

From James Stuart, *uKulumetule*, London: Longmans, Green, 1925.

(Part I, pp. 14-25)

Translator's notes

Modern orthography for names.

Have kept isiZulu words like umuzi, imizi; umkhumbi; isigodlo;

Numbers in bold between back-slashes are the page numbers in the original.

Footnotes made by Stuart in isiZulu in the original: position marked with '(n)'. To be worked on.

Translator's footnotes. To be worked on.

/14/ Part I

In the time of the kings, there were many large *imizi* in the Zulu country.¹ In the reign of Shaka, there were uBulawayo (uGibixegu), uDukuza, and uSiklebhe; in the reign of Dingane, there were uMgungundlovu, the White uHlomendlini, and uKhangela; in the reign of Mpande, there were uNodwengu, uMlambongwenya, and uGqikazi; in the reign of Cetshwayo, there were uNdi, uGingindlovu, and amaNgwe. There were many others like uNobamba, uMbelebele, iMpangiso, iMvoko, uDlambedlu, and iNtontela. The biggest of them all, according to what the old people tell us, was uMgungundlovu 'o *nduku zi bomvu*' (the place of the red sticks).

The name uMgungundlovu seems to have come from the word *isangungu*. *Ingungu* means something curved in shape, like the horns of a bull that are so curved that they almost meet; or like the tusks of an elephant, which, when laid on the ground /15/ opposite each other, form a shape like an *umkhumbi*,² or like the enclosure in an *umuzi*. That is the origin of the name.

¹ Umuzi, imizi.

² Umkhumbi

This *umuzi* was built in 1829, after Dingane had killed Shaka (1), Mhlangana, Mbopha, Ngwadi, Magaye, and Zihlandlo, and after the flight of Nqetho kaKhondlo. Shaka had built the kwaDukuza *umuzi* after he had been stabbed with a spear when he was at kwaBulawayo (2). He said of the Zulu country, ‘It is the place of the *iMpaka*.’³ [See Ngidi, JSA 5, p. 35.] He then left, and went to build on the other side of the uThukela.

For his part, Dingane had no anxieties about living in the Zulu country. He built uMgungundlovu between the uMkhumbane and the uNzololo, two streams which join and flow into the White iMfolozi, in the eMahlabathini area. (3) The place that he chose was in the bush country, but slightly elevated, so that it was pleasantly cool. In the country round about grew acacia trees such as the *umnqawe*, the *umunga*, and the *umtolo*, also euphorbias and aloes. The grass that grew there was *insinde* and *itungwa* (used for weaving the mats employed in roofing houses). Very close by to the west was the place known as eMakhosini, where the Zulu kings were buried.

The layout of uMgungundlovu is clearly shown in the illustration in *uTulasizwe*, p. 64.⁴ At the upper end, behind the *isigodlo*,⁵ are three small royal *imizi*. Behind them is a low hill, the iSangoyana. The uMkhumbane stream, on the near side of the *umuzi*, cannot be seen; the uNzololo, on the far side, is just visible. See also the illustration in *uHlangakula*, p. 64.⁶

/16/ [Diagram of uMgungundlovu, with legend and notes in isiZulu. Based on the diagram that Stuart drew on 21 March 1909 after conversation with Lunguza kaMpukane. See JSA, vol. 1, p. 339-40.]

[On layout see Lunguza, JSA 1, pp. 309, 339-41; Thununu, JSA 6, pp. 294-5.]

The total number of houses in the *umuzi* was /17/ 1500. There were four rows of them, with five rows in some places, and six rows in other places. Outside the houses was the outer fence of the *umuzi*. This *umuzi* of the king was very big: if a man called to another who was standing on the other side of the inner enclosure, he would not be heard.

The houses tended to be smaller than those in the country of the white people (eSilungwini), for in the latter country there was a tax on houses. In addition, those at uMgungundlovu were

³ Impaka

⁴ uTulasizwe. A drawing, probably by Stuart.

⁵ Isigodlo

⁶ uHlangakula. Reproduces a photograph of the site of uMgungundlovu, taken in 1914, presumably by Stuart. (During his tour of Zululand with Rider Haggard?)

occupied only by men of the amabutho.⁷ Women, girls and children lived at their homes, although the wives of the izinduna were continually going off to visit their husbands, and girls too would arrive with food and beer for their brothers in the amabutho.

There were two gateways at uMgungundlovu. They were wide, for the men of the amabutho that came to khonza were numerous,⁸ and the cattle kept in the enclosure were numerous. The cattle were kept in separate herds, each with its own pen within the main enclosure. Others stood in various different places, as shown in the diagram (p. 16).

Readers can see many other details of the layout of uMgungundlovu in the diagram. We have drawn it on the basis of information given to us by old men of the iMkhulutshane and iZigulutshane.⁹ As izinceku of the king, they herded, milked, and slaughtered cattle there.¹⁰ They were Thununu kaNonjiya of the Qwabe people, Ngidi kaMcikaziswa of the eLangeni, (note) Lunguza kaMpukane of the Thembu, and Sivivi kaMaqungo of the Malunga section of the Hlubi. All the matters that I discuss here I heard from them.

At the upper end of the umuzi were the white isigodlo and the black isigodlo. There were two of them. In the white isigodlo lived the girls of the king's umdlunkulu, numbering several hundred. The inkosikazi in charge of them was Bhibhi kaNkobe (Sompisi), /18/ sister of Ndlela, the king's induna. No one was allowed to enter the black isigodlo except young izinceku who had not yet reached the age of puberty. Here lived only the king and his izixebe,¹¹ together with the girls of the umdlunkulu who brought his food. The inkosikazi in charge of the black isigodlo was Langazana kaGubeshe. [See Ngidi JSA 5, p. 76.] She was later removed and sent to kwaKhangela.¹² She was succeeded as inkosikazi in charge by Mjanisi, a wife of Senzangakhona.¹³ Food – meat, beer, and gourds of amazi curds – was all kept in the houses of the girls; it was not kept in the house of the inkosikazi.

Both izigodlo were surrounded by a tall, strong fence. Here and there were openings in it, but not many. Both izigodlo had fences interwoven with umnqandane branches.¹⁴ At the openings and at the gates, the fences were interwoven with umklele branches which bent

⁷ Amabutho

⁸ Khonza

⁹ Imkhulutshane, iZigulutshane

¹⁰ Inceku

¹¹ Izixebe – women favourites?

¹² kwaKhangela

¹³ Senzangakhona

¹⁴ umnqandane

easily without breaking.¹⁵ The posts were cut with izince spear-blades and then rubbed smooth.¹⁶ In front of some of the houses were screens made of reeds. The posts for the outer fence were fetched from the large forests of the eNkandla area.

[The following four paras based on Lunguza, JSA 1, pp. 310, 343-4.]

The umdlunkulu girls wore no clothing, only a small covering of beads. This was the practice in the isigodlo. There were others kinds of bead for older women. They wore wristlets of pure white *ithambo* beads, and dressed up with umgazi beads and imfibinga beads.¹⁷ Their cloaks were red, the colour of blood. Those beads (and others, green/blue in colour) came from eNhlengeni, from the amaNhlwenga.¹⁸ In those days people slept under covers made of cowhide scraped clean and rubbed to soften them.

When the girls of the umdlunkulu went to the stream to wash (they always walked in a column), they were accompanied by men armed with spears and shields. (n) For other purposes, the girls / **19**/ went out in fours and fives; all the time they would be guarded by izinceku who also carried spears and shields.

If a person suddenly met up with them on the path, he would hurriedly turn aside into the grass and look down so that he would see nothing at all of them. A person who was summoned to the isigodlo, even if he was an inceku there, would not look at them or gqumela them, for he knew that he would at once be put to death.

These girls were fat, like pigs. They moved sluggishly; some of them were nkwentshelezi. They sweated, though there was no work for them to do in the isigodlo. The mats on which they sat became wet; the izinceku would take them and hang them outside until they were dry.

Inside the isigodlo were the menial servants (izigqila) of the girls, and also women whose husbands had died. They were always busy with the work they had to do.

Most of the girls of the umdlunkulu were reluctant to leave their homes to go and enter the isigodlo. But it did not help, for their fathers would force them to do so. They were sent as

¹⁵ umklele

¹⁶ isince

¹⁷ Umgazi, imfibinga.

¹⁸ amanhlwenga

tribute. Those liked by the king were the fat ones, together with those who looked attractive and would grow up to be beautiful.

When Dingane was overthrown by Mpande (in alliance with the Boers), his isigodlo broke up. Many of the women went over to Mpande; others were taken by Maphitha.¹⁹

The girls of the umdlunkulu were continually being married off to the great men, to senior men like Mondise kaJobe of the Sithole people. When Ziwelele was sent off to Mondise, he lobola'd her with 40 cattle. All those cattle went to the king. The king would give nothing to the fathers of the girls, for they had been presented to him as tribute.

[Five paras based on Lunguza, JSA1, pp. 324-5]

/20/ The women of the isigodlo loved to have fat to smear on themselves. Lunguza (see p. 17) said that Dingane would send to Jobe (n) kaMaphitha of the Sithole people to ask for fat for the isigodlo. Jobe would pick out thirty wethers, of the kind of sheep with long heavy tails. It would take two weeks for them to walk from iLenge (n) to uMgungundlovu. They were taken by Mpukane, father of Lunguza. Lunguza would go with him as a mat-bearer.

When Mpukane arrived with the sheep, he would herd them into the inkundla, or men's assembly place. He would then report to Ndlela that the sheep wanted by the king had arrived. Ndlela would go and tell the king, and the sheep would be driven in for the king to see them. He would then tell Ndlela that they should be kept aside. Early one morning Mpukane would be summoned to the isigodlo. He would be told, 'Go home and give my thanks to my father, the son of Maphitha.' Upon this, Mpukane would turn back and return to Jobe.

The sheep would all be slaughtered to make fat for the isigodlo. When the fat was finished, more sheep would be fetched. Dingane would also send to Jobe to ask for shields.

Ncwadi kaMhlonhlo of the Ximba people was also fetched from Jobe. He knew how to dress hides. The order would go out, 'Let him appear. Let Jobe summon people to cut ihlaba aloes for preparing cloaks.'²⁰ Those cloaks would be for the isigodlo.

Mpukane would then take Ncwadi to the king. After leaving him at uMgungundlovu, he would go back to fetch the people who had been cutting aloes, and take them too to the king.

¹⁹ Maphitha.

²⁰ Ihlaba aloes.

It took sixty men to carry the aloes; there were no womenfolk. They were told that, once they had delivered the aloes, these would be used to touch up their headrings.

/21/ There was an English missionary who arrived at uMgungundlovu in 1837, and established himself there (see p. 41). He said that he would teach the girls of the isigodlo: he had asked for permission from the king. Indeed, he taught some of them to sew with thread; others he taught the (Christian) faith.

[Following based on Sivivi, JSA 5, p. 370.]

Inside the isigodlo the king had an ilawu hut.²¹ It was called an ilawu for the king was not yet married. In the ilawu was a single post supporting the roof. It was not very big. It was beautifully decorated. All of it was woven round with beads (strung together by the umdlunkulu), like the beads one sees woven round dancing-sticks so that they resemble sjamboks.

Some of the beads were white (ithambo beads); others were red (umgazi beads). They were formed into beautiful patterns, from the top of the post to the bottom. The beads used for decorating the post were those worn only by the umdlunkulu; all other people were prohibited from wearing them. The ilawu where the king stayed was where he had his meals.

The king had another hut in the isigodlo. In this one there were many roof-posts. An illustration of this one is given on page 22.²² The girls visible in it are of the umdlunkulu, though not all of them. Khamungana (Gadeni) (n) went into it when summoned to speak with the king. He said that it was dark inside; he could see the girls only from flashes of light from their neckrings and armrings.(n)

There were ten roof-posts in that hut. The floor was slippery and shiny from having been rubbed with fat. Near the king was a fair-sized hearth. Khamungana was surprised to see that

/22/ [Illustration]

/23/ there were no items in the hut besides those that appear in the illustration. However, he saw strings of beads hanging up at the side. Another thing that astonished him was that, when the king was present, at no stage did the girls of the umdlunkulu stand; they shuffled round on their knees.

²¹ Ilawu

²² Illustration of hut from Gardiner.

[See Sivivi, JSA , p. 379.]

No one could go into either of the izigodlo. They were held in awe. People made oath by the isigodlo, saying, ‘Let me enter the isigodlo!’ Only the izinceku of the isigodlo went into it, to fill the gourds and cut up meat. Izinduna like Ndlela went in when they were summoned.

[On eBheje see Sivivi JSA 5, pp. 373-4; Thununu JSA 6, pp. 255, 262-3.]

Behind the isigodlo, outside the umuzi, were three small imizi (see the illustration on p. 16). Their names were eMvazana, eBheje, and kwaMbeceni. The one in the middle was eBheje; it was the largest. It had eight huts; the others both had four. Collectively they were referred to as eBheje. EMvazana and kwaMbeceni were imizi where the gourds of the girls of eBheje were kept.

The name ‘Bheje’ derived from Bheja kaMagawozi, a minor chief of the Khumalo who lived near the eNgome forest. The forest was his stronghold. The umuzi of Mnyamana kaNgqengelele, eMahlabaneni (built in the time of Mpande), was opposite Bheja’s stronghold. One crossed the iSikhwebezi stream to get to the stronghold.

Dingane once made war on Bheja. Bheja ran off to take refuge in the forest. The Zulu forces surrounded the forest, They pulled up all the crops of sorghum, and built shelters. The army simply remained there. After a while Bheja’s people began to slip away one by one to go and khonza the king. Bheja did not leave; he eventually perished there.

Some people refer to these imizi of the king as eBheja. /24/ In Dingane’s manner of speech it was eBheje. He yeyeza’d in speaking, like Qwabe people.²³

Thununu kaNonjiya (who was one of the people who told us about these matters) had occasion to go into eBheje (he was carrying the king’s chair). He said that Dingane did not sleep at eBheje; he slept inside at eMgungundlovu, in the isigodlo.(n) It was the amakhosikazi and the king’s iziklebhe who stayed at eBheje. Sorghum was stored in grainpits there. There was an open space (isigcawu) nearby with imisinsi trees planted there. It was where people sat in the sun.

All the huts at eBheje were large. Many people stayed in them, people who wore izingxotha (on their forearms), and umnaka (round the neck).²⁴ They wore izinganekwane (beautiful

²³ Yeyeza

²⁴ Ingxotha, umnaka.

coils of ithusi) on the upper arm.²⁵ (n) Their beads were white (ithambo) and red (umgazi); they also wore imifibinga.²⁶ No one else was allowed to wear these, they were for the king and the umdlunkulu alone.

There were some men who stayed at eBheje, and cooked for the people there: Vumbi and Bhungane of the Mdlalose people. They cooked in six large pots. A beast cooked in them would be finished off in a day. At eMgungundlovu, there was meat in plenty. People ate and ate, and then rubbed themselves clean with it. There were also other izinceku of eBheje.

The amabutho at uMgungundlovu filled the whole umuzi. In the isicamelo section on the left-hand (uhlangothi) side was the uNgqobolondo, then followed the aMankamane (iMkhulutshane). In the body (isisu) of the umuzi on that side were the iZibolela and the uFasimba; towards the gate was the uTshoyisa. In the the isicamelo section (next to the isigodlo) of the isibaya esikhulu (right-hand) side was the iZimpohlo, then followed the aMankentshane (iMkulutshane) and the /25/ uDukuza. Towards the gate was the isibaya esikhulu, the amaWombe.

The hut of Ndlela, the chief induna, was next to the isigodlo in the isicamelo section on the left-hand (uhlangothi) side. The hut of Nzobo (n) was also next to the isigodlo, in the isicamelo section of the isibaya esikhulu (right-hand) side.

The work of the amabutho, when there was no war to be fought, was to build the huts of the umuzi; to repair the cattle enclosure; to hoe, weed, and reap the king's fields; to fetch umklele and umnqandane for fencing the isigodlo; together with various light tasks.

In time of war, when the army left the presence of the king to go on campaign in a far country (such as Mzilikazi's country), the whole place sprang into motion. The army was worked up with war-talk; it burst into war songs and dances; spears and shields were made ready; a black bull was caught; the amabutho were ritually cleansed and sprinkled with izintelezi medicines by the king's special war-doctors; then they went to fetch the ancestors at

²⁵ Inganekwane, ithusi.

²⁶ Imfibinga.

eMakhosini, near the uMzinhlanga (a stream which joins the Mpembeni, when then flows into the White iMfolozi). (See the map on p. 220.)²⁷

[On izinyango see Lunguza, JSA 1, p. 345.]

The war-shields were kept in storage huts, raised up high, called izinyango. The posts on which the izinyango were raised were tall; they were as high as the huts in which people lived. The storage huts were placed on top. They were placed so high to keep out rats, for if the posts were short the rats would make their way in and finish off the shields. The shields were frequently taken out, beaten, and aired to keep out borer grubs.

²⁷ Map