taung were engaged, is informative of the nuanced responses of small, dispersed communities to the culture of violence which primitive accumulators - or the agents of early colonialism - initiated in areas beyond the reaches of "official" colonisation. This implies a reassessment of the metaphor of the "blank slate" upon which the boers were to write their early republics, and a reinsertion of a long history of interaction which replaces "race" with such concepts as material culture (visibly, hats; fundamentally, guns, horses and the support of their providers) as the central determinant of "haves" and "have-nots" in power relations. Sparse and contradictory evidence dictates that much of the hypothesis is comparative and somewhat speculative, but nonetheless a valid exercise if the lived experiences of small communities without resident white recorders are to be painted into the intricate historical picture of early nineteenth-century South Africa.



# RECONSTRUCTION OF HISTORY: The case of Shaka

*M.Z. Malaba • University of Zimbabwe*

The history of the Shakan era is a fascinating one because of the frequent revisions that have taken place.

For the literary historian, the constant reevaluations of the life and times of Shaka, the first Zulu king, provide an illuminating index of the social and political issues at stake during the times in which they were written and the usefulness of the Shakan motif to the writers in question.

The pioneering black Southern African writers - notably Thomas Mofolo, Magera Fuze and John Dube - shared the sensibility of the praise-poets who celebrated Shaka as a great warrior king, but differ from the eulogistic style of the praise-poets by questioning, in varying degrees, the means by which Shaka established his empire.

The next major phase in Shakan literature came with the consolidation of the "received wisdom" in the late 1920s, in the pioneering historiographical works, notably A T Bryant's Olden Times in Zululand and Natal. These authors relied heavily on oral testimony and the scattered accounts of the first white settlers in Zululand, during Shaka's reign.

A marked reassessment came in the 50s and 60s, when Shaka was mobilised, largely by dramatists from French-speaking Africa as a heroic leader whose major preoccupation was the founding of a nation-state. Significantly, many of these writers played active roles in the newly independent African states, particularly Leopold Sedar Senghor, Seydou Badian and Djibril Niane. Senghor and Badian specifically take issue with Mofolo's characterisation of Shaka as the "originator-of-all-things-evil"; preferring, instead, to celebrate Shaka's success in imposing a super-tribal identity.

A similar pre-occupation can be found in the celebration of Shaka as a Pan-Africanist leader in Mazisi Kunene's epic, Emperor Shaka the Great, and Wole Soyinka's poem, Ogun Abibiman.

In each phase, we find subtle shifts in emphasis from a specifically Southern African perspective on the Shakan era in the first two decades of this century; a European infusion which is essentially the colonizers' views of the colonized; and a revisionist trend, from both West African and South African writers, aimed at consolidating the myth of a "greater Zulu" identity and empire.

Shaka thus emerges as all things to all men and they grapple with the problems of refashioning "history" in order to make sense of their contemporary reality.

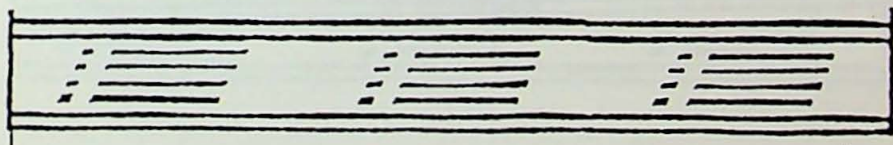


# THE HURUTSHE, THE DIFAQANE AND THE FORMATION OF THE TRANSVAAL STATE 1820-1875

*Andrew Manson • University of Bophutatswana*

The Cobbing intervention in the "Mfecane debate" focuses on the overwhelming impact of white penetration upon African societies in Southern Africa in the early nineteenth century. The implication of Cobbing's "theory" is that it permits a view of an omnipotent European power, driven by imperial and capitalist forces, carving out at will new states upon South Africa's highveld, thus determining the geopolitical structure of the modern South African State.

This paper, by focusing on relations between the Hurutshe and the Boers on the hitherto unexamined north-western border of the Transvaal, shows that white society determined neither its locality nor the nature of its relationships with African communities with the ease one would have imagined if one is to believe Cobbing's assertion that the early forerunners of the capitalist system (the colonial agents and frontier traders and raiders) were responsible for sweeping established African communities from their historic homes a mere thirty years before Boer occupation of the western highveld. Thus on the surer empirical ground provided by the documentation of archives of the Transvaal state, (as rudimentary as it was), we must seriously re-assess the destructive impact of white penetration, without rejecting the real possibility that white agency was a powerful contributory cause of the difaqane.



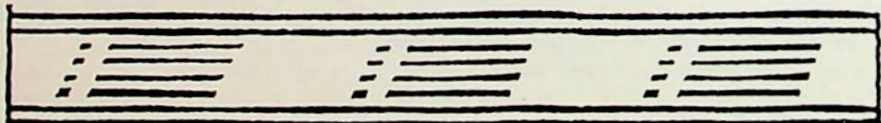
## PRE-DIFAQANE WARS IN THE WEST

*Neil Parsons*

Fourteen years ago I compiled an account of the so-called Mfecane and Difaqane wars, and their origins, which was subsequently published in a textbook of 1982. Though self-consciously revisionist at the time, no doubt the book is now responsible for helping to perpetuate historical orthodoxy.

My account of the wars and their origins east of the Drakensberg was hardly novel (following Omer-Cooper and Daniel & Webb) - except possibly in emphasizing the Ndwandwe-Tembe and even Rozvi forbears of military state development. My account of developments west of the Drakensberg, on the other hand, besides some judicious rejigging of the received version (following Lye) of battles after 1821-22, was more innovative. I tried to show that the wars were a continuation of a long series of previous minor wars in the Kalahari-Highveld region since about 1770. In a subsequent textbook, for Zimbabwe schools, I even gave those wars a name - the "Ivory Wars", though Ivory-and-Cattle-and-Women Wars might have been more apposite.

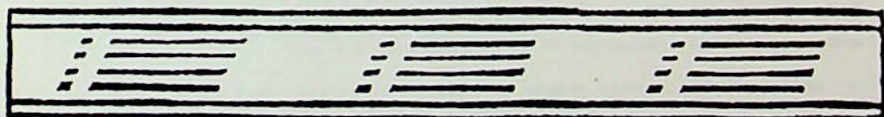
In the paper for the colloquium I will return to this topic of Pre-Difaqane Wars in the West - substantiating, questioning and revising what I wrote in the 1970s, and hopefully opening up pathways for more understanding and research on the Mfecane/Difaqane historical phenomenon as a whole.



MATIWANE'S ROAD TO MBHOLOMPHO:  
A reprieve for the 'mfecane' ?

*J.B. Peires • UNITRA*

The article begins with a discussion of the sources available for the history of Matiwane. It proceeds to a discussion of Matiwane's alleged clash with the Griqua, and his reasons for moving south to the Transkei. The third section looks at British Colonial policy, and the motivations which impelled Lieutenant-Governor Bourke to send an army to fight against Matiwane. Finally, I review the methodology adopted by Cobbing, and consider its implications for the remainder of the "Cobbing hypothesis."



# EASTERN FRONTIER SLAVING AND ITS EXTENSION INTO THE TRANSORANGIA AND NATAL, 1770-1843

J Richner • Rhodes University

This paper deals with two interconnected themes: (1.) The refutation of the perception that there existed a "natural" enmity between "Boer" and "Brit" already in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. (2.) The evidence for a local slave raiding and trading by both British and Boer Colonists in the Eastern Cape, Transorangia as well as in Natal.

(1.) The popular and academic perceptions of the nature of the relationship between Boer and English in the early 19th Century is still one of "naturally enmity". The study of writings of the 1820+30 make it quite clear, that there was no such enmity at the time. This enmity originated in the Boer reaction, above all by those led by Paul Kruger, to the British (Shepstone) annexation of the Transvaal. It resulted in a war which left "psychological" scars among the states involved and as well as amongst all English and Dutch speaking communities in Southern Africa.

Despite the efforts of historians, such as Theal, who emphasised the common past of a "pan-South African white Nation", the perceptions created in the 1870's/80's remain. The divisions of whites in the pre-great trek Eastern Cape were not those of "Boer" and "Brit", but those colonist ("Boer" or "Brit") against the British imperial and philanthropic interests. 1820 Settlers became *heeraden* and *veldkornet*; married Boer women; many learnt Dutch; and most importantly, they had the same political/economic interests (land and labour) in their contact with Africans. Officials who supported these "Settler interests" became heroes (D'Urban, Col. Henry Somerset) and those who did not were the villains (Stockenström, but also London and the missionaries).

(2.) Labour at the Eastern and North Eastern Frontier was always scarce before 1835. The "trekboer" economy depended on cheap labour and offered little incentives to prospective workers. Thus, a number of ways to get and keep workers onto the farms were devised, this paper is dealing with one of these: the raiding or buying of "slaves" locally. The "bushman war" on the Northern Frontier in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century provided an opportunity to take home and "tame" "bushman" (mainly children). From 1770 onwards even with VOC sanction, Khoi, Bastards and Oorlam increasingly participated in the "bushman war" on the side of the colonists. When groups of these left the Colony, they continued the "bushman war", with the sole aim of selling "bushman children" to the colony. With the original 1820 Settler scheme, failing the already existing labour shortage in the Eastern Cape was enormously exacerbated. The number of "bushmen" in the Transorangia decreased while raiding groups multiplied and these raiders began to raid Sotho-Tswana people for cattle and slaves for sale into the colony. When "Boers" got to the Transorangia they bought slaves locally from raiders and participated themselves in the raiding of slaves.

In 1824 and 1825 a small group of English colonists (Port Natal hoodlums) began to "hunt" and "trade" from Port Natal. They were "chiefs" over chiefdoms of Natal Africans, married their women (polygamy) and with their African armies (equipped with guns) hunted Elephants, Hippos and also raided for slaves which were shipped out from Port Natal and as far South as the Mzimvubu. Until 1834 these "Port Natal hoodlums" tried to get official British support; though without British control. From then onwards they were co-operating with an increasingly restless section of Dutch colonists at the Eastern Border of the Cape Colony and finally decided to found, in Natal, a state independent of Britain. The co-operation between "Port Natal hoodlums" and the emigrant boers is apparent from their combined actions in 1837/38.

The survival of both groups of colonists depended on their full control over their labour: the Port Natal hoodlums over their "parzoes" with thousands of African "slaves" and the Boers over their "servants" in the patriarchal household units. To secure enough "slaves" for their respective economies was thus paramount, i.e. In March 1838 the "Port Natal hoodlums" raided +/- 500 Zulu women and children. After defeating Dingaan's armies the boers returned not only with +/- 40 000 cattle, but also with +/- 1000 Zulu children. By 1843 Boers on the Transorangia had a surplus capacity of slaves and sold them to the Portuguese at Delagoa Bay. The Republic of Natal was the brief fulfillment of both, the boer's and the "Port Natal hoodlums's", dream of their control over an independent slave state in Southern Africa.



## ' COBBING AND THE HISTORIANS '

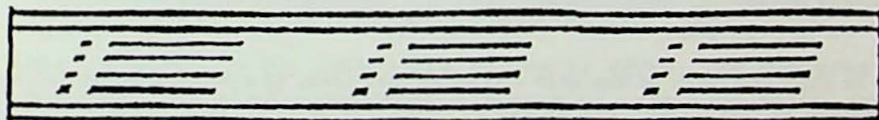
*Christopher Saunders • University of Cape Town*

In attacking the 'Mfecane', Cobbing has attacked a large and disparate group of historians, from Theal through Walker to Omer-Cooper and Davenport. Cobbing accuses these historians of a range of sins, from inventing mythical 'Mfecanes' to conspiracy, from suppressing information on slave-raiding to mere hyperbole.

How sound are Cobbing's criticisms and accusations? This paper considers the way historians have handled the 'Mfecane' over time, and assesses Cobbing's interpretation of their writings on this topic.

The following caveats will not apply:

- any relationship between this Abstract and the paper that will emerge for the September Colloquium is coincidental
- remarks to be made about historians are not to be taken to refer to actual individuals, living or dead



# UNMASKING THE FINGO:

## The War of 1835 revisited

*Alan Webster • Rhodes University*

This paper has two concurrent themes : the war of 1835 and the identity of the Fingo. In settler and 'mfecane' historiography, these two subjects have been compartmentalised; the first into white 'frontier' history, and the second into African, 'mfecane' history. But neither can be understood outside the context of the other. The orthodox interpretations of both areas are deeply flawed and need extensive revision and reinterpretation. For one and a half centuries the propagandistic explanation of the events of 1835 put forward by the 'Graham's Town faction', the colonial military authorities and the Cape Governor D'Urban has remained essentially unchanged.

The War of 1835 (otherwise the 6th Frontier War) has hitherto been described as an unprovoked attack by the 'Xhosa' on the Colony, masterminded by the Gcaleka paramount Hintsa and carried out by a large percentage of the Rharhabe and Gcaleka, to which the Colony responded defensively. This interpretation needs to be inverted. It was the Colony who was aggressor, its power exhibited over decades of frontier incursions and Rharhabe land seizure. The Rharhabe reacted in late 1834 to this pressure, although their attacks were on a much smaller scale than claimed by the settlers. D'Urban then took the opportunity to destroy Rharhabe political structures, undermine Gcaleka stability, and seize enormous numbers of cattle, most Rharhabe land, and thousands of women and children to solve the entrenched colonial labour shortage.

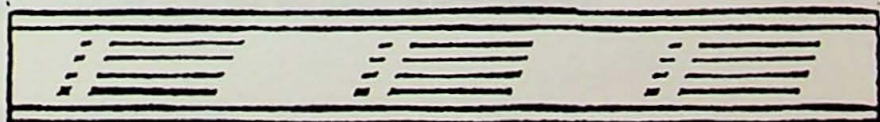
It is this inversion of the 1835 orthodoxy that leads to a re-examination of the identity of the Fingo (now called Mfengu). The settler (and still accepted) orthodoxy on Fingo history is that they were an amalgamation of various 'Natal' groupings, chased south by the devastations of Shaka and the 'mfecane'. The Fingo fled to Hintsa who welcomed them, but they soon fell victim to Gcaleka oppression. From this they were rescued by the British in 1835. As a result of the claims about the origins of Fingo movements, their 'history' has been placed firmly as an aspect of 'mfecane' theory. The explanations for Fingo identity lie not in Zulucentric expansion, but in the exhibition of British power in 1835. Of the 17000 claimed Fingo in 1835, a mere two hundred have roots traceable to 'Natal'. A good percentage of the Fingo were actually Thembu, Mpondo, Gcaleka and Rharhabe from the Wesleyan missions, and others were 'Caffer' military collaborators. There is substantial evidence to point to the assertion that the majority of Fingo in 1835 were Gcaleka, Rharhabe and Bomvana women and children, captured by the colonial forces in 1835, and forced into servitude in the labour-starved Colony.

A re-examination of the War of 1835 thus shows that the Fingo must be removed from 'mfecane' theory. Their origins lie in colonial penetration and labour-based expansion, not in mythical wanderings attributed without evidence to Shakan power and Zulu destruction. This is a clear case of the poverty of 'mfecane' empiricism. The structure and credibility of the entire 'mfecane' argument needs examination in light of the removal of the Fingo from it.

# POLITICAL TRANSFORMATIONS IN NATAL IN THE LATE 18TH AND EARLY 19TH CENTURIES

*J.B. Wright • University of Natal*

This paper is the third in a series which essays to provide a new baseline for thinking into the history of the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region in the period c.1760-c.1830. In the first, I have argued that the concept of the mfecane is of little, if any, use in analyzing the history of the period. In the second, I have argued that the standard account of the region's history in these years, that which appears in A.T. Bryant's Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, is based largely on colonial-made myths, and cannot be regarded as reliable. In the present paper I go on to outline an alternative interpretation of the evidence. Its main lines of argument are as follows. Firstly, that the beginnings of major political changes south of the Thukela long predate the emergence of the Zulu state. These changes were a product of conflicts which were becoming widespread in the Delagoa Bay hinterland as a result of the expansion of maritime trade at the bay after c.1760. Second, that in the period of major upheaval in the late 1810s and early 1820s, the emerging Zulu state was simply one among a number of important political actors in the region. Third, that though the Zulu were eventually able to establish domination over the region, they did not 'devastate' it, as conventionally they are supposed to have done, and were unable effectively to occupy more than a small part of it. They were still in the process of establishing a hold on the region, when, in the mid-1820s, its political dynamics began to be transformed by the increasing involvement of British traders from the Cape in the affairs of the Zulu state.



# LANGUAGE AND ASSASSINATION: Aspects of white writers' portrayal of Shaka and the Zulus

Dan Wylie • Rhodes University

There is no clear distinction between works by white writers on Shaka which present themselves as "history" or as "fiction". A number of linguistic and narrative strategies are common to both types, and are repeated in markedly similar forms throughout the 170 years of literature on Shaka. These forms, which imply a stability of underlying attitude and power-relations, are sufficiently stable and numerous for a descriptive terminology to be developed.

This paper proposes four classes of language-strategy, none mutually exclusive. The first class is here termed *enterrment* (or en-earthment). The Zulu is aligned with the earth, nature, the animal, the underworld; this may be in open derogation or in ambivalent admiration; it therefore frequently invokes or reifies unintelligibility, timeless stasis, incorrigibility.

A second class is termed *layback*. This signifies ways in which writers' attitudes (often unwittingly) pull in opposite directions. For instance, the impulse to understanding may be in tension with dismissal, "ethnography" with Eurocentric judgement, admiration with repulsion. Stories, jokes and exaggerations apparently designed to affirm Zulu values in fact do the opposite.

A third class involves *projection*. This covers those unconscious psychological impulses by which the Zulu becomes an embodiment of the writer's own fears, desires or prejudices: including the portrayal of sexuality and violence, Eurocentric categorizations (eg. military and political) and comparisons (eg. Shaka as the "Black Napoleon").

All these overlap strongly with a fourth class, termed *deadlighting*. This is an essentially protective, self-enclosing manoeuvre, by which the Zulu reality is fictionalised, commandeered to European mythologies and inherited tropes, and embellished, and so denied its own voice.

Such linguistic-narrational devices abound in a corpus of literature distinctive for its incestuous, frequently plagiaristic repetition of tales and phrases. An awareness of the rhetorical heritage of all the works on Shaka thus becomes essential for an accurate reassessment of them either as historical sources or as documents of a colonial culture and mindset.





# UNIVERSITY ART GALLERIES

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

*Forthcoming Burton Exhibition*  
Gertrude Posel Galleries

The University Art Galleries is presently engaged in mounting an exhibition and compiling a catalogue that will represent a sizeable collection of objects of Luban and Songye origin. These pieces were obtained from the Apostolic missionary W.F.P. Burton during his time spent with the Congo Evangelistic Mission, starting in the 1920's.

Burton spent most of the rest of his life working amongst the people of Lubaland. From 1933-1941 he collected a variety of objects ranging from ancient pots to household and ritual items which he presented to the University's Social Anthropology Department. He supplemented the collection with extensive photographic and written documentation.

Whilst currently in the early stages of preparation for the exhibition, significant issues have emerged which we hope to explore as the process unfolds. We would like to engage with the current art/artifact debates as well as the politics of representation.

Furthermore, due to the nature of the material at our disposal it seems logical to focus the exhibition around Burton 'The Collector'. Given the history/traditions of Western display and gallery practises, we are also aware of the issues associated with the promotion of the individual. We hope to challenge, question and engage with the existing debates mentioned above whilst at the same time maintaining a coherent and historically relevant reconstruction of the material at our disposal.

Fiona Rankin-Smith  
Nessa Leibhammer  
6.6.91

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

## HISTORY WORKSHOP

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The 'Mfecane': New and exciting research in this area has forced historians and teachers to rethink the way we teach 19th century South African history.

As in the past, the History Workshop is encouraging wide participation in reshaping and refocusing South African History, making current research accessible to practising teachers.

So we invite all teachers to attend a conference to share ideas about teaching the 'mfecane'. New insights and theories have come to the fore and we need to explore them together.

The teachers' day will be held at Wits University on Monday 9 September, 1991.

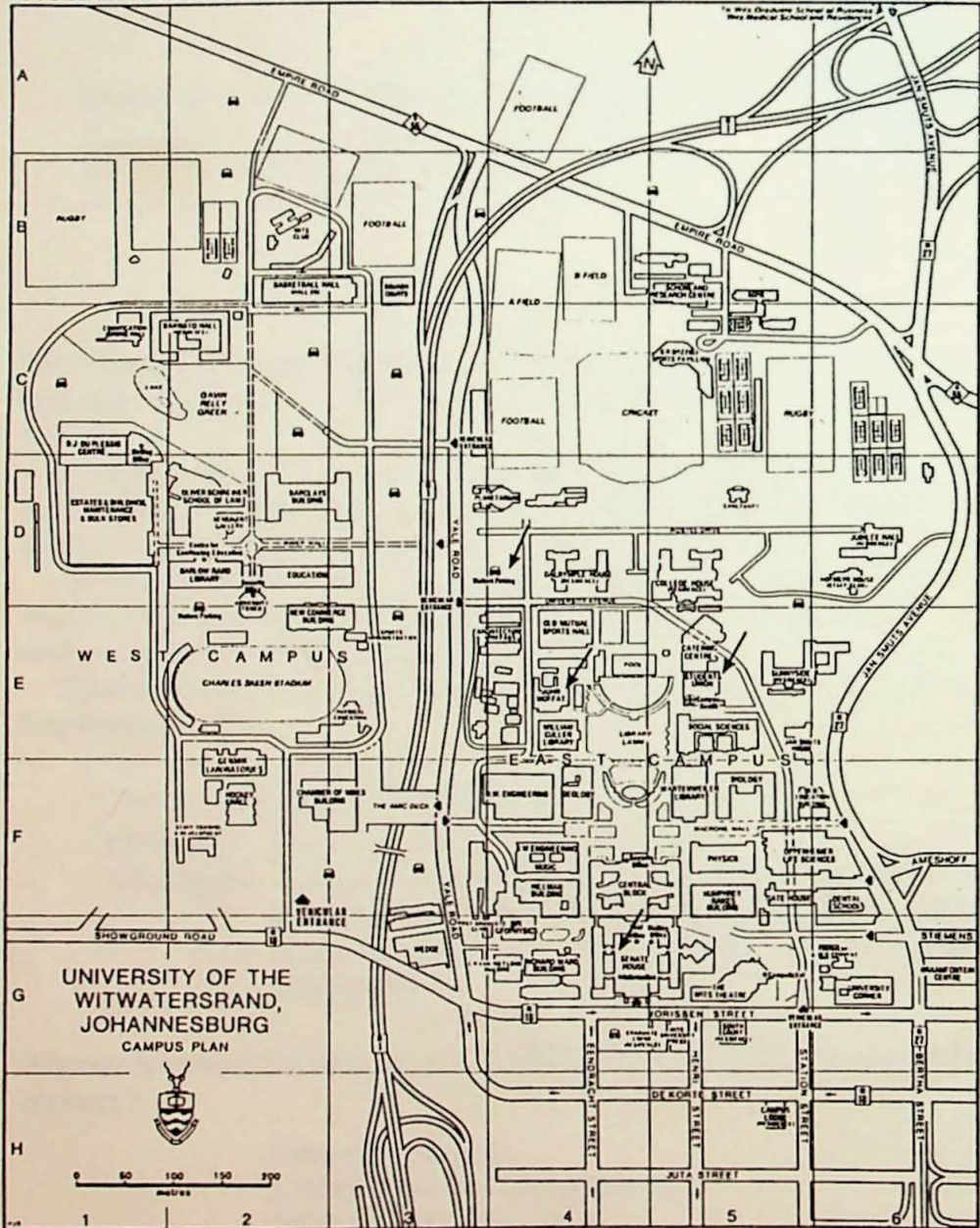
The programme will be held in two sessions:

**Morning:** Papers on teaching the 'mfecane'

**Afternoon:** A session on teaching methodologies with videos and a panel discussion. Many of the participants in an earlier academic conference on the 'mfecane' will participate in this session.

Anyone interested in attending or participating in the teacher's day should contact :

History Workshop  
University of the Witwatersrand  
Johannesburg, Wits 2050



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