THE WIDER KWAZULU-NATAL REGION CIRCA 1700 TO THE ONSET OF COLONIALISM: A CRITICAL ESSAY ON SOURCES AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

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A Dissertation Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for a M.A. by research.

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February, 2020

Abstract

This dissertation is an extended essay dealing with historical productions on the late independent era (the late "pre-colonial" epoch) of the wider KwaZulu-Natal region. The project pays particular attention to the development of the historiography and examines how it has shaped and in turn been shaped by the source material over time. Attention is also drawn to issues with terminology and disciplinary convention, including the distinction which is traditionally made between 'primary' and 'secondary' sources. The dissertation's scope extends beyond the discipline of history to interrogate how influences from the fields of anthropology, art history, archaeology, and literary criticism have shaped the production of history. It also examines the productions of African intellectuals whose works were excluded from the discipline of history during the late colonial and apartheid eras. Among other things, this essay draws attention to historiographical breaks in the literature and considerers where paradigm shifts and epistemic ruptures can be discerned.

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Acknowledgments

Introduction

In this dissertation I produce an extended historiographical review of south-east Africa's late independent era[1] and focus in particular on the region which is today called KwaZulu-Natal. This study offers an unprecedented analysis of the historiography both in terms of its bibliographic depth and in the scope of the historical productions it examines. This dissertation has also drawn on works from across numerous other disciplines and this has enabled me to produce a more encompassing picture of the influences which have shaped the production of the historiography over time. These contributions include works from the disciplines of archaeology, anthropology, and art history. I have also looks beyond these to cover productions which have conventionally fallen outside of academia. I am referring here to the vernacular works of black intellectuals whose productions were excluded from the white-dominated academies during the colonial period and the apartheid era. I subsequently refer to these works as the 'exiled Black Humanities' because they incorporated a range of political, social-cultural, and historical elements.

Unlike other historiographical overviews, this study identifies how works by different researchers shaped one another's perspectives and consequently influenced each other's approaches to the production of history over time. While this work is a historiography, it also pays close attention to the nature of sources and evidence. My approach is consistent with a conventional 'production of history' approach – a strategy which recognises the contextual forces at work at the specific time a historical production made. The approach has been conceptualised by the works of two scholars. The first of these scholars is David William Cohen, whose 1994 book *The Combing of History*[2] interrogated the socio-political forces which shape the production of history. The second is Michel-Rolph Trouillot, whose 1995 book *Silencing the Past*[3] examined how power structures operate in the production of history by silencing and omitting the voices of the powerless. This 'production of history approach' has assisted me in establishing a critical distance between the works I review and the conventions of history which influence my engagement with these productions in the present context.

This dissertation is in the process of laying the foundation for a forthcoming bibliographic essay. This bibliographic piece is being undertaken as part of the Five-Hundred Year Archive (FHYA) - a larger project being run by the Archive and Public Culture (APC)[4] research initiative at the University of Cape Town. The aim of the essay is to create a digital online

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[1] This refers to the period immediately prior to the onset of colonialism. As I discuss shortly, when precisely colonialism began is itself a complex point. In some cases the works I discuss implicate the early colonial period.

[2] David William Cohen, *The Combing of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

[3] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).

[4] I discuss the initiative in more detail in chapter four.

research tool capable of linking researchers directly with FHYA resources. Correspondingly, users of the FHYA will be connected with a detailed breakdown of the resources with which they are engaging. This bibliographic piece is set to be the first essay of its kind.

One of the difficulties of producing this dissertation relates to the drawing of temporal boundaries between one period of history and the next. While I have distinguished between the late independent period and the colonial period, the exact point at which the former epoch ended and the latter began is not clear-cut. This is because although the Colony of Natal was proclaimed in 1843, the Zulu kingdom remained autonomous until its eventual defeat by colonial forces in 1879. The onset of the colonialism was thus not a uniform occurrence across the KwaZulu-Natal region and correspondingly Africans were not all brought under colonial rule at the same point in time. The implication of this is that it is difficult to establish a definitive starting date for this historiography because the period on which it focuses is itself temporally indeterminate. For this reason, unlike most historiographical pieces, I have avoided naming a fixed starting date for this historiography in favour of an approximate one.

A related difficulty was that of determining where my discussion of the sources should start. The main issue is that little is known of the KwaZulu-Natal region's earliest historical productions – the oral texts produced by Africans during the late independent era. Without substantive data, the epistemology which was in place for producing history in the region at this time cannot be firmly attested to. Rather, it can only be glimpsed at within the testimonies of interlocutors whose evidence was recorded nearly a century later. The African oral productions and the ways in which they were produced prior to the arrival of the colonists require further historical research in their own right. Consequently, I begin my discussion with the earliest written productions of the KwaZulu-Natal region instead. These are works written from the perspectives of European hunter-traders, the first of which were published during the 1830s.

An important point on this dissertation is that it does not claim to be a complete historiographical overview. Due to the constraints imposed on this work as a master's dissertation, a review of the historiography in its entirety is beyond this project's scope. It is inevitable, then, that certain works have been restricted to a merely a mention where a full discussion was merited, while other important studies have been overlooked in their entirety. But while these inexorable gaps in the historiography are a shortcoming of this dissertation, the forthcoming bibliographic essay based on this study will be able to avoid them. This is because digital format of the project will allow additions to be made to the historiography so that it can integrate missing work and be updated to accommodate new contributions to the field over time.

An example of a previous historiographical review of South Africa's late independent era is the introductory chapter to the 2009 book *The Cambridge History of South Africa Volume 1*

by Carolyn Hamilton, Bernard Mbenga, and Robert Ross.[5] A drawback of the piece is that its broad focus on South Africa limited the extent to which it engaged the productions of a single region in significant depth. In addition, the time period examined was more extended. Consequently, its discussion of the KwaZulu-Natal region contained far less bibliographic detail than provided by this dissertation. It is also worth noting that a number of important developments have taken place within the literature in the decade since *The Cambridge History* was published. This dissertation not only brings the historiography up to date, but it also builds on *The Cambridge History*'s recognition that vernacular works are yet to be fully integrated within the historiography.

An overview focusing on the Zulu kingdom in particular was completed by Elizabeth Eldredge in 2015.[6] Eldredge's study predominantly dealt with the reign of King Shaka and examined his role in consolidating the Zulu kingdom as a polity. Her book included an assessment of the Zulu kingdom's expansion during the 1820s and an investigation of the social and political reconfigurations which took place within the kingdom during this period. A drawback of Eldredge's study is the narrow scope of its investigation - both in terms of its topic focus and the timeframe it considers. The impact of this is that the Zulu kingdom becomes removed from its broader socio-political context. A further issue is that Eldredge largely overlooked sources from other disciplines. This caused her to overlooked relevant features of the Zulu kingdom's history, such as the ecological conditions during the early nineteenth-century. While detailed, her study provides a less complete picture than that offered by this dissertation.

A third overview by John Wright, Simon Hall, and Amanda Esterhuysen was undertaken for *Oxford Bibliographies* in 2016.[7] Although the piece draws the attention of readers to a wide range of scholarly works, it was never intended to be more than a cursory guide for introducing researchers to the literature. Consequently, the piece constitutes more of a research tool than it does an in-depth historiography. Furthermore, the content it highlights is restricted to the fields of history and archaeology. What distinguishes this dissertation is that it not only examines a wider range of sources, but it also provides a far more comprehensive analysis of each of the historical productions it discusses.

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[5] See Carolyn Hamilton, Bernard Mbenga and Robert Ross, "The Production of Preindustrial South African History" in Carolyn Hamilton, Bernard Mbenga and Robert Ross (eds.), *The Cambridge History of South Africa Volume 1: From Early Times to 1885* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1-62.

[6] See Elizabeth Eldredge, *The Creation of the Zulu Kingdom, 1815-1828* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[7] See Wright, John, Simon Hall and Amanda Esterhuysen. "Southern Africa to c. 1850". *Oxford Bibliographies*. Accessed 4 December 2019. https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199846733/obo-9780199846733-0003.xml?rskey=C14aUG&result=2&q=wright#firstMatch

In a field of study characterised by a large of number influential works which have gone unpublished, a point of importance is that some studies have different versions which were produced and reproduced at different points in time. Recognition of these different versions is important because earlier versions tend to fall out of view, particularly if they are unpublished. In such cases, they go unrecognised as contributions to the literature even when they have significantly impacted the historiography at that particular point in time. The issue with acknowledging only the latest version of a study is that it obscures the true chronology of the literature by misrepresenting the point at which that study's arguments entered the historical discourse. Furthermore, it obscures the extent to which different versions of the same production are influenced by developments within literature which take place between different versions of the same text. As far as possible, this study has tried to clarify such instances.

I have periodised this dissertation in accordance with a number of 'breaks' in the historiography. To my knowledge, no previous study has periodised the historiography in this way because these historiographical 'breaks' have never been conceptualised in this way. These 'breaks' have led me to consider why changes in the production of history take place over time. To assist with this, I have turned to consider the applicability of two theoretical conceptualisations put forward separately by Thomas Kuhn and Michel Foucault. Kuhn forwarded a conceptual meaning for the term 'paradigm' with the publication of his extended essay *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* in 1962.[8] Kuhn used the term in two ways. Firstly, he referred to a paradigm as the consensus approach and methodology of a scientific community at a particular point in time. In the second sense, Kuhn regarded the formative scientific work of a particular era as paradigm-defining: works of this class were those which had become the exemplar by which 'normal science' was conducted within that particular epoch.[9] Importantly, Kuhn believed that only one dominant paradigm existed at a time.

As Kuhn recognised, 'normal science' is itself subject to a dominant paradigm which shapes the parameters of what is considered normative scientific practice at a specific point in time.[10] In light of this observation, Kuhn argued that major scientific advancement does not take place linearly within 'normal science' but that is made possible through scientific revolutions. According to Kuhn, these revolutions are characterised by the overturning of previously accepted facts and theories and a reconsideration of their underlying scientific principles. Revolutions occur, he added, as the failure of the current paradigm becomes increasingly pronounced.[11] The failure of a paradigm, in this respect, is triggered by the build-up of what Kuhn called 'anomalies' – factors which cannot be explained or which

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[8] See Thomas Samuel Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.* Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1962.

[9] Such works include Nicolaus Copernicus' *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* in 1543 and Isaac Newton's *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica* in 1687.

[10] See Kuhn, *Scientific Revolutions*, Introduction.

[11] Ibid, see in particular chapter VI.

contradict the 'normal science' of that context.[12] According to Kuhn, scientific revolutions are thus 'paradigm shifts' – they are points at which the dominant paradigm becomes supplanted by a new paradigm which is capable of solving the former's 'anomalies'.[13]

In his 1966 book *Les Mots et les Choses* (*The Order of Things*), Foucault outlined his conception of the term 'episteme' – a word to which he attributed a specialised meaning somewhat resembling Kuhn's notion of a paradigm.[14] Foucault's aim was to investigate the origins of human sciences. Taking a comparative approach, he set about analysing the parallels in the development of the fields of biology, economics, and linguistics. These disciplines, he believed, had stemmed from life, labour, and language within the natural world. According to Foucault, across history, each of these fields has relied on sets of epistemological assumptions which construct the necessary conditions in which knowledge of a field can develop. An episteme, Foucault explained, refers to the basis which exists for constructing knowledge within a particular context.[15]

In Foucault's view, the basic assumptions which characterise an episteme are so intrinsic to the epistemology of that particular context that they are invisible to those working within its confines. Foucault called this the epistemological 'unconscious'. Foucault further argued that academic discourse is restricted by the limitations of the episteme. Different periods of history are thus underpinned by discontinuities characterised by different epistemological assumptions.[16] Where Kuhn's paradigms are shaped by what is recognised by scientists as the dominant scientific practice, epistemes are the 'unconscious' contours which restrict the 'condition of possibility'.[17] Furthermore, where Kuhn had argued that the formative scientific work of an era shaped the paradigm of that era, Foucault argued that several epistemes could coexist within a single discipline.[18]

Working with both Kuhn's and Foucault's formulations in mind, I have observed that historiographical change takes place in several ways. In some cases, changes in the types of historical productions being produced correspond with contextual political changes. An example of such a shift was the decolonisation of much of Africa between the 1940s and the 1960s; a major development which generated renewed interest in the study of the African past prior to the colonial period. Other changes appear to have been triggered by the introduction of new theoretical influences. An example of changes of this kind is those which were set in motion by the growing influence of Marxist theory on examinations of pre-capitalist African societies during the early 1970s. Further changes still appear to

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[12] Ibid, see introduction.
[13] Ibid, see in particular chapter IX.
[14] See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970 [1966]).

[15] Ibid, xvi-xxvi.
[16] Loc. cit.
[17] The 'condition of possibility' is a philosophical concept. It refers to the underlying conditions which must exist if a certain eventuality is able to occur.
[18] Foucault, *The Order of Things*, see in particular chapters two and four.

correspond with deeper epistemological shifts. Whether or not these epistemological changes are sufficient to constitute paradigm shifts, or the breaks from an epistemes that Foucault called 'epistemic ruptures', is a question this dissertation raises.

The body of this dissertation is composed of four chapters. In chapter one I examine how the main features of the late independent era's history became established in the historiography between the time of the earliest surviving written productions and the early 1960s. Following the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910, a break in the historiography took place. The fledging class of educated Africans was excluded from the emerging white academic institutions and the African past became disassociated from the study of history. It was also during this post-1910 context that a thread of 'devastation' drawing on existing settler topes became established in the literature. This narrative blamed Shaka's alleged military atrocities for destabilising the KwaZulu-Natal region and for emptying the land of its people prior to the arrival of the colonist. This chapter builds on previous works which only examined individual elements of this history, or which focused on whether or not this history was 'invented'.

In the second chapter I examine historical productions created between the early 1960s and the late 1970s. It was during this period that the decolonial movement in much of Africa began to impact the forms of historical works being produced. I argue that three threads of historical works were developed during this period. The first of these threads originated with the 1950s and 1960s work of anthropologist Jan Vansina. This historiological[19] approach draws on oral testimony as evidence by systemically mining it for historical facts. The approach became influential among Africanists by the early 1970s. The second thread I examine was developed during the mid-1960s. The successor to the 'devastation' narrative, this Mfecane thread reframed the wars of the early nineteenth-century as a triumph of Shaka's nation building. It also marked the point at which the study of the late independent re-entered the discipline of history. Lastly, by the mid-1970s, a materialist school of thought had become prominent in the literature. The approach is characterised by its use of Marxist theory as a tool of analysis.

In chapter three I examine the historical literature produced from the early 1980s to the early 2000s. During the 1980s, as political resistance to South Africa's apartheid regime intensified, a source-critical approach began to develop. At this time, the notion of the Mfecane and the sources on which it had been based were being drawn into dispute. The debates over the nature of the evidence continued to develop during the 1990s as scholars began to pay greater attention to their evidence. By the early 2000s, scholars employing the

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[19] Vansina developed this term to describe his 'scientific' brand of historical study.

source-critical approach had begun to probe how the conventions of the archive[20] had shaped the production of history.

In the final chapter I examine the contributions to the historiography which were made between the mid-2000s and the present. I argue that two important developments took place during this period. The first of these occurred between 2006 and 2008. It was during this period that the *Five Hundred Year Initiative*, a cross-disciplinary project, galvanised the study of the past 500 years having recognised that the period prior to colonialism had been neglected in recent decades. The second development was set in motion by the work of a second initiative, *The Five Hundred-Year Archive,* during the early 2010s. Building on the work of the *Five Hundred Year Initiative*, the project is in the process of constructing an online exemplar capable of convening sources on the past 500 years in a virtual format. What distinguishes the project is that it is treating previously excluded sites of evidence as archives and is thus transcending the conventions which have previously restricted archives to written documents.

The terminology I use in this dissertation requires further explanation. By 'south-east Africa' I refer to the territories of the KwaZulu-Natal region, parts of what is today called the Eastern Cape, and southern Mozambique (Maputo and its surrounds). Throughout this dissertation I have attempted to avoid using the term 'pre-colonial' because the language of the phrase reads as a subtle privileging of the colonial context. This is because the term 'pre-colonial' constructs the period of history which took place prior to colonialism as a precursory time rather than acknowledging it as a complex and historically significant period in its own right. The term 'late independent era' is preferred. It refers to the period immediately prior to the onset of colonialism. The word 'independent' refers to African groups' self-determination free from the pervasive influence of colonial rule. This term nevertheless remains imperfect because the period in question saw many formerly independent African groups subjugated and assimilated to varying degrees by a number of more powerful polities. In the absence of a more suitable label, however, this is the term I have opted to use.[21]

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[20] The label of 'archive' typically refers to the entire body of materials and studies produced by Europeans on colonised peoples. The archive also remains closely associated with the notion that archived materials are fixed and unchanging records of the past. Since the 1990s, however, scholars have begun to challenge this notion. See for example Carolyn Hamilton, "Archives, Ancestors and the Contingencies of Time: The Limits of the Inherited Archive" in Alf Lüdtke and Tobias Nanza (eds.), *Laute, Bilder, Texte. Register des Archivs* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Unipress, 2015).

[21]My views on this terminology were largely shaped by John Wright's and Cynthia Kros' discussion of terminology in a paper for a workshop organised by the Archive and Public Culture Research Initiative run between 31 October and 2 November 2018. The paper in question is intended to form a chapter in a forthcoming book. The terminology did, however, enter the discourse prior to this time. See for example Carolyn Hamilton and Nessa Leibhammer, "Tribing and Untribing the Archive" in Carolyn Hamilton and Nessa Leibhammer (eds.), *Tribing and Untribing the Archive: Identity and the Material Record in Southern KwaZulu-*

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The use of the term 'structuralism' in this dissertation requires some clarification. This is because structuralism has taken many forms and has influenced a range of fields in a number of different ways over time. The structural functionalism pioneered by Alfred Radcliffe-Brown during the early twentieth-century, for example, is very different from the structural Marxism developed by Paul Hirst and Barry Hindess during the early 1980s. For the purposes of discussing the broad influences of structuralism, my use of the term is thus itself very general. I define structuralism as: the belief that knowledge can be attained by approaching human interactions as a complex system composing interrelated parts which are ordered by underlying structural laws.

A further issue is that the existing terminology seems insufficient for describing some of the first proto-historians to write on the late independent era. As the discipline of history only took shape in the 1920s, it is inappropriate to label researchers active prior to this time as 'historians'. Consequently, I have referred to them as 'amateur historians' or as 'early researchers' where appropriate. There are a couple of cases, however, where these labels do not seem adequate. As I discuss in the body of this dissertation, George McCall Theal and Alfred Thomas Bryant were substantial proto-historians who operated prior to the establishment of academic history in South Africa, but who nevertheless produced works of an 'academic' character. Indeed, Theal worked in the capacity of a professional at Lovedale Seminary while Bryant later crossed over to academia when he joined the Bantu Studies department at the University of the Witwatersrand. It would be more befitting if an in-between term existed which recognised the contributions of these writers as historians, but also acknowledged that they were not professional historians in the conventional sense of the term.

I have chosen to label the Zulu-dominated polity which consolidated during the second decade of the nineteenth-century as a 'kingdom'. I do so for two reasons. Firstly, the Zulu kingdom was composed of several polities were drawn together under the rule of the Zulu leader. The term 'Zulu polity' is thus unsuitable because it does not capture the complexity of the Zulu kingdom's socio-political layering or recognise the supreme power of its ruler. The heightened power of the Zulu ruler befits the term 'king' better than that of 'chief' because the Zulu kings ruled over numerous lesser chiefs and their respective supporters. I have used the term 'chief', however, for referring to the leaders of smaller African polities. Secondly, although the Zulu kingdom did develop state-like institutions, they were still developing during the late independent era. Consequently, I prefer not to use the term 'Zulu state' as the term implies a fully-formed political structure.

A further note on nomenclature concerns the term 'Zulu' itself. During the mid-1820s, the Zulu kingdom was characterised by high levels of socio-political stratification. Rather than

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Natal in the Late Independent and Colonial Periods (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2016), 19, 26.

composing a single ethnic unit, the Zulu kingdom was made up of a number of sub-groups which were categorised according to their political status.[22] It was only the royal house which was referred to as 'Zulu'. To indiscriminately refer to the people of the Zulu kingdom as 'Zulu' would thus erase the distinctions in the socio-political status of its people. Indeed, it was not until the early twentieth-century that the rise of Zulu nationalism began to displace previous notions of 'Zulu' as a new and more encompassing Zulu identity emerged.[23]

Another decision I have taken is to refer to Zulu people as 'Zulu' as opposed to 'amaZulu'.[24] The reason I do this is to avoid complications which arise when applying Zulu language conventions within a text written in English that is subject to its own language conventions. For the same reason, I use the term 'Zulu' as opposed to 'isiZulu' throughout this dissertation. Finally, I have opted to use certain Zulu words which do not have an adequate equivalent in English. These words are italicised within the text to signify that they are of the Zulu language. An exception is the word 'Mfecane', which although Zulu in origin, possess a specific conceptual meaning in English.

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[22] This argument has been developed most prominently by Carolyn Hamilton. See for example Carolyn Hamilton, "Ideology, Oral Traditions and the Struggle for Power in the early Zulu kingdom", Master's dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1985.

[23] For more on the rise of Zulu nationalism, see for example Hlonipha Mokoena, *Magema Fuze: The Making of a Kholwa Intellectual* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2011); Paul la Hausse de Lalouvière, *Restless Identities: Signatures of Nationalism, Zulu Ethnnicty and History in the Lives of Petros Lamula (c. 1881-1948) and Lymon Maling (1889 – c. 1936)* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2000).

[24] I also apply this practice when referring to early nineteenth-century Zulu-speaking groups. For example, I refer to the Ndwandwe rather than the amaNdwandwe. It should also be noted that the morphology of a group's name can take numerous further forms. For more on these morphological changes see Adrian Koopman, "Some notes on the morphology of Zulu clan names", *South African Journal of African Languages* 10, no. 4 (1990), 333-337.

Chapter 1

Late Independent Era Historiography: a focus on the KwaZulu-Natal region from the earliest written productions until the early 1960s

Introduction

In this chapter I analyse the historiography on south-east Africa's late independent era beginning with the earliest surviving written productions and tracing some of the most notable contributions to the literature up until the early 1960s. I argue that a prominent break can be observed in the historiography; one characterised by a striking difference in types of historical productions being made before and after 1910. This break in the historiography corresponded with the establishment of the Union of South Africa. It would appear that it was the socio-political changes imposed by the Union's formation in 1910 which solidified changes in the production of history which were first introduced by the arrival of the colonist. For example, after 1910, the practice of consulting African interlocutors was excluded from the discipline of history as the fields of anthropology and Bantu Studies were introduced to study African 'traditions'. These traditions were, for the most part, regarded as being unchanging over time and were thus not treated as history.

This chapter is broken down into three parts. In part one I discuss the witnesses whose accounts provided the first comprehensive written evidence on Zulu kingdom.[1] While their writings came to be seen as sources, for a long time, they were the only written 'histories' which existed of the KwaZulu-Natal region. As subsequently historiographical debates have shown, these works were important in establishing a number of prominent tropes which later became well-established within the historiography. In part two, I discuss some of the earliest written histories of the nineteenth-century and review the sources they drew on. Notably, figures like Theophilus Shepstone were drawing on African interlocutors for evidence at this time. In particular, I track how these early written works, influenced by witness accounts, began to establish a 'devastation stereotype' within the historical literature. In part three, I examine the impact of the formation of the Union of South Africa. It was in the aftermath of 1910 that African oral evidence was excluded as a site of history, while the notion of 'clan histories' was becoming entrenched within the written works of Europeans.

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[1] The first of these witnesses to produce an account was Captain William Fitzwilliam Owen, whose journal was published in 1833, but was not draw into the historiography until a much later date. See William Fitzwilliam Owen, *Narrative of voyages to explore the shores of Africa, Arabia, and Madagascar* (in two volumes) (New York: J. & J. Harper, 1883).

A point which must be addressed concerns the issue of vernacular evidence. As the likes of Bhekizizwe Peterson,[2] Hlonipha Mokoena,[3] and more recently Carolyn Hamilton[4] have recognised in their works, the early productions of black intellectual figures, particularly those writing in their own language, have long been ignored within an academic setting. Magema Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama* (*The Black People*)[5] presents an example of this, for although the English version of the text is regularly consulted as a historical source, the original Zulu-language production is rarely interrogated. Further works (predominantly in Zulu) including those by the likes of Rolfes Robert Reginald Dhlomo,[6] Herbert Isaac Ernest Dhlomo,[7] and John Langalibalele Dube[8] have likewise long been overlooked.

While many of these writings contain little direct historical evidence, Hamilton has argued that they remain valuable. This is because they provide indications of the kinds of inherited concepts dating from the period prior to colonialism which was being written down by literate Africans in their vernacular. Furthermore, many of these texts were positioned as literature works rather than history and were thus not subjected to the same conventions shaping the productions of white historians. In their vernacular form, these black writings thus constitute their own public sphere and can be analysed to uncover insight into the experiences of the African community at that time.[9] The problem presented to me by the vernacular texts is that, as a non-Zulu-speaker, I am not in a position to analyse them. It is for this reason that I only engage these productions indirectly as they have arisen in the works of the aforementioned scholars.

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[2] See Bhekizizwe Peterson, *Monarchs, Missionaries and African Intellectuals: African Theatre and the Unmaking of Colonial Marginality* (New York: African World Press, 2000).

[3] See for example Hlonipha Mokoena, *Magema Fuze: The Making of a Kholwa Intellectual* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2011).

[4] Carolyn Hamilton, "Exiled Writings, Consecrated Sources and the Institutional: Displacement of Politically Potent Historical Discourse", Conference paper, African Literature Association Meeting in Ohio, 2019.

[5] See Magema Fuze, *The Black People and Whence They Came: A Zulu View*, trans. by Harry Camp Lugg, Anthony Trevor Cope (ed.), (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1979 [1922]).

[6] See for example Rolfes Robert Reginald Dhlomo, *UShaka* (Köln: Köppe, 1994 [1935]).

[7] Dhlomo was a prolific poet and playwright. See Nick Visser and Tim Couzens (eds.), *H.I.E. Dhlomo: Collected Works* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985).

[8] Dube accomplished many intellectual and political feats and notably authored the first Zulu novel. See John Langalibalele Dube, I*nsila ka Tshaka* (Pinetown: Mariannhill Mission Press, 1979 [1930]).

[9] See Carolyn Hamilton, "The Persistent Precolonial and the Displacements of Discourse" (Archive and Public Culture Seminar Paper, University of Cape Town, 2018), 14-16.

Part 1: Records and Witnesses

Part 1.1: The Hunter-Traders

The first British hunter-traders to produce accounts of their experiences among Africans were influential in shaping historical representations of the independent Zulu kingdom.[10] Henry Francis Fynn arrived in Port Natal (Durban) in 1824 with Francis Farewell's party in the hopes of securing trade with the Zulu kingdom. At this time, Shaka was trading ivory in exchange for goods like brass and beads from polities further north, such as the Mabhudu.[11] The Mabhudu acquired their goods by conducting trade at Delagoa Bay (Maputo Bay), a trade Farewell was attempting to redirect towards Port Natal. Nathaniel Isaacs and Charles Rawden Maclean (alias John Ross), meanwhile, arrived the following year in the entourage of James Saunders King, another prospective trader. As Jeff Guy has commented, the early nineteenth-century was a period in which Britain was expanding both its economic power and its global influence - civilians who prospected for economic gain were not uncommon at this time.[12]

During the 1820s, the hunter-traders intermittently sent reports of their activities in the KwaZulu-Natal region to correspondents in the Cape Colony.[13] A report by naval commander Lieutenant Edward Hawes, which appeared in *The Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser* on 4 June 1825, was the first published piece to comment on their activities. In 1826, King arrived in the Cape Colony in a bid to secure enough funds for a new expedition to Port Natal. His comments on Shaka, which were published in the *South African Commercial Advertiser* on 6 June and on 11 July 1826, were the first to portray the Zulu king and his dealings with the hunter-traders in a negative light. As Hamilton has discussed, this was likely a strategic move to help pay for what King was portraying as a rescue mission.[14] A further letter of King's, presumably a correspondence with John Thompson (Farewell's agent in the Cape), was published in *The Colonists* on 3 January 1828. Herein, King walked-back some of his comments on Shaka seemingly in an effort to reassure his financial

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[10] See Carolyn Hamilton, "'The Character and Objects of Chaka': A Reconsideration of the Making of Shaka as the Mfecane Motor", *The Journal of African History* 33, no.1 (1992), 37-63; Dan Wylie, "Textual Incest: Nathaniel Isaacs and the Development of the Shaka Myth", *History in Africa* 19 (1992), 411-433; Julie Pridmore, "The writings of H.F. Fynn: History, Myth or Fiction?", *Alternation* 1, no. 1 (1994), 68-78; Julie Pridmore, "Hunter, Trader and Explorer? The Unvarnished Reminiscences of H.F. Fynn", *Alternation* 4, no. 2 (1997), 46-56.

[11] Jeff Guy, "Shaka kaSenzangakhona – A Reassessment", *Journal of Natal and Zulu History* 16, no. 1 (1996), 8.

[12] Ibid, 8.

[13] For more detail on these productions and the ways in which the hunter-traders depicted Shaka, see Hamilton, "Character and Objects", 37-63.
[14] Hamilton, "Character and Objects", 51.

backers.[15] A further report of Fynn's was published in the *South African Commercial Advertiser* on 27 December 1828 while yet another piece authored by Farewell was published in the *South African Commercial Advertiser* on 31 January 1829.

Deckhand turned hunter-trader Isaacs was the first to produce a substantial written account of his experience of the Zulu kingdom. Having operated successfully as a hunter-trader for several years, following a trade dispute with King Dingane and a rumour of a Cape Colony invasion, the relationship between the Zulu king and the British at Port Natal soured. Fearing for his life, Isaacs had fled.[16] His two-volume memoir, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa*, was published in 1836[17] - just a few years after Isaacs had permanently departed the Zulu kingdom in 1831. Although Dingane later implored the hunter-traders to return, Isaacs instead travelled the islands of the Mozambique Channel.

Travels narrated Isaacs' experience of the Zulu kingdom from a first-hand perspective. Indeed, Isaacs presented himself as a witness to a number of important historical episodes which took place during the 1820s. These included Shaka's attack on the Ndwandwe in 1826, the death of Shaka's mother, Nandi, in 1827, as well Shaka's assassination the following year. Isaacs depicted the Zulu kingdom itself as a radically different entity to European society. In particular, he stressed what he perceived to be its backwardness.[18] He expressed distaste for the paucity of clothing adorning Africans and dismissed their socio-cultural practices, such as polygamy, as unnatural. Furthermore, Isaacs frequently described Africans, particularly Shaka himself, as bloodthirsty and cruel – often killing on a mere pretence.[19] It is likely that Isaacs' hostile and condescending descriptions of Africans played an important part in shaping stereotypes in the historiography.

As the first account by a European traveller reporting on the Zulu kingdom to reach a substantial audience, *Travels* became a hugely influential text and played a significant part in shaping settler perceptions of the Zulu kingdom and of Africans generally. To a large extent, the popularity of the journal among the settlers of the Cape Colony and the British public can be attributed to its marketing. *Travels*, in this respect, played on the sentimentalities of its audience – its political positionality reflected the context in which colonialism was being championed.[20] This was particularly the case in the aftermath of the

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[15] For Hamilton's analysis of King's motivations, see Hamilton, "Character and Objects", 50-52.

[16] Wylie, "Textual Incest", 413. Hamilton has pointed out that Africans also played a big part in shaping how Shaka and the Zulu peoples were perceived by British settlers. See for example Carolyn Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty: The Powers of Shaka Zulu and the Limits of Historical Invention* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1998), 51-68.

[17] Nathaniel Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa, Descriptive of the Zoolus, their Manners, Customs, etc. etc. with a sketch of Natal* (two volumes). (London: E. Churton, 1836).

[18] Isaacs, *Travels* 1, 12-13.

[19] Ibid, 240-242.

[20] Wylie, "Textual Incest", 417.

Napoleonic Wars (which had concluded in 1815), for Britain was rising as the dominant colonial power.[21]

A point of importance which must be raised in connection with *Travels* concerns the extent to which Isaacs acknowledged where he acquired the ethnographic and historical details on which he reported. For the most part, Isaacs' writing appears to reflect his personal observations and opinions regarding his interactions with Shaka and the population of the Zulu kingdom. Nevertheless, what Isaacs knew of the history of the Zulu kingdom and the practices of its people would have required some engagement with Africans knowledgeable on these subjects - sources which are not acknowledged within the pages of *Travels*. Furthermore, Isaacs appears to have frequently echoed information he had heard from his fellow hunter-traders. Francis Farewell in particular appears to have acted as a regular source of information to Isaacs.[22]

The second traveller account worth mentioning is Charles Rawden Maclean's. As I have mentioned, Maclean arrived in the Zulu kingdom in 1825 as part of King's company shortly after their party was shipwrecked along the coast of Port Natal. Barely 10-years-of-age on his arrival, Maclean remained among Shaka and the people of the Zulu kingdom for nearly three years, only departing from Delagoa Bay in July 1828.[23] During this period he appears to have picked up a lot of the Zulu language. Furthermore, he is reported to have stayed in close quarters to Shaka for an extended part of his time in the Zulu kingdom. It was not until 1853, however, that Maclean first began to commit his experiences to paper.

Maclean's memoir was published in a twelve-piece serial for *The Nautical Magazine and Naval Chronicle*, entitled: 'Loss of the Brig Mary at Natal, with Early Recollections of that Settlement'.[24] The initial instalments recalled the events of the shipwreck itself, following which the stranded crew was welcomed by Shaka and work on a new ship began. Later instalments detailed what Maclean could recall witnessing within the Zulu kingdom. The first nine instalments were printed between January 1853 and January 1854, while the remainder were published a year. The timing of Maclean's serial coincided with a period in which there was a growing interest in the Zulu kingdom among the British public. It is likely

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[21] For more on the political context see for example Peter Cain and Anthony Hopkins, "Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Expansion Overseas I. The Old Colonial System, 1688- 1850", *The Economic History Review* 39, no. 4 (1986), 501-525; Alan Lester, "Colonial Settlers and the Metropole: Racial discourse in the early 19th-century Cape Colony, Australia and New Zealand", *Landscape Research* 27, no. 1 (2002), 39-49.

[22] See for example Isaacs, *Travels* 1, 45-47, 63, 125. A further point worthy of some consideration is that the hunter-traders were, at least initially, greatly reliant on their interpreters for their communications with the local population they encountered.

[23] Stephen Gray, *The Natal papers of 'John Ross': Loss of the Brig Mary at Natal with early recollections of that settlement and Among the Caffres* (Durban: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 1992), 6-7.

[24] Ibid, see introduction.

that this was due to the recent establishment of the British colony there.[25] Given colonial expansionism was being widely encouraged, Maclean's experiences among Africans was a subject of public interest among the British.

Maclean frequently refuted aspects of Isaacs' account and notably claimed that that Isaacs and Fynn had volunteered to accompany Shaka in his fight against the Ndwandwe. This contradicted Isaacs' story in which he and Fynn were coerced into participating in the battle by Shaka.[26] Contrary to Isaacs, Maclean also depicted the Zulu kingdom and its people in a predominantly positive light. He expressed particular gratitude to Shaka for his hospitality, defending him against Isaacs' attack on the Zulu king's character. As Stephen Gray has argued, the differences between Maclean's account and Isaacs' are so stark that they suggest Isaacs must have highly exaggerated his negative depiction of Shaka.[27]

Fynn is the third of the hunter-traders to supply an account of the Zulu kingdom although it was not until 1950 that his completed writings were published. Fynn's narrative was based on the contents of the journal he had kept during the 1820s, but his account was entirely written from memory following the original diary's loss.[28] As I discuss later, Fynn's writings were also greatly enriched by its editors.[29] Nevertheless, Fynn became well acquainted with Shaka and Dingane during the 1820s and early 1830s as a consequence of his trading relationship with them. Among the settler community, he was regarded as an authority on the Zulu kingdom and his experiences were accredited with particular prestige. According to Julie Pridmore, whose works I discuss later, Fynn's affiliation with Robert Godlonton, a politician and the editor of the settler newspaper *The Grahamstown Journal*, further enhanced his reputation as an 'expert'.[30]

Fynn's account was written from the perspective of a witness. He claimed to be present for Shaka's attack on the Ndwandwe in 1826[31] and even medically examined the ailing Nandi immediately prior to her death in 1827.[32] Following Shaka's assassination in 1828, Fynn bore witness to several further important incidents. These included the quarrels between the deceased king's brothers, Dingane's rise as Shaka's successor, and the successful flight of the Qwabe. Echoing Isaacs' *Travels*, Fynn frequently portrayed Shaka as violent and ruthless.[33] Aside from Shaka himself, however, Fynn acknowledged that the African

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[25] Ibid, 12.

[26] Ibid, 150.

[27] Ibid, see introduction.

[28] For Fynn's account of how the original *Diary*'s loss occurred, see Fynn, *Diary*, Preface, particularly XII-XIII.

[29] The reason this is of importance is because the socio-political context in which the content of the *Diary* was edited was removed from the context in which the *Diary*'s narrative was set. Thus, the original contents of the *Diary* were subjected to revisionism and reimagining.

[30] Fynn, *Diary,* see 'original editor's introduction'. For Pridmore's comments see Julie Pridmore, "Hunter, Trader and Explorer? The Unvarnished Reminiscences of H.F. Fynn", *Alternation* 4, no. 2 (1997), 47.

[31] See Fynn, *Diary*, chapter 9.

[32] See Fynn, *Diary*, chapter 10.

[33] See for example Fynn, *Diary*, 24-25, 132-133.

population 'were extremely well disposed and expressed a particular desire for us to remain among them.'[34] Fynn further commented that parts of the KwaZulu-Natal region were highly suitable for colonisation, claiming it was 'almost without inhabitants'.[35] This notion of the 'empty land' later became well-established in the historiography. It is likely that Fynn had at least some part to play in disseminating this belief.

Although a full manuscript of Fynn's journal was never published during his lifetime, segments of his writings were nevertheless influential in shaping settler perceptions of the Zulu kingdom. For example, in 1838, Fynn supplied a brief history of the region to a British expeditionary force to Port Natal – an account which was later documented by John Centlivres Chase and published as part of *The Natal Papers* in 1843.[36] A reworking of some of Fynn's notes was also included in John Bird's *The Annals of Natal* in 1888.[37] The contents of the journal then come into the hands of James Stuart[38] - a magistrate turned historical researcher - who was commissioned to bring Fynn's writings in line with a twentieth-century public's expectations.[39] Following Stuart's death in 1946, the journal came into the possession of Douglas McMalcolm, who conducted further editing in preparation for the eventual publication of the full *Diary* in 1950.

Like Isaacs' journal, Fynn's *Diary* did little to acknowledge the underlying sources Fynn had used to learn about the history of the Zulu kingdom. This much is evident as early as the 'Historical Introduction' section of the *Diary*, in which Fynn provided a brief account of Dingiswayo's rise to power over the course of the two decades prior to the arrival of the travellers in the region.[40] It is evident that Fynn, who spoke Zulu, must have drawn on African oral sources to inform his insights into the pre-Shakan period. Indeed, Fynn's description of Shaka's betrayal of Dingiswayo, his account of Shaka's attack on the Qwabe,

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[34] Fynn, *Diary*, 55.

[35] Fynn, *Diary*, 55.

[36] See John Centlivres Chase, *The Natal Papers: A Reprint of all Notices and Public Documents Connected with that territory including a Description of the Country and a History of Events from 1498 to 1843.* (Two volumes). Grahamstown: Godlonton, 1843. As I discuss later, the practice of collecting and preserving written records was a hallmark of how settlers were historicising the late independent era during the nineteenth-century.

[37] See John Bird, *The Annals of Natal* 1 (Cape Town: Struik, 1965 [1888]).

[38] Stuart's own significant contribution to the historiography is discussed in a later section.

[39] Dan Wylie, ""Proprietor of Natal:" Henry Francis Fynn and the Mythography of Shaka", *History in Africa* 22 (1995), 422-424. Stuart's concern with the image of Fynn's writings suggests that perceptions of Fynn as an essential source of information on the late independent era had begun to cool in the 1930s in the wake of the comprehensive histories written by the likes of George McCall Theal and Alfred Thomas Bryant, each of which I discuss shortly. Stuart's efforts to modernise Fynn's writings thus implies that he continued to regard Fynn as a crucial eyewitness source.

[40] See Fynn, *Diary*, 8-11.

and his reference to the Zulu-Ndwandwe conflict of the late 1810s, were all based on knowledge he had acquired rather than what he witnessed.[41]

A final European traveller worth mentioning, albeit he only travelled the KwaZulu-Natal and region during the early 1840s, was Frenchman Adulphe Delegorgue. A naturalist and avid hunter, Delegorgue's account of his expedition, which was published in 1847, detailed his journeying between Port Natal, a visit to King Mpande, and Lake St. Lucia.[42] Delegorgue also made several hunting trips within the KwaZulu-Natal region and travelled elsewhere in southern Africa before his eventual return to France in 1844. His account of his journey also included topographical work encompassing a sketch of the KwaZulu-Natal region (among others), entomological notes, and an 800-item Zulu-language vocabulary. Delegorgue's account was largely overlooked by scholars and has thus had a very limited impact on the historiography at the time of its publication. It was only following the translation of his account in 1990 that his maps and his vocabulary began to garner attention.

Part 1.2: The Missionaries

A decade or so after the hunter-traders had arrived at Port Natal, Allen Francis Gardiner, a retired Imperial Navy Captain, became the first of the British to establish a mission station in the area. Gardiner travelled to the Zulu kingdom in 1834 where he sought permission from Dingane to teach the gospel. Dingane, however, was dismissive of Gardiner's mission. Having failed to impress the Zulu king, Gardiner travelled back to Port Natal. It was there, in 1835, that he established a mission station, although he remained hopeful of reattempting a mission to the Zulu kingdom in the future.[43] In the following year, Gardiner's account of his experience was published.

Although it was largely overlooked by early researchers, Gardiner's narrative is a witness account of the Zulu kingdom in the same vein as Fynn's and Isaacs'. Much of his writings concerned his efforts to Christianise the Zulu kingdom's people.[44] Given his frequent discussions with Dingane, it is likely that the Zulu king was himself the missionary's primary informant.[45] In addition, Gardiner was frequently drawn into meetings with two of Dingane's senior *izinduna* (headmen), each of whom Dingane appears to have consulted

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[41] See Fynn, *Diary*, chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4.

[42] See Adulphe Delegorgue, trans. Fleur Webb, Stephanie Alexander and Colin Webb (eds.), *Travels in southern Africa* 1 (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 1990 [1847]). For Delegorgue's original account, see Adulphe Delegorgue, *Voyage dans l'Afrique Australe* (Paris: René, 1847).

[43] Allen Francis Gardiner, *Narrative of a Journey to the Zoolu Country in South Africa* (London: William Crofts, 1836), 68, 85.

[44] Gardiner's depiction of the African population was dominated by his perceptions of their strange and 'uncivilised' social practices. Gardiner interpreted these practices as evidence of Africans' ignorance. Africans, he believed, were 'barely raised above the lowest scale of civilisation'. See 67-71, 85.

[45] Ibid, 33-35, 60-61, 67-68, 119-122, 125-126, 130-133.

regularly.[46] Although he was dismayed by his difficulties in attracting any interest in Christianity,[47] Gardiner nevertheless expressed a seemingly sincere concern for the wellbeing of the ordinary people of the Zulu kingdom. It was for this reason, he explained, that he remained determined to persuade Dingane of the merits of 'the book'.[48]

In 1837, with the support of Gardiner, English clergyman Francis Owen succeeded in establishing a mission station within the Zulu kingdom itself. An affiliate of the Church Missionary Society (CMS), Owen's ambition was to convert the 'heathen' to Christianity, for although he regarded Africans as backward, he also believed that his teaching might be of great benefit.[49] As Daphna Golan has argued, missionaries' approach to their work at this time was characterised by their efforts to engage 'the minds and modes of thought' of the 'savage' Africans. According to Golan, it was believed that Christianity was essential for saving Africans from their perceived barbarousness.[50] The most significant feature of Owen's narrative was his witnessing of the killing of Boer leader Piet Retief.[51] The treacherous nature of this killing, for Retief and his party had been on a diplomatic mission, is likely to have reinforced the stereotypical image of African brutality among the settlers.

Although Owen succeeded in convincing Dingane to let him teach, like Gardiner before him, he had difficulty persuading the Zulu king of the merits of these lessons. In addition, while Owen had initially been welcomed by Dingane, even becoming a confidant of his, their rapport rapidly deteriorated following the demise of Piet Retief and his party at Dingane's hand.[52] As was the case with Gardiner, it is likely that Dingane himself was an important source of information to Owen. Indeed, it probable that it was through his access to the Zulu king that Owen was able to gain information on Zulu-Boer land negotiations.[53] Dingane, for his part, appears to have regarded the Owen as a potential trader. At a time when the British government had placed sanctions on the trade of guns between settlers and the Zulu kingdom, Dingane appears to have looked to Owen as a potential outlet for acquiring further European weaponry.[54]

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[46] Ibid, 34-37, 60-61, 67-68, 130-133.

[47] Ibid, 93.

[48] Ibid, 67-69.

[49] Francis Owen, Joseph Kirkman, and Richard Brangan Hulley, George Edward Cory (ed.), *The Diary of the Rev. Francis Owen, MA: Missionary with Dingaan in 1837-38, Together with Extracts from the Writings of the Interpreters in Zulu, Messrs Hulley and Kirkman* (Cape Town: The van Riebeeck Society, 1926), 5-8, 14-15, 18, 48, 58.

[50] Daphna Golan, *Inventing Shaka: Using History in the Construction of Zulu Nationalism* (New York: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1994), 46-48.

[51] Ibid, 106-112.

[52] Ibid, 106-113.

[53] Ibid, 95-105. According to Owen, Dingane had agreed to grant the Boers land in exchange for their retrieval of a large herd of Zulu cattle which had previously been captured by Sekonyela of the Batlokwa.

[54] Ibid, 40, 59, 67.

Owen's journal originally composed a series of instalments which the missionary had periodically sent to the CMS to report on his activities.[55] In 1888 several excerpts were published in John Bird's *The Annals of Natal*, a volume I discuss in more detail later. Bird's recognition of the importance of Owen's writings suggests that Owen's account was already well known to historical researchers at this time. It was not until 1926, however, that Owen's full journal of was published. Editor George Edward Cory had acquired the diary in 1922 and had subsequently lobbied the Van Riebeeck Society[56] to publish the work. Cory had recognised the importance of the journal as an 'account of the [Piet] Retief murder by the only white man who witnessed it'.[57] Indeed, the resurfacing of Owen's diary corresponded with a period of during which Afrikaner nationalism was on the rise. This would explain why the Van Riebeeck Society was interested in a witness account of Retief's killing.[58]

Part 1.3: The Natal Papers

For two decades witness sources were the only sites of written evidence freely available to early researchers interested in the late independent era's history. This began to change, however, by the early 1840s. In 1843, Cape Colony civilian John Centlivres Chase, a cartographer and former explorer,[59] published a set of historical records entitled *The Natal Papers* which detailed the activities of settlers in the KwaZulu-Natal region between 1498 and 1843.[60] These records included government notices, advertisements, letters, shipwreck reports, and excerpts from travellers' accounts. Chase appears to have intended *The Natal Papers* to advocate for the colonisation of the region. He was notably an affiliate of the pro-colonial politician Robert Godlonton, who was also the publisher of his work. Chase's correspondence with Fynn further suggests that he was well aware that the hunter-trader's narrative could be used to further his own pro-colonial views.[61] Chase also had a personal association with the linguist and colonial government researcher, Donald Moodie, who had

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[55] Ibid, see preface.

[56] Now known as 'Historical Publications Southern Africa', the Society was founded in 1918 with the intention of providing the Union of South African, established in 1910, with 'a sense of its roots in the colonial past.' See website: http://www.vanriebeecksociety.co.za/about.htm.

[57] See Owen, *The Diary of the Rev. Francis Owen*, preface.

[58] For an analysis of the development of Afrikaner nationalism see Marijke Du Toit, "The Domesticity of Afrikaner Nationalism: Volksmoeders and the ACVV, 1904-1929", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 29, no. 1 (2003), 155-176.

[59] For more on Chase's background in cartography see Elri Liebenberg, "Mapping South Africa in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: The Cartography of James Centlivres Chase", *Historia* 52, no. 2 (2007), 1-18.

[60] Chase, *The Natal Papers*.

[61] Chase to Fynn, 10 December 1829, letter, Fynn Papers 1/1, Pietermaritzburg Archives Depository, Pietermaritzburg; Pridmore, "Unvarnished Reminiscences", 46-48.

previously worked with documents detailing the history of the relationship between the British colonists and Xhosa communities.[62]

The Natal Papers especially commissioned an account by Fynn of his experiences in the Zulu kingdom.[63] As Pridmore has commented, this marked the first time the writings of one the travellers were used uncritically as part of an authoritative historiography.[64] Indeed, with the publication of *The Natal Papers*, Fynn's account of the events he witnessed became established as official historical records – an occurrence which also officialised Fynn's characterisation of Shaka as a bloodthirsty tyrant. Aside from Fynn's account, the records contained within *The Natal Papers* ignored the history of Africans in the region. Furthermore, entreating Africans purely from the perspective of the colonists, *The Natal Papers* reinforced the settler notion that Africans did not have a history at all; that they had lived more or less unchanging over time in accordance with their socio-cultural practices until the reign of Shaka.

A further factor of importance regarding *The Natal Papers* was that it demonstrates the approach which was being taken by settlers for producing histories of the south-east African context at this time.[65] Given the approach taken by Chase, the practice of collecting written records and drawing on the witness testimony of European travellers was clearly regarded as a reputable basis for reconstructing the past. Indeed, as I discuss later, between the 1840s and 1900, there was a growing urgency to preserve documents among the settler community as it was believed that with the passing of time, fewer and fewer sources pertaining to the period prior to colonialism would remain.

Part 1.4: The Lithographs of George French Angas

A further European traveller who had a major influence in shaping representations of African groups, this time in a visual sense, was the explorer and lithographer George French Angas. Born in England in 1822, Angas emigrated to Australia 1844 before traveling to present-day South Africa in 1846. Here he spent two years illustrating African groups in numerous areas in the vicinity of both the Cape Colony and the Colony of Natal. Angas' contribution to the literature was made with the publication of his 1849 series of drawings

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[62] For more on Moodie see Vertrees Canby Malherbe, "Donald Moodie: South Africa's Pioneer Oral Historian", *History in Africa* 25 (1998), 171-197.

[63] Pridmore, "Unvarnished Reminiscences", 46-48; Dan Wylie, *Savage Delight: White Myths of Shaka* (Scottsville: University of Natal Press, 2000), 120.

[64] Pridmore, "Unvarnished Reminiscences", 48.

[65] It should be noted that there were no academic institutions established at this point. The historical studies department at the University of the Witwatersrand was founded in 1917. The discipline of Bantu Studies, meanwhile, was established during the early 1920s.

and paintings, *The Kaffirs Illustrated*.[66] To inform my discussion of Angas' work, I draw on a 1989 paper by Sandra Klopper.[67]

In *The Kaffirs Illustrated*, Angas produced a series of visual representations of the numerous African groups he had encountered. These images were noteworthy in that they supplied Victorian audiences with a sense of the costumes and ornaments used by south-east African groups of the period.[68] Angas, in this respect, had a significant impact in propagating what became the popular image of Africans, their materials, and their artefacts among Europeans. As Klopper has remarked, the perceived realism of Angas' depictions was also substantiated by European visitors to the Zulu kingdom. In 1859, for example, John William Colenso, the inaugural bishop of the Colony of Natal, commented on the accuracy of Angas' depictions following his journey to the Zulu kingdom to meet the King Mpande.[69] Notably, Angas' portrayal of Africans has endured largely uncontested within the historiography.

According to Klopper, whose article was the first to examine Angas' lithographs critically; numerous inaccuracies and inconsistencies can be observed in Angas' representations of the Africans he was depicting. Focusing on representations of Mpande and the people of the Zulu kingdom, Klopper observed that changes had been made in the colouring of the images (to improve their composition) and that deliberate manipulation and substitutions of the material objects carried or worn by warriors had taken place.[70] According to Klopper, these alterations were signs that Angas had made his images correspond with existing European stereotypes of Africans.[71] They thus reflected the 'noble savage' stereotype – whereby Europeans perceived Africans as 'uncontaminated by the ills of civilisation'.[72] The impact of this representation of the Zulu kingdom's people thus exaggerated Europeans' characterisation of them as an uncivilised warrior society.

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[66] See George French Angas, *The Kaffirs illustrated in a series of drawings taken among the Amazulu, Amaponda and Amakosa tribes. Also portraits of the Hottentot, Malay, Fingo, and other races inhabiting Southern Africa: together with sketches of landscape scenery in the Zulu country, Natal, and the Cape Colony* (Cape Town: A.A. Balkema, 1974 ([1849]).

[67] See Sandra Klopper, "George French Angas' (Re)presentation of the Zulu in The Kafirs Illustrated", *South African Journal of Cultural and Art History* 3 (1989), 63-73.

[68] Ibid, 62-64.
[69] See John William Colenso, *First Steps of the Zulu Mission* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1860), 79.

[70] Klopper, "George French Angas", 62-64.
[71] Klopper further argued that Angas' images spread misleading depictions of Africans' social practices, many of which were uncritically accepted by settlers and Europeans on account of their perceived realism. For example, Angas' pictures of the Zulu kingdom's homesteads misrepresented the extent to which cattle were permitted to roam free. In addition, Angas failed to depict the taboo which prevented women from interacting with cattle, thus portraying an inaccurate image of homestead life. Ibid, 62-68.

[72] Ibid, 67.

Part 2: Cultivating Histories

Part 2.1: The Empty Land

Between the mid nineteenth-century and the early twentieth-century, a number of missionaries and settlers had begun to write about the KwaZulu-Natal region's past. While George McCall Theal (whom I discuss later) was the most notable early researcher to emerge during this period, his writings were preceded by the works of William Holden in 1855,[73] Joseph Shooter in 1857,[74] and Lewis Grout in 1860.[75] A notable feature of these works was their dismissive treatment of Africans as warlike, barbarous, and backward.[76] In this respect, where Europeans' intrusion into the KwaZulu-Natal region was treated through a historical lens, African groups were regarded as static peoples unchanging over time. As I discuss in the next two sections, this assumption would characterise settler productions of the African past for much of the next century.

The most significant of the works mentioned above was Holden's because it is the most indicative of how the white narrative of the late independent era would develop. Holden allocated two chapters to a discussion of the KwaZulu-Natal region from the time of its 'discovery' by Vasco de Gama in 1497 until the expulsion of the Boers from the region by the British in 1842. Making no acknowledgment of his sources, although he was likely influenced by Isaacs' characterisation of Shaka, Holden claimed that the Zulu king had "like a desolating scourge, over-ran Natal with his armies… until no nation dared stand before his wrath, but all fled… to their safe retreats in the dense bush. Directly after Natal had thus been swept, Fynn, Farewell, and others arrived."[77]

The significance of this passage is that it reveals an important assertion Holden was making about the south-east African past. Holden claimed, without evidence, that Shaka's armies had either destroyed or cleared away the African groups of the region by around 1820. In this respect, Holden asserted that the territory of KwaZulu-Natal, other than that occupied by the Zulu kingdom itself, had been emptied by Shaka prior to the arrival of British settlers in the region. Holden thus played a prominent part in perpetuating the myth of the 'empty land' - reports of which were first popularised in the Cape Colony during the second half of

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[73] William Curry Holden, *History of the colony of Natal* (London: A. Heylin, 1855).

[74] Joseph Shooter, *The Kafirs of Natal and the Zulu country* (London: E.A. Stanford, 1857).

[75] Lewis Grout, *Zulu-land; Or, Life Among the Zulu-Kafirs of Natal and Zulu-land, South Africa* (*Philadelphia*: *Presbyterian Publication Committee*, 1864).

[76] A further prominent example, although it was published much later (1905), was a work by Robert Plant. See Robert Plant, *The Zulu in Three Tenses: Being a Forecast of the Zulu's Future in the Light of His Past and His Present* (Pietermaritzburg: P. Davis, 1905).

[77] Holden, *History of the colony of Natal*, 41.

the 1820s.[78] The myth is notable because it provided settlers with justification for their land claims within the Colony of Natal.

Part 2.2: Shepstone's Historical Sketch

An important historical piece was authored by Theophilus Shepstone in 1864, although it was not published in its original form until 1883.[79] Shepstone, the acting Secretary for Native Affairs in the Colony of Natal at this time, had personally conducted researches with African interlocutors to determine whether Africans had inhabited areas within the colony prior to their dispersal from the region during Shaka's reign. Shepstone's piece formed part of a dispatch which was sent to the Secretary of State in London by the Lieutenant-Governor of the colony of Natal, John Scott, in February 1864. Also included was a map which marked the 'traditional' territories which had been occupied by various 'tribes'.[80] By establishing the legitimacy of African land rights, Shepstone appears to have correspondingly restricted the land claims of the settlers.[81]

According to Shepstone in his 'Historical Sketch', the year 1812 marked the beginning of what he called the 'great disturbance'. In his view, it was the rise of the 'universal enemy' Shaka which had 'revolutionised the country'[82] and had ushered in a new era of violence and instability. For Shepstone, it was thus the Zulu kingdom which had unbalanced the 'ancient comfortable mode of life' which had supposedly characterised African societies prior to Shaka's reign.[83] Indeed, Shepstone's allusion to this supposedly idyllic pre-existence suggests that he regarded Africans in a manner akin to the 'noble savage'. In this respect, Shepstone appeared to consider Africans simpler, wilder, and less civilised than settlers.

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[78] See John Wright, "The Dynamics of Power and Conflict in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu Region of the Late 18th and Early 19th Centuries: A Critical Reconstruction" (Ph.D. thesis, Witwatersrand University, 1989), 62, footnotes 3 and 4.

[79] See Theophilus Shepstone, "Historical Sketch of the Tribes Anciently Inhabiting the Colony of Natal, as at Present Bounded, and Zululand" in Government Report, in Cape of Good Hope Blue Book no. G.4.'83, *Report and Proceedings, with Appendices, of the Government Commission on Native Laws and Customs, part II*, 415-420 (Cape Town, 1968 [1883]). Shepstone's piece was also republished in 1888 as part of *The Annals of Natal*, a work I discuss later.

[80] Wright, "Power and Conflict", 100-103; John Wright, "A.T. Bryant and the 'wars of Shaka'", *History in Africa* 18 (1991), 413-414; Jeff Guy, *Theophilus Shepstone and the Forging of Natal: African Autonomy and Settler Colonialism in the Making of Traditional Authority* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2013), 312-317.

[81] Wright, "Power and Conflict", 100-103; Guy, *Forging of Natal,* 312-317.

[82] By 'country' Shepstone was referring to the area of 'Zululand', or what is today the western interior of KwaZulu-Natal.

[83] Theophilus Shepstone, "The Early History of the Zulu-Kafir race of South-Eastern Africa", *The Journal of the Society of Arts*, 23 (1875), 192-193.

Shepstone's inquiries into the past had taken place in a context beset by political tensions. At the heart of these tensions lay the 'native question' – the issue of governing the African population of the Colony of Natal. Shepstone's role as the Secretary for Native Affairs had required him to balance the demands of African patriarchs, the settler presence, and the interests of missionaries. For his part, Shepstone had sought to model colonial rule on his understanding of Shaka's reign. [84] His plan was to create 'native policies' which would govern the African population in accordance with what he perceived were their 'traditional' laws.[85] The political deliberations on colonial rule were extremely complex, however, for there was frequent discord among colonial officials, missionaries, and settlers regarding the extent to which Africans should be permitted to assimilate to the colony's capitalist system.[86] It is thus a point of some significance that Shepstone chose to interview African informants, for this suggests that he considered Africans' testimony an important source of historical evidence. How Shepstone went about synthesising the information interlocutors provided to him, however, remains unclear.

Although his 1864 report was not widely publicised, an article based on its findings was published in 1875.[87] Shepstone's piece largely omitted his previous discussion of the origins of African groups. Instead, he opted to focus his discussion on the 'great disturbance' – the period of prolonged warfare and dislocation (which later came to be known as Mfecane). Despite having previously reinforced the land claims made by Africans within the Colony of Natal, Shepstone's 1875 article accommodated the popular myth that the colonial territories were depopulated prior to the arrival of the settlers. Indeed, the effect of the myth was that it reinforced the defence of the colonial takeover of the region on the basis

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[84] For an assessment of Shepstone's approach to native rule and how he drew on Shaka's methods, see Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty*, chapter five. Also see Carolyn Hamilton, "Authoring Shaka: Models, Metaphors and Historiography" (Ph.D. thesis, Johns Hopkins University, 1993), chapter five.

[85] Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty*, chapter three; Nafisa Sheik, "Colonial Rites: Custom, Marriage Law and the Making of Difference in Natal, 1830s - c. 1910" (Ph.D. thesis, The University of Michigan, 2012), 21, 28-29; Carolyn Hamilton, "The Persistent Precolonial and the Displacements of Discourse" (Archive and Public Culture Seminar Paper, University of Cape Town, 2018), 3-5. A version of Hamilton's 2018 workshop paper was originally produced in 2014 for the conference 'Twenty Years of South African Democracy: South Africa and the Social Sciences' hosted at the University of the Witwatersrand. A further version was published in 2017. See Carolyn Hamilton, "The long southern African past: enfolded time and the challenges of archive", *Social Dynamics: A Journal of African Studies* 43, no. 3 (2017), 338-357. This version was also republished in 2018. See Carolyn Hamilton, "The long southern African past: enfolded time and the challenges of archive" in June Bam, Lungisile Ntsebeza, and Allan Zinn (eds.), *Whose History Count?: Decolonising African Pre-Colonial Historiography* (Stellenbosch: AFRICAN SUN MeDIA, 2018).

[86] Guy, *Forging of Natal,* 196-197.

[87] See Shepstone, Theophilus. "The Early History of the Zulu-Kafir race of South-Eastern Africa". *The Journal of the Society of Arts* 23, (1875), 192-196.

that the land was unoccupied and available.[88] The impression created by Shepstone's account was thus that Shaka's 'wave of desolation' had been decisive in the 'clearing away' of the African population.[89] Shepstone was, in this respect, influential in establishing the notion of 'devastation' within the literature.

As I have mentioned previously, Shepstone's writings were largely based on evidence he acquired from African oral sources. It is clear, however, that Shepstone believed that the onset of the colonialism was leading to greater insecurity for non-written forms of history. Indeed, in Shepstone's view, the evidence provided to him by his interlocutors was in danger of being lost forever. As he wrote in 1875: 'Ten, or at most twenty years more, will deprive us of the testimony of nearly all the few remaining eye-witnesses of the earlier of those exciting scenes which thus revolutionised the country.'[90] Shepstone's perspective appears to have reflected a minority view which was developing in the settler community at this time. As I discuss shortly, by the late nineteenth-century, several amateur researchers and collectors believed that the preservation of historical records was becoming a matter of importance.

A further point is that by the time Shepstone had begun his researches into the late independent era, Shaka's reputation as tyrannical ruler was already well established within the Colony of Natal. Indeed, as Carolyn Hamilton has demonstrated, although the Zulu king had initially been favourably regarded by the Cape Colony's media, by 1829, a year following his death, this had begun to change.[91] As I discuss in greater detail later, the writings of hunter-traders Nathaniel Isaacs and Henry Francis Fynn, along with the African population who had suffered under Shaka's rule, were influential in disseminating the negative depictions of Shaka which came to predominate.

Part 2.3: *The Annals of Natal*

During the second half of the nineteenth-century, early researchers were drawing on both written documents and were consulting African interlocutors for information on the history of the KwaZulu-Natal region. By the late nineteenth-century, however, the practice of drawing on written documents for sources was becoming increasingly prevalent. An important work for enabling this transition was John Bird's *The Annals of Natal: 1495 to 1845*, which was first published in 1888 (in two volumes). The work comprised a comprehensive collection of letters and reports selected by Bird for reprinting on account of

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[88] Wright, "Power and Conflict", 69.

[89] Shepstone, "The Early History", 193.

[90] Ibid, 192.

[91] Hamilton, "Character and Objects", 37-63. I revisit Hamilton's arguments in greater detail at a later stage. Hamilton's piece was later republished. See Carolyn Hamilton, "'The Character and Objects of Chaka': A Reconsideration of the Making of Shaka as the Mfecane Motor" in Carolyn Hamilton (ed.), *The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1995).

their perceived historical significance to the settler community.[92] Like Chase's *The Natal Papers*, *Annals* provided insight into colonial policy and the correspondence between the British, the Boers, and African groups.[93] From the perspective of figures like Bird, written documents alone constituted truly 'authentic' windows into the period prior to colonialism.[94]

Commissioned on behalf of The Natal Society[95] during the 1880s, *Annals* is a significant work for a number of reasons. Not only did its publication reproduce records of the history of the region between 1495 and 1845, but it established *Annals* as a 'primary' source in its own right. *Annals*, in this respect, obtained the status of an essential reference for early written histories of the colonial period. Furthermore, in addition to preserving these historical records within the public domain, *Annals* drew greater attention to the historical importance of the documents themselves. It is notable that influential researcher James Stuart, whose notes comprise the James Stuart Papers collection at the Killie Campbell Africana Library (an archival repository) appears to have acquired a copy of *Annals* in 1900. Indeed, Stuart scrupulously cross-referenced its contents with his own researches.[96] This is a point of some significance, for as I discuss later, Stuart himself has had a major impact on the historiography of the late independent era.

Part 2.4: The Writings of Theal

The most influential of the early writers on the late independent era was George McCall Theal, who authored a succession of lengthy works during the late nineteenth-century and the first decade of the twentieth-century. A Canadian by birth, Theal arrived in the Cape in either 1856 or 1857 (at the age of either nineteen or twenty) having abandoned a potential position as clergyman.[97] Theal then began work as a teacher in Knysna, a role he occupied for several years before taking up an editing role at the small King William's Town newspaper *The Maclean News and Kaffrarian Farmer's Friend* in 1862.[98]

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[92] Bird, *The Annals of Natal* 1. A notable omission from the *Annals of Natal* is the collection of documents and early maps assembled by John Centlivres Chase. It is likely that Bird intended his work to compliment Chase's own annals.

[93] The bulk of the records contained within *Annals* dated to the first half of the nineteenth-century.

[94] See Bird, *The Annals of Natal* 1, introductory letter.

[95] *The Natal Society* (now *The Natal Society Foundation*) was a public library established by journalist David Dale Buchanan in Pietermaritzburg in 1846. By the mid-1860s, the library had evolved into a formal museum collection intent on preserving information of local interest. See website: https://www.natalia.org.za/nsf_history.html.

[96] See Grant Christison, *James Stuart's Notes & Queries on John Bird's Annals of Natal* (Scottsville: Grant Christison, 1994).

[97] Christopher Saunders, "The Making of an Historian: the Early Years of George McCall Theal", *South African Historical Journal* 13, no. 1 (1981), 3-5.

[98] Ibid, 5-6.

Theal continued to work in the struggling newspaper business for much of the next decade during which time he began writing his first historical piece. This he self-published in 1871[99] and later, following favourable reviews, utilised as the basis for his far more comprehensive series entitled *Compendium of South African History and Geography* (which comprised three volumes published in 1874, 1876, and 1877 respectively).[100] Prior to *Compendium*, however, Theal had a brief and unsuccessful spell at the diamond fields of Kimberley. It was in the aftermath of this expedition that he accepted a post as a teacher at the prestigious Lovedale Seminary, where he devoted himself to the study of south-east African history.[101]

Over the next several decades, Theal produced a prodigious quantity of historical works which established him as the nineteenth-century's foremost historical researcher. Over many years, he developed an important theory about African origins. It was Theal's belief that Bantu-speakers had first arrived in south-east Africa several hundred years previously following 'migration from a far northern home'.[102] This theory was based on his identification of underlying similarities in the origin stories of different African groups. Indeed, so convinced was Theal by the evidence in support of the migration theory that he insisted it was 'indisputable that most of the tribes now in existence are immigrants of a very recent date'.[103]

Theal's approach was characterised by his rigorous examination of any written documentation he could lay his hands on.[104] The correspondence of district officials, church records, journal entries, shipping records, and land grant papers were all potential sources of information. As thorough as Theal was, however, it is worth noting that he made no attempt to critically scrutinise the data at his disposal. Rather, he sought to reproduce the 'general tenor of events' he came across 'undisturbed'.[105] Although willing to draw on oral

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[99] See George McCall Theal, *South Africa As It Is* (King's William's Town: George McCall Theal, 1871).

[100] Christopher Saunders, "George McCall Theal and Lovedale", *History in Africa* 8 (1981), 157-158.

[101] Saunders, "The Making of an Historian", 8-11; Saunders," Theal and Lovedale", 155-158. It is worth noting that Theal's political views became increasingly conservative following his departure from Lovedale in the late 1870s. Renouncing the more sympathetic outlook he had had toward non-Europeans in his previous works; by the 1880s his work had come to reflect the pro-colonial position of white farmers. As Christopher Saunders has demonstrated, Theal's change of attitude appears to have coincided with the period he began to work for the colonial government as a Labour Agent in the Western Cape. See Christopher Saunders, "The Missing Link in Theal's Career: The Historian as Labour Agent in the Western Cape", *History in Africa* 7 (1980), 273-280.

[102] George McCall Theal, *History of South Africa since 1795* volume 5 (London: Allen & Unwin, 1915 [1908]), 209.

[103] Theal, *SA since 1795* volume 5, 434.

[104] Theal commented briefly on his approach in the preface of a 1888 work. See George McCall Theal, *History of South Africa, 1691-1795* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co, 1888), v.

[105] Theal, *History of SA*, v-viii.

sources as forms of evidence, Theal was complained that they were both 'vague' and 'unreliable'.[106] This distaste for oral sources did not arise because he doubted the historical value of these sources, but because they lacked congruency and offered insufficient detail.

What made Theal's writings influential was the specific context in which he framed his discussion. In this respect, Theal's most consequential contribution to the literature was his interpretation of the region's history from a markedly pro-colonial viewpoint, one which emphasised the concerns of the settlers and ignored the concerns of Africans. This perspective was widely and uncritically adopted by later scholars. Furthermore, Theal played a significant part in divorcing the history of African groups from the history of white settlement in south-east Africa. Theal thus effectively obscured the role Europeans had played in influencing African societies during the early colonial period, the effect of which was to focus much of the blame for the degradation of African way of life squarely on the shoulders of Shaka in place of colonialism.[107] As I discuss later, Theal's writings also had a profound influence on influential historical researcher Alfred Thomas Bryant's work.

Part 2.5: Bryant's Early Work

Alfred Thomas Bryant was a Catholic priest and a prominent historical researcher with a keen interest in Zulu language and the history of Zulu-speakers. During the last decade of the eighteenth-century, Bryant began studying the Zulu language and researching the history of Africans in southern Africa prior to colonialism. In 1905, after 12 years of research, Bryant published a comprehensive Zulu-English dictionary which also included a lengthy historical essay as its preface.[108] This essay, entitled 'A Sketch of the Origin and early History of the Zulu People', built on the notion of 'devastation' in the literature. According to Bryant, 'three successive waves of destruction' had taken place in the KwaZulu-Natal region during the early nineteenth-century.[109] These Bryant described as a 'cataclysm of bloodshed and devastation', a description which played a part in shaping the stereotypical view of Africans which was emerging among pro-intellectual researchers.[110]

Bryant's 'Sketch' also speculated extensively on the origins of Africans. Taking an ethnographic approach whereby he compared the characteristics of what he perceived were distinctive black-skinned races, Bryant theorised that numerous branches of 'Negro'

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[106] Theal, *History of SA*, 209.

[107] John Wright discusses Theal's impact in at length in his Ph.D. thesis. See Wright, "Power and Conflict", 96-110, 150-154.

[108] Alfred Thomas Bryant, *A Zulu-English Dictionary with notes on pronunciation, a revised orthography and derivations and cognate words from many languages; including also a vocabulary of Hlonipa words, tribal names etc., a synopsis of Zulu grammar and a concise history of the Zulu people from the most ancient times* (Pinetown: Mariannhill Mission Press, 1905).

[109] Ibid, 48.
[110] Ibid, 33.

and 'Bantu' groups had migrated into Africa at different points in time.[111] The Zulu-speaking groups which inhabited the KwaZulu-Natal region, Bryant claimed, had migrated there from further north. When precisely Zulu-speakers became established in the region was unclear to Bryant, although he insisted that it was prior to 'the middle or early part of the seventeenth-century.' Notably, Bryant's claim complicated the notion of the 'empty land' because he recognised that the region had been inhabited by Africans for at least several hundred years prior to the arrival of the colonists. Bryant further claimed that the 'tribal' way of life of Bantu groups had remained unchanged since their migration into south-east Africa. Referring to African groups broadly, Bryant stated that 'from all we can judge, these races are to-day just as they were then… '[112]

In 1905, Bryant began work on a far more detailed history of Zulu-speakers in the KwaZulu-Natal region specifically. As I discuss later, it was around this time that Bryant became acquainted with fellow researcher James Stuart, whose own findings had a pronounced effect on Bryant's work. It was also around this time that Bryant began to consult with African interlocutors for historical evidence. Bryant's project would last for over two decades and would culminate in his 1929 magnum opus. Between 1909 and 1910, Bryant also wrote a serialised history for the African newspaper *Ilanga Lase Natal.*[113] He authored yet another set of papers between 1911 and 1913 which later served as the basis for his 1954 book *History of the Zulu and Neighbouring Kingdoms*. These papers were published in a periodical called *Izindaba Zabate* by the Brothers of the Mariannhill Monetary before later being acquired by Killie Campbell (whom I discuss later).[114]

Part 2.6: *Abantu Abamnyama*

While early amateur historians such as Bryant and Theal led the development of the late independent era's narrative, by the 1920s, several African intellectuals were beginning to produce written accounts of their own. The most prominent of these works was Magema Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama*, which was all but completed during the first few years of the twentieth-century, but languished unpublished until 1922.[115] Predominantly composed of a fragmented history of the Zulu kingdom from the time

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[111] Ibid, 13-21.

[112] Ibid, 13.

[113] Paul la Hausse de Lalouvière, *Restless Identities: Signatures of Nationalism, Zulu Ethnnicty and History in the Lives of Petros Lamula (c. 1881-1948) and Lymon Maling (1889 – c. 1936)* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2000), 20.

[114] See Alfred Thomas Bryant, *History of the Zulu and Neighbouring Tribes* (Cape Town: Struik, 1954), publisher's note.

[115] For the original version of Fuze's book, see Magema Fuze, *Abantu Abamnyama: Lapa Bavela Ngakona* (Pietermaritzburg: City Printing Works, 1922). A translated version of the work, the version on which I have drawn, was published in 1979. See Magema Fuze, *Abantu Abamnyama: Lapa Bavela Ngakona* (*The Black People and Whence They Came: A Zulu View)*, trans. by Harry Camp Lugg, Anthony Trevor Cope (ed.) (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1979 [1922]).

of Shaka until the death of Dinuzulu in 1913, a further section of the work contains ethnographical descriptions of the people of the Zulu kingdom and their social practices. A third section contains information on the origins of black people in south-east Africa.[116] What makes *Abantu Abamnyama* such a significant work is that it was the first historical account to have been written by an African. In this respect, although it attracted remarkably little attention at the time of its publication, *Abantu Abamnyama* established the foundation of the Zulu-language historical literature.[117]

According to Hlonipha Mokoena, Fuze steadily developed from a 'native informant' to a '*kholwa* intellectual'.[118] A first generation Christian assimilator to the settler colonial system, Fuze was born in 1840 into the elite *kholwa* community which had close ties to missionary researchers. Indeed, missionaries frequently acted as mentors to the *kholwa*.[119] Fuze was himself influenced by Bishop Colenso, whom he served as an assistant. A printer by trade, Fuze's status as a *kholwa* meant that he was frequently consulted by the colonial administration regarding African socio-political practices.[120] Fuze retained a close connection with his African roots and became an accomplished writer in Zulu. In his later life, he became a columnist for the Zulu-English newspaper *Ilanga Lase Natal,* publishing a series of articles between 1916 and 1922.[121]

Fuze's writings were in essence drawn from oral histories which he credited to his 'forebears' together with his own personal observations.[122] Although he did not elaborate on where and when he had acquired the historical information he had learnt, it is likely that Fuze greatly enriched his knowledge of the Zulu kingdom and the practices of its people

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[116] These sections, it should be established, were not created by Fuze, but were introduced by the editor of the translated volume, Harry Lugg, to better organise the data. A further point is that when Fuze spoke of 'black people', he was referring to Bantu speakers.

[117] La Hausse de Lalouvière, *Restless Identities*, 103-104. Another important historical work authored by an African around this time was Petros Lamula's *UZulukamalandela*. Although it attracted considerably more attention than Fuze's work at the time of its publication, it was subsequently largely ignored. See Petros Lamula*, UZulukamalandela: a Most Practical and Concise Compendium of African History Combined with Genealogy, Chronology, Geography and Biography* (Durban: Star Printing Works, 1924).

[118] See Hlonipha Mokoena, *Magema Fuze: The Making of a Kholwa Intellectual* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2011), Conclusion. Mokoena convincingly argued that Fuze made the transition from a source of information to a figure who critically reflected on the source material itself. In this respect, Fuze was transformed from a mediator between settler scholars and African history to a writer in his own regard. Mokoena's book cited above is a reworking of her Ph.D. thesis. See Hlonipha Mokoena, "The Making of a Kholwa Intellectual: A Discursive Biography of Magema Magwaza Fuze" (Ph.D. thesis, The University of Cape Town, 2005).

[119] Mokoena, *The Making of a Kholwa Intellectual*, chapter one.

[120] Mokoena, "A Discursive Biography", 9, 16, 20-22.

[121] La Hausse de Lalouvière, *Restless Identities*, 22-24; Mokoena, *The Making of a Kholwa Intellectual*, chapter three.

[122] Fuze, *The Black People*, 1.

through his association with the *kholwa* community, who were, as I have already discussed, frequently acted as interlocutors. As Paul la Hausse de Lalouvière has observed, Fuze also accompanied Colenso on his well-renowned visit to King Mpande in 1859, following which he maintained an intimate correspondence with the Zulu royal house.[123] In addition, Fuze was himself witness to the socio-political changes which had taken place in the area of present-day KwaZulu-Natal over the course of the second half of the nineteenth-century. Further research is required, however, if Fuze's concept of history is to be better understood.

Part 2.7: James Stuart and his 'Idea'

Although written histories on the KwaZulu-Natal region had become increasingly prevalent during the second half of the nineteenth-century, the practice of consulting African interlocutors had endured. Beginning in the late 1890s, colonial magistrate James Stuart had begun to keep written records of his conversations with numerous interlocutors knowledgeable on the Zulu kingdom of Shaka's reign.[124] As Carolyn Hamilton argued in her 1993 Ph.D. thesis,[125] Stuart's research during the late 1890s and the early years of the twentieth-century were motivated by his 'Idea' - his vision for educating white colonists, particularly those in government, in the ways of the Zulu kingdom.[126] Stuart's vision stemmed from his belief that it was necessary for both the colonial government and settler society at large to come to understand Africans' socio-cultural practices. Only an official sensitive to the needs of the black population of the colony, Stuart believed, would be able to govern them effectively. To Stuart's mind, the policies which had been put in place by Shepstone between the mid-1840s and the mid-1870s had been far more effective than the policies enacted since. Indeed, Stuart supported a return to the previous system.[127]

To acquire his data, Stuart would invite one or more interlocutors to engage in lengthy discussions. During these conversations he would write down details of the statements which interested him, often expanding on his initial rough notes at a later stage.[128] On some occasions, Stuart listed the topics of conversation he had sought to pursue with a particular

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[123] La Hausse de Lalouvière, *Restless Identities*, 100.

[124] Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty,* 132-133. For more on Stuart's background, see John Wright, "Making the James Stuart Archive", *History in Africa* 23 (1996), 333-350.

[125] See Hamilton, "Authoring Shaka", chapters 7 and 8.

[126] Carolyn Hamilton, "Backstory, Biography, and the Life of the James Stuart Archive", *History in Africa* 38, no. 1 (2011), 328. For an in depth analysis of Stuart's 'idea', see Hamilton, "Authoring Shaka".

[127] John Wright, "Ndukwana kaMbengwana as an Interlocutor on the History of the Zulu Kingdom, 1879-1903", *History in Africa* 38, no. 1 (2011), 355; John Wright, "Socwatsha kaPhaphu, James Stuart, and Their Conversations on the Past, 1897–192", *Kronos* 41, no. 1(2015), 150-151; Hamilton, "Life of the JSA", 328- 331; Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty*, 153-156. Stuart had by the first decade of the twentieth-century begun to deliver a series of public lectures on his work. This brought him some renown in the Durban and Pietermaritzburg areas as an expert on native affairs. See Wright, "Making the JSA", 336-337; Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty*, 144.

[128] It is worth noting that Stuart often wrote his notes in a mixture of languages – English and Zulu.

interlocutor. For the most part, he pressed them on historical and ethnographic topics pertaining to governance and social practices.[129] The reign of Shaka, for example, was a particular interest of his.[130] Stuart also recognised that there was frequently a lack of accord between different interlocutors. Consequently, he often repeated discussions to cross-reference his material.[131] As Wright has observed, Stuart took meticulous care to indicate the dates on which his interviews took place, which interlocutors had been present, and the dates on which he added his own follow-up notes.[132] By the late 1910s, he was repeating several previous discussions with interlocutors in preparation for the creation of a series of educational readers. It was with these readers, which were used in schools, that Stuart made a limited contribution to the early twentieth-century historiography.

As Hamilton has observed, Stuart sought to cross-reference his own findings with the written material of the travellers. Stuart acquired a copy of Isaacs' journal in 1903 and it was also around this time that he was commissioned to prepare Fynn's papers for their eventual publication. Fynn's papers were subsequently subjected to substantial editing by Stuart's hand.[133] In addition, Stuart is known to have consulted a copy of *The Annals of Natal*.[134] A further point of importance is that the written records compiled by Stuart and his interlocutors would later come to comprise the James Stuart Papers, an archival collection curated by the Killie Campbell Africana Library at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.[135] The James Stuart Papers in turn would later see publication as a six-part series of volumes edited by John Wright and Colin Webb.[136] As I discuss later, these volumes were greatly influential in shaping the historical literature produced from 1976 onward.

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[129] Wright, "Making the JSA", 337; Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty*, 152-153.

[130] Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty*, 143.

[131] Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty*, 142-143.

[132] Wright, "Making the JSA", 337.

[133] Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty*, 144.

[134] See Christison, *James Stuart's Notes & Queries on John Bird's Annals of Natal*.

[135] The Killie Campbell Africana Library was previously part of the University of Natal prior to the merger with the University of Durban-Westville in 2004 which created the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

[136] Colin Webb and John Wright (eds.), *The James Stuart Archive of Recorded Oral Evidence Relating to the History of the Zulu and Neighbouring Peoples* (six volumes) (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1976-2014).

Part 3: The Devastation Thread

Part 3.1: The Union and its Effects

The creation of the Union of South Africa, which came into being on 31 May 1910, was a moment of major importance within south-east African. The enactment of the Union saw the previously self-contained British territories of the Cape Colony, the Colony of Natal, the Orange River Colony, and the Transvaal, merge into single self-governing dominion of the British Empire.[137] Unification saw the regional jurisdiction of each colony superseded by a new centralised authority. The impact of this was that the socio-political landscape of the former colonies, the relationship between black and white groups, and also the relationship between these groups and the state, was dramatically altered. A major break in political policy was taking place, one which also triggered a break in the types of historical productions being made.

The effect of the Union's establishment on the KwaZulu-Natal region was that it ended the hopes of the emerging *kholwa* community of being permitted to assimilate to colonial rule. According to Shula Marks, rather than welcome the *amakholwa*, the colonial government further reinforced the socio-political divisions between them and the settlers.[138] Africans were consequently denied any prospect of equal social standing and were also barred from political participation within the colonial state. As Mahmood Mamdani convincingly argued in his 1996 book *Citizen and Subject*,[139] the black population were designated by the colonial government as the subjects of British rule. The white population, on the other hand, enjoyed the privileges of citizenship. The late 1910s and the early 1920s was a period of prosperity for white settler communities who benefited from the growing intrusion of capitalism into the KwaZulu-Natal region. The Natives Land Act of 1913 was a particularly important piece of legislation for enabling this growth, for it forced many Africans to take up roles as labourers on white farms at low rates.[140]

Amid the socio-political changes which were taking place, the late 1910s saw the growth of a small academic community in the KwaZulu-Natal region following the founding of the

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[137] For more on the enactment of the Union see H.R. Hahlo and Elisson Kahn, *The Union of South Africa, the Development of its Laws and Constitution* (Cape Town: Juta and Co. Ltd, 1960), 146-163.

[138] Shula Marks, *The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa: Class, Nationalism, and the State in Twentieth-Century Natal* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986), 12-13.

[139] See Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996). A new edition of Mamdani's book, which responds to some of the critical commentary Mamdani received within a new introduction, was published in 2008.

[140] Henry Slater, "Land, Labour and Capital in Natal: The Natal Land and Colonisation Company 1860-1948", *The Journal of African History* 16, no, 2 (1975), 280.

Natal University College in Pietermaritzburg in 1910. The survival of the institution was uncertain, however, and while classical and European history was taught sporadically during the 1930s, the institution would not achieve full university status until after World War II.[141] The University of the Witwatersrand, on the other hand, which was established in Johannesburg in 1922, played an important role in shaping intellectual engagement with the south-east African past in the decades which followed the formation of the Union.

By the 1920s, interlocutor evidence was being drawn into the disciplines of anthropology, archaeology, and Bantu Studies. [142] A possible explanation for this was that many of the first academics working in these fields came from missionary circles.[143] Like the colonial officials of the former Colony of Natal, missionaries had routinely consulted with African interlocutors for insight into their history and their social practices.[144] Concurrently, however, interlocutor evidence was falling out of favour among historians. This appears to be because oral evidence did not correspond with colonial notions of what historical evidence should be. As Valentin-Yves Mudimbe has observed, from the perspective of the European settler, the very comprehension of Africa required the notion of Africa to be contextualised within Western academic literature's 'colonial library'.[145] Oral evidence, by definition non-written, did not correspond with this 'colonial library' and were thus overlooked as sites of historical evidence. Mudimbe's explanation also accounts for why anthologies of records such as Chase's *The Natal Papers* and Bird's *The Annals of Natal* were created.[146]

Part 3.2: Shifting Focus

The declining importance being attributed to oral sources as sites of historical evidence had by the 1920s begun to impact James Stuart's approach to his research. In the aftermath of the Union's creation, following which the political authority of colonial officials in the

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[141] Bill Guest, *Stella Aurorae: The History of a South African University. Natal University College (1909-1949)* volume 1 (Pietermaritzburg: Trustees of The Natal Society Foundation, 2015), 25-66.

[142] Bogumil Jewsiewicki and Valentin-Yves Mudimbe, "Africans' Memories and Contemporary History of Africa", *History and Theory* 32, no. 4 (1993), 2.

[143] See Mokoena, *The Making of a Kholwa Intellectual*, Introduction.

[144] Peterson, *African Intellectuals,* 1-20, 64-68; Carolyn Hamilton, "The Persistent Precolonial and the Displacements of Discourse" (Archive and Public Culture Workshop Paper, University of Cape Town, 2018).

[145] See Valentin-Yves Mudimbe, *The Idea of Africa* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 213. Hedley Twidle has discussed the significance of the 'colonial library' with reference to the Grey Collection, a vast assemblage of manuscripts and books gifted to the National Library by former Cape Colony governor George Grey which was first curated by linguist Wilhelm Bleek in 1863. See Hedley Twidle, "From *Origin of Language to a Language of Origin: a Prologue to the Grey Collection*" in Andrew van der Vlies (ed.), *Print, Text and Book Cultures in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2012), 252-284

[146] Peterson, *African Intellectuals*, 218-228.

KwaZulu-Natal region was superseded by Pretoria; Stuart abandoned his hopes of becoming an intermediary between the Zulu kingdom and the colonial government.[147] Stuart had recognised that the need for an official with the historical knowledge capable of mediating between Africans and settlers had abated as the capitalist interests of the settlers became the primary concern of the colonial government. Instead, he became interested in the prospect of publishing a series of educational readers based on the notes he had amassed between the 1890s and 1920s.[148]

Stuart's shift in interest is suggestive of how oral history was being perceived within settler circles in the aftermath of the Union's creation. Without the political purpose his researches had originally been intended to serve, his notes were adapted into stories for use in colonial schools of the region.[149] In this respect, although Stuart's readers contained historical evidence, they were not recognised as possessing evidence suitable for producing an intellectual history of the Zulu kingdom. On the other hand, as David Rycroft and Bhekabantu Ngcobo have observed, Stuart's readers had a pronounced impact on their Zulu-speaking readers outside of white academic circles. The most notable among these were the African writers C.L.S Nyembezi, and as Wright has also observed, R.R.R. Dhlomo.[150]

Part 3.3: *Olden Times*

By the 1920s, Bryant had become affiliated with the Bantu Studies department at the University of the Witwatersrand. In addition, he had helped establish the *Native Teachers' Journal* – a liberal mission-based forum for research into the history and language of the local African population.[151] By 1929, he had completed work on his magnum opus, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal*, a work which had a major influence on the historiography of the late independent era.[152] Drawing on Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama* and making extensive use of African oral evidence, Bryant historicised African groups on the basis of individual

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[147] Wright, "Making the JSA", 336.

[148] Ibid, 334. These were published as *uTulasizwe* (1923), *uHlangakula* (1924), *uBaxoxele* (1924), *uKulumetule* (1925), and *uVusezakiti* (1926).

[149] Wright, "Socwatsha", 159-160.

[150] David Rycroft and Abednego Bhekabantu Ngcobo (eds.), *The Praises of Dingana: Izibongo zikaDingana* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1988); Wright, "Socwatsha", 161-164.

[151] La Hausse de Lalouvière, *Restless Identities*, 99.

[152] Alfred Thomas Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, containing earlier political history of the Eastern Nguni Clans* (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1929). Bryant would later publish a further book on the Zulu kingdom in 1948. See Alfred Thomas Bryant, *The Zulu People: As They Were Before the White Man Came* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1948).

'clan' histories.[153] Bryant also appears to have drawn on Stuart's readers as sources. The pair is known to have corresponded directly in 1904, during which time they exchanged historical and lexical information. Bryant was also in attendance at the General Orthography Conference, held in the September of 1905, in Durban, which was chaired by Stuart.[154] As Wright has noted, it was in 1905, around the same time he met Stuart, that Bryant began conducting research for *Olden Times*.[155]

According to Bryant, Bantu[156] groups had first arrived in south-east Africa between 1600 and 1700 following emigration from further north.[157] Echoing his earlier work, he asserted that much of the KwaZulu-Natal region had been laid to waste during the early nineteenth-century. He added that a series of invasions then took place between 1818 and 1823 which triggered a great 'disturbance'. He regarded this 'disturbance' as the foremost historical event of the late independent era.[158] Like Theal and Shepstone, Bryant also regarded Shaka as a figure of particular significance. For Bryant, Shaka represented the archetypal 'great man'[159] - he believed Shaka was the catalyst for the establishment of the Zulu kingdom's regional hegemony. Bryant also uncritically accepted Theal's characterisation of Shaka as a violent tyrant, a representation he not only reproduced, but also helped establish as a stereotype.[160] Nevertheless, Bryant's approach to producing history differed from Theal's in substantial ways. Where Theal actively pursued the writing of histories which promoted settler interests, Bryant's work was grounded in the study of African groups themselves. Furthermore, while Theal was reluctant to draw on oral sources when written documents were available, African interlocutors were the basis of Bryant's research endeavours.

Olden Times was completed in a context characterised by an awakening of Zulu nationalism. At this time, the *kholwa* class were recognising that they were being excluded from white settler establishment. Consequently, their sense African identity experienced a revival fuelled by their rejection of the socio-economic conditions which were being imposed on them by colonialism.[161] It was at this time that Fuze's *Abantu*

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[153] John Wright's 1989 thesis would later expose Bryant's set of 'clan histories' as one beset by errors. In addition, Wright discovered that Bryant had 'plagiarised' much of his writings from the earlier researches conducted by Theophilus Shepstone. See Wright, "Power and Conflict", 151-152.

[154] Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty*, 150-151.
[155] Wright, "Power and Conflict", 6.
[156] Like both Theal and Shepstone, Bryant categorised Bantu groups on the basis of similarities in their language.
[157] See Bryant, *Olden Times*. Because Bryant discusses each 'clan' in its own section, there is no single chapter in which he unpacks his interpretation of the migration theory methodically.
[158] Bryant, *Olden Times*, 94.
[159] The 'Great Man' theory, which originates with a series of lectures delivered by philosopher Thomas Carlyle between 1837 and 1840, regards the actions of historical figures such as kings as the most significant factor in the shaping of historical outcomes.
[160] See for example Bryant, *Olden Times*, 94.
[161] La Hausse de Lalouvière, *Restless Identities*, 98-123.

Abamnyama, Petros Lamula's *UZulukamalandela* and political pieces published in *Ilanga* were coming to the attention of a wider black audience.[162] The significance of this context was that, from the perspective of the settlers, a more detailed account of the 'great disturbance' would have been greatly welcomed. This was because by evoking the notion of the 'disturbance', settlers were able to side-step accountability for the struggles of Africans in the colonial system.[163]

Part 3.4: The Influence of Structuralism

As I have mentioned, by the 1920s, anthropology was beginning to emerge as a professional academic discipline in the South African context. At this time, anthropology was dominated by a structuralist outlook. Known as structural functionalism and founded by Alfred Radcliffe-Brown in the 1920s, the approach is typified by an investigation of how each feature of a society contributed to the cohesive functioning of that society as a whole. Function, in this setting, refers to a set of structural relations existing between the constituent components of a group, the effect of which is to maintain that group's composition.[164] Although it was not until the 1970s that structuralism became a prominent influence on the Africanist historians, Eileen Krige's 1936 book *The Social System of the Zulus*[165] was the first academic work to integrate structuralist influences with ethnography on Zulu-speakers.

The purpose of Krige's study was to describe the socio-structural composition of the 'Zulu'[166] population of the KwaZulu-Natal region. Rather than attempt to historicise socio-economic patterns, Krige's approach was influenced by Radcliffe-Brown's methodology. In this respect, she sought to categorise and describe features of the way of life of the 'Zulu' while providing merely a broad description of their history.[167] Krige relied heavily on Bryant's *Olden Times*, which features prominently among her footnotes. Indeed, given that her study followed just seven years after the publication

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[162]Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty,* 16-18; La Hausse de Lalouvière, *Restless Identities*, 98-123.

[163] The notion of the 'civilising mission', that of raising the 'barbarous' blacks to the status of civilised Christians, was a common ideological justification for colonialism in missionary and settler circles during the colonial period. For more discussion on this, see for example Nafisa Sheik, "Colonial Rites: Custom, Marriage Law and the Making of Difference in Natal, 1830s - c. 1910" (Ph.D. thesis, The University of Michigan, 2012), 1-8.

[164] Alfred Radcliffe-Brown, "On the Concept of Function in Social Science", *American Anthropologist* 37, no. 3 (1935), 396-397; Robert Gordon, "Early social anthropology in South Africa. African Studies 49, no. 1 (1990), 16.

[165] Eileen Krige, *The Social System of the Zulus* (London: Longmans Green & Co, 1936).

[166] By 'Zulu', Krige was referring to the African population of what had formally been the Colony of Natal, which had by the 1930s become part of the Union of South Africa.

[167] See Krige, *The Social System*, particularly the sections on Zulu History and its Influence.

of *Olden Times*, Bryant's work is certain to have had a major influence in framing Krige's understanding of 'Zulu' society. For *The Social System of the Zulus*, Krige consulted travellers' testimony and also drew on Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama* for further evidence

According to Andrew Bank, Krige was instrumental in developing techniques which combined teaching with data supplied by African interlocutors in the field. Although she conducted substantial fieldwork throughout her career,[168] Krige's use of interlocutors in part stemmed from her difficulties in acquiring sufficient funds to conduct research trips.[169] The most prominent of her interlocutors was George Mahlobo, who is credited as a co-author of a study conducted by the pair in 1934.[170] According to Bank, Mahlobo, in addition to his own input on African culture and marriage practices, conducted a series of interviews with further African interlocutors. He submitted his findings to Krige in a series of letters.[171]

Part 3.5: Van Warmelo's Ethnographies

While anthropologists were describing African way of life and Bantu Studies scholars were debating the origins of Bantu-speaking groups, beginning in the 1920s, linguist turned ethnologist Nicolaas van Warmelo was collecting substantial ethnographic material on the Africans of the KwaZulu-Natal region at the behest of the colonial government. Having published a brief article in 1930,[172] van Warmelo elaborated on his findings in studies completed in 1935[173] and in 1937.[174] The significance of his approach was that it challenged the basis of the 'clan' structures Bryant had previously described. Unlike Bryant, who had puzzled together the history of individual 'clans' by consulting oral sources, van Warmelo's own ethnological categories were primarily drawn on the basis of linguistic analysis. Van Warmelo was also highly sceptical of Bryant's migration theory, which he criticised for relying on highly speculative evidence.[175]

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[168] For an assessment of Krige career, see Andrew Bank, *Pioneers of the Field*, chapter six.

[169] Andrew Bank, *Pioneers of the Field: South Africa's Women Anthropologists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 251-253.

[170] See George Mahlobo and Eileen Krige*, "*Transition from Childhood to Adulthood amongst the Zulus", *Bantu Studies* 8, no. 1 (1934), 157-191.

[171] Andrew Bank, *Pioneers of the Field*, 251-253.

[172] See Nicolaas Jacobus van Warmelo, "Early Bantu Ethnography from a Philological Point of View", *Journal of the International African Institute* 3, no. 1 (1930), 31-48.

[173] Nicolaas Jacobus van Warmelo, *Preliminary Survey of the Bantu Tribes of South Africa* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1935).

[174] See Nicolaas Jacobus van Warmelo, "Grouping and Ethnic History" in Isaac Schapera (ed.), *The Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa: an Ethnographic Survey* (Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1937), 45-46.

[175] Van Warmelo, "Grouping and Ethnic History", 45-46.

According to van Warmelo, each linguistic grouping could be matched with a specific geographic origin. At a time when the colonial government was pursuing a segregationist policy to protect white interests in urban settings, the establishment of fixed ethnological boundaries between groups presented a useful 'scientific' basis for forcing African groups to occupy designated 'homeland' territories.[176] Van Warmelo's approach also mirrored a Calvinist -influenced Afrikaner ideology: the belief that distinctive groups possessed their own pre-ordained place in the world.[177] His categorisation of African groups and their designated land would later serve as a basis for the Bantustan policy embraced by South Africa's apartheid government.

Despite van Warmelo's criticisms of *Olden Times*, Bryant's work remained the defining historical account of the late independent era for many decades after its initial publication. Indeed, *Olden Times* was not just significant as an historical study in and of itself, but also because it sanctified Bryant's account of the late independent era as the measure by which all future studies of the period were appraised. So authoritative was *Olden Times* that Bryant's methods and his use of sources were accepted without scrutiny, such that his findings were taken for granted by historians. As I discuss later, it was not until the late 1960s that Shula Marks began to scrutinise Bryant's work and his categorisation of African groups far more closely.

Part 3.6: Gluckman's Population Theory

As I have discussed previously, prior to the 1940s, research into African societies of the late independent era was largely undertaken by amateur historians – predominantly by missionaries and government officials. Early twentieth-century academic history had largely centred on the political relations between the white language groups of South Africa. While Afrikaner historians established accounts of the Afrikaner nationalist struggle, white historians tended to focus on the establishment of settler colonies in the regions of the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. The histories of African people remained largely overlooked and formed little more than contextual considerations in the narratives of Afrikaner struggle and the British's 'civilising mission'.[178]

By the 1940s and 1950s, however, social anthropologist Max Gluckman began to hypothesise how the Zulu kingdom had developed into a large and influential state during the early nineteenth-century.[179] Gluckman's theory, which he summarised in a 1960

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[176] Sara Pugach, "Carl Meinhof and the German Influence on Nicholas van Warmelo's Ethnological and Linguistic Writing, 1927-1935", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 30, no. 4 (2004), 827. 827

[177] Pugach, "The German Influence", 846.

[178] Natalie Swanepoel, Amanda Esterhuysen and Philip Bonner, *500 Years Rediscovered: Southern African Precedents and Prospects* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2008), Introduction.

[179] See for example Max Gluckman, "The Kingdom of the Zulu of South Africa" in Meyer Forte and Edward Evans-Pritchard (eds.), *African Political Systems* (London: Oxford University Press, 1940). Gluckman is widely credited with having founded the 'Manchester School' of anthropology during this period; an anthropological

article,[180] was based on the notion that the rise of the Zulu kingdom could be explained by specific sociological conditions. Taking a long view, Gluckman asserted that African groups were prone to disaggregate into smaller groups because this eased the strain on their production strategies. These pressures, he theorised, had been caused by rapid population growth during the late eighteenth-century. According to Gluckman, by 1800 resource shortages had brought about population pressures which had consequently driven Zwide's Ndwandwe and Dingiswayo's Mthethwa into conflict.[181] It was in the midst of this struggle that Shaka and his Zulu forces emerged as the region's dominant force – an outcome which Gluckman attributed to Shaka's military genius and his successful resolution of the population pressures.[182]

Gluckman relied on a combination of published written sources, witness accounts, and data which he acquired via fieldwork to inform his understanding of the south-east African past. In addition, he consulted census data gathered by van Warmelo.[183] His approach to fieldwork was characterised by an emphasis on practical experience. Indeed, reflecting on his experience of Zululand (the district of Ulundi), he commented: 'In this niche I could move freely seeking information and above all observing'.[184] It was by conducting fieldwork that Gluckman attempted to link the history of the Zulu kingdom with contemporary features of the African societies encountered through his extensive practical 'case studies'. His primary interest was in uncovering evidence of 'rebellion' (class struggle). In Gluckman's view, class struggle lay at the heart of the social dynamics of African groups.[185]

As Robert Gordon has noted, Gluckman's interest in African society was likely influenced by the political context of the 1920s and the 1930s. At this time English-speaking universities were engaging the issue of 'the native problem' while Afrikaans-speaking universities had become preoccupied by the prevailing 'poor white problem' – a context which made for vibrant debate.[186] Furthermore, although he was influenced by fellow anthropologist Branislaw Malinowski, Gluckman was critical of Malinowski's ideology of racial difference and his dismissal of the importance of history. Gluckman's personal political beliefs in conjunction with his ambitions to build on Malinowski's ideas must be regarded as a

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approach which emphasised practical field work as a form of case study. The approach was also influenced by Marxist thought and placed much emphasis on the notion of class struggle within societies.

[180] Max Gluckman, "The Rise of the Zulu Empire", *Scientific American 202*, no. 4. (1960), 157-169.

[181] Ibid, 162.
[182] Ibid, 163-168.
[183] See Max Gluckman, "Analysis of a social situation in modern Zululand", *Bantu Studies* 14, no. 1. (1940), 1-30.
[184] Robert Gordon, "On Burning One's Bridge: The Context of Gluckman's Zulu Fieldwork. With the previously unpublished chapter: "The Research Situation" (circa 1946)", *History in Africa* 41 (2014), 186.

[185] Max Gluckman, *Order and Rebellion in Tribal Africa* (London: Routledge. 1963), chapters 2, 3, and 6. Gluckman borrowed from Branislaw Malinowski's ideas about immersive fieldwork to inform his own approach.
[186] Gordon, "Burning One's Bridge", 159-160.

profound influence on his work.[187] But while Gluckman's approach for acquiring evidence was hugely influential in the field of anthropology, it was his population theory rather than his Manchester School[188] methodology which made a greater impression on historians. This was because Gluckman's socio-political take on the 'great disturbance' would later move historians to reconsider its underlying causes.

Part 3.7: Black Intellectual Marginality

As I have previously mentioned, in the aftermath of the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910, African history was largely excluded from the white-dominated academic institutions which had begun to emerge during the early 1920s. The African past was instead consigned to disciplines such as anthropology and Bantu Studies. This division persisted between the 1920s and the 1940s and beyond, but it was during this period that a class of educated black intellectuals began to emerge. Although many of the works of these black intellectuals were historical in their subject matter, because black writers were excluded from the academic realm, their productions were not recognised as constituting history. What makes the works produced by black intellectuals during this period significant is that they provide insight into what Bhekisizwe Peterson has called the 'black experience'; the educated black population's engagement with the African past.[189]

Among the prominent black intellectuals to emerge from the KwaZulu-Natal region was John Langalibalele Dube. Dube and his wife Nokutela Dube co-founded the first Zulu language newspaper *Ilanga Lase Natal* in April 1903 and this provided a platform for early intellectual figures such as Magema Fuze to develop their writing skills.[190] Active in brokering political alliances between the black and white groups between the 1920s and 1930s, Dube's own historical novella *Insila kaShaka* was published in 1930.[191] The work told the fictional story of an attendant of Shaka's and drew on the history of the Zulu kingdom to do so. It was also the first Zulu-language novella to be published.[192]

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[187] Gluckman aroused the suspicion of the settler community on account of the communist sympathies of his activist wife, Mary Brignoli. Gordon has further argued that anti-Semitism – Gluckman was Jewish – was a major factor in his banning from conducting further fieldwork in Zululand.

[188] The Manchester School is name which has been given to the branch of Anthropology pioneered by Gluckman, the distinctive features of which I have already discussed.

[189] Peterson, *African Intellectuals*, 218-223.

[190] Mokoena, "A Discursive Biography", 212-219.

[191] John Langalibalele Dube, *Insila kaShaka* (Pinetown: Mariannhill Mission Press, 1930). Dube's work was translated into English in 1951. John Langalibalele Dube, *Jeqe, the body servant of King Tshaka*, trans. by J Boxwell (Alice: Lovedale Press, 1951 [1930]).

[192] The likes of Shula Marks and Heather Hughes have written more extensively on Dube. See Shula Marks, "The ambiguities of dependence: John L. Dube of Natal", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 1, no. 2 (1975), 162-180; Heather Hughes, "Doubly Elite: Exploring the Life of John Langalibalele Dube", *Journal of Southern*

Some of the most prolific African intellectuals active during the first half of the twentieth-century were Dhlomo brothers Herbert Isaac Ernest and Rolfes Robert Reginald. Each worked as journalists for *Ilanga Lase Natal* and Johannesburg newspaper *The Bantu World*,[193] and drew on the history of the Zulu kingdom to inform their social commentary. R.R.R. Dhlomo's 1928 *An Africa Tragedy*,[194] a work which described the difficulties faced by Africans (particularly women) in the urban colonial setting of Johannesburg, became the first novella by an African to be published in English.[195] In addition, R.R.R. Dhlomo produced five historical works on the Zulu kings.[196] H. I. E. Dhlomo, on the other hand, was a prolific poet and playwright who used his theatrical productions (in both English and Zulu) to critique the marginalisation of Africans living under the colonial regime.[197]

Further notable African intellectuals active during this period included the linguist and writer Solomon Plaatje, author Thomas Mofolo, and the author and poet Benedict Wallet Vilakazi. Plaatje's historical romance novel *Mhudi*[198] was the first by an African to be written English. Completed in 1919, it was not published until 1930 – two years after R.R.R. Dhlomo's 1928 *An Africa Tragedy*.[199] Mofolo's *Chaka*,[200] first published in 1925, was an historical fiction of Shaka's life and career and was the first novel to be written in Sotho. Vilakazi, in addition to writing Zulu fiction and poetry, became the first African to acquire a Ph.D. following his studies at The University of the Witwatersrand. As Peterson has

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African Studies 27, no. 3 (2001), 445-458. See also Heather Hughes, *First President: A life of John Dube, founding president of the ANC* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2011).

[193] R.R.R. Dhlomo would later serve as the editor of both papers, with H.I.E. Herbert serving as assistant editor to *Ilanga Lase Natal*.

[194] Rolfes Robert Reginald, *An African Tragedy* (Alice: Lovedale Press, 1928).

[195] Shelley Skikna, "Son of the Sun and Son of the World: the Life and Works of R.R.R. Dhlomo" (Master's dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1984), 34-35.

[196] Rolfes Robert Reginald Dhlomo, *UDingane kaSenzangakhona* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1936); Rolfes Robert Reginald Dhlomo, *UShaka* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1937); Rolfes Robert Reginald Dhlomo, *Umpand* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1938); Rolfes Robert Reginald Dhlomo, *UCetshwayo kaMpande* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1952); Rolfes Robert Reginald Dhlomo, *UDinuzulu* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1968).

[197] Peterson, *African Intellectuals*, 218-228.

[198] Solomon Plaatje, *Mhudi* (Alice: Lovedale Press, 1930).
[199] For a detailed analysis of *Mhudi*, see Timothy Couzens, "The Dark Side of the World: Sol Plaatje's "Mhudi"", *English Studies in Africa* 14, no. 2 (1971), 187-203.

[200] Thomas Mofolo, *Chaka* (Morija: Morija Sesuto Book Depot, 1925). The work was later translated into English. Thomas Mofolo, *Chaka*, trans. by Frederick Hugh Dutton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1931 [1925]).

observed, Vilakazi's works were an important site for the production of Zulu nationalism in the face of 'progressive' settler liberalism during the 1930s.[201]

The reason vernacular texts are of historiographical importance is because they reveal something about how Africans were approaching the production of their own history. As I discuss in greater detail later (specifically in relation to Peterson's work), because vernacular writings were being produced outside of the white-dominated academies, they were not subjected to the disciplinary conventions which were shaping the production of white scholarship at this time.[202] Critical readings of vernacular works thus provide insight into how Africans were constructing the past in ways which shaped their identity formation within the colonial context. In addition, as Hamilton has argued, missionary and colonial interpretations of African concepts relayed in oral and in performative modes changed the meanings of these concepts. According to Hamilton, further research is awaited on how missionaries fixed their interpretations of translations in written forms which reshaped and even effaced vernacular meanings.[203]

Part 3.8: Killie Campbell and the James Stuart Papers

Between the 1930s and the early 1960s, much of the research being conducted into the Africans of the KwaZulu-Natal region was undertaken by ethnologists like van Warmelo and anthropologists such as Krige.[204] During this period, Africans were largely regarded as though they did not possess history prior to the time of Shaka's reign. Following the publication of *Olden Times* in 1929, little further research had been conducted on the period prior to colonialism. One of the few exceptions was the Afrikaans-language journal *Historiese Studies* which was based out of Pretoria University. But while the journal was operational between 1939 and 1949, its activity appears to have ceased following the onset of apartheid in 1948.[205]

While the historical research being conducted during this period was minimal, the 'collecting' of evidence was not. A prominent figure in collecting oral and written material alike was Margaret Roach 'Killie' Campbell. As early as 1912, Campbell and her father, the politician Marshall Campbell, had instigated an essay writing competition which the aim of acquiring information on 'Zulu Tribal History'.[206] Further essay competitions took place in 1942 and in 1950. These latter two competitions were adjudicated by Daniel Mck. Malcolm, the chief inspector of Native Education. Contestants were required to write about 'tribes':

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[201] Peterson, *African Intellectuals*, 218-228.

[202] Ibid, 218-228.

[203] Hamilton, "The Persistent Precolonial", 6-7.

[204] As I discuss later, a number of African authors, poets, and playwrights did begin to draw on the history of the late independent era within their works during this period. As scholars such as Bhekisizwe Peterson have argued, these works should not be excluded from the label of 'academic' productions. See Peterson, *African Intellectuals*.

[205] Swanepoel et al, *500 Years Rediscovered*, 2-3.

[206] See Jenni Duggan, "*Killie Campbell: 1881-1965*", *Library News*, no.23 (1981).

their origin; their history; the genealogy of their chief; prominent members; and their present locality were all regarded as points of interest. Notably, contestants were encouraged to seek out African informants as their sources in place of written documents.[207]

In Campbell's view, African men and women possessed valuable historical knowledge which was in danger of being lost. By initiating her essay competitions, Campbell sought to record remembrances and to preserve them as items of historical and cultural significance.[208] In many respects, Campbell's attitude to the preservation of sources echoed that of Bird's and Chase's. By 1945, Campbell's personal collection of written sources totalled an estimated 20, 000 books.[209] It was also around this time that she came into the possession of James Stuart's papers, whose writings she had purchased from his widow.[210] Sometime hereafter, having entered Campbell's curatorship, Stuart's papers assumed the status of a formal archival collection (the James Stuart Papers). It was following Campbell's death in 1965 that her collections were entrusted to the University of Natal.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the historiography on the late independent era as it has developed from the time of earliest known written historical productions until the early 1960s. I have argued that a break in the historiography began to take place following the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910. It was at this time that a set of academic conventions was developed which excluded oral sources from consideration as historical evidence. By the 1920s, the African past had become divorced from the study of history and African intellectuals had been excluded from the white-dominate academies. My discussion of the historiography in this chapter raises questions about the dynamics of change and whether or not this break in the historiography constitutes a paradigm shift. In my view, the break I have identified does not signify the point at which an epistemic rupture was set in motion, but rather, it marks the point at which a paradigm shift which was initiated far earlier was fully realised.

The underlying rupture corresponds with the arrival of British colonists in the KwaZulu-Natal region beginning with the hunter-traders between the 1820s and the 1840s. Prior to this context, historical productions within the region were made by the local African population

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[207] Tomohiro Kambayashi, "History Learning and Political Consciousness: Examination of Zulu Historical Writings" (Archive and Public Culture Workshop Paper, University of Cape Town, 2019), 17-18.

[208] See Killie Campbell Africana Library, Zulu Tribal History Competition 1912 papers, Collection Number 6098.
[209] See Duggan, "*Killie Campbell".*

[210] Hamilton, "Life of the JSA", 330- 331. Stuart's original handwritten notes are accessible to historians at the Killie Campbell Africana Library.

in oral form. According to Hamilton, a point she discussed in her 1985 master's dissertation,[211] in African societies, the transmission of oral texts was the primary means of circulating and establishing new ideas. History, she added, was an important site for ideological restructuring. In this respect, oral history was subject to reproduction and reinterpretation in accordance with the changing political context as it evolved over time.

The significance of these points is that they help illustrate the differences between the epistemological approach taken by Africans for producing history and the approach which was introduced by the colonists. Beginning with the hunter-traders, colonists' productions of history took a written form which introduced a set of pre-existing assumptions about written texts to the African setting. These included the Western positivist notion of the 'objective' historical fact; that once a fact was recorded in a written text, it would remain unchanging over time. In contrast with malleable oral histories subject to ideological renegotiation and reproduction over time, written histories established a comparatively rigid set of ideas about the past which drew on 'primary' written sources which were uncritically accepted as historical fact.

My review of the historiography has enabled me to identity the rise of several threads of history within the historiography; each of which appears to be linked to the onset of colonialism and to have contributed over the long term to the break in the post-1910 historiography. The first of the historical threads I have identified is the 'records regime'. As this chapter has shown, beginning in the middle of the nineteenth-century, record compilers Chase and Bird were beginning to establish a European framework for historical knowledge production in the Colony of Natal. The work of these compilers was influential in foregrounding certain written documents (in place of oral evidence) as the essential source materials for the production of history.

The second strand of history I have identified is the 'oral history thread'. As my review of the historiography has helped make clear, between the onset of colonialism in the KwaZulu-Natal region and the 1920s, African interlocutors were regarded as important sources of historical evidence. As far back as the 1860s, Shepstone was drawing on African oral evidence to inform native policy in the Colony of Natal. By the 1890s, Stuart had begun to draw on African interlocutors for historical knowledge. During the early nineteenth-century, the likes of Stuart, Bryant, and Fuze were all drawing on African oral evidence. It was not until the establishment of the disciplines of anthropology and Bantu Studies in the early 1920s that African interlocutors were excluded from the discipline of history.

The third thread I have identified is the 'devastation thread'. This strand is characterised by a number of associated stereotypes. These include the notion that African societies prior to

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[211] Carolyn Hamilton, "Ideology, Oral Traditions and the Struggle for Power in the Early Zulu kingdom" (Master's dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1985). See chapter one.

Shaka's reign had remained static in time; that Shaka's reign had initiated a destructive 'revolution' across the region; and that much of the land in the KwaZulu-Natal region had been emptied prior to the arrival of colonists. Elements of this thread of date back to the hunter-traders Nathaniel Isaacs and Henry Francis Fynn. By the mid-nineteenth-century, these stereotypes had been incorporated into amateur histories of the late independent era. By 1929, Bryant's authoritative *Olden Times* had established them within an academic setting.

It was thus in the aftermath of 1910 and particularly during the early 1920s that the epistemological changes first introduced by the onset of colonialism during nineteenth-century, along with the three threads of history which were developed over the intervening period, completely displaced the previously dominant oral source-based approach for the production of African history. Indeed, while not much is known about the African knowledge practices which existed prior to the onset of colonialism, my review of the historiography suggests that these approaches must have changed considerably over the course of the second half of the nineteenth-century. It was only following recent developments in the literature that present-day scholars have begun to consider the African forms of knowledge production which pre-dated colonialism in greater depth.

A further point I would like to raise concerns the inadequacy of the existing terminology for discussing non-written sources as part of a historical discourse. To discuss these sources as part of the 'historical literature' is problematic because the non-written form of these productions is at odds with the conventional notion of 'literature' which specifically refers to written texts. Furthermore, while I have referred to these productions as part of the 'historiography' throughout this chapter, historiographies are themselves conventionally associated with the production of written history. Neither of these terms is thus entirely suitable for an analysis of historical productions across both written and non-written forms. This implication of this in turn is that a further breakdown of the boundaries between written and non-written sources is necessary if oral evidence is achieve the same status as written texts.

Chapter 2

Historiography on the KwaZulu-Natal region from the early 1960s until the late 1970s

Introduction

In chapter two I examine the literature on south-east Africa's late independent era which was produced between the early 1960s and the late 1970s. I argue that three distinctive schools of thought were developed within the historiography during this period and that each was shaped by the growing impact the decolonisation of much of Africa was beginning to have on the production of history. It was during this period that African history was 'rediscovered' and that the study of the socio-political transformation of African polities re-entered the discipline of history. Methodological developments also saw scholars begin to systematically mine 'traditional' sources for historical facts. In addition, they began to draw on Marxist theory as a tool of analysis.

Chapter two is divided into three parts. In part one I discuss the emergence of the historiological approach; a school of thought which advocated for the scientific analysis of oral sources so that they could be mined for historical evidence. The approach was pioneered by the work of ethnographer Jan Vansina between the 1950s and the early 1960s, but was only adopted in the south-east African context during the early 1970s. I also discuss the development of the Mfecane thread. This thread of scholarship was initially triggered by the work of John Omer-Cooper, who conceived of the Zulu kingdom's rise during the 'devastations' of the early nineteenth-century as evidence of the pioneering nation-building feats of King Shaka. The study of African state-formation and trade at Delagoa Bay stemmed from challenges to Omer-Cooper's work. I also examine how the publication of *The Oxford History of South Africa* in 1969 encouraged more critical and cross-sectional histories of southern Africa. Lastly, I examine how Shula Marks began re-examining Alfred Thomas Bryant's work during the late 1960s.

In part two, I discuss how by the early 1970s, historians were beginning to incorporate Marxist influences into their study of pre-capitalist African societies. Historical materialism consequently developed into a popular approach among Africanists as analyses of the mode of production became a recognised means of engaging structural change in pre-capitalist African societies. I also examine how breakthroughs in the field of archaeology began to impact the study of the south-east African past during this period. These breakthroughs enabled archaeologists to begin assessing ecological factors to see whether they substantiated the population argument first put forward by Max Gluckman three decades prior.

In the third part of this chapter I discuss a number of materialist-influenced studies of the late independent era. It was at this time, between the mid-1970s and the mid-1980s, that the study of African state-formation was at its height. Some scholars began to integrate ecological evidence into their studies, whereas others, such as Philip Bonner, theorised that socio-political development was associated with a transformation in the mode of production. It was also during this period that the established trade theory was extensively refashioned by David Hedges, who was also the first historian to begin drawing on the James Stuart Papers as a source of evidence. I have examined the trade hypothesis in particular detail because the debate has recently resurfaced in the historical scholarship.

Part 1: Orality, Achievement, and State-Formation

Part 1.1: Vansina and the Structuralist Paradigm

During the 1950s and the 1960s, an important shift in global politics was taking place. In the aftermath of World War II, nationalist movements across Africa had begun to develop far more strongly as political self-determination was recognised as a human right. [1] This period also saw Pan-Africanism develop strongly, particularly in the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Caribbean islands.[2] As colonial governments struggled to supress the contradictions of imperialism and nationalism,[3] a succession of organised nationalist uprisings took place across the continent. In the south-east African context, the impact of decolonisation triggered renewed academic interest in the history of the period prior to colonialism. By the early 1960s, the revival of south-east African archaeology and the 'discovery' of Bantu history had begun to take place.[4] It was in this context that academics both in Africa and abroad began to reconsider the basis of the existing research methodologies.

By the 1960s, Jan Vansina, a medievalist who had accepted a post as an anthropological researcher in the Belgian Congo (Democratic Republic of Congo), began to come to greater recognition. In 1965, four years after its initial publication, Vansina's seminal study *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology*[5] was

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[1] Redie Bereketeab, "Self-Determination and Secession: African Challenges" in Redie Bereketeab (ed.), *Self-Determination and Secession in Africa: The post-colonial state* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 6-10.
[2] Ibid, 6-10.

[3] Jack Goody, "Decolonisation in Africa: National Politics and the Village Politics", *The Cambridge Journal of Anthropology* 7, no. 2 (1982), 2-24.
[4] Martin Hall, "'Hidden History': Iron Age Archaeology in South Africa" in Peter Robertshaw (ed.), *A History of African Archaeology* (London: James Currey Ltd, 1990), 67.

[5] See Jan Vansina, *De la tradition orale*: *essai* de *méthode historique* (Tervuren: Musée royal de l'Afrique Centrale, 1961).

translated into English.[6] The study outlined Vansina's novel approach for the critical analysis of oral 'traditions' as forms of historical evidence. Vansina had conducted fieldwork in central Africa during the early 1950s having recognised that there were no written documents from the period prior to colonialism on which to draw for historical evidence. This led him to begin collecting evidence from oral testimony. According to Vansina, oral 'traditions' contain historical evidence which be drawn out provided the tradition in question is subjected to a systematic analysis.[7] Although far more accessible to Africanists following his work's translation, it took several years for Vansina's ideas to become established in the south-east African context.

Although he had no direct connection to the decolonisation movement, Vansina's historiological methodology helped re-establish that Africans possessed a history. His foremost observation was that history continued to exist and to be reproduced outside of written forms. Oral 'traditions', he asserted, were categorically different from written documents and possessed their own set of methodological problems which had never previously been investigated. The most significant of these issues was that interlocutors who transmitted 'traditional' evidence frequently had little to no connection with the context in which their information had originally been produced. This, Vansina observed, was one of the reasons why oral sources had long been ignored as historical sources in favour of written documents.[8]

Vansina asserted that 'traditional' evidence could be of much greater use to historians if it was subjected to systematic scrutiny. It was for this purpose that he sought to establish a methodology for extracting 'facts' from the data he collected.[9] In particular, Vansina's methodology emphasised two points. The first of these was the analysis of the interlocutor in relation to the oral text. In this respect, Vansina sought to investigate the context in which an oral source had been produced. In addition, he sought to identify the intentions behind the interlocutor's transmission of the oral text. The second was Vansina's attempt to develop a directory of the different forms an oral text could take. He sought to characterise the various features or structures of different forms of oral texts. Poetry, for example, possessed a different form to that of commentary on socio-cultural practices. An analysis of form, Vansina urged, enabled valuable content to be distinguished from data which was of little historical consequence. Oral texts, in this respect, could be mined for historical data.[10]

Although Vansina's approach helped pioneer the field of ethno-history, by the 1970s, his study was drawing strong criticism on account of his highly literal interpretation of its

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[6] See Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology*, trans. Hope Wright (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965 [1961]).
[7] Ibid, 8-19.
[8] Loc. cit.
[9] Ibid, 31-46.
[10] Ibid, 114-140.

evidence. Foremost among these detractors were structuralist anthropologists influenced by Claude Lévi-Strauss. These anthropologists argued that Vansina had failed to interrogate ideology or symbolism, components which were vital for interrogating the meaning of language.[11] Furthermore, by the early 1980s, literary theorists were beginning to investigate how texts could be read in such a way as to expose meanings which ran counter to their intended meaning. As I discuss later, Carolyn Hamilton later integrated these ideas, along with Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony, into her own critical examination of oral sources.[12]

Part 1.2: Omer-Cooper and the Mfecane

At least initially, the impact of Vansina's work was not widely felt in the south-east African context. This was because oral evidence was still perceived as falling within the preserve of anthropological study. But while oral sources continued to be overlooked as sources of historical evidence, interest in African history had nevertheless begun to experience a revival. In a context shaped by the ongoing process of decolonisation, this revival coincided with a shift in the treatment of the African past. Not only were historians being drawn back to the study of the Zulu kingdom prior to the onset of colonialism, but they were beginning to consider its achievements rather than its supposed atrocities.

African achievement was an important theme in the work of John Omer-Cooper's influential 1966 study *The Zulu Aftermath*.[13] In sharp contrast with a 1969 study by E.V. Walter,[14] which described the power structure of the Zulu kingdom as a 'regime of terror' characterised by 'fear and terror', Omer-Cooper depicted Shaka and the Zulu kingdom in a positive light. Drawing on Gluckman's population theory, a hypothesis he uncritically accommodated into his own study, Omer-Cooper's break from the canonised conception of the 'great disturbance' was to depict Shaka and his Zulu forces as the triumphant protagonists of the region's history. In his view, Shaka was a pioneering nation builder who had saved his people from the Ndwandwe threat and all but singlehandedly established the Zulu kingdom as a hegemonic force.[15] Furthermore, unlike Theal or Bryant, each of whom

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[11]Lévi-Strauss pioneered the integration of anthropology and structural linguistics. See for example Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, trans. Claire Jacobson and Nrooke Grundfest Schoepf (New York: Basic Books, 1963 [1958]).

[12] See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (eds.) (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971).

[13] John Omer-Cooper, *The Zulu Aftermath: A Nineteenth-Century Revolution in Bantu Africa* (London: Longmans, 1966).
[14] See Eugene Victor Walter, *Terror and Resistance: A Study of Political Violence, with Case Studies of Some Primitive African Communities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

had discussed the 'devastation' as part of the broader history of the south-east African region, Omer-Cooper treated it as single historic episode.[16]

Rebranding the 'devastations' as the 'Mfecane'[17] and presenting its events as separate from colonial intrusions into the region, Omer-Cooper argued that although state-formation in south-east Africa had first been initiated during the eighteenth-century, it had reached a 'revolutionary climax' during Shaka's reign.[18] According to Omer-Cooper, the upheaval of the Mfecane was symptomatic of an underlying political transition toward the formation of larger scale polities. It was not until the 'political and military genius' of Shaka, however, that the development of the 'centralised kingdom' in place of the 'small clan-based tribe' was realised.[19] The effect of Omer-Cooper's study was that it presented a newly positive take on the upheavals of the early nineteenth-century which broke with the mainstream representations which had preceded it.[20]

Oblivious to the developments being made in the analysis of oral sources, Omer-Cooper predominantly looked to 'existing published material' to supply his evidence.[21] His approach to these sources was largely uncritical. Rather than question the evidence for the Mfecane, Omer-Cooper augmented and reinforce the established narrative. Bryant's *Olden Times* and his *History of the Zulu and Neighbouring Tribes* feature prominently among Omer-Cooper's footnotes.[22] He also drew heavily on Isaacs' *Travels* and Fynn's *Diary*,[23] accounts he accepted without subjecting to critical readings. Finally, Omer-Cooper sought to incorporate the data of numerous archival sources. These included the papers of the Methodist

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[15] Omer-Cooper, *The Zulu Aftermath*, 24-36

[16] Ibid, 97-88.

[17] As John Wright noted in his Ph.D. thesis, the term 'Mfecane' had seen intermittent use as early as the 1920s, but had not been standardised in its meaning prior to Omer-Cooper's use of the term. See John Wright, "The Dynamics of Power and Conflict in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu Region of the Late 18th and Early 19th Centuries: A Critical Reconstruction" (Ph.D. thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1989), 97-98.

[18] Omer-Cooper, *The Zulu Aftermath*, 1-8, 24-37.

[19] Ibid, 5-6.

[20] John Wright, Beyond the Concept of the 'Zulu Explosion'" in Carolyn Hamilton, *The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1995), 107; Elizabeth Eldredge, "Sources of Conflict in Southern Africa c. 1800-1830: The 'Mfecane' Reconsidered" in Carolyn Hamilton, *The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1995), 123.

[21] Omer-Cooper, *The Zulu Aftermath*, 7.

[22] See Alfred Thomas Bryant, *History of the Zulu and Neighbouring Tribes* (Cape Town: Struik, 1954).

[23] This was the *Diary* in full. See Henry Francis Fynn, Daniel McK. Malcolm and James Stuarts (eds.), *The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn: Compiled from Original Sources* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter & Shooter, 1950).

Missionary Society housed in London, the Société des Missions Évangéliques de Paris, and the Archivo Historico Ultramarino located in Lisbon.[24]

Omer-Cooper's study was at the forefront of a new thread of historical scholarship – the Mfecane thread. Like the historiological approach pioneered by Vansina, the origin of the Mfecane thread was rooted in the influences that decolonisation was having on academic scholarship at this time. But where the historiological approach welcomed the analysis of oral 'traditions' as a tool for extracting historical evidence, Omer-Cooper ignored oral evidence in favour of reinterpreting the narrative established by existing written histories and the 'primary' sources on which they were based. Significantly, where works such as *Olden Times* had previously been recognised as highly authoritative historical syntheses, by the time of *The Zulu Aftermath*'s publication, Bryant's use of oral evidence had led scholars like Omer-Cooper to treat his work as though it was itself a 'primary' source.

Part 1.3: The Oxford History of South Africa

In 1969 Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson published the first volume of *The Oxford History of South Africa*,[25] a work which covered the history of South Africa from earliest times until 1870. The volume was significant because it critically reengaged the evidence on which the stereotypical narrative of Shaka and the Zulu kingdom was based. Following Omer-Cooper's study, Wilson's and Thompson's work was among the first scholarly productions to forward a critical view of colonial perspectives of South African history. Their critique also coincided with the development of historical materialism – a methodology which, as I discuss further in part two of this chapter, introduced a new approach to the study of African history.

According to Wilson and Thompson, the primary challenge of writing a revisionist history was that it was difficult to produce an account which recognised and offered an equal assessment of the diverse origins of South Africa's numerous peoples, their languages, their socio-political systems, and their ideologies.[26] The pair argued that previous histories had predominantly focused on the history of single groups in isolation. Furthermore, although a 'plural society', Wilson and Thompson recognised that South Africa's history had been dominated by the experiences of the region's white inhabitants, while other groups had predominantly been engaged only in relation to white political, religious, and cultural interests. The significance of Wilson's and Thompson's study was that they intended, as far as possible, to produce an

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[24] Notably, as I discuss later, Alan Smith would later consult the *Archivo Historico Ultramarino* as a source for investigating the significance of trade at Delagoa Bay.

[25] See Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson, *The Oxford History of South Africa* 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

[26] See Wilson and Thompson, *Oxford History,* Preface.

'interrogative' and more cross-sectional historical overview of South Africa than any previous study.[27]

In a chapter conducting a broad survey of the history of Nguni-speakers prior to 1870, Wilson observed there were many socio-structural similarities between different Nguni-speaking groups. Drawing predominantly on Theal's *Records of South-Eastern Africa*, W. J. D. Moodie's *Ten Years in South Africa*,[28] and Bryant's *Olden Times* for her evidence, Wilson observed that the practices of cattle keeping, the homestead structure, and the symbolism and divination practices of Nguni-speaking groups had much in common not only with one another, but also with those of Sudanese, Ugandan, and Kenyan groups.[29] Wilson further concluded that Nguni dialects were being spoken along the eastern coast of Africa by 1593. Indeed, Xhosa, Thembu, and Mpondomise oral traditions recalled that each of these groups had congregated along the upper Mzimvubu River several generations prior to that date. Wilson was, meanwhile, reluctant to accept Bryant's migration theory on account of insufficient evidence. She did, however, speculate that several waves of migrations likely took place which caused the populations of Nguni-speaking groups to amalgamate at numerous different points in time.[30]

A chapter written by Thompson is also worthy of attention.[31] Divided into three parts, Thompson examined the pre-1870 histories of the Zulu kingdom, the Voortrekker republic, and the Colony of Natal. Although he gave a brief overview of the formation of each of these proto-states, the most significant aspect of Thompson's chapter was that it touched on the Mfecane argument which had been reinvigorated three years prior by John Omer-Cooper with the publication of his book *The Zulu Aftermath*. Beginning with the writings of the hunter-traders, Thompson tracked the numerous explanations for the Mfecane which had developed in the literature chronologically, while also conducting a critical assessment of each. [32]

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[27] Ibid, Preface.

[28] See John Wedderburn Dunbar Moodie, *Ten Years in South Africa*: *Including a particular description of the wild sports of that country* (London: Richard Bentley, 1835).

[29] See Monica Wilson, "The Nguni People" in Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford History of South Africa* 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 75-130.

[30] Ibid, see 75-130.

[31] See Leonard Thompson, "Co-operation and conflict: The Zulu kingdom and Natal" in Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford History of South Africa* 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 334-390.

[32] Thompson cautioned against taking the writings of Fynn and Isaacs at face value. Fynn's *Diary*, he remarked, had been 'heavily worked over by the author, with the help of others' such that it could not be uncritically accepted a constituting a witness account. Isaacs' *Travels*, he added, appeared to possess 'many distortions' while it also 'stressed the sensational', which rendered much of its testimony dubious. See Thompson, "Co-operation and conflict", 337.

Drawing extensively but also critically on Bryant's *Olden Times*, Thompson was quick to dismiss the longstanding settler assumption that white civilisation had inspired the socio-political revolution which took place in the KwaZulu-Natal region during Dingiswayo's reign as king of the Mthethwa. According to Thompson, this notion had been uncritically reproduced by Bryant without an evidential basis.[33] Thompson was also sceptical of Wilson's assertion that competition for trade between Nguni-speaking groups might have triggered the Mfecane.[34] Arguing that 'Portuguese power in the Delagoa Bay area was at a low ebb during the late eighteenth-century and the early nineteenth-century', Thompson added that there was insufficient evidence to support the claim that trade had reached a substantial scale. Indeed, although he did not rule trade out as a possible contributory consideration, Thompson concluded that trade was unlikely to have been 'the crucial factor behind political change.'[35] On the other hand, Thompson did appear to regard Gluckman's population pressure hypothesis (also adopted by Omer-Cooper) as a plausible explanation for the Mfecane. Nevertheless, he recognised that the theory was based on 'tenuous' demographic data which was unlikely to become more substantive over time.[36]

Part 1.4: The Trade Theory

By the late 1960s a new generation of South African academics had begun to look to the late independent period to explain the phenomenon they termed 'state-formation' in south-east Africa.[37] Where Omer-Cooper's work had focused on historicising the wars and migrations of the Mfecane, by the late 1960s, historians were beginning to consider the broader significance of the period in which the Mfecane had occurred. Although it was accepted that wars and migrations had taken place, historians were beginning to view these events as part of a broader process of political development in south-east Africa between late eighteenth-century and the early nineteenth-century. Indeed, rather than focus on the Zulu kingdom, historians were beginning to consider socio-political development within the KwaZulu-Natal region at large.

A 1969 paper by Alan Smith proposed an alternative underlying cause for the shift toward state-formation – a trade hypothesis.[38] Building on a theory first proposed by

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[33] Thompson, "Co-operation and conflict", 338-340. As Thompson recognised, this idea could be detected in the writing of Theophilus Shepstone and Bryant.

[34] See Monica Wilson, "Divine Kings and the 'breath of men'" (The Frazer Lecture, University of Cambridge, 1959).

[35] Thompson, "Co-operation and conflict", 340.

[36] Ibid, 340-341.

[37] See Natalie Swanepoel, Amanda Esterhuysen and Philip Bonner, *500 Years Rediscovered: Southern African Precedents and Prospects* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2008), 4-5.

[38] See Alan Smith, "The Trade of Delagoa Bay as a factor in Nguni politics, 1750-1835" in Leonard Thompson (ed.), *African Societies in Southern Africa* (London: Heinemann, 1969), 171-190. Smith appears to have conceived of trade as an equal exchange of material goods. It is unclear, however, whether or not African

Monica Wilson,[39] Smith argued that Mthethwa-Ndwandwe conflict, which he pinpointed as the beginning of the Mfecane, could at least to some extent be attributed to the contending efforts of these polities to monopolise the ivory trade. According to Smith, the ivory trade had expanded substantially during the second half of the eighteenth-century. Rather than attribute state-formation to Shaka's leadership as Omer-Cooper had done, in Smith's view, it was the growth of the trade and the increase in the flow of prestigious goods into the KwaZulu-Natal region which had initiated the socio-political development of 'northern Nguni' groups.[40]

According to Smith, the 'principle source of information' on trade at Delagoa Bay between the sixteenth- and nineteenth-centuries was the writings of European travellers who had passed through the region.[41] For data on the 'interior',[42] Smith primarily relied on the testimony of the hunter-traders, whom he referred to as 'primary sources'.[43] In addition, Smith appears to have regarded Bryant's *Olden Times* as a primary source given it had supposedly been constructed from 'traditional evidence'.[44] In addition, Smith looked to works drawing on unpublished Portuguese archival records produced by the Portuguese traders and administrators who had been based at the fort of Lourenço Marques.[45] Lastly, he recognised the records of the Austrian Asiatic Company of Trieste, which had traded at Delagoa Bay between 1777 and 1781, as 'the most systematic recording of the trade in Delagoa Bay during the latter half of the eighteenth-century.'[46]

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groups of the late independent era conceived of trade in the way Smith presumed. For example, it is possible that inequitable exchanges took place between two groups. In such a scenario, a weaker group might have traded with a more powerful group as a means of acknowledging the political ascendency of a more powerful group; in exchange for which the smaller group would receive a small acknowledgement as a reciprocal gesture.

[39] See Wilson, "Divine Kings".
[40] By 'northern Nguni' Smith was referring to the Nguni-speakers which inhabited the area of present-day KwaZulu-Natal.
[41] Smith, "The Trade of Delagoa Bay", 172.

[42] Although Smith failed to specify what he meant by the 'interior', given he argued that trade was taking place between the Zulu kingdom and the Mabhudu, it can be taken that he was referring to the northern and western areas of present-day KwaZulu-Natal.
[43] Smith, "The Trade of Delagoa Bay", 172. Smith listed Henry Francis Fynn and Allen Gardiner among his footnotes, while he also referenced John Bird's *Annals of Natal*, volume 2, as a source.
[44] Smith, "The Trade of Delagoa Bay", 172.
[45] See for example Alexandre Lobato, *História da Fundação de Lourenço Marques* (Lisbon: Edições da Revista Lusitânia, 1948); Caetano Montez, *Descobrimento e Fundacão de Lourenço Marquez* (Lisbon: Minerva Central Editora, 1948).

[46] Smith, "The Trade of Delagoa Bay", 172. Specifically, Smith was referring to records utilised by Lobato in *História da Fundacão.*

The ivory trade had seen African groups exchange their ivory stock for beads and copper goods procured by Europeans.[47] According to Smith, Rhonga (Tonga) groups acquired a substantial proportion of their ivory by trading with Nguni-speaking groups.[48] The ivory trade, Smith concluded, had thus connected the western interior of present-day KwaZulu-Natal with the Portuguese trading base at Delagoa Bay. This meant that the Nguni-speaking groups eager to acquire European goods would have traded northwards toward the Portuguese base.[49] Trade relations between Nguni-speaking groups and Rhonga groups, he added, were also well-substantiated by the evidence of travellers' accounts.

According to Smith, the Mthethwa-Ndwandwe conflict could at least to some extent be attributed to Dingiswayo's and Zwide's rivalling attempts to control the ivory trade during the early nineteenth-century, by which time it had begun to decline in scale.[50] Indeed, Smith asserted that the ivory trade had played a major part in the growth and the consolidation of the Ndwandwe polity and the Ngwane polity. This, he suggested, was because the competition to secure trade brought about increased militarisation. In addition, the economic advantages of trade facilitated wealth accumulation and enabled chiefs to reward their supporters with traded goods. This in turn enabled them to attract greater followings thus facilitating political centralisation.[51]

As the strength of Nguni-speaking groups grew during the early nineteenth-century, the Ngwane and Ndwandwe aggressively expanded their positions to reinforce their connection to the ivory trade.[52] Indeed, Smith argued that the economic incentive to trade had also motivated the expansionism of Dingiswayo's Mthethwa. Citing *Olden Times*, Smith argued that their conquest corresponded with an axis running from the south-east toward the west and the north – the areas in closer proximity to the Delagoa Bay trade networks. Smith also noted that Dingiswayo had formed an alliance with the Mabhudu by the early 1810s, an alliance which would have facilitated trade between the two groups.[53]

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[47] Smith discussed this point further in a later article. See Alan Smith, "Delagoa Bay and the Trade of South-Eastern Africa" in Richard Gray and David Birmingham (eds.), *Pre-Colonial African Trade: Essays on Trade in Central and Eastern Africa before 1900* (London: University of Oxford Press, 1970), 272-273, 286.

[48] Smith, "Nguni politics", 176. By 'Rhonga', Smith referred to the closely associated cultural-linguistic groups which inhabited both the northern and southern banks of Delagoa Bay. The groups included the likes of the Tembe, Mabhudu, and the Mfumo. Small quantities of gold and tin were also known to have been traded since the period of the Dutch control of Delagoa Bay in the 1720s. These metals appear to have been acquired by the Rhonga groups via trade with groups inhabiting the north-eastern Transvaal area.

[49] Smith, "Nguni politics", 177-179. Smith appears to have regarded the term Nguni as a broad ethnic category characterised by a similarities in language. By 'Northern Nguni' he refers to a geographical location rather than a distinctive ethnic group.

[50] Zwide was of course the leader of the Ndwandwe at the time of the conflict with the Mthethwa.

[51] Smith, "Nguni politics", 180-184.

[52] The Ngwane sought to dominate the territory north of the Phongolo River while the Ndwandwe manoeuvred to secure control over the southern bank towards the mountains in the west.

[53] Smith, "Nguni politics", 183-185.

Following Shaka's defeat of Zwide, the Mabhudu appear to have formed a trading alliance with the Zulu kingdom.[54] Between 1824 and 1826, however, Shaka appears to have directed the ivory trade away from Delagoa Bay and to have focused his trading attentions toward Port Natal. Smith interpreted Shaka's attempt to do so as a strategy for cutting out middlemen. In this respect, Smith argued that Shaka had remained dependent on the Mabhudu as envoys for conducting trade at Delagoa Bay on his behalf, but by welcoming the British traders based at Port Natal into his court, he was able to negotiate the terms of the trade far more directly.[55] It is also worth noting that Port Natal, which lay to the south-east of the territory occupied by the people of the Zulu kingdom, was substantially closer to Shaka's capital than Delagoa Bay. Not only would this closer proximity have substantially reduced the transport costs of trading, but it was also an area over which he possessed far greater military control.

As Smith recognised, there is some evidence that slavery was being conducted by both the Portuguese garrison and the Portuguese trading company established near Delogoa Bay between the early 1820s and early 1830s.[56] Indeed, drawing on the journal of naval explorer Captain William Owen, Smith argued that the slave trade had been bolstered during the 1820s following the outbreak of war between the Rhonga groups and groups of mysterious invaders. According to Smith, these invading groups were likely to have been the Gaza and Ngoni, for each had become established in the vicinity of Delagoa Bay during the 1820s. The migration of these groups into the region had followed shortly after the dissolution of the Ndwandwe polity (of which the Gaza and Ngoni had been constituents) following their defeat by Shaka around 1819.[57]

Part 1.5: The Lourenço Marques Garrison

Although principally concerned with what had motivated Dingane's attack on the Portuguese garrison at Lourenço Marques in 1833, a 1969 paper by Gerhard Liesegang expanded on Smith's analysis of Delagoa Bay as a site of trade during the 1820s and the early 1830s. Drawing on studies which had utilised many of the same unpublished records as those consulted by Smith;[58] Liesegang asserted that the Portuguese garrison at Lourenço Marques was intended to safeguard the Delagoa Bay port from a hostile takeover by a European rival. According to Liesegang, predominantly two types of trade had taken place during the 1820s. Firstly, there was a trade in foodstuffs to support the Portuguese garrison, which numbered roughly eighty soldiers. These foodstuffs consisted predominantly of

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[54] Ibid, 186.

[55] Ibid, 188. Smith also acknowledged that the British traders witnessed many Rhonga traders visiting Dingane's capital between 1828 and 1835. In addition, Shaka was eager to form an alliance with the British on account of their military technology, which Shaka sought both to utilise and acquire

[56] Smith, "Nguni politics", 177-181.

[57] Smith, "Nguni politics", 186-187.

[58] See for example Lobato, *História da Fundacão;* Alexandre Lobato, *Quatro Estudos e Uma Evocadao Para a História de Lourenço Marques* (Lisbon: Editora Brasiliense, 1961).

cereals and vegetables - for which Africans traders accepted brass bangles, cloth, and beads in exchange. Secondly, there was the trade for ivory.[59]

Drawing on Theal,[60] Liesegang recognised that the garrison of Lourenço Marques was not the only player in the ivory trade during the 1820s. Many of the visiting ships, the majority of which were either French or Brazilian, opted to trade directly with Rhonga groups rather than engage the Portuguese as middlemen. Furthermore, the Portuguese trading company established in 1826 had been granted a monopoly over ivory exports by the colonial authorities. The company purchased its stock directly from African traders which consequently drew the garrison into competition with the company.[61] Having consulted the journal of William Owen, Liesegang further recognised that the Ngoni and Gaza might have become players in the trade at Delagoa Bay following their respective migrations into the area during the 1820s.[62]

Retracing many of Smith's observations, Liesegang noted that around the year 1820 numerous Nguni-speaking groups had left the northern areas of present-day KwaZulu-Natal and migrated northward toward Delagoa Bay. Many of these groups were former constituents of the Ndwandwe coalition, which implied that they had fled shortly after the polity's collapse. According to Liesegang, at least two of these groups are recorded as having passed close by Lourenço Marques. There is also evidence that one or several such groups, whose identity was uncertain, attacked groups in the vicinity of the garrison, including the Tembe, Matola, and Moamba.[63] Like Smith, Liesegang concluded that the Ngoni (led by Zwangendaba) and the Gaza (led by Soshangane)[64] were the most likely to have orchestrated attacks on the Rhonga groups.[65]

A development of particular importance was the appointment of Dioniso Antonio Ribeiro as the new governor of Lourenço Marques in 1829. What made Ribeiro's instatement significant were his expansionist ambitions. According to Liesegang, Ribeiro was soon orchestrating raids on Rhonga groups. The Libombo and Matola groups are among those known to have been subdued by Portuguese attacks during the early 1830s. Indeed,

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[59] Gerhard Liesegang, "Dingane's Attack on Lourenço Marques in 1833", *The Journal of African History* 10, no. 4 (1969), 567-568.

[60] See George McCall Theal, *History of South Africa from 1795 to 1872* volume 3 (London: S. Sonnenschein & Company, 1920).

[61] Liesegang, "Lourenço Marques", 567-568.

[62] See Owen, *Narrative of voyages*; C.A.J. Teixeira, "Descrição dos Rios da Bahia de Lourenço Marques", *Arquivo das Colonias* 2, no. 8 (1918), 64.

[63] Liesegang, "Lourenço Marques", 569-570.

[64] Soshangane was also sometimes referred to as Manukosi.

[65] Liesegang, "Lourenço Marques", 569-570. Liesegang expanded on this explanation in a further paper. See Gerhard Liesegang, "Ngoni Migrations between Delagoa Bay and the Zambezi, 1821-1839", *African Historical Studies* 3, (1970), 317-337.

according to a Portuguese source,[66] the Matola are recorded as having paid tribute to the governor in January 1832.[67] According to a further document (believed to have been written by a Portuguese agent named Antonio José Nobre), the governor also appears to have received military support from Soshangane.[68] It was Ribeiro's alliance with Soshangane which Liesegang speculated might have given Dingane cause to attack Lourenço Marques in 1833.This, Liesegang asserted, was because Dingane sought to halt Portuguese expansionism over an area he was himself attempting to control; at least in the areas south of the Komati River.[69]

Part 1.6: Reconsidering Bryant

By the late 1960s and early 1970s, Africanist scholars influenced by the impact of decolonisation were beginning to recognise the pro-colonial biases which had characterised the scholarship prior to decolonisation. Among the most influential of these more critical scholars was Shula Marks. In particular, Marks' work began to draw attention to some of the issues associated with the categorisation of African groups and the terminology which was being employed to describe them. In a paper published in 1970,[70] Marks and Anthony Atmore argued that the term 'Nguni' was misleading because its connotations were specific to particular small groups within larger categories, yet applied broadly to a large number of disparate small groups. In a concurrently written piece published as part of *African Societies in Southern Africa* in 1969,[71] Marks put forward a substantial critique of Bryant's assessment of African oral sources in *Olden Times*.

According to Marks, Bryant was the most important figure in establishing the term 'Nguni' - a label he applied to the three streams of African groups which had migrated into the KwaZulu-Natal region during the seventeenth-century by crossing the Limpopo River.[72] Bryant had divided these streams into sub-groups on the basis of the hybridity which developed between Nguni and outside cultures. This three-fold classification of the Nguni

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[66] See Francisco Santana, *Documentação do Avulsa Moçambicana do Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino* 1 (Lisboa: Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos, 1964), 932.

[67] Liesegang, "Lourenço Marques", 572.

[68] See Santana, *Documentação* 1, 234*;* see Liesegang, "Lourenço Marques", 573, footnote 39.

[69] Liesegang, "Lourenço Marques", 570-577.

[70] Shula Marks and Anthony Atmore, "The Problem of the Nguni: An Examination of the Ethnic and Linguistic Situation in South Africa Before the Mfecane" in David Dalby (ed.), *Language and history in Africa* (London: Frank Cass, 1970), 120-132.

[71] Shula Marks, "The Traditions of the Natal 'Nguni': a second look at the work of A. T. Bryant" in Leonard Thompson (ed.), *African Societies in Southern Africa* (London: Heinemann, 1969), 126-144.

[72] Ibid, 127-130. A study by John Wright has since further interrogated the Nguni label, specifically in regard to how Bryant categorised the Lala groups. According to Bryant, the Lala were a subgroup of the Tonga-Nguni faction. See John Wright, "A.T. Bryant and the 'Lala'", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 38, no. 2 (2012), 366-368.

saw them divided into the Ntungwa, Mbo, and Tonga-Nguni factions.[73] Correspondingly, Bryant devised migrations routes which these Nguni factions must have followed to reach their areas of settlement. According to Marks, however, there was only vague recollection of these migrations within the oral evidence. This led Marks to conclude that the migrations must have taken place far earlier than Bryant had proposed, such that the details had long been forgotten. Drawing on a study by Brian Fagan, Marks noted that an earlier date for the migrations also corresponded with the archaeological evidence.[74]

Marks further argued that Bryant's sub-classification of the Nguni groups frequently encountered difficulties. One example is the case of the Mthethwa. According to Bryant, the Mthethwa were Tonga-Nguni who had migrated into the KwaZulu-Natal region from the Maputo River area in what is today the southern Mozambique. Bryant had claimed, however, that there were associations between the Mthethwa and the Mkhize. The issue with this assertion was that Bryant had categorised the Mkhize as Mbo, thus creating a categorical incongruence.[75] Marks made a further example of the Ndwandwe. Although categorised as Ntungwa by Bryant, according to Marks, the Ndwandwe's oral traditions were very closely linked with those of the Ngwane. Unlike the Ndwandwe, however, Bryant had classified the Ngwane as Tonga-Nguni.[76] These and numerous further categorical discrepancies led Marks to conclude that Bryant's group classifications were greatly oversimplified.

Part 2: Materialism and Ecology

Part 2.1: Marxism and Structural Change

By the late 1960s, Omer-Cooper's Mfecane thesis had become an established part of the historical narrative of the KwaZulu-Natal region. Despite this, historians were sceptical of Omer-Cooper's intellectually dated perception of Shaka as a 'great man'. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, they had begun to theorise alternative explanations for the development of African polities in the KwaZulu-Natal region between the late eighteenth-century and the early nineteenth-century. It was at this time that Marxist theory was becoming an increasingly prevalent tool for the analysis of the African polities which had existed prior to the onset of colonialism. Its influence introduced a

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[73] Marks, "The Traditions of the Natal Nguni", 127-130. The Tonga, also sometimes spelt 'Thonga', are frequently also called 'Rhonga' and 'Tsonga' within the literature.

[74] See Brian Fagan, *"Radiocarbon Dates for Sub-Saharan Africa"*, *Journal of African History* 8, no. 3 (1967), 525.

[75] Marks, "The Traditions of the Natal Nguni", 136-137.

[76] Ibid, 141-142.

new school of history in the African context: historical materialism.[77] As I discuss, the advent of historical materialism in south-east Africa led scholars to begin thinking about the notion of state-formation in very different ways.

A 1972 paper by Claude Meillassoux was greatly influential in shaping the developmental trajectory of historical materialism in the south-east African setting.[78] Building on the work of Emmanuel Terray,[79] Meillassoux set out to critique Karl Marx's characterisation of pre-capitalist[80] societies by performing his own analysis of the subsistence culture of small-scale agricultural groups.[81] According to Meillassoux, based predominantly on theory rather than historical evidence, each new generation of agriculturalists was dependent on its forbearers for the seeds they required to establish their own independent means of subsistence. Consequently, lineage-based systems developed between ''those who come before' and 'those who come after''.[82] Control over subsistence, Meillassoux added, was realised not only by controlling the cycle of agricultural production, but also by controlling the reproduction of the community. In pre-capitalist agricultural societies, control over women was thus of considerable importance. Meillassoux further asserted that lineages were not necessarily based on physiological kinship relations alone as these were 'unable to ensure the harmonious reproduction and balanced composition necessary for the productive unit.'[83] Consequently, he argued that the cohesiveness of pre-capitalist agricultural societies depended on an ideology of kinship which cut across purely biological ties.

A contribution of major importance was made in 1975 by sociologists Barry Hindess and Paul Hirst with the publication of an influential book.[84] Based on a close reading of

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[77] For a comprehensive assessment of a materialist perspective on the history of Africa since 1800, see Bill Freund, *The Making of Contemporary Africa: The Development of African Society since 1800* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1984).

[78] See Claude Meillassoux, "From reproduction to production: A Marxist Approach to Economic Anthropology" in Harold Wolpe (ed.), *The Articulation of Modes of Production: Essays from Economy and Society* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980 [1972]), 93-105.

[79] See Emmanuel Terray, *Le marxisme devant les sociétés "primitives": deux études* (Paris: François Maspero, 1969).

[80] Marx's use of 'pre-capitalist' referred to a wide range of productive strategies which he defined in a series of models.

[81] By 'agricultural societies', Meillassoux meant societies whose dominant means of production was agriculture. Groups which practised pastoralism and hunting were thus included in Meillassoux's analysis, as these practises were always secondary to agriculture in terms of their subsistence value.

[82] Meillassoux, "From reproduction to production", 100.

[83] Ibid, 101. Here, Meillassoux extrapolated from the work of Sahlins. See Marshall Sahlins, "La premiere société d'abondance", *Les Temps Modernes* 268 (1968), 641-680.

[84] See Barry Hindess and Paul Hirst, *Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975).

Marx's writings, Hindess and Hirst redefined the ways in which the mode of production of pre-capitalist societies was understood by academics. The pair defined the mode of production as the interplay between the forces of production within a productive superstructure and the relations existing between those forces of production, as shaped by whichever relations of production were dominant within that superstructure.[85] The crux of this formulation was that it defined the mode of production in terms of the relationships which existed between different classes (a dominant one and a subordinate one) as opposed to different forces of production. Forces of production, they argued, corresponded to labour processes, but did not imply that the conditions of surplus extraction altered the labour process or the relationship of the labourers to that labour process.[86]

Part 2.3: Producing Materialist History

One of the first historians to produce a materialist history of the KwaZulu-Natal region's late independent era was Henry Slater, whose Ph.D. thesis was completed in 1976. Slater viewed state-formation as process brought about by a change in the mode of production rather than an outcome of individual leadership. In this respect, he argued that a shift from a feudal mode of production to one of absolutism[87] had occurred among south-east African societies between 1810 and 1840.[88] According to Slater, the Mfecane had been triggered as a consequence of the tensions which had begun to arise within the feudal form of production being practised by African groups.[89] The cause of these tensions, Slater asserted, were the combine influence of the trade in prestige goods emanating from Delagoa Bay and labour shortages.[90] It was in an effort to exert greater control over the trade, he added, that African groups had

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[85] Ibid, 194-214.

[86] Ibid, 9-10, 183, 196, 225.

[87] Slater conceived of 'absolutism' as a political system which arises during the transition between feudalism and capitalism, characterised by the absolute power of the ruler. Slater was influenced by Perry Anderson's writing on the subject. See Perry Anderson, *Passages From Antiquity to Feudalism* (London: New Left Books, 1974); Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: New Left Books, 1974).

[88] Henry Slater, "Transitions in the political economy of South-East Africa before 1840" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Sussex, 1976).

[89] A drawback of Slater's argument was that it described African groups in terms of distinctly European productive models. His application of feudalism and absolutism in the south-east African context thus made for an artificial representation of African groups which failed to take root among Africanist historians.

[90] Although Slater drew on Alan Smith's trade hypothesis for his own theory, he did not attempt to build on Smith's theory.

initiated a process of social, political, and military transformation.[91] It was these transformations, rather than the Mfecane itself, which interested Slater.

Slater's thesis drew a clear distinction between what he perceived to be his 'primary' and his 'secondary' sources. In his view, the former consisted of archival documents, published records (including the annals assembled by Bird), and travellers' accounts (including Isaacs' *Travels* and Fynn's *Diary*). African oral sources, on the other hand, Slater largely ignored, albeit he did reference a number of works – notably including Bryant's *Olden Times* - under a further category of 'primary' sources he called 'Compilations of Traditions.' But although Slater largely accepted these sources uncritically as sites of evidence, he did observe that the notion of timeless was at odds with the structural transformation he was describing. Slater intended his study to resolve this contradiction.[92]

Slater's 'secondary' sources provided much of the theoretical basis of his argument. Drawing on his reading of Marx and the works of numerous neo-Marxist scholars, Slater argued that the Zulu kingdom had emerged during the 1820s as a successful 'empire' owing to a political structure which afforded Shaka supreme political authority. It was this structure, he added, which enabled the Zulu kingdom to overcome its inability to exploit the productive power of commodity exchange outside of the trappings of a feudal system.[93] Slater also recognised that the establishment of centralised regiments of *amabutho* had been greatly significant. This was because control over these regiments had provided chiefs with the authority to exercise increased control over the labour power of their people.[94] In a footnote, Slater also acknowledged that David Hedges, whose thesis I discuss later, was at this time conducting a study investigating 'the political relationship which came to exist between [Delagoa Bay] and the Tugela [region of KwaZulu-Natal] in this period.'[95]

Another early materialist-influenced work was a 1976 paper by Jeff Guy in which he examined production processes in the Zulu kingdom.[96] Guy was critical of the overpopulation theory first proposed by Max Gluckman, arguing that the witness accounts Gluckman had drawn on for his theory provided speculative evidence of population growth at best. In addition, Guy rejected Gluckman's psychosexual analysis

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[91] Slater, "Transitions", 276-281. Slater was at least somewhat influenced by Smith's trade hypothesis, a theory he utilised for his own work without interrogating critically.

[92] Slater, "Transitions", 34-38.

[93] Ibid, see in particular part 4, chapter X.

[94] Ibid, 277-282.

[95] Ibid, 267, footnote 25.

[96] See Jeff Guy, "Production and exchange in the Zulu kingdom" (Workshop Paper, National University of Lesotho, 1976).

of Shaka, which Gluckman had suggested provided insight into the development of the Zulu kingdom's military system.[97] Rather than overpopulation, Guy argued that the production processes of the Zulu kingdom were more likely to have been constrained by resources shortages. The rise of the Zulu kingdom, he argued, could be attributed to its resolution of this issue.

According to Guy, the homestead system was a patrilineal lineage system composed of a patriarch and his wives. These wives were acquired by exchanging surplus cattle. Their labour was essential for the self-sufficiency of the homestead. Later, the sons of the homestead would break from it to establish homesteads of their own. The power to permit marriage, however, was vested in the king. The king, in this respect, had a great deal of power over reproduction in the homestead and thus also over production. It was this power, Guy argued, which had enabled the Zulu kingdom to resolve resource shortages by manipulating production and reproduction.[98]

Part 2.4: *The James Stuart Archive*

By the early 1970s, scholars influenced by Vansina's historiological approach were beginning to reconsider the historical value of oral sources.[99] The notion that historical facts could be extracted from the 'traditions' of Africans had become more established. In addition, academics were recognising that oral sources provided an opportunity to give voice to marginalised groups. In this respect, they offered a means of producing history 'from below.'[100] This perspective on history was appealing to many historians because they recognised that it challenged the 'great man' view which had been advanced by the likes of Bryant and Omer-Cooper.

It was in this context that Colin Webb and John Wright began the long process of preparing the Stuart Collection, based at the Killie Campbell Africana Library, for release in volume form.[101] Work on the project began in 1971. It was a complex process which involved organising the notes, editing them, and translating extensive passages. By 1976, work on the first volume of the *James Stuart Archive* (*JSA*) had

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[97] See Max Gluckman, "The Individual in a Social Framework: The Rise of King Shaka of Zululand", *Journal of African Studies* 1, no 2 (1974), 137-140.

[98] See Guy, "Production and exchange".

[99] Philip Bonner, for example, conducted a series of interviews with interlocutors in 1970 in a bid to acquire oral 'traditions' from ordinary people which might counterbalance the more renown oral evidence presented by the royal house. See Carolyn Hamilton, "The Swaziland Oral History Project", *History in Africa* 14 (1987), 385.

[100] Jeffrey Peires, "Paradigm Deleted: The Materialist Interpretation of the Mfecane", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 19, no. 2 (1993), 296.

[101] Wright and Webb successfully assembled four volumes worth of records between 1976 and 1986. Following Webb's death, Wright has continued the task, and has completed a further two volumes as of 2001 and 2014 respectively.

been completed. The publication of the *JSA* had a pronounced effect on the historical scholarship. Not only did the material produced by Stuart and his interlocutors become far more accessible to historians,[102] but it also brought the evidence to the attention of a far wider audience. This was because by the late 1970s and the 1980s, historians had begun to apply Vansina's historiological methods to the James Stuart Papers and the *JSA*'s evidence. The rich historical evidence on which scholars were drawing enabled them to produce far more detailed and comprehensive histories.

Part 2.5: Incorporating Archaeological Evidence

Prior to the 1970s, archaeology in south-east Africa was dominated by the study of Great Zimbabwe and of Mapungubwe.[103] It was following the excavation of Khami in 1947 that the first systematic ceramic typographies were beginning to be produced. Much of the study which was taking place would stall shortly hereafter, however, as a consequence of the ideological pressures being exerted by the apartheid government of South Africa. By the 1950s, many of south-east Africa's most prominent archaeologists had departed the region. It was not until the 1960s, as the impact of decolonisation began to be felt, that archaeological study in south-east Africa experienced resurgence.[104]

By the 1970s the growing sophistication of radiocarbon dating techniques was enabling archaeologists to gauge the age of organic matter with a far greater level of accuracy than had previously been possible. New archaeological evidence was beginning to offer historians fresh insight into features of the KwaZulu-Natal region's distant past. It was now possible to determine ecological changes and to produce far more accurate ceramic typographies.[105] At this time, historians and archaeologists were working closely together to integrate this new evidence with the region's history. As I discuss later, however, the approaches favoured by archaeologists and historians would begin to diverge by the late 1970s and the 1980s.[106]

The technological advancements of the 1970s were followed by controlled excavations at the site of Dingane's former capital uMgungundlovu. The first series of exactions took place between January 1974 and July 1975 and were overseen by the Archaeology Department of the University of Cape Town in collaboration with the

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[102] It was also far easier to compare the evidence of interlocutors and pinpoint changes and contradictions in their statements following the publication of the JSA.

[103] Hall, "'Hidden History', 59-67. Pro-colonial figures such as Cecil John Rhodes had initially attempted to pass off these sites as former Phoenician settlements, likely for the purposes of justifying white exploitation of African land by suggesting there had been a prior Semitic presence.

[104] Ibid, 63-68.
[105] Ibid, 67-74.
[106] Ibid, 74.

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Natal Museum. John Parkington and Mike Cronin would later publish some of their findings from the undertaking in 1979.[107] Martin Hall would then excavate the site in 1975 as he worked toward the completion of his Ph.D. thesis.[108] Hall was at this time in the employ of the Natal Museum. Frans Roodt then conducted a further study on uMgungundlovu during the early 1980s.[109] The significance of these studies was that their findings allowed archaeologists to match the physical evidence with the ethnographic record. This enabled them to provide greater insight into the scale, shape, and layout of the uMgungundlovu settlement. In some cases, the material evidence they discovered also enabled the status of the inhabitants of individual huts to be identified.[110]

A 1976 dendroclimatological study by Martin Hall was particularly impactful.[111] Hall used dendroclimatological data to demonstrate that rainfall figures in the area of present-day KwaZulu-Natal oscillated in a roughly 20-year regional cycle. Having identified a pattern of variance within the cycle, Hall demonstrated that annual precipitation figures frequently diverged substantially from the mean rainfall. In addition, he observed that the total regional rainfall would often remain very low for several years in succession.[112] According to Hall, in a climate where limited rainfall imposed the greatest restraint on agricultural production, the relative abundance of precipitation was likely to have brought about an increase in agricultural production. This in turn could have supported population growth in the KwaZulu-Natal area during the second half of the eighteenth-century – a point consistent with Gluckman's and Omer-Cooper's theories.[113]

According to Hall's findings, the period of high rainfall towards the end of the eighteenth-century peaked between the years 1787 and 1789, following which a sharp reverse in the trend took place. Plentiful rainfall gave way to a prolonged drought, one which might have been exacerbated by overexploitation of the arable land over the course of the previous decades. This, Hall speculated, might plausibly have led to a decrease in the palpability of grasses and an increase in the overall degradation of the

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[107] See John Parkington and Mike Cronin, "The Size and Layout of Mgungundlovu 1829-1838", *Goodwin Series* 4 (1979), 133-148.

[108] See Martin Hall, "The Ecology of the Iron Age in Zululand" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1980).
[109] Frans Roodt, "'n Rekonstruksie van Zoeloe geelkoperbewerking by eMgungundlovu", Master's dissertation, University of Pretoria, 1983.

[110] Parkington and Cronin, "Mgungundlovu", 147-148.
[111] Martin Hall, "Dendroclimatology, Rainfall and Human Adaptation in the Later Iron Age of Natal and Zululand", *Annals of the Natal Museum* 22, no. 3 (1976), 698-699.
[112] Ibid, 698-699.
[113] Ibid, 701.

environment.[114] Although Hall was reluctant to overstate his conclusions, they nevertheless had a pronounced impact on the thinking of Guy, whose ecological argument I discuss later.

Part 3: Production and Reproduction

Part 3.1: The *amaButho* and the State

By the late 1970s, historical materialism had become the dominant approach for the study of late independent era African groups. It was in this context, at a 1977 workshop[115] held at the University of Natal, that a number of historians, archaeologists, and environmentalists were invited to present papers which engaged the theme 'production and reproduction in the Zulu kingdom' prior to 1879. The object of the workshop was to deliberate on the political economy of the Zulu kingdom by integrating the findings of specialists from across the aforementioned disciplines.[116] What made this workshop significant was that it provided a platform for two notable threads of research to be presented. The first of these was the study of *amabutho*, whose formation was the subject of papers by John Wright and Julian Cobbing.[117] The second, as I discuss later, was what is known as the 'ecological argument' – an explanation for state-formation put forward by Jeff Guy.

Wright began by pointing out that *amabutho* 'regiments' had initially been small in scale, but had, as kingdoms developed during the early nineteenth-century, become larger.[118] According to Wright, in the 'conventional view' favoured by Leonard Thompson, Gluckman, and Omer-Cooper, *amabutho* had first been introduced by Dingiswayo of the Mthethwa as circumcision practices became displaced by conscripted age-regiments. The aforementioned scholars, Wright observed, had primarily drawn on the writings of Fynn and Shepstone

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[114] Ibid, 698-701.

[115] A number of the papers presented at the workshop were later published in an ensemble. See Martin Hall and John Wright, *Production and reproduction in the Zulu kingdom: Workshop Papers* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal, Department of Historical and Political Studies, 1977).

[116] Hall and Wright, *Production and Reproduction,* 1-2.

[117] The more essential of these pieces was Wright's. I have elected not to discuss Cobbing's paper here as his piece predominantly sought to raise questions about the nature of *amabutho* rather than present fresh scholarship.

[118] See John Wright, "Pre-Shakan Age-Group Formation Among the Northern Nguni" in Martin Hall and John Wright (eds.), *Production and reproduction in the Zulu kingdom: Workshop Papers* (Pietermaritzburg: Department of Historical and Political Studies at the University of Natal, 1977), 2-4. Wright's paper was republished the following year. See John Wright, "Pre-Shakan Age Group Formation among the northern Nguni", *Natalia* 8 (1978), 22-28.

published within John Bird's *The Annals of Natal* in 1888 as their sources.[119] Shaka, meanwhile, was believed to have extended these practices by introducing women's regiments and delaying marriage. The 'conventional view' additionally regarded *amabutho* as having primarily served a martial role. Precisely how the regiment-system had developed, however, remained only superficially explained.[120]

According to Wright, a focus on the martial aspects of *amabutho* had caused scholars to overlook their numerous other roles. Drawing on Guy's 1976 paper,[121] Wright observed that *amabutho* served a purpose of great importance: they were essential for *butha*'ing (gathering) - for organising both labour production and reproduction. According to Guy, the importance of *amabutho* had increased during the late eighteenth-century owing to resource shortages.[122] Wright acknowledged that Slater had drawn a similar conclusion.[123] According to Slater, *amabutho* had arisen to compensate for labour shortages. Their primary military function was to ensure the polity in question could access additional pastoral grounds. In addition, Slater had recognised that *amabutho* served as labourers in the king's fields and were called on to construct homesteads. *Amabutho* were thus more than soldiers, Wright concluded, because they acted as multi-faceted labourers.[124] The development of the *amabutho* system, he added, might best be explained by a transformation in the relations between 'elders' and 'cadets'. In a context in which there was growing competition for resources, elders might well have tightened their control over production and reproduction, thus initiating greater political centralisation.[125]

Wright concluded his paper by encouraging historians to make greater recognition of the oral histories contained within Bryant's works as well as those contained with Stuart's readers and the *JSA*, the first volume of which had been published the previous year. Drawing on the *JSA*,[126] Wright noted that the names of numerous *amabutho* were recorded there. Furthermore, he observed that *amabutho* appeared to have become widely

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[119] See John Bird, *The Annals of Natal* 1, Cape Town: Struik, 1956 [1888]), 60-71, 155-166. Also see Shepstone in *Cape of Good Hope Blue Book G. 4*, Report and proceedings on the government commission on native laws and customs, part II, 415-426.

[120] Wright, "Pre-Shakan Age-Group Formation", 1-2.
[121] See Guy, "Production and exchange".

[122] Wright, "Age-Group Formation", 1-2.
[123] See Slater, "Transitions".
[124] Wright, "Age-Group Formation", 3.
[125] Wright drew on the work of Meillassoux. See Meillassoux, "From reproduction to production", 93-105.

[126] See for example Killie Campbell Africana Library, James Stuart Collection, file 59, notebook 29, 33, 38; Statement of Mabonsa kaSidhlayi in Colin Webb and John Wright 2 (1979), 11-41; Killie Campbell Africana Library, James Stuart Collection, file 61, notebook 52, 23; Statement of Mageza kaKwefunga in Colin Webb and John Wright 2 (1979), 68-76; Killie Campbell Africana Library, James Stuart Collection, file 62, notebook 71, 3; Statement of Jantshi kaNongila in Colin Webb and John Wright 1 (1976), 174-208.

established among northern Nguni[127] groups prior to Shaka's reign.[128] Wright added that there was some indication that circumcision practices were beginning to cease during the late eighteenth-century and the early nineteenth-century, which strengthened the proposed association between the decline of circumcisions and the increasing prevalence of *amabutho*.[129]

Part 3.2: The Ecological Argument

As I have briefly acknowledged, by the 1970s, archaeological studies were beginning to uncover evidence that the ecology of south-east Africa was far more volatile than had previously been assumed. Indeed, the picture provided by the evidence suggested that areas of the KwaZulu-Natal region had experienced pronounced ecological degradation by the late eighteenth-century. It was in light of this new evidence that academics began to theorise that the political transformation and the degrading ecology of the wider region might well have been connected. Indeed, fieldwork conducted by the likes of J. Daniel and Colin Webb in the mid-1970s suggested a correlation between ecologically more advantageous physical environments and the areas which had been inhabited by African groups.[130]

A comprehensive argument exploring the connection between ecological factors and state-formation was put forward by Jeff Guy at the 1977 'Production and Reproduction' workshop.[131] Guy's argument was primarily based on a detailed analysis of much of the archaeological fieldwork which had taken place over the previous decade (which included some of his own analysis of pastoral grounds).[132] He also combined these observations with his prior breakdown of the Zulu Kingdom's productive system.[133] According to Guy, the geographical expansion of pre-Shakan[134] groups in the KwaZulu-Natal region reflected an ambition to access different types of veld. Indeed, drawing on the studies of Daniel and Webb, Guy explained that the

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[127] By 'northern Nguni' Wright was referring to the Nguni-speakers which inhabited the area of present-day KwaZulu-Natal.

[128] Wright, "Age-Group Formation", 4.

[129] Ibid, 4.

[130] See J. B. Mcl. Daniel, "A Geographical Study of pre-Shakan Zululand", *South African Geographical Journal* 55, (1973), 23-31; Colin Webb, "Of Orthodoxy, Heresy and the Difiqane" (Conference Paper, Rand Africans University, 1975).

[131] This piece was only published in 1980.

[132] See Jeff Guy, "Cattle-keeping in Zululand" (Research Group on Cattle Keeping in Africa, S.O.A.S., University of London, 1970.

[133] See Guy, "Production and exchange".

[134] Guy did not specify the period to which he was referring in precise terms. In addition, he did not explain exactly which groups he was referring to, although it can be assumed he chiefly implied the Mthethwa, the Ngwane-Dlamini, and the Ndwandwe, who were among the larger groups in the area during the period in question.

settlements established by African groups correlated with the availability of a mix of veld types, thus maximizing the natural grazing for their cattle.[135]

By the late eighteenth-century, Guy theorised that the strategies utilised by African groups to exploit their environment had resulted in an ecological breakdown which had in turn brought about resource shortages. Incorporating Hall's 1976 dendroclimatological findings, Guy further argued that a drop-off in rainfall during the 1790s had led to a period of sustained drought which had intensified resource deprivation. Guy further argued that the prolonged dry conditions had inhibited crop production, ultimately bringing about the Madlathule famine.[136] Echoing Gluckman's population theory, he argued it was likely the interplay of increased population density and the growing competition for resources which had triggered the Mfecane.[137] Notably, Guy consulted the *JSA* to corroborate archaeological findings with oral accounts which recalled periods of sustained drought.[138] Although Guy's use of the *JSA* was sparing, it nevertheless demonstrates that the *JSA* was steadily becoming a fixture within the historical literature.

Guy's explanation for the rise of the Zulu kingdom was that Shaka had succeeded in introducing a series of structural changes which ameliorated the region's susceptibility to its degraded ecology.[139] According to Guy, who drew predominately on Bryant and Gluckman to inform his discussion of the Zulu kingdom circa the 1820s, the ecological crisis was predominantly resolved as a consequence of the greater political centralisation which had accompanied the formation of the nascent Zulu kingdom. By distributing cattle over larger areas and stabilising population growth by inhibiting marriages through the close control of age regiments, Guy argued that Shaka was able to rectify the issue of overgrazing while simultaneously alleviating population pressures.[140]

A feature of Guy's study was that he integrated an analysis of ecological factors with Marxist theory. In this respect, Guy's methods demonstrate that he believed that the socio-economic workings of the Zulu kingdom could be broken down into a series of

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[135] For information on veld types, Guy had drawn on the work of John Phillip Harison Acocks, who had categorised different varieties of veld type and their characteristics back in 1953. See John Phillip Harison Acocks, "Veld types of South Africa", *Memoirs of the Botanical Survey of South Africa* 28 (1953), 1-192.

[136] Jeff Guy, "Ecological Factors in the Rise of Shaka and the Zulu Kingdom" in Shula Marks and Anthony Atmore (eds.), *Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa* (London: Longman, 1980), 110-111.

[137] Sine nomine.

[138] Guy cited a statement by Jantshi kaNongila. See Statement of Jantshi kaNongila in *The James Stuart Archive* 1 (1976), 174-208.

[139] Guy, "Ecological Factors", 112.

[140] Ibid, 115-118.

productive relationships. For Guy, the ecological degradation of the late eighteenth-century was thus fundamentally tied to productive processes. Correspondingly, he argued that a fundamentally productive issue could only be corrected by systematically adapting these productive strategies. A further point is that although Guy considered the evidence of oral sources, his use of the evidence was 'extractive'. In this respect, Guy viewed the *JSA* as a store of facts in the same vein as Vansina.

Part 3.3: The Rise of the Ngwane

In his 1977 Ph.D. thesis[141] which would later form the basis of his 1983 book,[142] Philip Bonner examined the rise and the consolidation of the Ngwane (Swazi) state during the nineteenth-century. According to Bonner, the ruling Dlamini lineage became established in the area of present-day eSwatini (Swaziland) during the 1820s shortly after the collapse of the Ndwandwe polity following his defeat by Shaka. The Ngwane consequently shifted their centre of power toward the northeast as a precaution against attack by the Zulu kingdom.[143] Drawing on oral evidence he had acquired by conducting interviews with Swazi interlocutors,[144] Bonner argued that the Dlamini had quickly expanded within the area. Led by Sobhuza, they succeeded in defeating a number of small Tsonga-, Nguni-, and Sotho-speaking groups. These groups were exploited rather than assimilated, for they were permitted only limited cultural and political integration.[145]

Bonner further outlined the complex interactions which took place between the Ngwane, the Boers, and the Zulu kingdom during the 1830s; the growth and consolidation of Dlamini power between 1852 and 1865; the decline in the centralised power of the Swazi state between 1865 and 1881; and the steady encroachment of colonial rule which gradually overcame Swazi independence over the remainder of the 1880s.[146] Aside from his analysis of the Swazi state itself, Bonner used his analysis to forward his own take on state-formation. In his view, state-formation had been triggered by a transformation in the mode of production. Bonner, in this respect, advocated for a historical materialist take on state-formation.

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[141] Philip Bonner, "The rise, consolidation and disintegration of Dlamini power in Swaziland between 1820 and 1889" (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1977).

[142] Philip Bonner, *Kings, Commoners and Concessionaires: The Evolution and Dissolution of the Nineteenth-Century Swazi State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

[143] Ibid, 9-12. Bonner did not believe, however, that the Ndwandwe and Ngwane were as closely integrated as Bryant had previously suggested.

[144] These tape recorded interviews, conducted in 1970, are housed at Africa Institute at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. For the details on the interviewees in question see Bonner, *Kings, Commoners and* Concessionaires, 292-294.

[145] Bonner, *Kings, Commoners and Concessionaires*, 27-46.

[146] Loc. cit.

Heavily influenced by the materialist approach, Bonner argued that state-like polities were characterised by the emergence of a new aristocratic class which disrupted the power of the homestead heads and which redefined the division of labour by harnessing the power of the *amabutho* system. The significance of the *amabutho* was that they facilitated the creation of a tributary system whereby greater surpluses could be extracted for consumption by the dominant class.[147] Bonner also stressed the significance of the Madlatule famine and the *amabutho's* capacity for replenishing lost stock during the period of resource shortages. Indeed, according to Bonner, the Madlatule famine was the 'necessary but not the sufficient cause of the (socio-political) transition.'[148]

In a 1978 paper building on his thesis, Bonner drew on the theoretical foundations laid by Hirst and Hindess to produce a Marxist analysis of the embryonic Ngwane-Swazi polity.[149] Amid much debate concerning which mode of production was most applicable for describing pre-capitalist African societies, Bonner argued that the Asiatic mode was the most appropriate model, but that it nevertheless made for an imperfect fit.[150] According to Bonner, this was because the appropriation of surplus in African groups occurred only after production had already taken place. The point at which tribute was extracted was thus external to the process of production itself. The implication of this was that the mode of production could not meaningfully be deduced from the relations of production, making it impossible to describe the productive processes of pre-capitalist African groups based on theoretical abstraction alone.[151]

To resolve this issue, Bonner theorised that surplus extraction in pre-capitalist African societies might have taken place in a different form. To help substantiate this view, he drew on a series of interviews he had conducted with Swazi interlocutors in 1970. Referring to his oral evidence, Bonner argued that young Swazi men were utilised by their chief to construct agricultural terraces and walls. In Bonner's view, the chief's action constituted a form of political intervention, one which he argued could be likened to surplus extraction.[152] He further argued that the Zulu Royal House had

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[147] Ibid, 21-24.

[148] Ibid, 23.

[149] Philip Bonner, "Classes, the Mode of Production and the State in Pre-Colonial Swaziland", Collected Seminar Papers, *Institute of Commonwealth Studies* 22 (1978), 31-41.

[150] Bonner, "Production and the State", 31-32. The lineage mode was a variant of the primitive communist model. The Asiatic mode of production, originally outlined by Marx, referred to a production process in which there was no private land ownership. Rather, the Asiatic mode was characterised by a form of surplus extraction in which a centralised political authority extracted labour and resources in the shape of tribute.

[151] Ibid, 31-32.

[152] Ibid, 32-33.

relied on similar forms of political intervention to maintain access to the different pastures and soil types they required to maintain their livestock. It was the *amabutho* regiments which were tasked with providing the necessary security, which again, Bonner argued, constituted a form of productive intervention. Bonner thus asserted that there was sufficient articulation between the forces of production and the relations of production to deduce the existence of a tributary mode of production after all.[153]

Part 3.4: Adapting the Trade Hypothesis

In a further 1978 paper, Bonner integrated the evidence of recent archaeological findings with the trade hypothesis. He observed that the chronology of Smith's argument required substantial revision.[154] As he observed, the Ndwandwe-Mthethwa conflict could not have initiated the Mfecane because the Ndwandwe had previously attacked both the Ngwane-Dlamini and the Khumalo polities. This, he argued, suggested that the Mfecane had begun at an earlier date than that suggested by Smith. Furthermore, because the Ndwandwe had not participated directly in the ivory trade prior to their defeat of the Mthethwa, Bonner argued that this could not have motivated their expansionism. It was far more likely, he asserted, that Zwide (the Ndwandwe leader) had been seeking to extend his control over valuable pastoral territories.[155]

A far more comprehensive trade argument was forwarded by David Hedges that same year.[156] While Hedges acknowledged the importance of ecological considerations,[157] his overarching focus remained the effects of the Delagoa Bay trade on politics within the KwaZulu-Natal region. Hedges' study was characterised by its rigorousness - an attribute of his work which extended to his engagement with his source material.[158] He was among the first scholars to consult the James Stuart Papers, which were by this time housed in the Killie Campbell Africana Library. More than a decade after Vansina's treatise on the merits of

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[153] Ibid, 33.

[154] Philip Bonner, "Early State Formation among the Nguni: the Relevance of the Swazi case" (Conference paper, the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1978).

[155] Ibid, 6-10.

[156] David Hedges, "Trade and Politics in Southern Mozambique and Zululand in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries" (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1978).

[157] Hedges was careful to analyse the regularity of rainfall and to assess the advantages various types of pasturage posed for whichever group controlled them. See Hedges, "Trade and Politics", chapter two.

[158] Hedges organised his sources into numerous classifications. The categories of 'published documents', 'newspapers', 'maps', and 'archival sources' are all distinctively marked, with Hedges appearing to conceive of each as forms of 'primary' sources. Interestingly, sources long regarded by historians as 'witness' testimony, notably including the likes of Fynn's *Diary* and Isaacs's *Travels*, were not afforded special attention by Hedges, but were listed among his citations under 'published works'.

engaging oral sources, the James Stuart Papers were still widely unknown. Indeed, it is possible that it was the publication of the first volume of the *JSA* two years prior which first attracted Hedges' attention to the James Stuart Papers.[159] Hedges also conducted some fieldwork in 'the northeast of present-day Zululand'.[160]

Drawing on Portuguese records, Hedges acknowledged that the volume of the ivory trade had expanded between 1750 and 1770 and that Nguni-speaking groups became increasingly integrated into the Delagoa Bay trade network during this period. Unlike Smith, however, Hedges argued that the available data suggested that the volume of the ivory trade had begun to decline by the 1790s.[161] He further argued that cattle had steadily come to displace ivory as the principle product of exchange between Africans and Europeans (as well as Brazilian traders) at Delagoa Bay. The primary clientele of the cattle trade were whalers who had begun to dock in the bay in increasing numbers from the late 1780s to acquire fresh supplies of meat and vegetables.[162]

What made trade so significant was that it had transformed the relations of reciprocity existing between chiefs and their supporters.[163] By controlling the distribution of valuable prestigious goods like copper, brass, beads, and cloth, the chief was able to concentrate his own wealth and ideological power.[164] Consequently, the greater the share of the trade controlled by a chief, the greater his influence among his subjects.[165] The copper, brass, and beads which were acquired through trade were status items which predominantly served decorative purposes.[166] In particular, these items appear to have been associated with persons of chiefly status.[167] According to

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[159] See Colin Webb and John Wright, *The James Stuart Archive* 1 (Pietermaritzburg, 1976).

[160] In his thesis, Hedges commented very briefly on the nature of his fieldwork. See Hedges, "Trade and Politics", 275-276. Furthermore, although Hedges' study did not draw heavily on Bonner's work, he nevertheless acknowledged Bonner's assistance in helping him conduct this fieldwork. Elsewhere, in 1976, Jeffrey Peires had conducted fieldwork in what was then called Xhosaland to acquire oral evidence for his Master's dissertation. Peires was the first scholar to use Xhosa oral evidence in an academic setting. See Jeffrey Peires, "A History of the Xhosa c. 1700–1835" (Master's dissertation, Rhodes University, 1976).

[161] Hedges, "Trade and Politics", 147-148.

[162] Ibid, 147-148.

[163] A recent book has sought to explore this relationship between chiefs and supporters (*ukukhonza*) in great detail. See Jill Kelly, *To Swim With Crocodiles: Land, Violence, and Belonging in South Africa, 1800-1996* (Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 2018).

[164] Hedges, "Trade and Politics", 99.

[165] Iron was a common product of exchange which was not acquired via the Delagoa Bay trade. The metal was valued because it was used for making tools such as hoes, axes, and the points of spears. It was also essential for agricultural production, warfare, and hunting. During the eighteenth-century, the Qwabe controlled the bulk of the iron deposits in the area of present-day KwaZulu-Natal. See Hedges, "Trade and Politics", 86.

[166] Hedges, "Trade and Politics", 141-142.

[167] Consequently, these goods might have signified some ideological significance in addition to conveying the prestige of the wearer.

the oral evidence,[168] Hedges argued that the demand for these items – particularly for brass – had become very high by the late eighteenth-century.[169]

It was the transition toward predatory raiding in place of hunting which Hedges argued transformed localised hunting groups into centralised *amabutho*.[170] A factor of major importance, he stressed, was that cattle, unlike ivory, possessed considerable productive value. Not only were cattle the basis of socio-economic transactions, such as marriage, but they also represented a means by which wealth could be stockpiled.[171] Thus, it was desirable to maintain large herds of cattle and groups such as the Ndwandwe and the Mthethwa were incentivised to acquire excess cattle for the purposes of trade.[172] To facilitate raiding, chiefs who had previously organised hunting parties on a locality-by-locality basis began to draw on personnel from across their support base. Correspondingly, the martial power of the chief was increased and political centralisation was further reinforced.[173]

Conclusion

In chapter two I have examined historical productions made between the early 1960s and the late 1970s. I have argued that three distinctive threads of history developed within the historiography during this period: the historiological approach, the Mfecane thread, and historical materialism. Each of these threads of history appears to have been shaped by the decolonisation of much of Africa during the 1950s and the early 1960s. It was as Africans increasingly sought political self-determination that scholars were moved to challenge the existing approaches for producing history. Consequently, scholars began to devise new ways of looking at the African societies which had existed prior to colonialism.

This historiological approach was pioneered by the work of Jan Vansina during the 1950s and the early 1960s. Vansina developed a systematic means of extracting evidence from oral 'traditions' which he believed contained historical facts which had endured over time. Although he had little direct connection with the decolonisation movement, Vansina's methodology had profound implications. By the 1970s, his approach had begun to influence the work of scholars such as Philip Bonner and David Hedges, each of whom had begun to mine oral sources for facts on the Zulu kingdom. On the other hand, Shula Marks was wary

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[168]Hedges cited a combined statement by a pair of interlocutors and a separate statement by a single interlocutor. See Killie Campbell Library, James Stuart Papers, evidence of Mahungane and Nkomuza, 8 November 1897; Killie Campbell Library, James Stuart Papers, evidence of Mabola, 25 November 1898.

[169] Hedges, "Trade and Politics", 86-87.
[170] Ibid, 197-198.
[171] Loc. cit.
[172] Loc. cit.
[173] Ibid, 122-123, 195-196.

of accepting ethnographic evidence at face value for she recognised that white scholars had played a part in shaping that evidence. She warned against the contradictions of the 'Nguni' category and argued for a critical reassessment of the traditions collected by Alfred Thomas Bryant.

The Mfecane thread arose in the mid-1960s following the publication of John Omer-Cooper's *The Zulu Aftermath*. Uncritically accommodating the population theory into his account of the late independent era's history, Omer-Cooper largely ignored oral sources in favour of reinterpreting the 'primary' written evidence. Omer-Cooper historicised the 'devastation' in significant detail and rebranded it as the 'Mfecane'. His attention to Shaka's establishment of the Zulu kingdom initiated a new wave of scholarship engaging the socio-political origins of African state-formation. It was in response to Omer-Cooper's work that Alan Smith, David Hedges, and Jeff Guy articulated their own arguments for African state-formation.

The materialist approach was predominantly shaped by the interplay of theory drawn from structuralist anthropology and Marxism. The school of thought gained traction among Africanists during the 1970s as the Marxist-influenced methodology of a number of French anthropologists was adopted as a means of analysing structural change within pre-capitalist farming communities. The approach offered an alternative to the top-down 'great man' conception of Shaka and the Zulu kingdom (favoured by Omer-Cooper) by engaging the socio-political dynamics of the kingdom. By the second half of the 1970s, historians such as Henry Slater and Philip Bonner were beginning to study the phenomenon of state-formation through a materialist lens.

Chapter 3

Historiography on the KwaZulu-Natal region from the late 1970s until the early 2000s

Introduction

In this chapter I analyse the historical productions produced between the early 1980s and the early 2000s. I argue that a succession of 'breaks' took place within the literature during this period and that these contributed to the development of a new school of thought which I characterise as the source-critical approach. The source-critical approach is set apart by its critical interrogation of colonial- and apartheid era sources and its recognition that these sources have shaped the production and reinterpretation of history over time. By the mid-1990s, the source-critical approach had become a prominent part of the historical scholarship. By the 2000s, the scope of the approach had extended to include critical engagement with the archive.[1]

This chapter is composed of five parts. In part one I discuss developments which took place during the early 1980s. I begin by discussing how cognitive archaeology became an established research methodology within the South African context. Drawing on the work of structuralist anthropologists, archaeologists began to treat material evidence 'scientifically' to identify symbolic meaning, but relied on the backward application of ethnographic evidence to do so. Meanwhile, as the political struggle against South Africa's apartheid regime intensified during the 1980s, the African past became an openly contested site of ideological and political contention. It was in this context that the role of women in pre-capitalist polities began to receive greater scholarly attention, while more extensive research was also conducted into the slave trades of south-east Africa.

In part two, I discuss how identity and ethnicity became prominent areas of debate during the 1980s, partly in response to the way the apartheid system was mobilising ideas on these concepts. A work of importance was Carolyn Hamilton's pioneering 1985 master's dissertation which produced a far more complex picture of the Zulu kingdom's socio-political dynamic. In addition, it devised a new approach for interpreting the discrepancies within African oral evidence. A further contribution of importance was Jeff Guy's 1987 analysis of production and the homestead structure. Guy's key observation was that wealth accumulation in African polities was associated with control over labour. I then discuss how historical archaeologist Martin Hall attempted to bridge the growing divide between historical materialism and cognitive archaeology. I also examine the Swaziland Oral History

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[1] The label of 'archive' typically refers to the entire body of materials and studies produced by Europeans on colonised peoples.

project's work in creating an oral archive. Lastly, I discuss how by the early 1990s, Sandra Klopper had begun to examine the Zulu kingdom's material culture.

In the third part of this chapter I discuss a break in the literature which was important for hastening scholars' adoption to the source-critical approach. This transition was sparked by Julian Cobbing's 'alibi' argument: a controversial take on the Mfecane thesis which labelled the entire concept a colonial fabrication. I then discuss John Wright's 1989 Ph.D. thesis in which he conducted a critical re-analysis of the late independent era. Wright supported many of Cobbing's criticisms of the sources on which the KwaZulu-Natal region's history had drawn and also exposed many of the shortcomings of Alfred Thomas Bryant's work. Next, I discuss another 1989 piece in which Hamilton and Wright challenged Bryant's 'timeless' portrayal of the Zulu kingdom, arguing that this had obscured the socio-political transformation of the kingdom as well as the political distinctions between its composite groups. Lastly, I discuss several papers from a 1991 conference convened by Hamilton which interrogated Cobbing's 'alibi' argument and the impact it was having on the historical literature.

The fourth section of this chapter deals with a series of debates which emerged during the 1990s. By this time, developments in literary criticism had begun to influence the scholarship. It was during the early 1990s that a succession of literary critics began to deliberate whether or not the works of Nathaniel Isaacs and Henry Francis Fynn should retain their status as historical sources. It was also during this period that Jan Vansina began to contest an approach to oral history developed by David Cohen which argued that history is continually produced and reproduced in public life. In the aftermath of Cobbing's 'alibi' argument, Vansina believed that Cohen's approach rendered oral history subject to 'invention'. Building on this notion, in her 1994 book, Daphna Golan argued that Shaka's reign was being reinvented in the present to corroborate political rhetoric. Hamilton's 1993 thesis and later 1998 book then challenged this view by scrutinising the production and reproduction of sources over time as they respond to changing circumstances. This led her to theorise the limits and conditions of invention.

In the final section of this chapter I examine a 1996 paper by Wright in which he analysed his and co-editor Colin Webb's role in shaping the evidence of the *JSA*. I then discuss a 1998 paper by Sean Hanretta which examined the roles of late independent era women as diviners and lead mourners. Two books of importance published in 2000 were those of Dan Wylie and Bhekisizwe Peterson. Wylie argued that accounts of the late independent era contain a 'literary' component which has created 'mythologised' versions of the past. Peterson argued that African intellectual productions had been overlooked during the colonial era and stressed that these productions convey insight into the experience of Africans within the colonial context. I then examine how a 2001 book by Norman Etherington grappled with the writing of a history which escaped the confines of colonial

interpretations. Lastly, I discuss an important 2002 book in which a number of scholars began to scrutinise the workings of the archive in greater depth.

Part 1: Criticisms and Divisions

Part 1.1: Archaeology, Culture, and Symbolism

Between the late 1970s and the early 1980s, archaeologists in the south-east African context were beginning to respond to a growing international interest within the discipline: that of interpreting the symbolic meanings of trends in ceramic decoration. A school of thought was developed which categorised ceramics into typological groupings on the basis of their 'culture'. This approach enabled archaeologists to hypothesise population movement through time and space.[2] By the early 1980s, however, an alternative approach, one brought to south-east African by American archaeologist Thomas Huffman, was becoming prominent. Huffman's approach was based on the concept of ceramic tradition – an approach which implicitly viewed African cultures as changing little over time. Huffman further asserted that different ethnicities were distinguishable on the basis of specific linguistic markers. The spread of ceramics, he argued, was thus associated with the dispersal of language.[3]

Amid the debate over linguistics and ceramic typologies, some archaeologists began turning their attention to assessments of the relationship between small-scale farming settlement patterns and their ecology. In a 1980 study,[4] Tim Maggs explained that recent developments in radio-carbon dating had provided archaeologists with a 'general outline of the Iron Age'.[5] This in turn had enabled them to reconfigure the movements of Nguni[6] groups into the wide area between the Drakensberg and the east coast. By testing the sequence in which different pottery styles were developed, Maggs was able to disprove the longstanding assertion within the literature that waves of migrations into the aforementioned region had

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[2] Martin Hall, "'Hidden History': Iron Age Archaeology in South Africa" in Peter Robertshaw (ed.), *A History of African Archaeology* (London: James Currey Ltd, 1990), 69-70.

[3] Ibid, 70.

[4] Tim Maggs, "The Iron Age Sequence South of the Vaal and Pongola Rivers: Some Historical Implications", *The Journal of African History* 21, no. 1 (1980), 1-15.

[5] Ibid, 2.
[6] Maggs appears to have labelled the groups he discusses 'Nguni' on the basis of their spoken language.

taken place sometime between 1600 and 1700.[7] According to the evidence, Africans had inhabited the region from a far earlier date.[8]

Having plotted the dates at which various pottery styles emerged, Maggs observed that by the tenth-century a complete change in ceramic style had been developed. This period, he added, also coincided with the emergence of new forms of settlement architecture, technological change, and with new forms of material culture.[9] By identifying the spread of these new ceramics from the excavation of numerous former Iron Age settlements, Maggs was able to demonstrate that Bantu-speaking[10] groups had spread from the coastal plains and wooded valleys into the southern interior grassland regions, including areas of the KwaZulu-Natal region. Contrary to the notion of a sixteenth- or seventeen-century migration popularised by Bryant, Maggs demonstrated that Bantu groups had inhabited the region as early as the thirteenth- and the fourteenth-century.[11]

In contrast to the ecological studies, Huffman and his colleagues at the University of the Witwatersrand were developing an approach to the study of early farming communities which sought to interrogate ceramics as a form of language. To do so, they began to rely on techniques of structuralist linguistic analysis in an effort to identity the ceramic patterns they considered to be traditions.[12] Huffman's work was particularly influenced by a 1980 study by anthropologist Adam Kuper.[13] Based on theoretical extrapolations derived from ethnographic data[14] which described the features of 'Bantu' homesteads and their organisation, Kuper's study became renowned for his identification of a developmental pattern which illuminated some of the social and symbolic dynamics which existed between a husband and his wives in south-east African societies. Drawing on the work of A.I. Berglund,[15] Kuper's study had interpreted symbolic meanings within the homestead based on the symbolic distinctions between masculinity and femininity which could be observed within the ethnographic evidence.

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[7] According to Maggs, the theory had likely originated with geologist George William Stow, who had influenced the writings of Theal, who had in turn popularised the notion.

[8] Maggs," The Iron Age", 1-2.

[9] Ibid, 4.

[10] By 'Bantu' Maggs was referring to a broad linguistic category which includes Shona-speakers and Nguni-speakers.

[11] Maggs, "The Iron Age", 12-13.

[12] Hall, "Hidden History", 72.

[13] By 'Bantu' Kuper referred to groups of Nguni-language speakers which had lived in southern eastern Africa at an unspecified period in the past.

[14] Kuper drew on census data collected by the likes of Hilda Kuper (née Beemer, under which name she had also published), Bryant, and B.A. Marwick among many others. See Adam Kuper, "Symbolic Dimensions of the Southern Bantu Homestead", *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 50, no. 1 (1980), 8-23.

[15] See Axel-Ivar Berglund, *Zulu thought-patterns and symbolism* (Uppsala: Swedish Institute of Missionary Research, 1976).

According to Kuper, the homestead interiors of Nguni-speakers were divided into male and female spaces. The overall spacial organisation of the homestead corresponded to the social prestige of a husband's wives, whose huts were positioned in proximity to their husband's in order of their seniority.[16] The right-hand side of the homestead was predominantly associated with masculinity. Because men were predominantly occupied with caring for the cattle, men dominated the space in which cattle were safeguarded and catered to. Women, on the other hand, prepared the food for the homestead and consequently the left-hand spaces in which they worked were associated with femininity.[17]

Building on Kuper's analysis, Huffman developed ideas about a cognitive system which he used to structure his perception of early African societies. He employed his approach in a 1982 study in which he tracked the development of what he called 'Zimbabwe Culture'. According to Huffman, the Early Iron Age was characterised by Bantu[18] groups which had developed rudimentary technologies. Based on the radio-carbon dating of ceramic fragments, Huffman pinpointed this period as having taken place between the year 200 and 800. Huffman described the Late Iron Age as the period between the years 800 and 1200. By this later period, he asserted that African groups had developed new smelting techniques which had led to the creation of new and more sophisticated ceramic designs.[19] This 'Central Cattle Pattern' was characterised by homesteads which were designed to form a circle around the cattle byre at their epicentre. According to Huffman, the pattern quite literally signified the emergence of a culture in which cattle were central to the socio-economic lives of Bantu groups.[20]

The growing prominence of Huffman's brand of cognitive archaeology during the 1980s led to an increasing methodological divergence between the disciplines of archaeology and history. At a time when historians were increasingly drawing on Marxist theory to produce analyses of the mode of production in pre-capitalist African societies, historical archaeology was increasingly falling out of favour. Instead, archaeologists were beginning to adopt Huffman's more positivist framework. Following Huffman, archaeologists began extrapolating backward from ethnographic data on the basis that his 'scientific' treatment of the evidence enabled them to identity patterns of traditions over time.[21] What they overlooked, however, was any

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[16] Kuper, *Symbolic Dimensions*, 2-3.
[17] Ibid, 19.

[18] Like Maggs, by 'Bantu' Huffman referred to broadly to Bantu-language speakers.
[19] Thomas Huffman, "Archaeology and Ethnohistory of the African Iron Age", *Annual Review of Anthropology* 11, no. 1 (1982), 140-148.
[20] Ibid, 140-148.
[21] See Natalie Swanepoel, Amanda Esterhuysen and Philip Bonner, *500 Years Rediscovered: Southern African Precedents and Prospects* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2008), 10-11.

consideration of how the ethnographic data which informed their interpretations of the archaeological evidence had itself had been produced and reshaped over time.

Part 1.2: The Question of Slavery

Historical materialism's attention to production and the relations of production had by the early 1980s led scholars to begin considering productive forces which had previously been overlooked. In a 1981 paper,[22] Patrick Harries endeavoured to clarify whether or not Nguni-speaking groups had engaged in domestic slavery. Taking a materialist approach, Harries explained domestic slavery in terms of its productive impact within the homestead structure of African groups. For evidence, he drew extensively on archival material. In particular, he sought to extract data from Francisco Santana's syntheses of the written records housed in the Arquivo Historico Ultramarino[23] in Lisbon, as well as the records retained by the Secretary for Native Affairs at the Natal Archive in Pietermaritzburg. Harries also consulted the correspondence of nineteenth-century British naval officers such as Captain Owen, which is kept in the Public Record Office in London.

Harries recognised that slaving at Delagoa Bay had escalated during the period of the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815). Drawing on Portuguese records[24] and Captain Owen's correspondence,[25] Harries argued that the volume of the salve trade had increased further still during the 1820s. This was in large part due to the succession of wars and migrations within the region, which had eased the difficulty of taking captives. According to Harries, although slaves were sold for as little as two shillings in the year 1824, for much of the 1820s, they were sold for between ten and twelve shillings, making them highly profitable.[26]

Drawing on Portuguese sources,[27] Harris argued that there is irrefutable evidence that Nguni-speakers participated in the slave trades at both Lourenço Marques and at Inhambane during the early 1820s. Which groups, however, remain somewhat uncertain – largely because the Portuguese record-keepers had failed to distinguish between different

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[22] Patrick Harries, "Slavery, Social Incorporation and Surplus Extraction; The Nature of Free and Unfree Labour in South-East Africa", *The Journal of African History* 22, no. 3 (1981), 309-330.

[23] See Francisco Santana, *Documentação do Avulsa Moçambicana do Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino* (Lisboa: Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos, 1964).

[24] See for example Statement of Conselho Ultramarino, 20th March 1833, *Documentação* 1, 205.

[25] See for example Public Record Office, London. Admiralty Correspondence 1/2269, Owen to Admiralty, 8 March 1824.

[26] Harries, "Slavery", 313-314. This price refers to the cost at which slaves were sold to slave merchants, who consequently sold slaves to slaving ships for closer to £4.

[27] See Governor of Lourenco Marques to Governor General of Mozambique, 9 January 1830, *Documentação* 11, 173.

Nguni-speakers.[28] Nevertheless, Harries concluded that the groups in question were the Gaza and the Ngoni, led by former Ndwandwe military leaders Soshangane and Zwangendaba respectively.[29] In addition, given their influence in Delagoa Bay during the second quarter of the nineteenth-century, Harries speculated that the Zulu kingdom might well have participated in the trade. This, he argued, was all the more probable given that the Gaza and the Ngoni had migrated north of the Limpopo and across the Zambezi respectively by the late 1820s. Each group had thus already vacated the region by the time the slaving operations at Delagoa Bay during the 1830s were taking place.[30]

Drawing on the evidence of a Brazilian newspaper report first utilised in a study by Herbert Klein,[31] Harries observed that Rio de Janeiro had received 4,301 slaves from Lourenço Marques between 1825 and 1830. According to his calculations, the average number of slaves carried by vessels along the trade route between Delagoa Bay and Rio de Janeiro during the 1820s numbered 572 per ship.[32] Harries added it was likely that further slaves were shipped to Brazilian territories north of Rio de Janeiro. Likewise, the Caribbean Island of Bourbon (Réunion) was a known recipient of slaves.[33] Indeed, Bourbon was shipped over 2,800 slaves from Delagoa Bay and Inhambane during an 18-month window between 1827 and 1828. By extrapolating from these figures, Harries gauged that around 1,000 slaves per year were being exported from Delagoa Bay during the 1820s (post 1823).[34] Hereafter, during the late 1830s, the Delagoa Bay trade appears to have steadily retracted, most likely, Harries speculated, due to the British's increased anti-slavery policing along the east coast and the establishment of a more profitable land bound slave trade with the Transvaal Boers.[35]

Part 1.3: Shaka and the Hunter-Traders

A 1981 study by Charles Ballard analysed the political and economic impact of the trade between British hunter-traders and the Zulu kingdom following the establishment of the British trading post at Port Natal in 1824.[36] As I have discussed previously, the hunter-traders, led by Francis Farewell and James Saunders King, had sought to establish relations

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[28] Harries, "Slavery", 314. Harries added that the Portuguese referred non-discriminately to Nguni groups as Vatuas (sometimes spelt Vatwas or Vatwahs), which was a collective name for groups whose languages contained clicks.

[29] Harries, "Slavery", 314.

[30] Ibid, 314.

[31] See Herbert Klein, *The Middle Passage: Comparative Studies in the Atlantic Slave Trade (*New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978), 76-77.

[32] Harries, "Slavery", 315.

[33] See Commander of HMS Helicon to Governor General of Mozambique in 1828. *Documentação* 1, 459.

[34] Harries, "Slavery", 315-316.

[35] Ibid, 315-317. The evidence Harries refers to explicitly implicates Soshangane in both the Delagoa Bay trade and the later trade with the Transvaal Boers.

[36] Charles Ballard, "The Role of Trade and Hunter-Traders in the Political Economy of Natal and Zululand, 1824-1880", *African Economic History* 10 (1981), 3-21.

with Shaka for the purposes of redirecting the traffic of the ivory trade toward Port Natal in place of Delagoa Bay.[37] Drawing on Henry Francis Fynn,[38] Ballard noted that Shaka was never threatened by the presence of the hunter-traders. Indeed, he welcomed their arrival for two reasons. Firstly, they offered him a further supply of esteemed European goods such as copper and brass ornaments, beads, and medicines.[39] Secondly, Shaka utilised the hunter-traders (and their weaponry) to further his own political ends. In this respect, Shaka permitted the hunter-traders to establish themselves at Port Natal as a means of extending his control over the region. Given his coercive power and the hunter-traders' initial dependency on him for supplies, Shaka, in effect, exercised authority over the hunter-traders, and additionally, the African refugees who later congregated among them.[40]

According to Ballard, the hunter-traders were viewed as client-chiefs by Shaka and later also by Dingane. Although the Zulu kings permitted the hunter-traders relative autonomy, they remained subject to his commands and relied on his goodwill for their continued security. Drawing on Fynn and Allen Francis Gardiner,[41] Ballard noted that African refugees had flocked to Port Natal as a consequence of the ravages of Shaka's wars. These persons, Ballard noted, had been deprived of both their cattle and their security, which caused them to seek out the hunter-traders as a source of protection. The hunter-traders, in turn, welcomed these refugees as labourers who sustained the agricultural needs of the white settlement. This in turn enabled the hunter-traders to concentrate on hunting.[42]

Ballard further observed that Shaka had exercised very strict control over the trade taking place with the hunter-traders. According to Fynn's testimony,[43] free trade with the subjects of the Zulu kingdom was strictly prohibited, which meant that the goods acquired from the hunter-traders were exchanged exclusively with the royal house. This enabled the king to concentrate trade goods among the elite of the kingdom. Indeed, drawing yet again on Fynn,[44] Ballard claimed that only the ruling hierarchy of the royal family, military leaders, and the women of the *isigodlo*[45] were permitted to be adorned with European wares. By

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[37] Ibid, 3-4.

[38] Fynn, *Diary*, 131-132, 143.

[39] Ballard, "The Role of Trade", 4.
[40] Ballard, "The Role of Trade", 3-5.

[41] Henry Francis Fynn, *The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn: Compiled from Original Sources*, Daniel Mck. Malcolm and James Stuart (eds.) (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter & Shooter, 1950), 24; Allen Francis Gardiner, *Narrative of a Journey to the Zoolu Country in South Africa* (London: William Crofts, 1836), 85.

[42] Ballard, "The Role of Trade", 4.
[43] Fynn, *Diary*, 131-132.
[44] Ibid, 143.
[45] These were the royal quarters where women who 'belonged' to the king were housed. Each *ikanda*, an establishment of the Zulu king's which also housed the *amabutho*, would have contained an *isigodlo*. The *izigodlo* could be subdivided into a black reserve and a white reserve which distinguished the junior and senior

restricting the flow of these goods, Shaka had sought to control their distribution among his own subjects, for these trade items were an essential signifier of high status.[46]

Part 1.4: Women, Dominance, and Production

Between the late 1970s and the early 1980s, Black Consciousness was beginning to rise to prominence in the South African context. At this time, black political groups such as Inkatha were looking to depict the late independent period as a 'Golden Age'; an image which contrasted with the denial of black freedoms under the apartheid regime. Correspondingly, many black intellectuals had begun resisting detailed studies of African societies prior to colonialism because they were concerned that oppressive social structures within these societies might be uncovered.[47] It was in this context, in 1980, that Hamilton completed work on her honours dissertation.[48]

Hamilton recognised that 'facts' about the history of Nguni-speaking groups prior to colonialism were drawn from oral evidence collected by Europeans (such as Bryant and Stuart). This, she observed, had caused the evidence to be 'couched in Western terms, elicited in responses to questions considered relevant by a Western mind, or concerning issues highlighted by differences in culture between informant and recorder'.[49] Hamilton argued that the evidence was thus not based on a firm foundation but that was open to reinterpretation like 'pieces of a puzzle which can be assembled in different ways; the end result reflecting the approach of the researcher as much as the intrinsic content of the material.'[50] The significance of these comments is that they demonstrate that Hamilton was well aware of the complex relationship which exists between historiography and sources. In this respect, where sources are conventionally assumed to shape the historiography, in the case of the KwaZulu-Natal region of the late independent era, Hamilton recognised that the historiography shaped the sources in turn.

Taking a critical approach, Hamilton's study investigated some neglected features of the Zulu kingdom's history. Drawing on traveller's accounts and the James Stuart Papers, she stressed that Shaka's increasingly centralised control over marriage during

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women. The black reserve was further subdivided between the royal women and the *umndlunkulu*, the latter of which were high status non-royals. The white reserve too was subdivided, with one section containing the royal children, the other containing low-status servants and captives. Men other than the king were strictly prohibited from entering these women's quarters. See Carolyn Hamilton, "Ideology, Oral Traditions and the Struggle for Power in the Early Zulu kingdom" (Master's dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1985), 425-429.

[46] Ballard, "The Role of Trade", 4.

[47] Swanepoel et al, 5-6.

[48] See Carolyn Hamilton, "A Fragment of the Jigsaw: authority and control amongst the early nineteenth-century northern Nguni" (Honours Dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1980).

[49] Carolyn Hamilton, "A Fragment of the Jigsaw", ii-iii.

[50] Ibid, ii-iii.

his reign complicated Jeff Guy's and John Wright's assertions that homestead heads had exercised complete power over production and reproduction within the homestead. Women, she added, also played a far more prominent role in the production process through their involvement in agriculture than had previously been acknowledged.[51] Hamilton further argued that the notion of the complete subordination of women was oversimplified because elite women, such as Shaka's aunt Mnkabayi kaJama, were capable of rising to positions of political authority. *Izigodlo* women, she added, also played an important political role which had largely been overlooked.[52] As I discuss shortly, Hamilton developed several of her arguments far more substantially in her 1985 master's dissertation.

A further study focusing on the role of women was a 1983 paper by Margaret Kinsman. Focusing on women she identified as 'southern Tswana', Kinsman investigated the social structures which she asserted had suppressed these women between 1800 and 1840.[53] Although it did not directly touch on the KwaZulu-Natal context, Kinsman's study did stimulate a broader interest in the study of women's roles in pre-capitalist production processes. Her approach, although it focused on relations of production, it was influenced by social history. In this respect, her study examined the structural oppression of women by investigating the roles of ordinary southern Tswana women 'from below'. Kinsman's main argument was that the institution of marriage was instrumental for the systematic suppression of women.

Drawing predominantly on ethnographic data provided by missionary sources,[54] Kinsman observed that the productive processes of southern Tswana groups were strictly divided on the basis of gender in such a way that only men were capable of accumulating wealth. Although women were tasked with working the land, the authority to access this land was vested in the senior male of the homestead. Women thus remained dependent on their husband, father, or eldest son for access to the land they tended, which restricted their control over their productive output. Kinsman further recognised that married women were withheld the right to an inheritance, which further inhibited women's economic self-determination. Indeed, if the homestead head should die, the cattle of the homestead were known to pass from husband to son.[55]

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[51] Ibid, see chapter two and in particular chapter one.
[52] Ibid, see chapter two in particular.
[53] Margaret Kinsman, "'Beasts of Burden': The Subordination of Southern Tswana Women, ca. 1800-1840", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 10, no. 1 (1983), 39-40.
[54] Kinsman predominantly drew on papers preserved by the South African Library. Predominantly, these papers were drawn from the Methodist Missionary Archives and the John Campbell Papers. In addition, Kinsman made use of the University of London's Council of World Mission Archive. This included an examination of numerous journals and letters of correspondence.
[55] Kinsman, "Beasts of Burden", 42-43.

A further observation of Kinsman's was that the limited capacity for storing agricultural produce created a major problem for women. Without a means of banking the labour on which they were dependent for their subsistence, elderly women – whose capacity for harsh physical labour waned with age – became increasingly dependent on their relatives to support their subsistence needs. Men, on the other hand, given their authority of the homestead's cattle, could loan[56] out their stock to younger men in exchange for subsistence. Over several years, men were able to naturally accumulate wealth by expanding their stock of cattle.[57] Women, on the other hand, were incapable of accumulating wealth independent of their husband.

Part 2: Ideology and Theory

Part 2.1: The Making of the Lala

By the early 1980s, as resistance to South Africa's apartheid regime mounted, political strife was intensifying. At this time, Zulu nationalism was experiencing resurgence in the KwaZulu-Natal region owing to the outspoken rhetoric of KwaZulu Bantustan leader and chief, Mangosuthu Buthelezi.[58] Buthelezi's political organisation Inkatha was promoting a Zulu nationalist conception of the African past which emphasized the unity of the Zulu kingdom prior to colonialism. This politically-driven narrative was at odds with the historical works of historians who were beginning to probe the conventional ethnocentric terminology and labelling of Africans groups. Works which were disrupting the notion of bounded tribes thus conflicted with Inkatha's agenda.[59]

It was in this context that Carolyn Hamilton produced a 1982 study on the amalala of the KwaZulu-Natal region during the late independent era.[60] Hamilton's piece served as the foundation for further paper on the amalala, co-authored by John Wright, published in 1984. The pair argued that the Zulu kingdom was far more socio-culturally heterogeneous than Inkatha was seeking to depict it.[61] Drawing on evidence they

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[56] This process was to *sisa*.

[57] Kinsman, "Beasts of Burden", 43.

[58] Swanepoel et al, 5-6.

[59] Ibid, 5-6.

[60] See Carolyn Hamilton, "The AmaLala in Natal, 1750-1826" (Workshop Paper, University of the Witwatersrand, 1982).

[61] See Carolyn Hamilton and John Wright, "The making of the Amalala: Ethnicity, Ideology and Relations of Subordination in a Precolonial Context" (Paper presented to the History Workshop, University of the Witwatersrand, 1984). The paper drew on Hamilton's master's dissertation which, although not complete, was forthcoming at this time. A later version of this paper was also published in 1990. See Carolyn Hamilton and John Wright, "The making of the Amalala: Ethnicity, Ideology and Relations of Subordination in a Precolonial Context", *South African Historical Journal* 22, no. 1 (1990), 3-23.

uncovered in the *JSA*,[62] Hamilton and Wright argued that the Zulu kingdom was formed following the Zulu ruling lineage's conquest of numerous other groups, ones which were subsequently incorporated under the rule of the Zulu Royal House.[63] To facilitate the assimilation of some of these groups, particularly during the Zulu kingdom's initial expansion, the Zulu rulers evoked the notion of a common ancestral link – the amantungwa identity.[64] According to Hamilton and Wright, the creation of this common identity facilitated the creation of alliances which contributed to the growing strength of the Zulu kingdom during its formative years (during which time it had been vulnerable to Ndwandwe attack).[65]

Hamilton and Wright further observed that groups which were subjugated by the Zulu Royal House relatively late in Shaka's reign were, by contrast, excluded from this amantungwa identity. The pair theorised that by the late 1820s, the coercive power of the Zulu Royal House had become substantial enough that they no longer required defensive alliances. Instead, the Zulu elites were incentivised to exploit newly subjugated groups for their own gain.[66] Consequently, Hamilton and Wright argued that the new ethnic grouping amalala was created to signify the inferior status of these peoples and to justify their economic exploitation. Contrary to Bryant's conclusion, whose own evidence was riddled with inconsistencies, there was little to suggest that these groups had common origins.[67]

Part 2.2: Reconstituting Oral History

In 1985 Carolyn Hamilton completed work on her master's dissertation,[68] a work which was initially overlooked by historians, but which contained arguments which would later impact the historical literature.[69] Having noticed faint indications within

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[62] Hamilton's research drew on archival data from volumes 1, 2, 3 and what was at that time the forthcoming fourth edition.

[63] As Hamilton and Wright explained, this was also the view David Hedges had taken in his 1978 thesis.

[64] This argument drew on Hamilton's master's dissertation. See Hamilton, Ideology", chapter 5.

[65] Hamilton and Wright, "Amalala", 16-17.

[66] Also see Hamilton, Ideology", chapter 5.

[67] For her 1982, aside from her use of the *JSA*, Hamilton drew on numerous further oral sources. These included a series of interviews undertaken in partnership with Henry 'Hlahlamehlo' Dlamini over the course of 1983. These were conducted as part of what later became the *Swaziland Oral History Project*, established in 1985. For more on the project, see Carolyn Hamilton, "The Swaziland Oral History Project", *History in Africa* 14, (1987), 383-387. In addition, Hamilton made use of tape-recorded interviews conducted by Philip Bonner in 1970 which were housed at Africa Institute at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg.

[68] Hamilton, "Ideology".

[69] Hamilton's contribution was later recognised by Jeff Peires in a 1993 article. See Jeffery Brian Peires, "Paradigm Deleted: The Materialist Interpretation of the Mfecane", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 19, no. 2 (1993), 295-313.

Bonner's work, Hamilton's study drew attention to the importance of ideology in shaping oral evidence. In addition, where Bonner's thesis had produced some evidence of social stratification within the Zulu kingdom and plenty on its development in the Swazi polity, Hamilton's work broke new ground with its analysis of the Zulu kingdom's social structure. Much of Hamilton's evidence was drawn from the James Stuart Papers and the *JSA*. Notably, she benefited from having access to the first three published volumes of the *JSA*.[70] This enabled her to reread passages and compare the texts within the volumes far more readily. Furthermore, it enabled her to uncover contradictions which had previously been overlooked. The published volumes of the *JSA* were thus beginning to have a direct impact on the nature of the historical scholarship which was taking place.

Hamilton argued that the ideological views of interlocutors were largely inherited from their parents and grandparents (or others), or had arisen as a form of intervention to resist an opposing view. The significance of this was that the ideological positionality of the interlocutors was recognised as a powerful influence on their evidence – it was ideological differences, Hamilton argued, which accounted for the discrepancies between oral accounts by different interlocutors. To facilitate her analysis, Hamilton devised a new methodological approach based on Pierre Machery's and Frederic Jameson's deconstructionist take on the analysis of literary texts.[71] Hamilton's strategy was to view oral sources as capable of communicating or concealing information unintentionally. As Hamilton put it 'Silences in a text [or an oral source] – for example, the failure to mention something that might be expected – can be just as revealing as a statement itself.'[72] Texts with the appearance of 'ideological seamlessness', she explained, nevertheless contained inconsistencies because ideologies are not fully established facts, but remain transmutable through ideological struggle.[73]

What characterised Hamilton's approach was her adaption of these literary methodologies such that they could be applied within a historical context. Indeed,

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[70] Webb and Wright had published three volumes of the *JSA* at this time, while the fourth was forthcoming. The second volume had been published in 1979 and the third in 1983.

[71] See Pierre Macherey, *A Theory of Literary Production*, trans. Geoffrey Wall (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978). Macherey's work was original published in French in 1966. See Pierre Macherey, *Pour une théorie de la production littéraire* (Lyon: ENS Éditions, 1966). See also Frederic Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1981). Hamilton also influenced by the critical theory of Antonio Gramsci. See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (eds.) (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971).

[72] Hamilton, "Ideology", 56.

[73] Ibid, 56-57. 'Ideological struggle' in this context refers to the discourses at work on the source at the time it was being made. The source itself has thus an ideological position particular to its context. Hamilton also published an article on her approach in 1987. See Carolyn Hamilton, "Ideology and Oral Traditions: Listening to the Voices 'From Below'", *History in Africa* 14, (1987), 67-86.

Hamilton observed that '[oral sources are] in a heightened sense, not merely the vehicle of a hegemonic ideology, but the very site of the expression of the dialogue and conflict in which it engages… in a process of change over time.'[74] In so saying, Hamilton argued that dominant oral histories – just like literary texts - developed through a dialectical struggle between the dominant narrative and subordinate ones. These histories, furthermore, were dynamic, all the more so because they did not take a fixed shape until such time that they assumed a written form. Indeed, where previous historians had sought to rationalise the contradictions they had discovered within the source material, Hamilton actively sought them out with the intention of scrutinising their pluralities and discerning patterns in their contradictions.[75]

Part 2.3: The House and Status

In her master's study, Hamilton argued that groups subjugated by the Mthethwa polity (of which the Zulu group were a constituent prior to Shaka's reign) had had their genealogies manipulated for the purposes of facilitating assimilation and strengthening alliances.[76] An example of a group which was assimilated (becoming amantungwa) through a process of what she called 'incorporation' was the Qwabe polity. Utilising evidence acquired from the James Stuart Papers and the *JSA*,[77] Hamilton argued that the Qwabe's social structures were left largely intact and that their people were left unmolested. Furthermore, Qwabe warriors were drafted into the Zulu army and were subsequently resocialised. Qwabe refugees were also encouraged to resettle in their former territories while the Qwabe's captured cattle were returned to them.[78]

Hamilton further identified that the Zulu rulers had created elite offshoots from the royal house, an undertaking which was called *dabula*'ing.[79] The significance of this finding was

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[74] Hamilton, "Ideology", 60.

[75] Hamilton, "Ideology", 60-63. Hamilton has acknowledged the influence of Isabel Hofmeyr in helping her formulate her ideas about the role of ideology. Hofmeyr had made an important contribution by observing that the economic, political, and social conditions had shaped the development of Afrikaner nationalist ideologies. See Isabel Hofmeyr, "Building a Nation from Words: Afrikaans language, literature and ethnic identity', 1902-1924" (History Workshop Seminar Paper, University of the Witwatersrand, 1984).

[76] Hamilton, "Ideology", 105-110.
A 1996 book edited by Robert Morrell has built on the study of the interplay between identity formation and political change in the KwaZulu-Natal region. See Robert Morrell, *Political Economy and Identities in KwaZulu-Natal: Historical and Social Perspectives* (Durban: Indicator Press, 1996). See in particular chapter one.
[77] See Hamilton, "Ideology", 487-497.
[78] Ibid, 172-175.

[79] According to Bryant, endogamous marriages were strictly prohibited in the Zulu kingdom and had not taken place under any circumstances. But when Hamilton subjected Bryant's claim to close scrutiny, she began to discover inconsistencies. Indeed, within *Olden Times*, Hamilton found that Bryant had both accepted and refuted the existence of endogamous marriage practices in different passages. The evidence Hamilton had unearthed on *dabula*'ing, on the other hand, was corroborated by numerous interlocutors, rendering it comparatively far more credible. See Hamilton, "Ideology", 213-215.

that it demonstrated that the formation of distinctive groups was at least in some instances instigated by the ruling house. By interrogating the evidence of numerous of Stuart's interlocutors, Hamilton found that the Zulu Royal House had created at least three sub-groups during Shaka's reign: the Biyela, the eGazini, and the emGazini. Each of these splinter groups had formed new houses with their own distinctive identity.[80] In this respect, the newly created sub-groups retained an affiliation with their parent group, but nevertheless established their own *isibongo.*[81]

According to Hamilton, one of the reasons for delineating parts of the ruling group was that it protected the ruler from threats to his reign from within his own extended family. This was because groups which had been *dabula*'d no longer retained their status as royals.[82] In addition, the creation of these para-royal groups enabled members of the Zulu Royal House to marry other elites who had been delineated peripheral to the royal lineage.[83] This constituted a loophole which enabled elites to exploit an otherwise taboo practice to their advantage by establishing marriages which concentrated their wealth at the apex of society.[84] Hamilton further argued that the status of warriors reflected the same social divisions which manifest elsewhere in the Zulu kingdom's society.[85] *Izinduna* (headmen), rather than being awarded their position purely on the basis of meritocracy, appeared to be drawn from those with the status of amantungwa.[86]

Part 2.4: The *iziGodlo* and Elite Women

A further contribution of Hamilton's was her attention to the *izigodlo*; an institution she argued had received insufficient attention from scholars. While it was known that the king enjoyed sexual access to *izigodlo* women, Hamilton argued that *izigodlo* had served a far greater political purpose than that of housing concubines.[87] Building on the work of Wright,[88] Hamilton argued that elite families were obligated to present the

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[80] Hamilton, "Ideology", 207-213.

[81] The *isibongo* refers to the 'clan name' of the group which conveyed the parameters of its immediate familial connections.

[82] Hamilton, "Ideology", 207, 221.

[83] Ibid, 207-213, 229-230. The daughters of these elites demanded greatly inflated bridal prices, such that intermarriage between elites was highly incentivised because it enabled them to concentrate their wealth and power at the apex of the kingdom's society.

[84] Hamilton, "Ideology", 207-213.

[85] Ibid, 369-372. It was the units of warriors within the regiment rather than the regiment itself which was conferred the status of black or white. Hamilton consulted the evidence of ten of Stuart's interlocutors. See Hamilton, "Ideology", chapter six, footnotes 131, 132, and 133.

[86] Hamilton, "Ideology", 380-384. Hamilton further observed that the officer class was a 'new elite' and that new men were capable of gaining positions of authority. Their class in Shaka's kingdom rather than the status of their birth was what was significant.

[87] Hamilton, "Ideology", 422-426.

[88] See John Wright, "Control of Women's Labour in the Zulu kingdom" in Jeffrey Peires (ed.), *Before and After Shaka* (Grahamstown: Rhodes University Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1981), 92-93.

king with young women as a form of tribute. As neither Shaka nor subsequently Dingane ever married, the pair did not sire (recognised) daughters who could be exchanged for bridal wealth. Consequently, the women they received as tribute could be married off in exchange for bridewealth. Marriages of this kind, Hamilton argued, enabled the Zulu kings both to stockpile wealth and to strengthen their political relationships with elite the families of the kingdom.[89]

In addition to servicing the king's fields and brewing the king's beer, Hamilton argued that *izigodlo* women provided the bulk of the agricultural labour on which *amabutho* depended for their supply of grain. Recognising deficiencies in the available evidence, Hamilton argued that men serving in an ibutho were unlikely to have depended on their families for their subsistence. This was because only a small proportion of the homesteads from which these men had come would have been in the same locality as their *ikhanda* (an *ibutho*'s quarters). Secondly, drawing on Hedges, Hamilton observed that transport costs were high, which would have disincentivised the supplying of grain from a source external to the *ikhanda*.[90] Thirdly, Hamilton argued that although men of the *amabutho* were known to have participated in the cultivation of their *ikhanda*'s fields, the primary period of the harvesting and storing of grain took place during mid-summer, at which time the *amabutho* were collectively called to the capital in service to the king in anticipation of the *umkhosi* (first-fruits ceremony). Consequently, the only people capable of having performed these harvesting duties were the women of the *isigodlo*.

Hamilton's study also provided new information on the political role played by the *amakhosikazi*; the elder women, frequently of the royal lineage, who were in charge of the *isigodlo* and the *ikhanda* of individual localities. These women maintained the division between the institutions, ensured the security of *izigodlo*, and upheld the taboos observed by their women. They also presided over the women's agricultural production and enforced restrictions on the women's marriages.[91] The most powerful and influential of these women were Shaka's paternal aunts Mawa, Mmama and in

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[89] Hamilton, "Ideology", Oral Traditions, 429-432. This practice was distinct from gifting women as a form of patronage because these women demanded a substantial bridal price. Indeed, Stuart's interlocutors Mkando, Socwatsha, and Ndukwana also independently verified, in conversation with Stuart, that *isigodlo* women were both accepted as tribute and could effectively be 'traded in' by the king as Hamilton had described. Kings appear to have done so whenever they saw fit, which allowed them to lay claim to substantial bridal payments. These cattle would then be given to the *ikanda* – the division from which the woman came within the *isigodlo*. See statement of Ndukwana kaMbengwana in Colin Webb and John Wright (eds.), *The James Stuart Archive* 4 (1986), 263-406; Statement of Socwatsha kaPhaphu in Colin Webb and John Wright (eds.), *The James Stuart Archive* 6 (2014), 1-207.

[90] Hamilton, "Ideology", 435-438.
[91] Ibid, 443-445.

particular, Mnkabayi kaJama. Drawing on Mnkabayi's praise poem,[92] Hamilton observed that Mnkabayi likely wielded significant political influence. In addition, she possessed a great deal of ritual power important for warfare, rain-making, and the agricultural cycle.[93]

Part 2.5: Debating Descent Groups

In a 1985 paper,[94] David Hammond-Tooke forwarded a critique of the established view that the Africans chiefdoms of the late independent period were composed of bounded groups characterised by a kinship-based infrastructure (a lineage structure).[95] Hammond-Tooke opposed the notion that African groups had undergone a 'mutation' which saw them develop into chiefdoms from a prior stage of development. The basis of the 'mutation' view, he observed, was the notion that a transition toward a lineage mode of production had taken place. Contrary to this, Hammond-Took, argued that African chiefdoms had continued to develop in accordance with their existing social structure. Indeed, drawing on ethnographic and archaeological evidence, he argued that the centralised hierarchy structure which characterised the chiefdom of the late independent era could be observed throughout the Iron Age.[96]

Hammond-Tooke's criticism of the lineage structure sparked a debate which centred on opposing interpretations of the evidence. On the one hand, Hammond-Tooke, a structuralist anthropologist, had drawn his conclusions from a backward application of ethnological evidence[97] – an approach consistent with the historiological approach. According to Hammond-Tooke, there were patterns of continuity within the structure of African societies which demonstrated that the development of larger polities did not constitute a 'mutation'.[98] In addition, Hammond-Tooke criticised the notion that lineage hierarchies could be equated with territorial authority. In reality, he claimed, kinship was merely a

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[92] Hamilton cited the James Stuart Papers. See *Isibonga* of Mnkabayi kaJama, James Stuart Papers, 57/7, Killie Campbell Africana Library, Durban.

[93] Hamilton, "Ideology", 445-447.

[94] See David Hammond-Tooke, "Descent Groups, Chiefdoms and South African Historiography", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 11, no. 2 (1985), 305-319. A previous version of the paper had been presented at a seminar in 1984. See David Hammond-Tooke, "Descent Groups, Chiefdoms and South African Historiography" (African Studies Seminar Paper, University of the Witwatersrand, 1984). A later paper based on his previous works was then included as part of a 1991 book. See David Hammond-Tooke, "Kinship authority and political authority in precolonial South Africa" in Andrew Spiegel and Patrick McAllister (eds.), *Tradition and Transition in Southern Africa: Festschrift for Philip and Iona Meyer* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 1991), 185-200.

[95] Hammond-Tooke, "Descent Groups", 310.

[96] Ibid, 312-317.

[97] Wright criticised Hammond-Tooke for his application of ethnographic data in a 1986 paper.
See John Wright, "Doing the Lineage In: Some Grumbles From the Sidelines" (Precolonial History workshop paper, University of Cape Town, 1986).

[98] Hammond-Tooke, "Descent Groups", 305-310.

means of defining the relationships between agnatic groups - there was no true hierarchy among them aside from their political affiliation to a chief.[99]

On the other hand, drawing on their analyses of the *JSA*'s evidence, historians such as Hamilton and Wright continued to argue that significant socio-structural changes had taken place within African chiefdoms. Historians were recognising that backward extrapolation from ethnographic data was biasing the ways in which the pre-capitalist African societies of the past were being interpreted. In addition, as Hamilton later remarked in a 1997 paper,[100] there was strong evidence to support the categorical distinction drawn by historians between chiefdoms and states. Within the historical literature, 'chiefdoms' connoted small-scale polities led by a chief. 'States', on the other hand, were associated with formations which had incorporated several chiefdoms under the centralised rule of a paramount. In addition, states were characterised by the development of centralised institutions, a standing army, and in many cases, the emergence of distinctive social classes.[101]

Part 2.6: The Case for Structuration Theory

By the late 1980s, historical materialism had begun to draw substantial criticism. According to Jeffrey Peires, the approach struggled to overcome the issues of inadequate evidence, obscure terminology, and a lack of methodological consensus.[102] In addition, the historical materialism had largely isolated itself from the archaeological evidence. Alert to this issue, it was in a 1986 paper that Martin Hall argued in favour of a new approach to the physical evidence which married the research methodologies of archaeologists, historical materialists, and anthropologists. The basis of Hall's argument was that the dominant methodology of each of these aforementioned disciplines was confined to reductionism in isolation from one another. This, Hall explained, was because the methodology for analysing the evidence favoured by each discipline allowed conclusions to be drawn which would go unrecognised by the either of the other two disciplines.[103] To help express his argument, Hall presented an analysis of the role cattle had played in south-east

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[99] Ibid, 308-310.

[100] Carolyn Hamilton, "Restructuring within the Zulu royal house: clan splitting and the consolidation of royal power and resources under Shaka", *African Studies* 56, no. 2(1997), 85-113. Hamilton's paper drew heavily on her 1985 master's dissertation.

[101] Hamilton, "Restructuring", 86.

[102] See Peires, "Paradigm Deleted", 296.

[103] Martin Hall, "The Role of Cattle in Southern African Agropastoral Societies: More than Bones Alone Can Tell", *Goodwin Series*, Vol. 5 (1986), 83-87.

African societies.[104] He began by acknowledging the influence of Kuper's seminal study of African homesteads.[105]

According to Hall, Kuper's paper had had two major implications for archaeological analyses of the roles of cattle. Firstly, Kuper had demonstrated that cattle possessed tremendous symbolic worth. This, Hall explained, was because cattle's worth had predominantly been determined not by their subsistence value, but by their status value. Secondly, Kuper had convincingly shown that the symbolism associated with cattle was significant enough to have shaped the architectural layout of homesteads. According to Hall, this demonstrated that the symbolism had affected the physical environment in ways which could not be determined by archaeological evidence; at least not without a prior understanding of cattle's ideological significance. Nevertheless, Hall criticised the systematic way in which Kuper had regarded African settlement structures for he recognised that Kuper's model had difficulty in acknowledging change over time.[106] Indeed, contrary to the growing prominence of cognitive archaeology within south-east Africa at this time, Hall had remained opposed to it on the grounds of its narrow and ahistorical treatment of the evidence.

Next, Hall turned his attention to a discussion of the influences of historical materialism. Drawing on the researches of Philip Bonner, Hall asserted that southern African groups had practised a 'lineage mode of production' which was largely mediated by the exchange of cattle.[107] Cattle possession, he explained, had enabled homestead heads to acquire wives whom together with their children provided the homestead with sufficient agricultural subsistence. Elders, he explained, would have possessed substantially more cattle than their juniors on account of having accumulated growing numbers of cattle naturally over time. According to Hall, the notion of the lineage mode of production, however, lacked 'archaeological testability'.[108] This, he explained, was because homestead heads did not constitute a distinguishable 'class'. Consequently, there was no signpost evidence in the archaeological record which enabled the Lineage Mode of Production to be deduced from an examination of the remains of homesteads.[109]

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[104] Hall's periodisation was vague, but he appears to have been referring to which had lived during the second millennium AD in a very broad sense.

[105] See Adam Kuper, "Symbolic Dimensions of the Southern Bantu Homestead", *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 50, no. 1 (1980) 8-23.

[106] Hall, "The Role of Cattle", 83.

[107] Ibid, 83.

[108] Ibid, 84.

[109] Loc. cit. Whether or not Hall accepted the notion of a lineage mode of production is not important here. His point was that archaeological evidence alone is incapable of enabling scholars to conceive of such a mode of production.

To overcome the issue of reductionism, Hall proposed a new theoretical approach capable of '[building] on the insights of Kuper, Huffman, Slater, Hedges and others who have been concerned with the role of cattle in later centuries, but which can also accommodate and explain change…'[110] In Hall's view, a theory formulated by sociologist Anthony Giddens presented the potential solution. Giddens' approach, known as structuration theory, was founded on the integration of structuralist theory and historical materialism.[111] What attracted Hall to Giddens' theory was his conception of 'power' as a class of action capable of explaining an individual's influence over people and objects. According to Giddens' theory, objects were capable of becoming representative of relations of power. This, Hall exclaimed, was a valuable formulation because it enabled structuration theory to conceive of the symbolic power which was vested in cattle. In addition, Hall argued that structuration theory could be integrated with ecological and environmental evidence, thus enabling more coherent investigations into the gradual emergence of cattle keeping practices over the course of the second millennium.[112]

Despite Hall's hopes that structuration theory might promote greater interdisciplinary exchange between archaeologists and historians, the disciplines continued to remain methodologically disparate on account of the prevailing dominance of cognitive archaeology within south-east Africa at this time. Largely informed by structuralist anthropology, cognitive archaeologists were approaching their items of evidence 'scientifically' by attempting to draw deductions free from bias.[113] Doing so, however, required archaeologists to reason backward from ethnographic evidence. The problem with this, Hall argued, was that it caused the ideological component of archaeology to be overlooked. In this respect, the way the past is interpreted is structured by the socio-political context of the present. Ideology, Hall asserted, should thus not be dismissed because it affects the ways in which evidence from the past is engaged.[114]

Part 2.7: Reconceiving Wealth Accumulation

Despite the emerging issues of the approach, historical materialism remained a constructive methodology for engaging socio-political structures. Writing in 1987 and focussing broadly on south-east Africa, Jeff Guy sought to redefine conceptions of wealth accumulation among African groups of the 'pre-capitalist' era.[115] Elaborating on ideas he had first expressed in this 1979 *The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom*, Guy's

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[110] Hall, "The Role of Cattle", 84.

[111] See Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984).

[112] Hall, "The Role of Cattle", 84-85. Hall argued that cattle initially became symbolically significant because they were a more dependable source of subsistence than agriculture production, which fluctuated seasonally.

[113] Hall, "Hidden History", 59, 74-77.

[114] Ibid, 59, 74-77.

[115] Jeff Guy, "Analysing Pre-Capitalist Societies in Southern Africa", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 14, no. 1 (1987), 18-37.

principle critique of the existing literature was that while women and cattle were widely recognised as measures of wealth in agro-pastoral societies, there was no underlying understanding of why this was the case. According to Guy, the reason women and cattle were prized was because each contributed to the process of production. The basis of their value was thus determined by their labour output (or their potential labour output). The true underlying basis of wealth, Guy concluded, was the control of this labour power.[116]

As Guy explained, cattle held a special significance within south-east African societies of the independent era. This was because they constituted a self-reproducing store of productive power. Not only were they relied on for subsistence goods such as milk and meat, but their hides were used for the making of leather garments and war shields. Cattle were also valued because they provided homestead heads with a means to 'store' labour power. As Kinsman had observed, cattle were often loaned by wealthier men to less wealthy men, thus creating relations of debt and dependency which had to be repaid.[117] Guy explained that the practice was not uncommon because it enabled less wealthy men to acquire the cattle they needed to pay the bridal price for a prospective wife; an essential precursor to forming a homestead of their own. Only following the payment of a number of cattle from the homestead of the prospective groom to the homestead of the prospective bride's father could a marriage be legitimised.[118] According to Guy, this exchange could be expressed as compensation for lost labour given that women were the primary labourers of agricultural production and were in addition essential for reproduction within the homestead. Just as women possessed reproductive potential for the homestead, so too could cattle reproduce in her place.[119]

Guy's observations had a tremendous impact for they revolutionised academics' understanding of the homestead structure. Through his work, Guy had demonstrated that the homestead represented the principle unit of production. Agricultural production, cattle-related production, and reproduction, Guy had observed, each took place within a nuclear family which inhabited an individual homestead. In addition, Guy had pointed out that marriage was the primary means by which homesteads were formed and extended. The acquisition of a wife offered a means of extending the homestead's agricultural labour production. *Lobola*,[120] meanwhile, could be viewed as a means of compensating a father for the loss of his daughter's labour by supplying

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[116] Ibid, 21-29.

[117] Ibid, 19-22.

[118] Ibid, 21-22.

[119] Loc. cit.

[120] The bridal price paid by a man to a woman's father. By the nineteenth-century, *lobola* was primarily being paid with cattle.

cattle as a substitute source of production. The children of a marriage, on reaching adulthood, would then repeat the pattern anew.[121]

Guy's argument was primarily based on his application of Marxist theory rather than by drawing on historical evidence. Indeed, Guy acknowledged Claude Meillassoux's and Bonner's writings as major influences on his thinking. In particular, Guy credited the influence of Meillassoux, whom he recognised as having enabled him to establish the connection between sustainable production and the control of labour power.[122] Despite the hugely influential nature of Guy's paper, however, his study can be subjected to several criticisms. The greatest issue was Guy's aforementioned reliance on theoretical abstractions rather than historical data. His paper was thus devoid of a proper historical context. Indeed, Guy's nondescript treatment of historical change over time echoed the stereotypical notion of a 'timeless' African past; a formulation which offered little to historians seeking to chronologically trace historical developments. [123]

Part 2.8: The Swaziland Oral History Project

Following the publication of the first three volumes of the *JSA* and its growing influence on the scholarship during the 1970s and the 1980s, scholars in southern Africa had begun to pay greater attention to oral sources as a site of evidence on the late independent era. The impact of the *JSA*, however, was largely restricted to the study of the Zulu kingdom and to Zulu-speakers. Information on non-Zulu-speakers, on the other hand, remained in short supply. It was in a bid to acquire further data on the early history of the Swazi state that the *Swaziland Oral History Project* was formally established in 1985. The project was based at the National Archives at Lobamba.

In 1987 paper,[124] Hamilton wrote a report on her involvement with the project. Hamilton explained that its goal was to establish an archive of Swazi history based on oral sources. Special emphasis was given to acquiring information on the period prior to colonialism because of the absence of written documents pertaining to the late independent era. The project also set out to publish transcripts of oral history on the late independent era with the intention of popularising the history of eSwatini both prior to and following the onset of colonial rule. According to Hamilton, not only were Swazi oral histories in danger of dying out, but they were recognised as both unique in depth and useful for '[illuminating] the processes and forces that shaped the history of the entire region'.[125]

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[121] Ibid, 22-25.

[122] Loc. cit.

[123] For more on this notion of 'timelessness' within the historiography see Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

[124] See Carolyn Hamilton, "The Swaziland Oral History Project", *History in Africa* 14 (1987), 383-387.

[125] Ibid, 383.

According to Hamilton, the creation of the archive encompassed three steps. The first was that of assembling previously recorded interview data and ensuring its preservation in the National Archives repository. This previously recorded data stemmed primarily from four sources: a set of mid 1960s interviews commissioned by King Sobhuza II;[126] a series of interviews orchestrated by Dumisa Dlamini of the Swaziland Broadcasting Services for radio during the same period;[127] interviews conducted by Philip Bonner in 1970; and interviews administered by Hamilton herself in 1983.[128] The second step was that of identifying gaps in the recorded material. Further interviews were planned to address these by acquiring further data on groups whose lineages had been overlooked, or for which there was limited biographical and background data.[129] The third step was that of preparing the data for eventual use by academics. This involved cataloguing, indexing, and processing the oral material through transcription, translation, and annotation. Steps were taken to ensure that the roles played by the individuals involved in each of these steps were made visible. This was because it was recognised that each level of processing involved an interpretative element which had to some degree shaped the evidence.[130]

Part 2.9: Prestige and Exotic Materials

Prior to the 1990s, little attention had been devoted to the study of pre-capitalist African polities' material culture. The symbolic value of prestige goods and their association with socio-political status, for example, had never been scrutinised in significant depth. It was in 1992 that Sandra Klopper completed her Ph.D. thesis addressing this gap in the literature.[131] Specifically, Klopper's study examined the 'exotic materials' which were acquired by the Zulu kings either through trade or by extracting tribute from external groups during the nineteenth-century. As Klopper observed, although Nguni-speaking groups had had a long association with the Delagoa Bay trade, by the 1820s, Shaka had also established trade relations with the British at Port Natal. By the time of Mpande's reign (1840-1872), trade between settlers and the Africans of the Zulu kingdom was flowing far more freely. The significance of this was that it had begun to reshape the socio-political distinctions between elites and commoners.

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[126] According to Hamilton, these interviews were conducted across eSwatini and are rich in historical detail. They predominantly focus on the origins of the Swazi state. They were recorded by royal aide Isaac Dlamini.

[127] These interviews drew on knowledgeable informants and spanned a wide range of topics including nursery tales, praise poem, and stories of past heroes.

[128] Hamilton noted that in many instances, informants overlapped. Some participated in all four interview series.

[129] Hamilton, "The Swaziland Oral History Project", 385-386.

[130] Ibid, 386-387.

[131] Sandra Klopper, "The Art of Zulu-speakers In Northern Natal-Zululand: an Investigation of the History of Beadwork, Carving and Dress from Shaka to Inkatha" (Ph.D. thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1992).

Drawing extensively on the *JSA*, the fourth volume of which had been published in 1986, Klopper examined the importance of furs and feathers, each of which were worn as part of the ceremonial costumes worn during the *umkhosi*.[132] According to Klopper, based on the evidence of Stuart's interlocutor Bikwayo,[133] the area occupied by the Tonga towards the north was the primary source of supply for these items. Recounting his experiences from the 1870s, Bikwayo had explained that the likes of genet skins, blue monkey skins, ostrich feathers, as well as leopard and lion claws would be fetched from the Tonga annually. At least some furs and feathers were also collected in the Zulu kingdom itself.[134]

According to Klopper, ostrich and crane feathers were distributed as part of a reward system which was controlled by the king. Drawing on Bryant,[135] she argued that the feathers of each bird signified high status and were worn as ornaments at ceremonial occasions to facilitate the ideological ties between members of an *ibutho*.[136] In a further section, Klopper analysed the distribution of prestigious brass goods. Drawing on evidence from the *JSA*,[137] Klopper recognised that the artefacts which were particularly prized were neck rings or collars known as *imimnaka* and arm bands called *izingxotha*.[138] Klopper argued that these artefacts were gifted to the leaders of tributary groups by the Zulu kings following their submission to Zulu rule as a means of strengthening the political ties between them.[139]

Imimnaka were also commonly worn by women of *izigodlo* and men of high status, such as *izinduna*.[140] Klopper estimated that *izingxotha* were worn for the period of about a month prior to the *umkhosi* but noted that brass collars were sometimes worn for a period of several months at a time. This led Klopper to speculate that kings sometimes gave prestigious men special permission to wear *izingxotha* for an extended period time. She further argued that this was likely regarded as a great honour and that the practice served

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[132] Sometimes called the First Fruits Ceremony, the *umkhosi* was the most important ritual of the agricultural cycle. Its purpose was to reinforce the ideological ties between the king, the land, and his people.

[133] See Statement of Bikwayo kaNoziwawa in Colin Webb and John Wright (eds.), *The James Stuart Archive* 1 (1976), 63-74.

[134] Klopper, "The art of Zulu-speakers", 35-36. Given the Tonga were tributaries of Cetshwayo's, these goods appear to have been collected rather than traded for. Leopard skins were particularly prestigious and kings were known to reward persons who presented them with a leopard skin with a head or two of cattle.

[135] See or example Bryant, *Olden Times*, 141-142.

[136] Klopper, "The art of Zulu-speakers", 39-40.

[137] See statement of Baleni kaSilwana in Colin Webb and John Wright (eds.), *The James Stuart Archive* 1 (1976), 16-52; statement of Lunguza kaMpukane in Colin Webb and John Wright (eds.), *The James Stuart Archive* 1 (1976), 297-253; Statement of Mabonsa kaSidhlayi in in Colin Webb and John Wright (eds.), *The James Stuart Archive* 2 (1979), 11-41.

[138] Klopper, "The art of Zulu-speakers", 49.

[139] Ibid, 50-53.

[140] Ibid, 53-54.

as a means by which kings could strategically reward distinguished supporters.[141] This assertion was substantiated by Klopper's observation that only elites or distinguished warriors were permitted to wear *izingxotha*, which she argued demonstrated that the artefacts were used to symbolically reinforce existing social hierarchies.[142] Indeed, what made Klopper's study significant was that it recognised that material culture could be scrutinised as a form of evidence which enabled such conclusions to be drawn.

Part 3: The 'Alibi'

Part 3.1: The Mfecane as 'Alibi'

A controversial argument by Julian Cobbing put forward in a 1988 paper[143] initiated another important development within the historical scholarship. According to Cobbing, it was not the Zulu rulers who had initiated the Mfecane, but rather, the settler-controlled slave trade. White missionaries and the travellers, he added, were complicit in concealing the scale of the trade, a feat they achieved by exaggerating the brutality of Shaka's character and by emphasising the supposed atrocities of his rule. In Cobbing's view, the narrative of the Mfecane was little more than 'alibi' created to disguise the influence of Europeans in the south-east Africa.[144] Although Cobbing's arguments were contentious and met with a critique of his methods and his conclusions, his critique was nevertheless influential. This was because it propelled the problems with evidence into the mainstream consciousness. In this respect, although he had not instigated a major methodological break, Cobbing's argument was important for drawing greater awareness to a major issue and thus accelerated the transition toward source-criticism.

With his argument, Cobbing criticised both Alan Smith and David Hedges for neglecting to examine the impact of the Delagoa Bay slave trade within their respective trade hypotheses. Indeed, in his view, Delagoa Bay had been a prominent part of the Portuguese controlled slave trade and had supplied slaves to French and Brazilian

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[141] Ibid, 59-65.

[142] Ibid, 64-65.

[143] Julian Cobbing, "The Mfecane as Alibi: Thoughts on Dithakong and Mbolompo", *The Journal of African History* 29, no. 3 (1988), 487-519. Later that same year, Cobbing completed a second paper in which he refined his argument, although it never saw publication. See Julian Cobbing, "Jettisoning the Mfecane (with Perestroika)" (African Studies Seminar Paper, Rhodes University, 1988). Both papers stemmed from a seminar paper dating back to 1983. See Julian Cobbing, "The Case Against the Mfecane" (Seminar Paper, Rhodes University, 1983).

[144] Cobbing, "The Mfecane as Alibi", 487-519.

ships.[145] In addition, Cobbing refuted that Hedges' cattle trade argument amounted to a satisfactory explanation for the Mfecane. Conversely, he praised Patrick Harries' analysis of the slave trade at Delagoa Bay,[146] arguing that a flourishing slave trade was likely to have existed. Controversially, in asserting as much, Cobbing was willing to dismiss not only the European sources which recalled Shaka's conquests between the late 1810s and 1820s, but also the substantial weight of African oral sources which detailed the numerous wars and migrations of the period.[147]

Cobbing's scepticism of the sources on which the KwaZulu-Natal region's history was based extended to material which had assumed archival status. In a 1988 review[148] of editors Colin Webb's and John Wright's published volumes of the *JSA*, Cobbing launched a scathing attack on James Stuart's capabilities as a historical researcher. In particular, Cobbing criticised Stuart's pro-colonial political outlook – a factor he asserted had corrupted the *JSA*'s writings as a consequence of the racist rhetoric typical of settler society at this time.[149] In addition, Cobbing criticised the motivations which underlay Stuart's researches, alleging his enquiries into the history of Africans was motivated by his attempts to further reinforce their subjugation. Notably, Hamilton later refuted Cobbing's cynical interpretation of Stuart. As Hamilton argued, although Stuart did intend his research to inform colonial administration, there is evidence that he was nevertheless highly critical of how the established native policy was treating the black population.[150]

Having drawn primarily on Harries' research for his 'alibi' argument, Cobbing argued that the slave trade was the true cause of the disturbances which had taken place in parts of the regions now known as the Free State, North West, and Lesotho.[151] According to Cobbing, there was no evidence that either the Zulu kingdom or the Ndebele had ever raided in these areas. Furthermore, he dismissed the notion that African groups had fled through these territories to evade Shaka's military. This, he claimed, was part of the 'alibi'.[152] Cobbing further claimed that the Delagoa Bay slave trade had reached a significant scale by as early as the year 1815. This, he explained,

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[145] Cobbing, "The Mfecane as Alibi", 489.

[146] See Patrick Harries, "Slavery, Social Incorporation and Surplus Extraction; The Nature of Free and Unfree Labour in South-East Africa", *The Journal of African History* 22, no. 3 (1981), 309-330.

[147] Cobbing, "The Mfecane as Alibi", 488-491.

[148] See Julian Cobbing, "A Tainted Well: the Objectives, Historical Fantasies, and Working Methods of James Stuart, with counter-argument", *Journal of Natal and Zulu History* 11 (1988), 115-154.

[149] Cobbing, "A Tainted Well", 119-122.

[150] See Carolyn Hamilton, "Authoring Shaka: Models, Metaphors and Historiography" (Ph.D. thesis, Johns Hopkins University, 1993), chapters seven and eight. Also see Carolyn Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty: The Powers of Shaka Zulu and the Limits of Historical Invention* (Cape Town: David Philip), 130-167.

[151] Cobbing, "The Mfecane as Alibi", 498.

[152] Ibid, 488-491.

was a highly suggestive date as it implied that the uptake in the scale of slaving at Delagoa Bay had coincided with the period in which the Mfecane had taken place.[153]

According to Cobbing, a second market for slaves arose during the 1820s. Operating across the north-eastern frontier of the Cape Colony, it supplied slaves to settler farmers. According to Cobbing, Griqua raiders were the primary actors in the carrying out these slaving activities, although he further alleged that white missionaries were complicit in their orchestration.[154] It was the slavers, Cobbing argued, rather than the Zulu military presence in the south-east of the KwaZulu-Natal region, which had caused the supposed disruptions in the area.[155] For Cobbing: 'The core misrepresentations of 'the Mfecane' [Cobbing's emphasis] are thereby revealed; the term, and the concept, should be abandoned.'[156]

Part 3.2: Unravelling the Devastation Stereotype

In 1989, the year following Cobbing's critique of the Mfecane narrative, John Wright completed the writing of his Ph.D. thesis; a study which supported many of Cobbing's reservations about the source material conventionally drawn on by historians.[157] Wright's thesis constituted a comprehensive re-analysis of the political history of south-east African between the last quarter of the eighteenth-century and the late 1820s. Its focus was a critical examination of the 'devastations stereotype', the precursory characterisation of the Mfecane which had originated in the nineteenth-century before being canonised by Bryant in 1929 with *Olden Times*. It was Wright contention that the notion of 'devastation' was grossly overstated within the literature. In his view, the Mfecane should be reconceived as a gradual intensification of a series of conflicts which had taken place between several emerging polities during the late eighteenth-century.[158]

Wright thesis set about scrutinising *Olden Times* in particular, for he recognised that while the work was hugely influential in shaping the historiography, it nevertheless

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[153] Cobbing, "Jettisoning the Mfecane", 5-6.

[154] Cobbing, "The Mfecane as Alibi", 492-495.

[155] Cobbing does not appear to have recognised that slaving across the frontier and warfare instigated by the Zulu kingdom and other groups were not a mutually exclusive occurrence. Even if slaving had taken place, this did not preclude the established argument that the Zulu kingdom was the engine of the Mfecane.

[156] Cobbing, "The Mfecane as Alibi", 519.

[157] See John Wright, "The Dynamics of Power and Conflict in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu Region of the Late 18th and Early 19th Centuries: A Critical Reconstruction" (Ph.D. thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1989).

[158] Wright also observed that Bryant had plagiarised from Shepstone's earlier writings. See Wright, "Power and Conflict", 62-68.

remained a problematic source.[159] Rather than take the established Mfecane narrative for granted, Wright engaged Bryant's writings critically to test the foundations of his claims by drawing on oral evidence. Wright drew extensively on the James Stuart Papers and the four published volumes of the *JSA* for much of this evidence. Indeed, as one of the editors of the *JSA*, Wright was acutely aware that it contained important historical data which had yet to be extensively integrated into the scholarship.

According to Wright, the Zulu-centrism of the established Mfecane narrative had been reinforced by John Omer-Cooper with the publication of *The Zulu Aftermath*. By focusing on the Zulu kingdom, Wright argued that Omer-Cooper had detracted from the developments which had taken place within numerous other important groups.[160] Furthermore, although he reserved judgment on Cobbing's slavery-related arguments (little in the way of follow-up research had been conducted at this time), Wright expressed broad agreement with Cobbing's criticism of the conventional Mfecane narrative. According to Wright, what validated Cobbing's critique was his observation that the Mfecane narrative depended on largely unqualified evidence.[161] It is worth noting that Wright's views on this matter closely resembled those of Johannes Raum, whose 1989 paper criticised the evidential basis for African state-formation by arguing the concept was derived from the suspect writings of Bryant and Theal.[162] This was conclusion stands as another example of how historians were beginning to recognise that sources are themselves shaped by the historiography, rather than strictly than vice-versa.

According to Wright, the expansion of the Zulu kingdom south of the Thukela River during the early 1820s was primarily defensive in nature. Wright gave several reasons to support this view. Firstly, Shaka's subordination of the Cele and the Thuli polities was intended as means of replenishing the Zulu kingdom's stock of cattle. Secondly, Shaka recognised that the Ndwandwe state, which had been reinvigorated under the leadership of Zwide's heir, Sikhunyana, continued to pose a major threat from the north. By shifting his centre of power southward, Shaka thus ensured greater security for his fledgling kingdom.[163] Thirdly, Wright argued that Shaka intentionally established his new capital in close proximity to the dissonant Qwabe in an effort to quell their recurrent unrest. Although the Qwabe had been

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[159] Wright acknowledged the influence of Shula Marks in drawing attention to the need for a revaluation of Bryant's oral evidence. See Shula Marks, "The Traditions of the Natal 'Nguni': a second look at the work of A. T. Bryant" in Leonard Thompson (ed.), *African Societies in Southern Africa* (London: Heinemann, 1969), 126-144.

[160] See Wright, "Power and Conflict", chapters two and three.

[161] Ibid, 61-62.

[162] See Johannes Raum, "Historical concepts and the evolutionary interpretation of the emergence of states: The case of the Zulu reconsidered yet again", *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 114 (1989), 125-138.

[163] Wright, "Power and Conflict", 281-289.

among the first polities to be incorporated into the Zulu kingdom during the late 1810s, harsh suppression was required if the stability of the Zulu kingdom was to be maintained.[164]

Part 3.3: Traditions and Transformations

As Cobbing's 'alibi' argument continued to reverberate within the southern African context, a chapter written by John Wright and Carolyn Hamilton for a 1989 book[165] set about producing a broad reconceptualisation of the history of the area of KwaZulu-Natal lying between the Phongolo and Mzimkhulu rivers for the period between the eighteenth-century and the early nineteenth-century. A prominent theme of the chapter was that it traced African state-formation within the region. The pair began, however, by acknowledging that Bryant's *Olden Times* remained the most authoritative source on the late independent period and that it was continuing to influence the way scholars were interpreting oral history. Indeed, despite the exposure of *Olden Times*' many flaws,[166] scholars were continuing to accept Bryant's interpretations uncritically. To produce their revised history, Wright and Hamilton thus set about scrutinising Bryant's theories.

As Wright and Hamilton identified, in Bryant's view, variations on oral histories were the products of different takes on history on an inter-individual level. The most essential historical facts, Bryant had asserted, did not change. Based on this interpretation, Bryant's approach to the writing of history was to compare different oral histories and to select the versions which produced the greatest internal consistency.[167] Since Bryant's time, however, Wright and Hamilton noted that numerous developments in the study of oral history had taken place. Drawing on Hamilton's master's dissertation,[168] Wright and Hamilton argued that disjunctions between different oral histories could be read as subtle indications of political positionality, a consideration which Bryant had overlooked.[169]

Bryant's notion of the 'clan' was that it composed a 'magnified family' of related people who shared a common ancestor, who were ruled by the heir of that ancestor, and who

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[164] Ibid, 281-289.

[165] John Wright and Carolyn Hamilton, "Traditions and Transformations: The Phongolo-Mzimkhulu Region in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries" in Andrew Duminy and Bill Guest (eds.), *Natal and Zululand: From Earliest Time to 1910: A New History* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1989), 49-82.

[166] Wright's own thorough critique of Bryant was also completed in as part of his thesis in 1989. See Wright, "Power and Conflict". Wright and Hamilton credited works by Shula Marks and Anthony Atmore for bringing renewed attention to Bryant's scholarship, albeit their studies were merely preliminary ones. See Marks, "The traditions of the Natal 'Nguni'"; Shula Marks and Anthony Atmore, "The Problem of the Nguni: An Examination of the Ethnic and Linguistic Situation in South Africa Before the Mfecane" in David Dalby (ed.), *Language and history in Africa* (London: Frank Cass, 1970).

[167] Wright and Hamilton, "Traditions and Transformations", 51-52.

[168] See Hamilton, "Ideology", chapter one.

[169] Wright and Hamilton, "Traditions and Transformations", 52-53.

'dwelt and moved together in a great block.'[170] In Bryant's view, these 'clans' constituted autonomous bounded groups which shared a language and a culture.[171] According to Wright and Hamilton, however, this conception of African groups was falling out of favour. This was because the term obscured the political distinctions between different groups and inhibited an analysis of the how their social units were subject to change.[172] Furthermore, Bryant's interpretation of the 'clan' structure had caused him to describe three broad 'families' of Nguni-speakers in the Phongolo-Mzimkhulu region: the Mbo, the Ntungwa, and the Lala. Drawing on some of their previous works,[173] which had in turn drawn on the James Stuart Papers, Wright and Hamilton rejected this assertion. In their view, Mbo, Ntungwa, and Lala were sub-identities within the Zulu kingdom which had likely taken a particular shape during the 1820s. According to Wright and Hamilton, the existence of these sub-identities within the Zulu kingdom contradicted Bryant's notion of bounded 'clans'.[174]

Wright and Hamilton further criticised Bryant for his depiction of the Zulu kingdom as unchanging over time.[175] Drawing on some of Bryant's own works,[176] Magema Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama,*[177] and Hamilton's 'Ideology', Wright and Hamilton argued that the African polities of the late independent era were far from static, but contained 'a fluctuating number of local communities which were themselves composed of shifting clusters of homesteads'.[178] Polities also varied in the scale of their aggregation and their political

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[170] Bryant, *Olden Times*, 14.

[171] Wright and Hamilton, "Traditions and Transformations", 53.

[172] Ibid, 53.

[173] See Hamilton, "Ideology", chapters five and eight; see Carolyn Hamilton and John Wright, "The Making of the Lala: Ethnicity, Ideology and Class Formation a Pre-colonial Context" (History Workshop paper, University of the Witwatersrand, 1984). A later version of the paper was published in 1990. See Carolyn Hamilton and John Wright, "The making of the Amalala: Ethnicity, Ideology and Relations of Subordination in a Precolonial Context", *South African Historical Journal* 22, no. 1 (1990), 3-23.

[174] Wright and Hamilton, "Traditions and Transformations", 53-56. The term 'Nguni', they added, thus did not constitute a progenitor group, but only made sense as a linguistic category. For more on how the term 'Nguni' was developed and has been used by academics in different ways, see Marks, "The Traditions of the Natal 'Nguni'". Also see John Wright, "Politics, Ideology, and the Invention of the 'Nguni'" (Seminar Paper, University of the Witwatersrand, 1983). This paper was later published. See John Wright, "Politics, Ideology, and the Invention of the 'Nguni'" in Tom Lodge (ed.), *Resistance* and *Ideology* in *Settler Societies* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986), 96-118.

[175] See for example Alfred Thomas Bryant, *The Zulu People: As They Were Before the White Man Came* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1948), 71. As I discussed in chapter one, this 'timeless' stereotype can also be found in Shepstone's writings.

[176] Bryant, *Olden Times*, chapter nine; Bryant, *The Zulu People,* chapter three.

[177] See Magema Fuze, *Abantu Abamnyama: Lapa Bavela Ngakona* (*The Black People and Whence They Came: A Zulu View),* trans. by Harry Camp Lugg, Anthony Trevor Cope (ed.), (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1979 [1922]).

[178] Wright and Hamilton, "Traditions and Transformations", 58.

cohesion. They also tended to split, enlarge, and reform, such that they were characterised by fluidity rather than rigidity. Larger polities were formed when chiefs succeeded in subordinating external groups and began to extract tribute from them.[179]

Bryant's notion of timeless African societies, Wright and Hamilton noted, had also caused him to overlook the socio-political transformation which took place in the Phongolo-Mzimkhulu region, which had begun around the third quarter of the eighteen-century. According to Wright and Hamilton, this transformation was characterised by a transition toward the formation of larger polities. While the likes of Max Gluckman and later John Omer-Cooper had forwarded explanations which tied state-formation to the Mfecane, their arguments were restricted to 'great man' stereotypes and a focus on military innovations. The broader scope of the socio-political transformation had only superficially been examined. The population hypothesis and its possible dovetailing with an ecological crisis, on the other hand, depended on insufficient evidence and thus remained questionable. According to Wright and Hamilton, the trade hypothesis was the most enduring explanation for state-formation because it was the best supported by the evidence.[180]

In Wright and Hamilton's view, the development of state-like institutions first initiated among the Nguni-speaking groups of the Phongolo-Mzimkhulu region during the late eighteenth-century reached its height in the Zulu kingdom of the 1820s. The two most significant of these institutions were the *amabutho* and the *izigodlo*. Both were essential for enabling the 'emerging Zulu aristocracy' to exercise greater control over the young men and women of the kingdom while simultaneously regulating homestead formation by presiding over marriage.[181] The tightening of control over the *amabutho* system was also essential for reinforcing the coercive power of the ruler.[182] Not only did this help ensure the internal stability of the group, but it also strengthened its capacity to engage in expansionism.[183]

By the late 1820s, Wright and Hamilton argued, distinctions in socio-political status had begun to emerge. In their view, there were 'three tiers' of status in the Zulu kingdom at this time: the Zulu Royal House at the apex of society; the Ntungwa, which constituted high status families and the supporters of the ruler; and the Lala, low status 'outsiders' who served in menial roles and who were 'seen as being ethnically inferior.'[184] The existence of this socio-political hierarchy within a large and politically centralised kingdom, Wright and Hamilton argued, clearly distinguished the Zulu kingdom of the late 1820s from the smaller and relatively decentralised groups which had preceded it.

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[179] Ibid, 59.
[180] Ibid, 62-66.
[181] Ibid, 70.
[182] Loc. cit.
[183] Ibid, 68-71.
[184] Ibid, 72.

Part 3.4: Debating the Mfecane

In 1991 colloquium[185] convened by Hamilton, a large group of some sixty academics, the majority of whom were historians, gathered to discuss the implications of Cobbing's 'alibi' argument. Many of the papers presented at the colloquium would later be revised and published in a 1995 book.[186] Engagement with the topic ranged from historiographical and methodological assessments of Cobbing's work to reconsiderations of the historical chronology, the evidence, and its interpretation. Several scholars, including John-Omer Cooper, also defended the Mfecane thesis.[187] Indeed, Omer-Cooper argued that the notion of the Mfecane should not be discarded as it remained a useful label for 'the process of change in African societies accompanied by widespread migrations…'[188] Cobbing notably did not put forward a piece for the volume. Indeed, despite presenting two papers at the colloquium and initially agreeing to prepare an essay, Cobbing ultimately decided against publishing his piece and consequently withdrew his contribution.[189]

In a 1992 essay based on her colloquium piece,[190] Hamilton touched extensively on the writings of the travellers for the purposes of critiquing Cobbing's 'alibi' theory. According to Hamilton, Cobbing's theory was undermined by his failure to properly probe 'past historical myth-making processes', which she argued had caused him to mistakenly assume that the historical narrative was both homogenous and unchanging over time.[191] In addition, Cobbing had overlooked the complexities and the pluralities embedded within the Mfecane narrative.[192] Using Shaka's reputation as an example, Hamilton argued that impressions of

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[185] The colloquium, which took place at the University of the Witwatersrand in the September of 1991, was entitled: *'The 'Mfecane' Aftermath: Towards a New Paradigm.'*

[186] Carolyn Hamilton, *The Mfecane aftermath: reconstructive debates in Southern African history* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1995).

[187] John Omer-Cooper, "The Mfecane Survives its Critics" in Carolyn Hamilton (ed.), *The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1995).

[188] Ibid, 295.
[189] See Hamilton, *The Mfecane aftermath,* Preface.
[190] Carolyn Hamilton, "'The Character and Objects of Chaka': A Reconsideration of the Making of Shaka as the Mfecane Motor", *The Journal of African History* 33, no. 1 (1992), 37-63. Hamilton's piece was later republished in *The Mfecane Aftermath*. Carolyn Hamilton, "'The Character and Objects of Chaka': A Reconsideration of the Making of Shaka as the Mfecane Motor", in Carolyn Hamilton (ed.), *The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1995), 183-2012.

[191] Hamilton, "'The Character and Objects of Chaka'", 37-38.
[192] Ibid, 37-38.

the Zulu king's character had evolved in connection with different historical productions of his persona at various points in time.[193]

According to Cobbing's argument,[194] the hunter-traders had been incentivised to produce negative images of Shaka to deflect from their own illicit activities, which they feared would cause them to fall foul of the Cape colonial government.[195] The problem with this position was that Cobbing implicitly denied the extent to which Africans had played a part in the shaping of their own history.[196] Basing her argument on news reports and a close reading of the hunter-traders' correspondence, Hamilton argued that productions of Shaka's character only assumed the negative form to which Cobbing pointed at a later stage. Between 1824 and 1830, on the other hand, depictions of Shaka were predominantly positive in nature.[197] It was not until after Shaka's assassination in 1828 that the depictions of the Zulu king predominantly turned negative.[198]

Hamilton further asserted that Cobbing had failed to consider the productions of Shaka's character which had originated with subsections of the African population during the 1820s. By discounting African oral sources, Hamilton argued that Cobbing had fallen short of observing that depictions of Shaka were not uniform within the Zulu kingdom, but had ranged widely in accordance with the political affiliation of the group in question.[199] But aside from his narrow use of evidence, it was Cobbing's fundamental approach which posed the greatest underlying problem of his argument. As Hamilton remarked, Cobbing had in effect substituted 'Shaka-as-cause-of-violence with that of slave-trade-as-cause-of-violence.'[200]

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[193] Ibid, 40. Hamilton chose to focus on Shaka himself as his character was a central element in the Mfecane theory.

[194] See Cobbing, "The Mfecane as Alibi", 487-519.

[195] According to Cobbing, the hunter-traders had primarily been motivated by two ambitions. The first was colonise Port Natal and transform it into a British colony. The second was that they sought to spark a slave trade in the region. As Hamilton has pointed out, however, neither claim is well substantiated by the available evidence. See Hamilton, "'The Character and Objects of Chaka'", 41-46.

[196] Hamilton, "'The Character and Objects of Chaka'", 38-39.

[197] Hamilton points out that there is record of only two occasions during this period in which Shaka was depicted negatively. In both cases, hunter-traders James King had sought to slander Shaka in a bid to alarm the colonial government and thus secure funding for his trading endeavours at Port Natal. As Hamilton has convincingly argued, King's claims were decisively rejected by colonial officials and his account was recognised as flagrantly unreliable. See Hamilton, "'The Character and Objects of Chaka'", 40-41.

[198] Hamilton, "'The Character and Objects of Chaka'", 46-47, 53-57; Farewell to Somerset, 6 Sept. 1824, Cape Archives Depot, Colonial Office, 211, 650-651; *The Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser*, 4 June 1825.

[199] Hamilton, "'The Character and Objects of Chaka'", 56-61.

[200] Ibid, 39.

A further critical response to Cobbing was forwarded by Elizabeth Eldredge.[201] Eldredge criticised Cobbing's erroneous timeline and his exaggeration of the slave trade's scale in the absence of any substantiating data. According to Cobbing, the slave trade had begun to decimate the population of the African groups living near Delagoa Bay from 1815. According to Harries, on the other hand, on whom Cobbing had drawn for his evidence, the data indicated that it was not until 1823 and thereafter that the slave trade had reached a substantial scale.[202] In addition, Cobbing's claim that the region experienced a loss of around 25% to 50% of its male population during this period was completely unfounded.[203]

As Cobbing had implied that the true extent of the slave trade had been concealed prior to 1823, Eldredge looked to the writings of witness Captain William Owen for evidence which might substantiate his view. According to Owen, only around a dozen slaves a year were being exported from Delagoa Bay prior to 1823. Owen had feared, however, that the scale of the salve trade was poised to escalate following the arrival 'Vatwahs' in the area in 1823.[204] His observation corresponded well with Harries' evidence, for it established that there was likely a connection between the arrival of these 'Vatwahs' and the uptake in slaving in the region. William Threlfall, a missionary who had arrived at Delagoa Bay in mid-1823, had also observed the presence of the 'Vatwahs'.[205] Based on the strength of the evidence refuting Cobbing's chronology, Eldredge concluded that the slave trade was not sufficient in scale during the 1810s to have triggered the Mfecane.[206]

Cobbing had further argued for the existence of a second slave trade across the north-eastern frontier of the Cape colony, one which was allegedly conducted by missionary-backed Griqua raiders for the purposes of supplying white farmers with a cheap source of labour.[207] Having closely scrutinised the evidence, Eldredge concurred that Griqua raiders, frequently armed by white frontiersman, had indeed conducted slaving activities.[208] She

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[201] Elizabeth Eldredge, "Sources of Conflict in Southern Africa c. 1800-1830: The 'Mfecane' Reconsidered" in Carolyn Hamilton (ed.), *The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1995).

[202] Eldredge, "The 'Mfecane' Reconsidered", 4-6. It was not until the late 1820s and 1830s that the number of slaves being exported topped 1,000 persons a year, a figure which Cobbing had alleged might have been surpassed many times over by as early as 1818. Eldredge further pointed out that Harries had himself conflated the slaving figures for Delagoa Bay with those of Inhambane, the result of which was a misrepresentative and inflated notion of the slave trade's scale.

[203] Eldredge, "The 'Mfecane' Reconsidered", 504-505.

[204] Ibid, 10-12. The Portuguese referred non-discriminately to Nguni groups as Vatwahs (sometimes spelt Vatwas or Vatuas), which was a collective name for groups whose languages contained clicks.
[205] Eldredge, "The 'Mfecane' Reconsidered", 13. Threlfall implied that much of the upheaval in the area of Delagoa Bay had ostensibly been triggered by famine. I examine this point in more detail in a later chapter.
[206] Eldredge, "The 'Mfecane' Reconsidered", 139.
[207] Eldredge recognised that Griqua groups were called by numerous other names, including Bastaards, Kora, and Bergenaars.
[208] Eldredge, "The 'Mfecane' Reconsidered", 15-16.

further accepted that the Zulu kingdom had wrongly been accredited responsibility for the disturbances these slave raids had caused. On the other hand, Eldredge firmly rejected Cobbing's assertion that a missionary presence was directly involved in orchestrating these slave raids. This was because Cobbing had based his evidence on highly speculative evidence and had also ignored African oral evidence to the contrary.[209]

Part 4: Evidence and Invention

Part 4.1: Oral History and Literary Criticism

By the early 1990s, as the significance of the *JSA* for the study of the KwaZulu-Natal region prior to colonialism continued to come to wider attention, more historians were beginning to grapple with African oral sources as sites of evidence. The need to engage these sources was causing historians to take on board theoretical influences from literary criticism. According to Hamilton,[210] at this time, the cross-disciplinary research environment of the History Workshop at the University of the Witwatersrand was introducing historians to the work of Isabel Hofmeyr[211] and Stephen Gray.[212] Developments in the literary criticism were also taking place abroad, albeit these had little direct impact on the work of scholars in the south-east African context at this time.

A notable overseas work was a 1977 book by Mary Louise Pratt.[213] Pratt's study challenged a longstanding fallacy of linguistic theory; the notion that literature was categorically distinct from other forms of verbal discourse. According to Pratt, literature's status as its own specialised category rested on the acceptance of two premises: the scholarly conception of literature as a functionally distinctive use of language (rather than a kind of language); and the associated perception of literature as linguistically autonomous.[214] In outlining her opposition to these premises, Pratt argued that neither notion had ever satisfactorily been put to the test by the Russian Formalists nor the Prague School linguists, but that both had nevertheless been accepted as a given in academic circles.

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[209] Ibid, 17-19.

[210] Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty*, 225, footnote 79.

[211] Hofmeyr's work had previously influenced Hamilton's approach in her 1985 master's dissertation. See Hofmeyr, "Building a Nation from Words".

[212] I discuss some of Gray's work later.

[213] Mary Louise Pratt, *Toward a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977).

[214] See Pratt, *Literary Discourse*, introduction and chapter one.

Drawing on the works of William Labov[215] and Herbert Paul Grice,[216] Pratt argued that in place of the aforementioned categorical distinction, literature has a great deal in common with other forms of verbal discourse. Her theory, which she substantiated by way of numerous practical examples, was that all narratives – whether oral or literary – were based on a set of common structures.[217] The ramification of Pratt's study was that it demonstrated that historical texts, whether written or non-written, are composed of the same underlying narrative elements. Her study thus made an important contribution to critical theory during a period in which literary criticism was gaining momentum in South Africa.[218]

Another important development in literary criticism, specifically for critical readings of colonial literature, was Edward Said's influential 1978 book *Orientalism*.[219] Said's work, which predominantly dealt with Western representations of Arab culture and the Orient, made no direct comment on the African context. It was perhaps for this reason that his arguments were overlooked by Africanists until the early 1990s.[220] Nevertheless, Said's analysis of the how the colonised 'other' is depicted within Western media[221] spoke to the same biases which had distorted the representation of African groups within south-east Africa's literature. According to Said, the 'other' is depicted in accordance with colonial stereotypes which bear little resemblance to the reality of Arab culture, but which are reproduced to advance imperial interests.[222] Said further argued that these stereotypical representations of the 'other' had caused Arabs from different parts of the world to be depicted as homogenous and unchanging[223] - a description which echoes the homogenous labelling of African groups within the historiography.[224]

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[215] See William Labov, *The Social Stratification of English in New York City* (Washington, D.C: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1966).

[216] See Paul Grice, "Logic and Conversation" in Paul Grice (ed.), *Studies in the Way of Words* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 41-58.

[217] Pratt, *Literary Discourse*, see particularly chapter four.

[218] See Isabel Hofmeyr, "The State of South African Literary Criticism", *English in Africa* 6, no. 2 (1979), 39-50.

[219] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

[220] See for example Hamilton's recognition of Said's work in her thesis. See Hamilton, "Authoring Shaka".

[221] These representations, which are prevalent within art, poetry, and academic scholarship, have a long history dating back to nineteenth-century European explorers. They nevertheless remain prevalent within the twentieth-century context, both in Europe and in North America.

[222] Said, *Orientalism*, 1-30.

[223] Ibid, 1-30.

[224] For example, the term 'Nguni' was criticised by Shula Marks on account of its 'connotation of timeless homogeneity.' See Marks and Atmore, "The Problem of the Nguni", 126.

Part 4.2: Oral History, Archive, and 'Traditions'

Following the critical studies of Hamilton and Wright, and in the aftermath of Cobbing's influential 'alibi' argument, by the early 1990s, Africanist scholars had begun to dispute whether or not archival sources produced during the colonial period should continue to be utilised as historical evidence. As the political transition toward democracy in South Africa drew closer, scholars were taking greater care to critically consider the factors which had shaped how their sources were produced. On the other hand, scholars including the likes of Cobbing, Dan Wylie, and more recently Premesh Lalu,[225] opposed the use of archival sources. From the perspective of these scholars, the sources on which histories of the southern African context were drawing were too distorted by pro-colonial bias to constitute a valid form of evidence.[226]

A related development was that by the early 1990s, the approach for the reading of oral sources pioneered by Jan Vansina in 1961 was encountering resistance from a school of thought established by the work of historical anthropologist David Cohen. Where Vansina had long practised techniques for 'the mining of well-preserved oral traditions for nuggets of truth',[227] Cohen argued that oral evidence could be acquired from public life. According to Cohen, oral history was produced 'through the complex networks of relationship, association, and contact that constitute social life.'[228] Vansina objected to Cohen's view because he believed it rendered history and culture 'inventions' of the present context, whereby the past and its meaning are constantly being reinvented within the contemporary socio-political context.[229]

The effect of Cohen's approach was that it divided scholarly perceptions of oral sources into two seemingly distinctive camps. Vansina's methodology demanded scholars engage the layers of distortion to which oral accounts are subjected so that they can be reconstructed and historical knowledge can be uncovered. The term Vansina used for oral texts was 'historiologies'.[230] Cohen's position, on the other hand, demanded a reconstruction of the conditions in which historical knowledge is produced.[231] In his view, oral texts are

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[225] I discuss Lalu's contribution to the literature later.

[226] See for example Cobbing, "The Mfecane as Alibi", 519; Wylie, "Proprietor of Natal", 430.

[227] Carolyn Hamilton, "'Living by Fluidity': Oral Histories, Material Custodies and the Politics of Archiving" in Carolyn Hamilton, Vern Harris, Michèle Pickover, Graeme Reid, Razia Saleh, and Jane Taylor (eds.), *Refiguring the Archive* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 227.

[228] David William Cohen, *Womunafu's Bunafu: A Study of Authority in a Nineteenth-Century African Community* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 9.

[229] Jan Vansina, Some perceptions on the writing of African history: 1948-1992", *Itinerario* 16, no. 1 (1995), 89-90.

[230] Hamilton, "'Living by Fluidity'", 226-227.

[231] Ibid, 226-227.

historiographies which must be set within the socio-historical context of their production.[232] The debate between the pair would have a bearing on much of the historical scholarship which was produced over the course of the 1990s.

Part 4.3: Critiquing the *Diary*

By the early 1990s, literary scholars were beginning to critically probe witness accounts as sites of historical evidence. The first scholar to scrutinise Henry Francis Fynn's *Diary* in considerable depth was Julie Pridmore, who while working toward her Ph.D., [233] published a series of articles which questioned the different ways in which the evidence presented within the *Diary* has been interpreted by popular and academic writers alike.[234] According to Pridmore, the style of the *Diary* displays consistencies with a particular genre of writing which emerged in the Cape colony during the 1820s – one which sought to dichotomise the 'savagery' of the Africans and the supposed sophistication of the European settlers.[235] Pridmore further argued that the particular narrative style of the *Diary* bore a close resemblance to that of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. In this respect, she argued that the *Diary* had taken on the characteristics of an 'adventure-book' for the purposes of exaggerating Fynn's 'pioneering deeds'.[236]

In a 1994 paper influenced by Dan Wylie's analysis of Nathaniel Isaacs' *Travels* (which I discuss in the next section), Pridmore argued that the manipulation of the tone of Fynn's narrative was intended to promote its accessibility to its readership. According to Pridmore, Fynn's readers welcomed the addition of dramatic and literary elements.[237] To substantiate that such modifications were being made, Pridmore referred to the infamous letter written by Isaacs to Fynn in 1832, in which Isaacs fervently encouraged Fynn to exaggerate the savagery of Shaka's character.[238] Pridmore also recognised that Isaacs' and Fynn's correspondence was suggestive of a second motive: their desire that the Cape government should colonise Port Natal and thus legitimise their land claims there. It was for this reason

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[232] Loc. cit.

[233] See Julie Pridmore, "Henry Francis Fynn: An Assessment of his Career and An Analysis of the Written and Visual Portrayals of His Role in the History of the Natal Region" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Natal, 1996).

[234] See Julie Pridmore, "The writings of H.F. Fynn: History, Myth or Fiction?", *Alternation* 1, no. 1 (1994), 68-78; Julie Pridmore, "Hunter, Trader and Explorer? The Unvarnished Reminiscences of H.F. Fynn", *Alternation* 4, no. 2 (1997), 46-56.

[235] Ibid, 46.

[236] Ibid, 50-51.

[237] Pridmore, "Myth or Fiction", 73-75.

[238] See Natal Archives, Fynn Papers 1. No. 26: Isaacs to Fynn, December 1832.

that an exaggerated portrayal of Shaka aligned with their ambitions, for each claimed to have been granted land by Shaka.[239]

In the aftermath of Cobbing's 'alibi' argument, Pridmore interrogated whether or not Fynn's writings should be considered as historical or as myth. She concluded that they should be treated as a form of 'discourse'.[240] In this respect, she argued that both Fynn's material and the character of Fynn himself had been moulded by the blending of history and myth. According to Pridmore, neither history nor myth alone made for an adequate description of Fynn's witness testimony. Indeed, she stated that it was 'somewhere between these two opposing views that the 'real' Fynn exists, although it is doubtful if such a personality can ever really escape from the continuing discourse which surrounds it.'[241]

In a 1995 paper,[242] Wylie subjected Fynn's *Diary* to close critical scrutiny of his own. According to Wylie, the evidence put forward by Fynn was characterised by numerous shortcomings. On the one hand, Wylie argued that Fynn's account was pervaded by a sense of 'ventriloquism'. In this respect, the production of the *Diary* had seen its text become beset by numerous different voices which introduced a contrived quality to Fynn's narrative. As Wylie observed, on one level the text had sought to dramatise Fynn's narrative such that it would have increased its appeal to Fynn's British audience.[243] In another respect, Wylie argued that passages of the *Diary* had been extensively manipulated to either exaggerate the heroism of Fynn's character or disguise his unscrupulousness. For example, Wylie contended that Fynn's account had carefully omitted details of how he had voluntarily assisted Shaka in his military expeditions.[244] Wylie, in this respect, maintained that the Fynn's account was too distorted to constitute a source of historical evidence.

Part 4.4: Critiquing *Travels*

Wylie's interest in Fynn's productions of Shaka and the Zulu kingdom stemmed from a 1992 paper in which he had scrutinised Isaacs' *Travels*.[245] According to Wylie, Isaacs' account was fraught with issues which undermined its validity as an historical source. *Travels*, he explained, had been uncritically used and re-used by historians to reinforce the established

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[239] Pridmore, "Myth or Fiction", 71-72.

[240] Ibid, 76.
[241] Loc. cit.

[242] Dan Wylie, ""Proprietor of Natal:" Henry Francis Fynn and the Mythography of Shaka", *History in Africa* 22 (1995), 409-437.

[243] Ibid, 409, 413, 422.

[244] Ibid, 419, 421. Wylie convincingly argued that Fynn played-down his military association with Shaka to avoid punishment by British authorities despite volunteering his services and receiving trade privileges in exchange.
[245] Dan Wylie, "Textual Incest: Nathaniel Isaacs and the Development of the Shaka Myth", *History in Africa* 19 (1992), 411-433.

perception of the Mfecane.[246] The foremost of these issues was that *Travels* did not truly constitute a witness account at all, but was a highly reworked and repolished production. Observing the extent to which a passage from James Saunders King's original journal, quoted by both Isaacs and Charles Rawden Maclean, had been edited in *Travels*; Wylie asserted that *Travels* had been doctored to the point of being ghost-written.[247]

Wylie further argued that his analysis of *Travels* pointed to three ways in which its text had been revised. The first was in a political sense. A notable example of this, he explained, was Isaacs' highly negative portrayal of Shaka, whom he had ascribed the characteristics of cruelty and brutality in a manner consistent with the racial prejudices which were common at that time.[248] Referring to the 1832 letter written by Isaacs to Fynn, Wylie pointed out that Isaacs had called on Fynn to make Shaka and Dingane appear 'as bloodthirsty as you can, and endeavour to give estimation of the number of people they have murdered during their reign.'[249] The purpose of depicting the Zulu kings in this light, Wylie argued, was that it pandered to the expectations the British public had of Africans, which in turn served to make *Travels* far more marketable.

The second form of doctoring was what Wylie termed the 'mythic'. These were the poetic references and the religious sentimentalities which had been inserted into Isaacs' account. Wylie argued that these manipulations of the text were inserted to accommodate the literary conventions of the time and the expectations of *Travels*' readers.[250] The third form of revising, Wylie argued, was characterised by the idea of 'projection'. This Wylie explained referred to 'the projections of the individual at his particular juncture of history, and, those of the culture or society as a whole, whose strategies for establishing identity are complexly mutual.'[251] It was Europeans' fear of the danger Shaka posed which caused them to represent him as dangerous and threatening.

Despite arguing it should not be excluded as a historical source, Wylie's fundamental position was that *Travels* was problematic and should be examined in a different light.[252] In conjunction with the aforementioned issues with the validity of the text, Wylie argued that *Travels* had become a perpetual part of the 'incestuous' myth which surround the established depictions of Shaka. Furthermore, he added that *Travels* had played an important part in perpetuating and shielding the established image of Shaka from academic scrutiny. For this reason, Wylie argued that *Travels* should be regarded 'in a different light'

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[246] Ibid, 410-411.

[247] Ibid, 413-415.

[248] Ibid, 427.

[249] See Percival Kirby, "Unpublished Documents Relating to the Career of Nathaniel Isaacs, the Natal Pioneer", *Africana Notes and News* 18, no. (1968), 63-79; Percival Kirby, "Further Facts Relating to the Career of Nathaniel Isaacs, the Natal Pioneer", *Africana Notes and News* 18, no. 6 (1969), 237-242. Isaacs' letter was in reference to Fynn's own anticipated publication, the *Diary*.

[250] Wylie, "Textual Incest", 413-415, 428-429.

[251] Ibid, 429.

[252] Ibid, 428.

to that of an historical source. In his view, the value of *Travels* was that it could be engaged in 'creatively inquisitive ways' to expose how colonial and apartheid era histories had been constructed.[253]

Issues with the legitimacy of *Travels* were also flagged by Stephen Gray, albeit indirectly, in his 1992 book comprising a critical commentary on Charles Rawden Maclean's serial.[254] Gray's study scrutinised Maclean's account for the purpose of distinguishing the legend of John Ross from the historical figure of Maclean himself. As Gray observed, the two were in fact the same person, or rather, the mythological figure of Ross had been created from a highly exaggerated portrayal of Maclean. Gray's analysis of Maclean's writings drew parallels between the mythologies which surrounded *Travels* and those which surrounded the fantastical depictions of Maclean himself. As Gray observed, Maclean frequently criticised Isaacs' account on the basis of its numerous fabrications and exaggerations.[255] Maclean, furthermore, offered a strong defence of Shaka's character, which he asserted Isaacs had intentionally misrepresented.[256] In many respects, Gray observed, Maclean's serial was intended as a direct response to Isaacs' *Travels* – an attempt to set the record of the pair's adventures in the Zulu kingdom straight. *Travels*, Gray thus concluded, had largely been produced to correspond with a pro-colonial ideology.

Part 4.5: 'Inventing' Shaka

In a 1994 book,[257] Daphna Golan analysed the contested representations of Shaka and the Zulu kingdom which had come into the political spotlight in South Africa during the heightened tensions of the early 1990s. As I have mentioned previously, the years which immediately preceded the transition to democracy in South Africa were characterised by political friction in the KwaZulu-Natal region. Supporters of the Zulu nationalist party, the Inkatha Freedom Party, led by the KwaZulu Bantustan leader and chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, frequently clashed with the supporters of the African National Congress and its allied association the United Democratic Front.[258] In Golan's view, the Zulu kingdom's history and the historical representations of Shaka, its founder and foremost leader, were

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[253] Ibid, 428-429.

[254] Stephen Gray, *The Natal papers of 'John Ross': Loss of the Brig Mary at Natal with early recollections of that settlement and Among the Caffres* (Durban: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 1992).

[255] Gray, *The Natal papers of 'John Ross'*, 24-26.

[256] Ibid, 5-6, 23-24.

[257] Daphna Golan, *Inventing Shaka: Using History in the Construction of Zulu Nationalism* (New York: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994). Golan's book was based on her 1988 Ph.D. thesis. See Daphna Golan, "Construction and Reconstruction of Zulu history" (Ph.D. thesis, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1988).

[258] Ibid, 2-5. In contrast to Inkatha, the ANC and the UDF disregarded ethnic labels, for these had long been utilised by the apartheid regime to divide black communities.

being 'invented' in different ways by different groups to correspond with their political interests.[259]

Golan's study was diffuse in focus and offered several analyses of how Shaka and the Zulu kingdom's history have been constructed in different ways to serve different purposes. Rather than attempt to engage 'what really happened', Golan's goal was to uncover the intricacies of historical 'invention'.[260] The first chapter of her book dealt with how Inkatha used images of Shaka and the Zulu kingdom to revive a form of ambiguous black nationalism.[261] In the second chapter, Golan examined how the white narrative of Shaka was constructed and how it has developed and changed over time.[262] In chapter three, she analysed how the missionary-educated 'petty bourgeoisie' (kholwa) began to draw increasingly on their 'roots' during the 1920s in response to their continued socio-political exclusion from the colonial state.[263] The fourth chapter engaged four different interpretations of Shaka as a historical figure and examined how each influenced later conceptions of his historical image.[264] Finally, in the fifth chapter, Golan examined how Shaka has been depicted in Africans oral sources, but did so based on her analysis of existing academic syntheses rather than by interrogating oral sources directly.[265]

Golan's underlying argument can be illustrated by unpacking her first chapter in greater detail. Drawing on numerous speeches made by Mangosuthu Buthelezi,[266] Golan argued that Inkatha encouraged an image of Shaka which resonated with a sense of power, unity, and independence – particularly in a militaristic sense. From Inkatha's perspective, this image of Shaka was important for producing a nationalist message capable of uniting black South Africans in the 1990s context. This was because Shaka was symbolically associated with the creation of the Zulu kingdom, a powerful independent 'empire' which had resisted the onset of colonialism.[267] Drawing on a series of Inkatha history textbooks which had been used in KwaZulu[268] schools since 1979,[269] Golan further argued that Inkatha greatly emphasised the notion of a united Zulu 'nation', yet had insisted that Shaka had intended to

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[259] Golan, *Inventing Shaka,* 2-5.
[260] Ibid, 1-9. This notion of 'invention' echoed the work of Cohen.
[261] See Golan, *Inventing Shaka,* 11-34.
[262] Ibid, 35-65.
[263] Ibid, 67-84.
[264] Ibid, 85-116.

[265] Ibid, 117-135. Golan, who is based in Israel, explained in footnote that she could not easily collect 'oral traditions' of her own. See footnote 2, 133.
[266] See for example Mangosuthu Buthelezi, speech on Shaka Day, September 24, Stanger, 1974; Mangosuthu Buthelezi, speech on Shaka Day, Stanger, 1979; Buthelezi, G. M., speech on Shaka Day, September 25, Stanger, 1982.

[267] Golan, *Inventing Shaka,* 5-7.
[268] KwaZulu was a semi-independent Bantustan established in 1977 which became part of the KwaZulu-Natal province in 1994.
[269] See for example University of Zululand, KwaDlangezwa, Inkatha Collection, *Ubuntu Botho* Book 1.

unify black South Africans. The message of these books thus utilised the history of the Zulu kingdom to promote the importance of nationhood, but also blurred distinctions between Zulu nationalism and black nationalism.[270] This, Golan argued, was an example of how history had been 'invented' to suit a particular set of motives. In Golan's view 'There are many complex processes involved in the construction of the past, and many interests and ideologies, as well as many truths.'[271]

Part 4.6: *Terrific Majesty*

In a 1998 book[272] which drew heavily on her 1993 Ph.D. thesis, Hamilton launched a comprehensive analysis of how the historical image of Shaka had been produced and reimagined by different groups at various points in time. The work included an analysis of the origins of contemporary conceptions of Shaka; how Shaka's image was repurposed by Shepstone (in an attempt to influence the colonial administration of Africans); how Stuart had sought to preserve what he saw as 'Zulu traditions'; and how the image of Shaka later became the subject of political and ideological struggle within South Africa during the 1980s and the early 1990s. Although it focused on conceptions of Shaka, Hamilton's study also encompassed an analysis of how historical productions of the late independent era, in a far broader sense, were being created during the colonial period.

Hamilton argued that the late independent era's history was not merely constructed as an 'alibi' by white historians, as Cobbing had claimed, but that it had been produced by a far more complex interplay of political and intellectual influences at different points in time. Responding to Golan's argument that depictions of Shaka were subjectively 'invented', Hamilton argued that although different images of Shaka were promoted by various groups (both in the Zulu kingdom and in the then Colony of Natal) to further their respective political interests, the extent to which 'invention' is possible is confined by the existing historical image of Shaka, the extent to which history can be convincingly reinterpreted within the specific politics of that context, and the constraints imposed by the available historical materials.[273]

Utilising several statements from the *JSA*, Hamilton demonstrated that various interlocutors had supported different accounts of Shaka's birth. These, she demonstrated, portrayed Shaka as either legitimate or illegitimate corresponding to the political affiliation of their families.[274] This, Hamilton argued, indicated that dominant and subordinate accounts of Shaka's birth coexist and compete with one another as part of an ongoing inherited

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[270] Golan, *Inventing Shaka,* 11-31.

[271] Ibid, 2.

[272] Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty,* 130-167.

[273] Ibid, see chapter two.

[274] Ibid, 56-68. Hamilton compared the statements of Ndlovu kaThimuni and Mhuyi kaThimuni with those of Jantshi kaNongila and Baleka kaMpitikazi to demonstrate her point. She further observed that succession disputes were an important factor in giving rise to contending depictions of Shaka.

ideological struggle.[275] As Hamilton put it: '[… the dominant narrative] must incorporate and neutralize the arguments of the opposition.'[276] Thus, Hamilton argued that the dominant image of Shaka could not have been reinvented to suit a particular purpose, but that it was shaped by the interplay of contending black and white productions alike.[277]

Where Cobbing had argued that sources such as the *JSA* had been 'tainted' by colonial prejudices,[278] Hamilton's argument amounted to a defence of their use as items of evidence (provided the historical work required to understand how those sources were produced and were shaped over time is undertaken). As Hamilton has demonstrated, the issue with Cobbing's argument was that he ignored the influences of African productions. Consequently, his conception of the dominant historical narrative as an 'alibi' for white colonial figures had failed to recognise the oppositional narratives which contend with it. Considering Hamilton's use of the *JSA* was to demonstrate that contending historical productions develop in response to context-specific political interests, the contrived features of the travellers' accounts, although they demand critical scrutiny, nevertheless retain historical value. Indeed, it is the very silences and biases contained within the texts which enable their underlying agendas to be interpreted.

Part 5: Post-Historic Turn

Part 5.1: Making the *James Stuart Archive*

Prior to the 1990s, Africanist historians had treated the archive as a neutral, if limited, repository of knowledge. While aware of the issue of bias within these sources, scholars had regarded archival materials as windows into the past which could be mined for evidence relating directly to the period in which they had been produced. That evidence might be influenced by the preservation strategies to which it had been subjected; that the evidence might have been affected by contextual influences at the time of its production; or that the passage of time might have influenced interpretations of that evidence, were not factors which were taken into consideration.[279] By the mid-1990s, however, scholars were beginning to examine archival evidence and the process of its production far more critically.

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[275] Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty,* 70-71. Hamilton further argued that as ideologies of the past remain struggled over in the present, historical accounts themselves continue to evolve and adapt in accordance with the changing political terrain.

[276] Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty,* 71.
[277] Ibid, 168-171.
[278] Cobbing, "A Tainted Well", 115-54.

[279] For more discussion on the character of the archive see Carolyn Hamilton and Grant McNulty, "FHYA: Decolonial Digital Humanities" (Archive and Public Culture Seminar Paper, Cape Town, 2019).

As early as 1996 paper, John Wright had begun to consider the implications of his and co-editor Colin Webb's role in the production of the *JSA*. Wright had recognised that the work was a form of editorial intervention and that he and Webb had thus played a part in shaping the representation of the evidence.[280] The pair had begun work on the project in the 1970s, and following Webb's death in 1992, Wright had continued his efforts to complete the processing of the remainder of Stuarts' papers. The pair's objective with the project was to promote the accessibility of the archive's material and to bring it to greater attention. Indeed, at the time of the writing of his paper, Wright observed that the *JSA* remained largely unknown outside of southern Africa. The intention of Wright's piece, meanwhile, was to emphasise a 'neglected point' – that the records of oral testimony contained within the *JSA* were not solely the productions of Stuart's informants, but were also shaped by the influence of the editors.[281]

Building on Stuart's own diarised notes and Hamilton's preliminary study,[282] Wright began by conducting a brief biography of Stuart's life. His purpose for doing so was to uncover the reasons for why Stuart had compiled the extensive collection of historical testimony which would later come to constitute the James Stuart Papers.[283] Drawing on Hamilton,[284] Wright recognised that Stuart's 'Idea', his desire that the colonial government should base its policymaking on research into Africans' own institutional practices of the past, had motivated his work. Wright then outlined his and Webb's own involvement with the Stuart Collection. According to Wright, although he was unfamiliar with Webb's motivation, Webb had previously approached the Killie Campbell Africana Library to propose the project. His plan had been accepted in 1970. Wright, for his part, had applied and was accepted as a researcher to assist Webb. The pair had begun their work together in 1971.[285]

According to Wright, his first editorial intervention was that of organising and inventorying Stuart's records. This included the decision to separate Stuart's own writings from the statements made by his interlocutors. A further intervention was that of distinguishing between statements which the editors categorised as historical as opposed to those which they regarded as ethnographic, the latter of which was considered anthropology rather than history.[286] Next, the pair agreed that the best approach to ordering the statements of the interlocutors was to do so alphabetically rather than by grouping their statements by

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[280] John Wright, "Making the James Stuart Archive", *History in Africa* 23 (1996), 333-350. Hamilton had initially drawn attention to this in her review of the *JSA*. See Carolyn Hamilton, Review of the *James Stuart Archive*, *African studies* 43, no. 1 (1984), 53-65.

[281] Wright, "Making the JSA", 333.
[282] Carolyn Hamilton, "James Stuart and 'The Establishment of a Living Source of Tradition'" (Seminar Paper, University of the Witwatersrand, 1994).
[283] Wright, "Making the JSA", 334-337.
[284] See Hamilton, "Authoring Shaka".
[285] Wright, "Making the JSA", 338.
[286] Ibid, 339. Wright noted that he and Webb later broaden their perception of what qualified as historical data, adding that the omitted segments would added as addendum in the forthcoming volumes of the *JSA*.

subject matter. As for the editing process itself, Wright explained that he and Webb had translated the sections of the text which had been written in Zulu into English.[287] Stuart's notes had required little revision, although Wright explained that he and Webb had decided to cut out the words Stuart had scribbled down in the margins of his notes because these were merely Zulu words which were unfamiliar to him. More significantly, the pair also cut the praises Stuart had recorded. This was significant because these contain historical information.[288]

As Wright acknowledged, his and Webb's interpretation of the data the *JSA* contained was influenced by their existing understanding of the late independent era's history. During the 1970s and early 1980s, prior to the rise of source-critical histories, their views were greatly influenced by the conventional wisdom of the time: that the Mfecane had been the most significant historical event to take place during the late independent era. This view in turn had played a part in shaping their editing of the *JSA*'s material. As Wright put it, where he and Webb had intended their volumes to challenge the stereotypes associated with the history of what is today the area of KwaZulu-Natal: '… our annotations sometimes served instead to underpin them by unrelentingly reproducing concepts derived from Bryant and other established sources.'[289] Wright thus recognised that the *JSA* was not a static repository of historical data, but rather, a site for the shaping of representations of the past. This observation is another clear example of the complex interactions between historiography and sources, where contrary to conventional expectations, the historiography can be seen to have shaped the sources.

Part 5.2: Revising the Role of Women

As scholars began to pay greater attention to the debate enveloping colonial era evidence and the archive, they began to engage the politics of late independent era history far more directly. In the wake of the violence between Inkatha and African National Congress supporters in South Africa during the early 1990s, the question of whether women had been 'oppressed' or 'content' prior to colonialism had become a point of contention.[290] It was in a

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[287] Wright, "Making the JSA", 339-342.

[288] Ibid, 441. Wright observed that as Stuart frequently switched between Zulu and English while making his notes, there would have been much redundancy had the translated and non-edited version of the text been included side-by-side within a single volume. Thus, Wright and Webb opted to italicise the translated Zulu text to distinguish from those notes which were originally made in English. Wright further observed that the exact meanings of some of the interlocutors' phrases were lost during the translation process. This was because an emphasis was placed on the 'facts' as opposed to 'meaning'. See also Wright, "Making the JSA", 342.

[289] Wright, "Making the JSA", 343.

[290] Sean Hanretta, "Women, Marginality and the Zulu State: Women's Institutions and Power in the Early Nineteenth Century," *The Journal of African History* 39, no. 3 (1988), 389-390. Hanretta recognised that historical materialists such as Jeff Guy had been accused of attempting to discredit Zulu nationalism by Africanists such as Simon J. Maphalala, who advocated for the writing of history from the perspective of Africans rather than settlers. For more on this see Daphna Golan, "Inkatha and its use of the Zulu past", *History in Africa* 18 (1991), 113-126.

1998 article that Sean Hanretta examined how the social status of the women of the Zulu kingdom was impacted by the 'period of systemic transformation' in which the kingdom emerged as a powerful state during the early nineteenth-century.[291] As Hanretta recognised, his piece was published in a context in which the gender roles of the women who had lived under Zulu rule had become embroiled in a debate over the political positionality of academics. Hanretta intended his paper to transcend the pole by which the debate had become restrained.[292]

Recognising that 'the archival record of oral traditions is all but silent [on the subject of women's gender roles]', Hanretta predominantly drew critically on the existing published literature for his sources.[293] Citing Guy's 1987 'Analysing Pre-capitalist Societies in Southern Africa', he began by acknowledging that marriages were important for the productive processes of the Zulu kingdom and that they were essential for its social organisation. Women, he noted, were excluded from any authority over the productive power of the homestead. Drawing on the work of Harriet Ngubane,[294] Hanretta observed that the marriage practices of the late independent period were characterised by exogamy and took place along patrilineal lines. As women remained tied to their own lineages rather than their husband's, they were outsiders within the homestead. Nevertheless, Hanretta argued that the very structures which had marginalised women were also what had empowered them. This was because women's continued association with their own lineage made them important mediators between their husband's homestead and their father's.[295]

According to Hanretta, contrary to the assumption embedded within the exiting literature, changes in women's status had begun to take place prior to the onset of settler capitalism. Indeed, Hanretta pinpointed the early nineteenth-century as a period during which their status became increasingly stratified. As political centralisation was taking place, women from more powerful lineages were becoming increasingly important from a political perspective. This was because these women were crucial for facilitating and maintaining alliances between her father's and her husband's lineages.[296] Women of political importance thus garnered power not only through their association with the elite men of the kingdom, but also because their political role was of consequence.

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[291] Hanretta, "Women, Marginality and the Zulu State, 389-390.

[292] More recently, Sifiso Ndlovu has argued that assessments of women's roles in the Zulu kingdom were shaped by feminist discourse which misread Zulu women's identities. See Sifiso Ndlovu, "A reassessment of women's power in the Zulu Kingdom" in John Laband, Jabulani Sithole and Benedict Carton (eds.), *Zulu Identities: Being Zulu, Past and Present* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 111-21.

[293] Hanretta, "Women, Marginality and the Zulu State", 394. Hanretta also consulted the *JSA*.

[294] See Harriet Ngubane, *Body and Mind in Zulu Medicine: Ethnography of Health and Disease in Nyuswa-Zulu Thought and Practice* (New York: Academic Press, 1977).

[295] Hanretta, "Women, Marginality and the Zulu State", 390-394.

[296] Ibid, 389-397.

Hanretta further argued that *isigodlo* women garnered high status for a similar reason: they helped foster alliances between the Royal House and the kingdom's elites. Drawing on evidence from the *JSA* in addition to Hamilton's 'Ideology' and Bryant's *Olden Times*, Hanretta asserted that the *isigodlo* was a 'state institution' whose women were regarded as the exclusive property of the king. Having received these women as a form of tribute from the prestigious men of the kingdom, the king could marry-off *isigodlo* women in exchange for a highly inflated bride price. These inflated bridal prices not only reflected that *isigodlo* women held particularly high status, but it is also testifies to the value of forming a connection with the Royal House through a marriage brokered by the king.[297] Indeed, the *isigodlo* women which were married-off in this fashion were often regarded as the most prestigious of their husband's wives.[298]

According to Hanretta, women also emerged as the dominant members of a class of diviners during the early nineteenth-century. Drawing on the work of Judith Gussler[299] and the evidence of missionary Henry Callaway[300] (the latter of whom made his observations during the 1860s); Hanretta argued that the women of the late independent era were believed to possesses a unique connection to the spiritual realm and the natural world.[301] This connection was believed to have afforded women special powers which needed to be controlled. Women's emissions, for example, were believed to threaten society as a consequence of this spiritual connection. By the early nineteenth-century, however, the very spirituality which had previously justified men's control over women was becoming a means of empowerment. By this time, female diviners had become important figures for appeasing the ancestors by conducting rituals. It was a role often inaccessible to men because it was closely associated with femininity and women's biological reproduction.[302] Hanretta thus concluded that some women became revered for their divining capabilities, their sorcery, or their distinguished positions as lead mourners.

Part 5.3: 'Savage Delight'

As the debate over colonial era evidence continued to rage, in a 2000 book[303] expanding on his Ph.D. thesis,[304] Dan Wylie interrogated how Shaka, the Zulu kingdom, and the Zulu-speakers of the late independent era have been represented within white media and the

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[297] Ibid, 400, 403.

[298] Ibid, 397-402.

[299] See Judith Gussler,"Social change, ecology, and spirit possession among the South African Nguni" in Erika Bourguignon (ed.), *Religion, Altered States of Consciousness, and Social Change* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1973).

[300] See Henry Callaway, *The Religious System of the Amazulu* (Durban: Adams and Co, 1870).

[301] Hanretta, "Women, Marginality and the Zulu State", 410-415.

[302] Ibid, 410-415.

[303] Dan Wylie, *Savage Delight: White Myths of Shaka* (Scottsville: University of Natal Press, 2000).

[304] Dan Wylie, "White Writers and Shaka Zulu" (Ph.D. thesis, Rhodes University, 1995).

scholarship. According to Wylie, white representations of Africans have predominantly composed 'mythologised' depictions 'fundamentally [based] on ignoring Zulu self-conceptions'.[305] In Wylie's view, this white narrative has 'largely been constructed in defiance of historical evidence' for the explicit purpose of reinforcing imperial political hegemony and bolstering a sense of cohesive white identity.[306] The mythical component of this narrative; its stylistic and narratological alterations; and its socio-psychological meanings within the societies which produce them, are all considerations which Wylie stressed were in need of far greater academic consideration.

According to Wylie, the 'genealogy' of white accounts of Shaka which originated with the hunter-traders gradually assumed a formulaic structure which reflected the societal mentality of the white settler population. This mentality, he argued, was characterised by the notion of a 'paradisal mytheme' – a colonial stereotype in which pre-Shakan Africans were perceived by settlers and by Europeans as 'noble savages' whose idyllic society had been frozen in time.[307] Accounts of the Shaka and the Zulu kingdom consequently became intermeshed with white cultural stereotypes and biblical symbolism; themes which have continued to pervade the literature.[308] Shaka himself, on the other hand, has generically been depicted as a violent tyrant – as the destroyer of this 'paradise'. To interpret the 'character assassination' to which Shaka had been subjected, Wylie argued it is necessary to scrutinise the context in which the works which evoke his persona were produced, and also, to analyse the purpose these works were intended to serve.[309]

In Wylie's view, there are no certainties when it comes to the history of Shaka's personality or appearance. Indeed, given the extent to which accounts such as Isaacs' *Travels* and Fynn's *Diary* were manipulated to accommodate colonial audiences' expectations, Wylie maintained that a 'blurring' of history and fiction had taken place. The established historical narrative, he argued, amounted to an 'imaginative literary artefact'.[310] This, he added, necessitated that history must be abandoned as 'anything resembling an objective science'.[311] Rather, Wylie argued that history should be viewed as a means for disseminating cultural self-conceptions. White histories of the Zulu kingdom, he argued, were thus not truly histories of the Zulu kingdom itself, but of how the image of the Zulu kingdom which was produced within colonial society was mobolised to serve colonial ideals. For Wylie, the writing of history is thus ultimately a subjective exercise shaped by the cultural framework in which that history is produced.

Part 5.4: Unmaking Colonial Marginality

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[305] Wylie, *Savage Delight*, 5.
[306] Ibid, 1-10.
[307] Ibid, see in particular 61-63.
[308] Ibid, see chapter two.
[309] Ibid, see chapter four.
[310] Wylie, *Savage Delight*, 241.
[311] Loc. cit.

In his 2000 book *Monarchs, Missionaries and African Intellectuals*, Bhekisizwe Peterson undertook an examination of the intellectual development of Zulu-speaking African elites in the KwaZulu-Natal region and the Rand (Gauteng) with a focus on the period between the 1910s and the early 1940s.[312] As Peterson observed, this was a context during which 'native policy' was intensified and enforced far more systematically. The structures of colonialism were becoming increasingly characterised by socio-spacial segregation and the racial domination of the white settlers.[313] According to Peterson, by the 1930s, the class of missionary-educated Africans were growing frustrated by their continued exclusion from 'the grand scheme of capitalist development'. Caught between assimilation and a resurgence of African 'traditional' cultural identity, African elites struggled to articulate their ideological resistance to colonialism. Indeed, as Peterson argued, their resistance was expressed most freely in allegorical forms.[314] To exemplify his point, Peterson examined the poetic works of Benedict Wallet Vilakazi and theatrical productions of Herbert Isaac Ernest Dhlomo as case studies. Significantly, these works frequently drew on the history of the late independent period for their inspiration.

Aside from its analysis of Vilakazi's and Dhlomo's most important works, Peterson's book is noteworthy for having forwarded two influential arguments. The first of these concerned his notion of 'intellectual'. Peterson, in this respect, was one of the first academics to treat Vilakazi's and Dhlomo's discourse as intellectual productions rather than purely theatrical or poetic ones. In Peterson's view, Vilakazi's and Dhlomo's works evidenced that they were highly cognisant of their socio-political context and that they had actively deployed strategies for critiquing the marginalisation of Africans living under the colonial regime. African theatre, Peterson asserted, given the marginalisation of Africans in settler society, was the primary framework in which intellectual work was being done by black elites at this time.[315]

Peterson's second point concerned the question of vernacular evidence. In his view, productions such as those by Vilakazi and Dhlomo are significant because they are infused with the 'black experience': that of the development of self-consciousness.[316] According to Peterson, this self-consciousness was characterised by a paradox: Africans elites were navigating assimilation to a liberal ideology constructed in opposition to African 'traditions' while simultaneously embracing their African roots on account of their exclusion from colonial society. The intellectual works of African elites, he argued, were where black identity formation and cultural reconstructions were occurring. Vilakazi's poetry and Dhlomo's theatrical pieces – through their very language and the elements of dance and

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[312] Bhekizizwe Peterson, *Monarchs, Missionaries and African Intellectuals: African Theatre and the Unmaking of Colonial Marginality* (New York: African World Press, 2000).

[313] Peterson, *African Intellectuals*, 12-20.
[314] Ibid, 12-20.
[315] Ibid, 218-228.
[316] Ibid, 218-223.

orature which were being valorised in the face of 'progressive' settler liberalism - were the sites at which the production of Zulu nationalism was taking place.[317] As I discuss later, Peterson's arguments remain highly relevant in a context in which historians are grappling with the production of decolonial histories.

Part 5.5: Beyond the Mfecane

In a 2001 book,[318] Norman Etherington conducted a revisionist analysis of the late independent era's history. In laying out his research, Etherington identified numerous modifications to the established narrative; ones which had emerged following the decade or more of source-critical studies.[319] Central to each of these was his attempt to produce a picture of the period which accommodated the critiques of the Mfecane narrative which were first raised by Cobbing in 1988.[320] In this respect, Etherington sought to reorient the history of the period by carefully tracing the succession of 'great treks'[321] which had taken place in south-east Africa between 1815 and 1854. Indeed, as Etherington pointed out, the term 'Mfecane' itself might have derived from the Setebele word *lifaqane* (meaning migration).[322]

Despite the revisionist nature of his work, *The Great Treks* is notable for having made a novel contribution to the historiography. Etherington's observation was that the notion of state-formation had long been presumed to be a uniquely late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century phenomenon. As Etherington recognised, however, there was little in the way of evidence to support this presumption. On the contrary, he pointed out that there was much to substantiate the proposition that large polities – such as those based at Mapungubwe and Great Zimbabwe – had been forming in southern Africa long before the eighteen-century.[323] As he put it: 'I cannot find evidence that convinces me that [the Zulu kingdom] was a new kind of state, or necessarily larger than any that existed before.'[324] The

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[317] Ibid, 218-228.

[318] Norman Etherington, *The Great Treks*: *The Transformation of Southern Africa, 1815–1854* (London: Pearson Education Limited, 2001).

[319] Ibid, xx-xxi.

[320] Although Etherington was moved to abandon the notion of the Mfecane completely in the aftermath of Cobbing's critiques, he nevertheless expressed strong disagreement with Cobbing's own assertion that the rise of state-formation was tied to the demand for slaves. In Etherington's view, there was simply insufficient evidence of slavery's impact. See Etherington, *The Great Treks, xx.*

[321] Etherington had initially rejected an opportunity to sketch the history of the Boer trekkers who had travelled north-eastward from the Cape Colony between 1836 and 1838. Such a history, he had insisted, was far too narrow and it failed to acknowledge the major migrations of numerous African groups. See x-xi.

[322] Etherington, *The Great Treks, 337-338.*

[323] Ibid, xx-xxi, 330-336.

[324] Etherington's revisions included: rejected the notion of the Mfecane; critiquing the 'devastation stereotype'; critiquing notions of state-formation; disproving the depopulation myth which originated with Theal; and demonstrating that an alliance had existed between the British government and the Afrikaner Trekkers.

significance of this point was that it exposed the extent to which conceptions of state-formation remained closely entangled with the notion of the Mfecane.

Etherington's treatment of his source material was characterised by a careful and critical consideration of the evidence. Given that *The Great Treks* predominantly dealt with how the Mfecane had been portrayed in the written works of Western historians, it was these works (and their evidential basis in turn) which he subjected to scrutiny. Part of this critique incorporated an examination of the political context in which the works he examined were produced. Etherington was, for example, highly critical of George McCall Theal, whom he accused of utilising 'fragmentary evidence' to present a depiction of the southern African past intended as 'reconciliation [between Boer and British settlers] at the cost of truth.'[325]

Etherington was also sensitive to the post-apartheid climate in which his own work was being produced. In this respect, he recognised that the new political context warranted an approach to the history of the late independent era which transcended what he described as the Western-centric 'search for origins.' According to Etherington, historians in southern Africa had tended to approach the late independent era as the 'formative experiences' of the present.[326] Their interpretations of the late independent era, he argued, had been shaped by the presumption (on the part of professional and amateur historians alike) that something of the contemporary 'national character' of Africans could be discovered in the rise of the Zulu kingdom. According to Etherington, this unsubstantiated premise had given rise to a misconceived representation of African groups within the historiography. A further problem, he added, was that histories of south-east Africa had tended to 'fall into the habit of viewing colonial expansion from behind the lines of the advancing frontier.'[327] Etherington's own revisionist history was his attempt to break with this tradition.

Part 5.6: Refiguring the Archive

As I discussed in the previous section, during the 1990s, Africanist scholars had begun debating and scrutinising the production of evidence far more critically than they had in previous decades. This pattern continued during the early 2000s, during which time the fifth volume of the *JSA* was published (in 2001). This period also saw scholars turn their attention toward analysing the influences of the archive. It was in this context that a 1995 book[328] by French philosopher Jacques Derrida, first translated into English in 1996,[329] made an important contribution to the scholarship. Derrida's study had critically engaged the nature and the purpose of the archive through the lens of psychoanalysis. By doing so, his study had illuminated the unconscious beliefs and drives held by archivists and analysed how

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[325] Etherington, *The Great Treks, xii.*

[326] Ibid, xii.

[327] Ibid, x-xxv, 329-346.

[328] Jacques Derrida, *Mal d'Archive: Une Impression Freudienne* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1995).

[329] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. by Eric Prenowitz (Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1996 [1995]).

these forces shape the message the archive carries into the future. What made Derrida's work significant was that it drew greater attention to the political forces which shape the process of archiving.

In the 2002 book *Refiguring the Archive*, a number of scholars (the majority of whom were South African) engaged the ongoing debate over the use of the archive's evidence. A contribution of importance was made by Ann Stoler.[330] According to Stoler, archival sources had continued to be utilised by the majority of academics in an 'extractive' way, such that scholars remained preoccupied by the content of the archive but failed to show sufficient attention to the form of their data.[331] Stoler argued that archival sources needed to be recognised as subjects rather than objects – as sites at which colonial knowledge was made rather than acquired. The emphasis of her paper was thus to draw attention to 'archiving as a process rather than to archives as things.'[332]

According to Stoler, an 'historic turn'[333] (sometimes called an 'archival turn') had taken place over the previous two decades. It was characterised by a rejection of colonial era representations of the past and it critiqued the processes by which those representations had been made.[334] Colonial studies, Stoler added, had become less a question of distinguishing fact from fiction, but rather, a task of interrogating the 'evidential paradigms' of the colonial period – the systems by which facts are produced.[335] The basis of these source-critical analyses of the evidence, Stoler acknowledged, was that they had sought to read the evidence 'against the grain' – to probe the political context in which the source was produced with the intention of exposing hidden nuances which were not intended to be communicated.

As Stoler pointed out, however, a critical reading of a text against the grain first necessitated an understanding of how that text was intended to be read. Stoler thus argued that sources should first be read 'along the grain': they should be analysed in accordance with the dominant political current at the time of their production in such a way as to expose the protocols which caused them to assume their particular form.[336] Stoler further argued that

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[330]Ann Laura Stoler, "Colonial Archives and the Art of Governance: On the Content in the Form" in Carolyn Hamilton, Vern Harris, Michèle Pickover, Graeme Reid, Razia Saleh, and Jane Taylor (eds.), *Refiguring the Archive* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 83-102. A similar version of Stoler's piece was published *in Archival Science* that same year. See Ann Laura Stoler, "Colonial Archives and the Art of Governance, *Science* 2 (2002), 87-109.

[331] Stoler, "Colonial Archives", 87.

[332] Ibid, 87, 90.

[333] The term was coined by British social anthropologist Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard in 1951 in reference to what he believed was anthropology's apparent need to adopt a more historical focus.

[334] Stoler, "Colonial Archives", 88-89.

[335] Ibid, 91-92. As Stoler recognised, the notion of evidential paradigms was first articulated by Carlo Ginzburg. See Carlo Ginzburg, "Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm" in *Clues, Myths and the Historical Method*, trans. John Tedeschi and Anne Tedeschi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 96–12.

[336] Stoler, "Colonial Archives", 99-101.

archives were themselves a technology. They were a colonial tool whose protocols of production shaped their sources in accordance with the ideology of the state. Archives produced, in this respect, highly authoritative 'tended histories' through their power to preside over what constituted 'truth'.[337] It was in recognition of the power of these archival conventions that Stoler advocated for the reading the archive along the grain such that the 'systems of expectation'[338] manufactured by the archive could be identified.

Several further chapters are also worth mentioning. An essay by Achille Mbembe examined how specific records are subjected to archiving 'rituals' which cause them to be organised and codified in accordance with an archive's criteria. These criteria are determined by the archive's procedures and regulations, processes which also cause the record to become the property of society at large and thus to cease belonging to their author.[339] According to Mbembe, because only certain records are selected for preservation, these records are judged to be 'archivable' while excluded records are conversely judged to be 'unarchivable'. Mbembe thus concluded that archives are not a set of data, but a 'status'.[340]

A piece by Peterson drew attention to the historical inaccessibility of the archive to black intellectuals.[341] Referring to context of the Union of South Africa during the 1950s, Peterson argued that the exclusion of Africans could be explained by the political and symbolic duality which lay at the heart of the archive project. According to Peterson, the aim of the archive was to order the past as inheritance. Africans, however, were being denied a legacy worth preserving because it was believed that they did not possess a history which predated the colonial era. The archive, in this respect, established the 'intellectual and cultural horizons' (the political imaginary) that shaped social identity formation and history.[342] Peterson argued that it was vital to 'resist the lure to underplay the imperative to discover and construct the canons of previously marginalised groups' if the archive was to be successfully refigured. Failure to do so, he argued, would inhibit the creation of a Pan-African form of knowledge production because the true complexity of the social and intellectual factors which have shaped Africans would be constrained by the status quo 'in all its whiteness'.[343]

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[337] Ibid, 102-109.

[338] This refers to how the protocols of the archive are shaped to reinforce the dominant colonial narrative.

[339] Achille Mbembe, "The Power of the Archive and its Limits" in Carolyn Hamilton, Vern Harris, Michèle Pickover, Graeme Reid, Razia Saleh, and Jane Taylor (eds.), *Refiguring the Archive* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 19-27.

[340] Ibid, 19-21.

[341] Bhekizizwe Peterson, "The Archives and the Political Imaginary" in Carolyn Hamilton, Vern Harris, Michèle Pickover, Graeme Reid, Razia Saleh, and Jane Taylor (eds.), *Refiguring the Archive* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 29-37.

[342] Ibid, 30.

[343] Loc. cit.

Lastly, a piece by Hamilton drew specific attention to the debate between Vansina and Cohen.[344] According to Hamilton, Vansina was critical of Cohen's 'production of history' approach because it strayed from his historiological methodology. Furthermore, Vansina fervently opposed Cohen's broader conception of oral history because he believed Cohen's approach threatened his own methodology of extracting data from oral 'traditions'.[345] Hamilton argued that while oral sources are inherently fluid and material sources are inherently fixed in form, their meanings are nevertheless subject to reworking and reinterpretation over time. Consequently, Hamilton called for the establishment of a new form of archiving which recognised the duality of these fixed and flexible elements.[346]

Conclusion

In this chapter I have analysed the historical literature which was produced between the early 1980s and the early 2000s. I have argued that several minor 'breaks' in the scholarship took place during this period as persisting patterns in the literature were broken and that these contributed to the emergence of a source-critical approach. The first of these 'breaks' took place during the early 1980s as cognitive archaeology became established in the south-east African context. The approach focused on identifying ceramic 'traditions' which ignored change over time and thus created a division between the disciplinary practices of archaeology and history. While archaeologists continued to extract 'facts' from the ethnographic record to inform their analyses of physical evidence, historians recognised that 'traditions' were themselves subject to reproduction over time as the socio-political context in which the past was being engaged changed. What this chapter has helped illustrate is that where archaeologists' engagement with the African past continued to take place within the confines of a historiological methodology, historians had begun to engage sources from the perspective of the emerging source-critical approach.

A second break took place as political tensions escalated in South African during the 1980s. As the influence of the *JSA* on the scholarship grew, in 1985, Hamilton made an important contribution to the scholarship by recognising the importance of ideology for interpretations of oral sources. Hamilton also devised a new approach which enabled her to read oral sources critically, deconstruct their pluralities, and discern patterns in the contradictions she observed. Hamilton's study was followed by a further break initiated by Cobbing with his 'alibi' argument in 1988. Although the likes of Marks, Hamilton, and Wright had previously drawn attention to the problems associated with drawing uncritically on colonial era sources as sites of evidence, Cobbing's critique of the Mfecane narrative drew greater attention to these issues and stimulated further debate.

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[344] See Hamilton, "'Living by Fluidity".

[345] Ibid, 209-210.

[346] Ibid, 225-228.

Although I have argued that Cobbing's work was influential in advancing the transition toward the source-criticism, Cobbing's argument was not itself a product of the source-critical approach. Unlike scholars such as Hamilton, who were beginning to probe how contesting productions had shaped the development of the Mfecane narrative over time, Cobbing had argued that the 'devastation stereotype' was invented by white settlers to conceal the colonial slave trade. In this respect, although Cobbing considered the Zulu kingdom's role in initiating the Mfecane a fabrication, he did not engage the evidence from a path-breaking perspective. Rather, his argument merely replaced the existing Mfecane narrative with a new and equally tenuous explanation of the Mfecane's cause. It can thus be concluded that Cobbing's argument was itself limited by the very confines of the Mfecane narrative he sought to critique.

By the early 1990s, the scholarship was being dominated by the 'invention' argument as scholars debated whether or not colonial era sources retained historical value or were too greatly compromised by 'myth' and reinvention. It was during this context that the source-critical approach became a leading methodology within the scholarship. By the early 2000s, a further development was taking place. At this time, scholars were beginning to scrutinise the role of the archive in shaping the colonial sources. Part of this involved the recognition that the conventions of the archive had shaped the very notion of what qualified as evidence. Alternative forms of intellectual productions, those excluded from archival status, had correspondingly been excluded as sites of evidence.

Chapter 4

Historiography on the KwaZulu-Natal region from the mid-2000s until 2016

Introduction

In chapter four I examine the historical literature which was produced between the mid-2000s and 2016. Like the scholarship of the 1990s, the literature of this period has been shaped by developments within the source-critical approach to the production of history. In 2006, scholars working in association with the *Five Hundred Year Initiative* began to drive cross-disciplinary engagement on the past 500 years; a period which they asserted had suffered several decades of neglect. A separate initiative called the *Five Hundred-Year Archive* was then founded during the early 2010s. The projecting is working to make previously overlooked sites of evidence relating to the past 500 years available in a digital format in the hope that this will stimulate further research. The initiative has taken care to make its archiving processes visible, for it recognises that evidence is reshaped over time even within the custody of an archival institution. I argue that the *Five Hundred-Year Archive*'s effort to integrate evidence which has conventionally been excluded from archival status has helped extend the 'historic turn' by introducing a further 'turn'.

This chapter is broken down into three sections. In part one I discuss how the *Five Hundred Year Initiative* reinvigorated scholarly engagement with the past 500 years. This includes an examination the initiative's 2008 compendium in which several of its first conference papers were published. I then discuss a notable 2009 book by Premesh Lalu in which he argued that the archive should be abandoned as a source of evidence. According to Lalu, the archive continues to regulate the scholarship in accordance with its 'evidential paradigms' in the present-day. Lastly, I examine a methodology devised by Carolyn Hamilton for interrogating the conditions in which historical records are produced and how they are remade over time.

I begin the second section of this chapter with a discussion of a cross-disciplinary concept developed by Carolyn Hamilton in partnership with archaeologist Simon Hall. Their notion of 'inheritances' has helped transcend the divide in the approaches of historians and archaeologists. I then examine Elizabeth Eldredge's 2015 book focusing on rise of the Zulu kingdom. Eldredge has also disputed several of Hamilton's arguments. Next, I review Linell Chewins' 2015 master's dissertation which has re-examined David Hedges' trade argument. I follow this with a discussion of a Gavin Whitelaw's 2015 Ph.D. thesis, a study which is notable for its defence of Marxist and structuralist approaches to the archaeological record. I conclude this section by examining John Laband's 2017 book in which he investigates Shaka's assassination.

In the final section of this chapter I examine some of the most recent scholarly productions and the ongoing work of the *Five Hundred-Year Archive*. I begin by discussing a series of

papers by John Wright in which he acknowledged that he had previously overlooked the importance of James Stuart's interlocutors as agents in the shaping of the *JSA*'s evidence. I then examine an important 2016 book co-edited by Hamilton and Nessa Leibhammer. Comprising essays by academics from across several disciplines, the work wrestles with the issue of 'untribing' the archive and those of integrating ethnographic collections within an archival framework. Lastly, I discuss how the *Five Hundred-Year Archive* has extended the notion of 'archive' to previously excluded sites of evidence.

Part 1: Regimes and Rediscoveries

Part 1.1: Five Hundred Years Rediscovered

In the year 2006 a group of southern African researchers from across the disciplines of history, archaeology, historical anthropology, and from museums, came together to form a research initiative with the intention of reinvigorating the study of southern Africa's past 500 years. According to the research group's 2008 publication *500 Years Rediscovered*,[1] they set out their objectives at a 2006 workshop. Having settled on the name the *Five Hundred Year Initiative* (*FYI*),[2] their goals were to identity gaps in the existing research; locate and disseminate ethnographic and oral sources; facilitate the conservation of archival materials; and to encourage and train a new generation of postgraduate researchers.[3] The work of the *FYI* led to a minor break in the scholarship. This was because these researchers recognised that a divide had developed between the disciplines of history and archaeology and that increased cross-disciplinary study was an important step for producing further scholarship which would transcend it.

According to Natalie Swanepoel, Amanda Esterhuysen, and Philip Bonner (the editors of *500 Years Rediscovered)*, over the previous twenty-five years, archaeological studies of the past 500 years had become few and far between. This they attributed to the methodological divisions which had arisen between the disciplines of archaeology and history since the rise of cognitive archaeology during the 1980s. According to Swanepoel, Esterhuysen, and Bonner, as archaeological studies had become increasingly structuralist in their approach,

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[1] See Natalie Swanepoel, Amanda Esterhuysen and Philip Bonner, *500 Years Rediscovered: Southern African Precedents and Prospects* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2008), Preface. The reason the last 500 years formed the focus was because the *FYI* researches recognised that this was the period during which major political and economic development had taken place within southern Africa. The last 500 years, they added, was the period which had laid the foundation for the development of many of the African cultural identities which exist in the present-day.

[2] The *FYI* takes its name from C.F.J. Muller's 1969 book, which had, contrary to the *FYI*'s approach, focused on a narrow white-centric account of South African history. See Christoffel Muller, *500 years: A history of South Africa* (London: Academia, 1969).

[3] Ibid, Preface.

the scope of the research being conducted had become narrow and restrictive.[4] The intention of the *FYI* was to overcome this issue by promoting fresh cross-disciplinary study.

Overlooking the source-critical turn which had taken place over the previous two decades, Swanepoel et al further claimed that analyses of late independent era and of oral sources alike had stalled over the previous two and a half decades.[5] By asserting as much, they ignored the debates and the historical productions which had taken place within the scholarship between the mid-1980s and the early 2000s. Their reason for disregarding these studies likely stemmed from their own ideas about the production of historical knowledge. In this respect, each of the aforementioned scholars favoured a historiological approach to knowledge production. Unlike historians who had embraced the source-critical approach, Swanepoel, Esterhuysen, and Bonner had continued to view the archive as a repository for the extraction of facts rather than as a site for the production of historical knowledge. Consequently, they did not recognise the significance of the source-critical approach.

The first *FYI* conference was held in May 2007 and featured papers from a number of academics from across South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Botswana. A number of these papers were subsequently published. The most relevant of these for this study were works by Philip Bonner[6] and John Wright.[7] Bonner's paper drew attention to the paucity of academic studies to have conducted an analysis of the formation of the Swazi kingdom. Notably, Bonner named Hamilton as an absent co-author of the paper, but Hamilton refused to be credited because she felt Bonner was unable to engage (either positively or negatively) with her methodological arguments in both her master's dissertation and her Ph.D. thesis. Hamilton felt, in this respect, that Bonner did not recognise that oral history is reshaped by a complex interplay of political and intellectual influences at different points in time.[8]

In Bonner's view, the rich oral histories of Swazi-speakers had largely been overlooked by scholars. Indeed, having conducted a brief study of some of these Ngwane 'traditions' (based on interview evidence collected by Hamilton),[9] Bonner concluded that they potentially offered three meaningful lines of inquiry. They offered insight into how the Ngwane had absorbed and conquered smaller groups; where a number of major settlements were located; and indicated that the conflict between proto-Swazi groups was

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[4] Ibid, 5-13.

[5] Loc. cit.

[6] Philip Bonner, "Swazi Oral Tradition and Northern Nguni Historical Archaeology" in Natalie Swanepoel, Amanda Esterhuysen and Philip Bonner (eds.), *500 Years Rediscovered: Southern African Precedents and Prospects* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2008).

[7] John Wright, "Rediscovering the Ndwandwe Kingdom" in Natalie Swanepoel, Amanda Esterhuysen and Philip Bonner (eds.), *500 Years Rediscovered: Southern African Precedents and Prospects* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2008), 217-238.

[8] Carolyn Hamilton, "RE: Bonner/Hamilton 2006 paper authorship", Email, 2019.

[9] See Carolyn Hamilton, "The Swaziland Oral History Project", *History in Africa* 14 (1987), 383-387.

likely driven by competition to trade.[10] In addition, Bonner observed that few archaeological studies had ever been conducted in eSwatini. Further study, he argued, particularly of the sites suggested by the oral evidence, might help 'shed light on the nature, implications and fluxes of cultural hybridity and identity formation across a much broader geographic frame.'[11]

Wright's paper drew attention to 'one of the great causalities' of southern African history – the Ndwandwe kingdom.[12] Drawing on Hamilton's work with the *Swaziland Oral History Project* and the works of Bonner[13] and David Hedges,[14] Wright argued that the historiography of southern Africa was characterised by Zulu-centrism. In his view, this focus on the Zulu kingdom had obscured engagement with the broader history of the region. According to Wright, the dissolution of the Ndwandwe state following its defeat by Shaka in 1826 had had the effect of concealing its considerable part in the history of the KwaZulu-Natal region from view. Further study of the Ndwandwe's oral history, Wright argued, would help establish 'a clearer picture of the place of the Ndwandwe kingdom in the history of the KwaZulu-Natal-Swaziland-southern Mozambique-eastern Mpumalanga region in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.'[15]

Part 1.2: The Cambridge History

In a book published in 2009, works by a number of archaeologists and historians presented a historical overview of South Africa from the earliest times up until 1885.[16] The work aimed to give a definitive overview of southern African history prior to colonialism by compiling the works of the leading experts. It also marked the first time an extensive examination of South Africa's past had been written since the country's transition to democracy fifteen years prior. The chapters most relevant for discussion in this dissertation are chapter one by Carolyn Hamilton, Bernard Mbenga and Robert Ross,[17] and chapter five by John Wright[18] (although several further chapters also had some bearing on the historiography).[19]

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[10] Bonner, "Swazi Oral Traditions", 244-253.

[11] Ibid, 241.

[12] Wright, "Rediscovering the Ndwandwe", 217

[13] Philip Bonner, *Kings, Commoners and Concessionaires: The Evolution and Dissolution of the Nineteenth-Century Swazi State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

[14] David Hedges, "Trade and Politics in Southern Mozambique and Zululand in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries" (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1978).

[15] Wright, "Rediscovering the Ndwandwe", 234.

[16] Carolyn Hamilton, Bernard Mbenga and Robert Ross, *The Cambridge History of South Africa Volume 1: From Early Times to 1885* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[17] See Carolyn Hamilton, Bernard Mbenga and Robert Ross, "The Production of Preindustrial South African History" in Carolyn Hamilton, Bernard Mbenga and Robert Ross (eds.), *The Cambridge History of South Africa Volume 1: From Early Times to 1885* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1-62.

Hamilton et al's piece examined how discourses about the South African past have developed over time. They observed that African oral histories were overlooked by professional scholars before the 1950s because they were not recognised as history prior to this time.[20] By the late 1950s, however, due largely to the influences of Jan Vansina's work, oral 'traditions' had begun to be treated as historical sources. According to Hamilton et al, so great was Vansina's intervention that few scholars gave thought to examining oral sources as intellectual productions in their own right. This issue was compounded by the advent of historical materialism during the 1970s and 1980s, during which time oral sources were subjected to structuralist analysis but little historiographical scrutiny.[21] By the 1990s, the influences of literary criticism were crossing over into history and some scholars had begun to examine how oral sources were produced. It was at this time that Hamilton made an important contribution – she observed that oral histories are biased by the political positionality of the people who shape them and that this is reflected in their historical testimony.[22]

Hamilton et al further argued that a promising recourse for stimulating further research lies in reengaging how to approach or augment the archive. They observed that the archive was shaped by the colonial and apartheid eras in which it was established and that it was thus produced in accordance with colonial conventions. Consequently, written records formed the basis of the historical cannon while other forms of sources, such as oral sources, were ignored as sites of evidence.[23] Likewise, the productions of black intellectuals were ignored as sites of historical evidence during the colonial and apartheid eras because the African past was consigned to the disciplines of anthropology and Bantu Studies, neither of which was historical in its approach.[24] Hamilton et al concluded that efforts to integrate marginalised productions with the archive must continue if their intellectual weight is to become fully established within history-making institutions.[25]

Wright's chapter forwarded his take on the Mfecane debate. According to Wright, the history of the late eighteenth-century and the early nineteenth-century has been dominated

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[18] John Wright, "Turbulent Times: Political Transformations in the North and East, 1760s–1830s" in Carolyn Hamilton, Bernard Mbenga and Robert Ross (eds.), *The Cambridge History of South Africa Volume 1: From Early Times to 1885* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 211-252.

[19] See Simon Hall, "Farming Communities of the Second Millennium: Internal Frontiers, Identity, Continuity and Change" in Carolyn Hamilton, Bernard Mbenga and Robert Ross (eds.), *The Cambridge History of South Africa Volume 1: From Early Times to 1885* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 112-167; Paul Landau, "Transformations in Consciousness", in Carolyn Hamilton, Bernard Mbenga and Robert Ross (eds.), *The Cambridge History of South Africa Volume 1: From Early Times to 1885* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 392-448.

[20] Hamilton et al, "Preindustrial SA History", 3-4. Africans were not recognised as has having a history prior to the arrival Europeans.

[21] Hamilton et al, "Preindustrial SA History", 4-5.

[22] Ibid, 6-7.

[23] Ibid, 23-37.

[24] Ibid, 37-39.

[25] Ibid, 60-62.

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by the Zulu-centric conception of 'the wars of Shaka'. This notion that Shaka and his military conquests lie at the heart of the upheavals which took between the 1820s and the 1830s, he argued, fell short of setting the period within its broader political context.[26] In Wright's view, the rise of states in the KwaZulu-Natal region during the nineteenth-century should not be viewed as an outcome of Zulu expansionism alone, but as the result of a far broader set of pressures. These were triggered by growing colonial intrusion within the region and the intensification of conflicts between African groups seeking to control trade.

According to Wright, since the 1760s, groups within the KwaZulu-Natal region had begun to trade far more extensively with Delagoa Bay. This stimulated the wealth and power of political leaders and also sparked conflicts.[27] The territories east of the Drakensberg become a site of conflict between the Mabhudu and Tembe polities as they competed to secure authority over the trade emanating from the bay. Meanwhile, in the area between the Phongolo and Thukela rivers, the Ndwandwe and the Mthethwa kingdoms competed for dominance. According to Wright, a desire to control the ivory trade was likely a factor in the expansionism of each. It was in response to the growing threat posed by these polities that further groups such as the Hlubi and Qwabe began their own defensive expansions.[28]

Meanwhile, within the interior,[29] Dutch stock farmers were extending their activities further northward toward the Orange River. This began to drive KhoeKhoe, San, and Tswana groups further north. By the 1790s, following the arrival of pastoral groups who had likewise been driven northward, these communities became known as Griqua. Proficient raiders who made use of both guns and horses, the Griqua contributed greatly to the instability of the region during the 1820s and 1830s.[30] It was in this context that the Zulu-dominated group, a tributary of the Mthethwa, began to extend the *amabutho* system to establish a highly centralised military society. By the 1820s, following his defeat of the Ndwandwe, Shaka began his own campaign of expansionism predominantly south of the Thukela. A further succession of wars triggered further migrations as groups such as the Ndebele, Ngoni, and Gaza retreated from the KwaZulu-Natal area.[31] Wright thus concluded that although the Zulu kingdom ultimately established authority over many of the groups of the region, it was merely one of several important polities in the region.

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[26] Wright, "Turbulent Times", 211-212.
[27] Ibid, 214.
[28] Ibid, 219-225.
[29] Wright was referring to the area extending from the middle reaches of the Vaal River to the Khalahari.
[30] Wright, "Turbulent Times", 213-219. These African groups included the Bafokeng, Bahurutshe, Bakgatla, Bakwena, Bangwaketse, Barolong, and Batlhaping.
[31] Wright, "Turbulent Times", 226-232.

Part 1.3: Invalidating the Archive

In his 2009 book,[32] Premesh Lalu forwarded an argument for the strategic invalidation of colonial era sources as items of evidence to facilitate the production of post-colonial history. Lalu drew on healer-diviner Nicholas Gcaleka's famous journey to Scotland to recover the skull of Hintsa, a Xhosa king killed by British colonial forces in 1835, to help illustrate his argument. According to Lalu, Gcaleka's quest presented an example of an approach to history which has been excluded from what he called 'the regime of truth'. It was by unpacking Gcaleka's case that Lalu sought to critique the conventions of knowledge production which continue to shape engagement with African history in the post-apartheid context.

Echoing Bhekizizwe Peterson's *Monarchs, Missionaries and African Intellectuals* and observations made by scholars within *Refiguring the Archive*, Lalu recognised that histories of the colonial period operate in accordance with a set of conventions (the regime of truth). One such convention, for example, is the notion of proof. A sustainable argument, in this respect, depends on its capacity to establish its legitimacy. What qualifies as legitimate, in turn, is determined by a protocol; the argument must reach a certain threshold of verifiable evidence.[33] It is this need to meet the expectation of the protocol which Lalu argued produces an imaginary structure which acts as a regulatory system. Any argument which operates outside the conventions of this structure – such as Gcaleka's evoking of dreams, which cannot be verified as evidence in accordance with the protocol - are thus excluded as a form of legitimate knowledge.[34]

Lalu has further argued that the archive constitutes a 'pervasive system of knowledge', a framework which continues to regulate historical productions and confines its colonised subjects to the periphery. 'As a regime of truth', Lalu added, 'it polices the differences between what can be said and what is actually said.'[35] It is for these reasons that Lalu has argued that the archive should be abandoned as a source of evidence. Regardless of whether the archive is read either along or against the gain, its contents are always characterised by the constraints of its imaginary structure. In Lalu's view, it would be better to unlearn history than to continue to uphold the protocols of the archive in the post-colonial context.[36]

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[32] Premesh Lalu, *The Deaths of Hintsa: Post-Apartheid South Africa and the Shape of Recurring Pasts* (Pretoria: HSRC Press, 2009). Lalu's book was based on his 2003 Ph.D. thesis and there were thus several years of delay before his arguments were published. See Premesh Lalu, "In the Event of History" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Minnesota, 2003).

[33] Lalu argues that this evidence is not always 'forensic' in nature, but that it is formed on the basis of colonial images and depictions which were accepted as objective portrayals. See *The Deaths of Hintsa*, chapter two.
[34] Ibid, 1-30.
[35] Ibid, 265.
[36] Ibid, 263-269.

Part 1.4: The Life of the James Stuart Archive

In a 2011 essay,[37] Hamilton forwarded a method for investigating the conditions under which historical records are made and remade over time. Building on Achille Mbembe's 2002 paper,[38] Hamilton argued that archival records are bestowed with a particular archival status which distinguishes them from records which are not part of an archival institution. This, Hamilton asserted, causes the nature of the now archived object to change. This is because the selection of that object for preservation changes the way in which that object is perceived because it is now viewed as a part of an archival collection. According to Hamilton, by scrutinising the productions of archival institutions and by examining the history of a specific record before and after it becomes part of an archival repository, it becomes possible to interpret how the object itself develops agency as a result of and in the course of its history as an archived object. To investigate the stages in the life of a single record as well as the many stages in the life of an archive, Hamilton devised two closely associated concepts – the backstory and the biography.[39]

According to Hamilton, backstories comprise the history of the item prior to it entering an archival repository.[40] The backstory requires getting to grips with where the item came from, reconstructing the reason it was preserved and the purpose it was intended to serve, and analysing the influences which acted on that item over time.[41] The biography comprises the history of an item of evidence after it has entered an archival repository. It was from this point in time that the item of evidence was preserved with the intention that it would stand as a record of the past. This was also the point at which the record was subjected to a preservatory strategy conscious of that record's archival future. The biography encompasses getting to grips with a historical understanding of how ideas about the past changed over time after that item of evidence was preserved.[42] In addition, the biography requires the researcher to engage how the record acts on the world and how the world acts on it in turn. In this respect, some aspects of the record are constantly being renegotiated over time even as other core aspects remain unchanged.[43]

Hamilton drew on the *JSA* as an example of how an archive's objects pass through many stages. Furthermore, in contrast to Lalu's call for the abandonment of the archive, Hamilton argued that record collections such as the *JSA* had enabled the histories of African societies

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[37] Carolyn Hamilton, "Backstory, Biography, and the Life of the James Stuart Archive", *History in Africa* 38, no. 1 (2011), 319-341.

[38] See Achille Mbembe, "The Power of the Archive and its Limits" in Carolyn Hamilton, Vern Harris, Michèle Pickover, Graeme Reid, Razia Saleh, and Jane Taylor (eds.), *Refiguring the Archive* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 19-27.

[39] Hamilton, "Life of the JSA", 319-322.
[40] Ibid, 327.
[41] Ibid, 320-322.
[42] Ibid, 327-328.
[43] Ibid, 332-333.

to be vindicated from consignment to a 'historyless oblivion'.[44] Backstory and biography, she asserted, should be recognised as prerequisites for historical reconstructions, for each is necessary for interpreting those factors which has given shape to the materials which are utilised as evidence. What makes these concepts so important, Hamilton argued, is that they provide the critical tools necessary for destabilising the established concept of the archive itself.[45]

Part 2: Refutation and Revisionism

Part 2.1: Crossing Disciplinary Divides

In the decade which followed the publication of Etherington's *The Great Treks*, much of the scholarship concerning the late independent era had revolved around critical reengagement with the colonial era evidence. As I have discussed, this was a period during which the workings of the archive had come under intensive scrutiny. Indeed, the very conventions of colonial knowledge production themselves had become the subject of rigorous debate. In addition, scholars had begun to recognise that the conventions of their disciplines had caused them to interpret and categorise evidence in certain ways. It was in this context that a 2012 paper by Carolyn Hamilton and Simon Hall tackled the problems associated with two categorical divides. The first is the division between the disciplines of archaeology and history, where archaeologists predominantly rely on a structuralist approach to the past and historians implement a historical approach. The second division is the categorical distinction which has traditionally been drawn between Nguni and Sotho groups on the basis of their distinctive region and culture.[46]

According to Hamilton and Hall, although historians and archaeologists alike were well aware that identities change over time and were also interested in analysing the conditions in which identity shifts take place, each discipline approached its analysis in accordance with its disciplinary norms. In this respect, where historians focus on identifying change over time, archaeologists draw on ethnographic evidence to describe culture. Their interpretation of social and cultural continuities and differences thus become skewed by the conventions of their field.[47] To bridge the break between structuralist archaeologists and process-orientated historians, Hamilton and Hall proposed the notion of 'inheritances'. These they defined as ideas, identities, and practices of the past which have in some form persisted over time even as they have been reshaped by the changing context.[48] The degree to which changes in identity take place, they added, is tied to how its inheritances are

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[44] Ibid, 338-340.

[45] Loc. cit.

[46] Carolyn Hamilton and Simon Hall, "Reading across the Divides: Commentary on the Political Co-presence of Disparate Identities in Two Regions of South Africa in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 38, no. 2 (2012), 281-290.

[47]Ibid, 282.

[48] Ibid, 283-284.

perceived and understood within that context. Additionally, they are limited by what the keepers of the inheritances regard as the most important features to preserve.[49]

With their cross-disciplinary approach, Hamilton and Hall encouraged critical discussion of the Nguni-Sotho categorical divide on two interlinked levels. The first level is the study of what happened in the past. This entails looking what evidence existed to support the notion of the divide and examining exceptions which might cause it to be reconceived. On the second level, Hamilton and Hall sought to encourage greater analysis of how the categorical distinction became canonised within academic literature. This encompasses a consideration of how data of various kinds was identified, collected, and categorised, and also how it interplays with political and scholarly conventions.[50] Indeed, while theirs was only a preliminary study, Hamilton and Hall encouraged further cross-disciplinary enquiry into matters of identity and culture. Their work is another vivid example of how disciplinary conventions have shaped particular ways of interpreting the historical evidence and also exemplifies how 'breaks' in the historiography can expose these patterns in the historiography.

Part 2.2: Ideology and Ethnicity Revisited

Much of the debate which had taken place during the 2000s had centred on examinations of the archive and its evidence. When Elizabeth Eldredge's *The Creation of the Zulu Kingdom*, published in 2014, it thus marked the first substantial history of the late independent period to have appeared in over a decade.[51] Eldredge's study was centred on historicising the rise of the Zulu kingdom between 1815 and 1828. Primarily based on research she had undertaken between December 1993 and November 1994, at which time she had carefully studied the James Stuart Papers and the *JSA*, Eldredge critically reviewed each of the key developments to have taken place in the Zulu kingdom during the period of its consolidation.[52] Eldredge also sought to refute several arguments which were first forwarded by Carolyn Hamilton in her 1985 master's dissertation. Several of these arguments had been further developed win her Ph.D. thesis,[53] in *Terrific Majesty*, and in a paper co-authored by John Wright.[54] Although Eldredge drew on the evidence of the *JSA*,

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[49] Ibid, 81-284. In some cases, Hamilton and Hall observed, claims of continuity were asserted to disguise cultural changes which were taking place.

[50] Ibid, 289-290.

[51] See Elizabeth Eldredge, *The Creation of the Zulu Kingdom, 1815-1828* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[52] Ibid, vii-ix.

[53] See Carolyn Hamilton, "Authoring Shaka: Models, Metaphors and Historiography" (Ph.D. thesis, Johns Hopkins University, 1993).

[54] Carolyn Hamilton and John Wright, "The making of the Amalala: Ethnicity, Ideology and Relations of Subordination in a Precolonial Context", *South African Historical Journal* 22, no. 1 (1990), 3-23.

her book was published the same year as the sixth volume.[55] Consequently, she only drew on the evidence of the first five volumes.

The first of the arguments Eldredge contested was the claim that the Zulu Royal house had manipulated (or possibly fabricated) kinship ties – a strategy Hamilton asserted they had undertaken to promote the 'incorporation' or 'exclusion' of other groups into the burgeoning Zulu kingdom. In Eldredge's view, the evidence which supported Hamilton's claim was insufficient, for she believed that the contradictions Hamilton had observed in her own analyses of oral sources could be attributed to 'human memory and error.'[56] In addition, Eldredge asserted she had uncovered plenty of evidence which contradicted that lineage manipulations would have taken place.[57] Drawing on evidence from the *JSA*,[58] Eldredge argued that genealogies were closely safeguarded and that all the peoples of the region were familiar with their own line of descent owing to the cultural importance which was attributed to ancestors. This, she proclaimed, meant it was unlikely lineages were subject to manipulation.[59]

In a second argument dealing with a closely-associated point, Eldredge challenged Hamilton's claim that the 'ethnic'[60] identities amalala and amantungwa were an invention of the Shakan era.[61] Where Hamilton had argued that these identities had been fostered to

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[55] Statement of Socwatsha kaPhaphu in Colin Webb and John Wright (eds.), *The James Stuart Archive* 6 (2014), 1-207.

[56] Eldredge, *The Creation of the Zulu Kingdom*, 207.

[57] To some extent, Eldredge appears to have misread Hamilton meaning with respect to kinship ties. What Hamilton was referring to was the notion of a distant common ancestral origin, not direct ties between lineages, as Eldredge appears to have interpreted.

[58] In particular, Eldredge drew on the evidence of Ndukwana kaMbengwana. See Statement of Ndukwana kaMbengwana in Colin Webb and John Wright (eds.), *The James Stuart Archive* 4 (1986), 263-406.

[59] Eldredge, *The Creation of the Zulu Kingdom*, 209-210. Hamilton and Wright have since responded to Eldredge's argument, calling it a 'complete misrepresentation' of Hamilton's original view which Wright had come to share. See Carolyn Hamilton and John Wright, "Moving Beyond Ethnic Framing: Political Differentiation in the Chiefdoms of the KwaZulu-Natal Region before 1830", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 43, no. 4 (2017), 260, footnote 26.

[60] As I have mentioned previously, Hamilton and Wright have since reconsidered their assertion that the terms amalala and Nguni were ethnic groupings, arguing instead that they were political categories. See Hamilton and Wright, "Beyond Ethnic Framing", 663-679.

[61] Eldredge, *The Creation of the Zulu Kingdom*, 207-209. Eldredge further argued, drawing on evidence from the JSA, that the term 'amaNtungwa' was not associated with high status, as Hamilton had claimed, but was conversely derogatory. Eldredge argued this point on the basis that Shaka had reportedly attempted to rid the Zulu Royal House of its association with the name and had sought to promote identification with term 'amaNguni' in its place; a name of still higher status which was, in the context of the 1820s, associated with the original inhabitants of the region. As Hamilton and Wright have since argued, however, discrepancies in the connotation of the term amantungwa likely reflect ideological differences in the political perspectives of Stuart's interlocutors. Indeed, although Shaka might well have sought to identify with the term amaNguni, this not sufficient evidence to confirm that the connotations of the term amaNtungwa were derogatory. See

facilitate the formation of alliances between the Zulu Royal House and newly incorporated groups, Eldredge insisted that there was evidence to suggest that the terms had predated Shakan times. But although Eldredge cited evidence from the *JSA* to support her point, she overlooked the intricacies of Hamilton's argument.[62] Hamilton had argued that invention takes place within a limited framework; that it is confined by the specific historical materials and the politics of that context. In this respect, Hamilton had argued that the terms amalala and amantungwa had been reworked during Shakan times by drawing on cultural inheritances.[63]

Part 2.3: Trade, Brass and Prestige

Since Norman Etherington's 2001 criticism of what he called historians' 'search for origins' approach to the study of African state-formation, little further scholarship had engaged the topic area. A notable exception was Linell Chewins' 2015 master's dissertation,[64] a study which has reignited debate over David Hedges' trade hypothesis. Drawing predominantly on the Cape Archives and the Nationaal Argief (located at The Hague) for her evidence, Chewins argued that Hedges had failed to recognise the true significance of the brass trade. What made brass so significant, she argued, was that it had enabled chiefs to attract and retain supporters.[65] According to Chewins, it was the influx in brass goods and not an escalation in the ivory trade which had facilitated the political centralisation of northern Nguni-speaking groups during the late eighteenth-century.

Chewins focused her examination on the Rhonga polities of the early eighteenth-century. What made trade goods valuable to the chiefs of these polities was the prestige with which they were associated. In this respect, trade was essential for garnering a larger political following.[66] It was a chief's status as a trader, rather than the economic value of the trade itself, which earned him prestige. This was because negotiation was recognised as a political procedure which spoke of the chief's influence.[67] Chewins further argued that attracting large followings was essential as they strengthened the political authority of the trading

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Hamilton and Wright, "Beyond Ethnic Framing". For more on the term 'Nguni', see John Wright, "Politics, Ideology, and the Invention of the 'Nguni'" (Seminar Paper, University of the Witwatersrand, 1983).

[62] Indeed, Eldredge appears to have overlooked the subtitle of Hamilton's book: "The Limits of Invention".
[63] Carolyn Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty: The Powers of Shaka Zulu and the Limits of Historical Invention* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1998), 4, 26, 71. More recently, Hamilton has written about the constraints which face the formal archive in South Africa's post-apartheid setting, arguing that the demands of attending to ancestors exert a curatorial pressure which is constrained by the dominant conventions of curating. See Carolyn Hamilton, "Archives, Ancestors and the Contingencies of Time: The Limits of the Inherited Archive" in Alf Lüdtke and Tobias Nanza (eds.), *Laute, Bilder, Texte. Register des Archivs* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Unipress, 2015).

[64] Linell Chewins, "Trade at Delagoa Bay: the influence of trade on political structures, 1721-1799" (Master's dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 2015).

[65] Ibid, 90-5.
[66] Ibid, 125-126.
[67] Ibid, 85-88, 99-102.

chief, often at the expense of rival chiefs. Participating in trade was thus a means for chiefs to increase their power.[68]

Chewins presented three critiques of Hedges' trade hypothesis. In her first argument, contrary to Hedges, she rejected the notion that the ivory trade had experienced a contraction during the 1790s. Drawing on evidence which had surfaced six years after the completion of Hedges' thesis,[69] Chewins argued that around 40 percent of the trade goods at Mozambique Island between 1802 and 1803 were supplied from Delagoa Bay.[70] The statistics also suggested that the trade had continued at a low rate over the course of the next decade – which Chewins argued proved that English ships had continued to trade, and thus, that Hedges had underestimated the scale of the ivory trade.[71] Chewins conceded, however, that the trade was small in scale – a point which had been recognised by Hedges and thus somewhat undermined Chewins' critique.[72]

Chewins' second criticism of Hedges was entirely reliant on her new chronology for the decline of the ivory trade. Based on her assertion that the trade had remained prosperous until 1814, Chewins asserted that its contraction could not have coincided with the peak era of whaling at Delagoa Bay because whaling had reached its zenith between 1789 and 1804.[73] Drawing on Dutch records, Chewins argued that there had been a drastic reduction in the number of whalers to visit Delogoa Bay between 1805 and 1814, likely due to the outbreak of the Napoleonic Wars. Given this discrepancy between the peak whaling years and the decline of the ivory trade, Chewins concluded that a cattle trade could not have been a factor in initiating the Mfecane. She thus maintained that the Mfecane was triggered by the decline of the ivory following its collapse in 1814.[74]

In her third and most notable critique, Chewins argued that Hedges had overstated the number of cattle which were required to sustain the whaling vessels which had docked at Delagoa Bay.[75] Hedges' calculation had drawn on the records of the large trading vessel the

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[68] Ibid, 97.

[69] Chewins drew on a book by Sven Carlson which consulted records of the passage of trade between Mozambique Island and Bombay. See Sven Carlson, *Trade and Dependency: Studies in the expansion of Europe (*Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1984), 154-155.

[70] Chewins, "Trade at Delagoa Bay", 136-138.
[71] Ibid, 136-138.
[72] Ibid, 137.

[73] Ibid, 137-139, 145-146.
[74] Chewins, "Trade at Delagoa Bay, 137-138; Linell Chewins, "The Relationship between Trade in Southern Mozambique and State Formation: Reassessing Hedges on Cattle, Ivory and Brass", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 42, no. 4 (2015), 738-739.
[75] According to Hedges, at least one hundred and possibly even two hundred cattle would have been required by each whaling ship each season. See David Hedges, "Trade and Politics in Southern Mozambique and Zululand in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries" (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1978), 149-151.

Lion, but the Lion's crew, Chewins observed, was far larger than that of any ordinary whaling vessel. It was thus unlikely that any whaling ship would have matched the Lion's demand for meat.[76] Having examined the records of two Dutch ships, the Snuffelaar and the Zeepost, Chewins established that each ship had subsided off only a single head of cattle per week. Consequently, she established that the Lion's cattle purchases were greatly in excess of what might be expected for a whaling vessel.[77] Chewins further argued that the total scale of the cattle trade was likely far smaller than Hedges had suggested. Drawing on witness evidence[78] and published statistics,[79] she calculated that only 120 whaling vessels had docked at Delagoa Bay between 1789 and 1804.[80] As whalers had operated in the bay for around twenty-four weeks at a time, she concluded that it was unlikely that the scale of the trade was sufficient to initiate socio-political transformation among Nguni-speaking groups.

Part 2.4: Defending Structural Archaeology

An archaeological study of considerable importance was completed by Gavin Whitelaw in 2015.[81] According to Whitelaw, the primary purpose of his study was not to explain the origins or the development of southern African polities, but rather, to interrogate the 'history-making' capacity of groups which had inhabited KwaZulu-Natal during the Iron Age.[82] Combining archaeological evidence with ethnographic-, historical-, and oral records, Whitelaw emphasised the importance of archaeological evidence for shaping interpretations of Iron Age societies. Whitelaw intended to invert the notion that ethnography 'can give life to the archaeological record', arguing instead that it is the material record which enables 'interpretative advancement'. Indeed, in Whitelaw's view: 'It would be a mistake to neglect the shaping force that the material world has on people.'[83]

Drawing on numerous previous articles he had published,[84] Whitelaw's study made several novel contributions to the scholarship. Among these was his advancement of the discussion

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[76] Chewins, "Trade at Delagoa Bay", 138.

[77] Ibid, 138; Chewins, "Trade in Southern Mozambique", 740.

[78] See William White, *Journal of a voyage performed in the Lion from Madras to Colombo and Delagoa Bay, on the Eastern Coast of Africa* (London: J. Stockdale, 1800).

[79] See Alan Booth, "American Whalers in South African Waters", *South African journal of Economics* 32, no. 4 (1964), 278-282, 280; Phoebe Wray and Kenneth Martin, "Historical Whaling Records from the Western Indian Ocean, *Reports of the International Whaling Commission* 5, (1983), 214; Carlson, *Trade and Dependency*, 154-155*;* Rhys Richards and Thierry Du Pasquier, "Bay Whaling off southern Africa, c. 1785-1805", *South African Journal of Marine Science* 8, no. 1 (1989), 233.

[80] Chewins, "Trade at Delagoa Bay", 129-130; Chewins, "Trade in Southern Mozambique", 737.

[81] Gavin Whitelaw, "Economy and Cosmology in the Iron Age of KwaZulu-Natal" (Ph.D. thesis, Witwatersrand University, 2015).

[82] Ibid, 1-4.

[83] Ibid, 188.

[84] As Whitelaw explained, his thesis was done in part by publications.

of pollution in the context of marriage relations. Drawing on David Hammond-Tooke,[85] Whitelaw argued that the relationship between pollution and marriage among Nguni-speakers of the Iron Age had impacted settlement structures, some indications of which are expressed in the material culture. Signs of this can be seen in the social divisions between men and women within the homestead and in the spacial concentration of homesteads within a settlement.[86] A further contribution was Whitelaw's novel assessment of Iron Age fishing. Drawing on the remains of fish, Whitelaw was able to produce a political history of fishing which tracked how the practice was adopted by some African groups (where it achieved symbolic importance), but was avoided by others.[87] Whitelaw also addressed the ritualistic features of rainmaking and how these rituals were more closely associated with symbolically preparing groups for production and reproduction than for the actual creation of rain itself.[88]

The most notable feature of Whitelaw's thesis was its research methodology. Whitelaw argued that the most effective means for engaging the 'history-making' capacity of Iron Age groups was by adopting the Marxist-structuralist approach established by Jeff Guy in his 1987 paper 'Analysing Pre-Capitalist Societies in Southern Africa'. In Whitelaw's view, it was essential to grapple with the 'economic relations and principles on which societies were founded' if the origins of 'radical change' in these societies was to be comprehended.[89] In addition, Whitelaw advocated for Guy's theory to be read in conjunction with numerous structuralist-influenced works. Studies incorporating models such as those by Hammond-Tooke,[90] Tom Huffman,[91] Igor Kopytoff,[92] and Harriet Ngubane,[93] he argued, were essential for integrating the symbolism and belief-systems of African groups with their economic practices. Although Marxist-structuralist approaches to southern African history had fallen out of favour by the late-1980s, Whitelaw maintained that economic and cosmological

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[85] See for example David Hammond-Tooke, "The symbolic structure of Cape Nguni cosmology" in Michael Whisson and Martin West, (eds.), *Religion and social change in southern Africa: anthropological essays in honour of Monica Wilson* (Cape Town: David Phillip, 1975), 15–35; David Hammond-Tooke, "Patrolling the herms: social structure, cosmology and pollution concepts in southern Africa" (Paper presented at the 18th Raymond Dart Lecture, University of the Witwatersrand, 1981).

[86] See Whitelaw, Economy and Cosmology, chapter five. See in particular 77-78.
[87] Ibid, see chapter six.
[88] Ibid, see chapter nine.
[89] Ibid, 189.
[90] Loc. cit.

[91] See for example Thomas Huffman, "Archaeology and Ethnohistory of the African Iron Age", *Annual Review of Anthropology* 11, no. 1 (1982), 133-150.
[92] Igor Kopytoff, "The internal African frontier: the making of African political culture" in Igor Kopytoff (ed.), *The African frontier: the reproduction of traditional African societies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 3–84.
[93] See Harriet Ngubane, *Body and Mind in Zulu Medicine: An Ethnography of Health and Disease in Nyuswa-Zulu Thought and Practice* (London: Academic Press, 1977).

modelling still provided a basis which enabled archaeologists to interpret the material evidence in meaningful and novel ways.

According to Whitelaw, his own analysis of Iron Age fishing provided justification for his methodology. On the one hand, Whitelaw observed that Nguni groups had practiced avoidance of fishing and of fish-eating. According to Whitelaw, Nguni groups regarded fish with disdain because their form resembled snakes. Snakes were not eaten on the basis of their association with ancestors and because they were believed to influence women's fertility. The eating of fish consequently became associated with destitution – an impression which later became established in the historiography by the writings of Henry Francis Fynn and William Holden.[94] On the other hand, the practice of fish-eating among the Thuli (who were Nguni-speakers) could be linked with their takeover of the coastal regions previously occupied by Tsonga groups. Drawing on ethnographic evidence, Whitelaw argued that contrary to Nguni-speaking groups, fishing was regarded favourably among the Tsonga. This in turn, he argued, led to the Thuli adopting fishing as an ideological tool for asserting their authority over the Tsonga groups of the region.[95]

Part 2.5: The Assassination of King Shaka

In a book published in 2017, John Laband examined the balance of the available evidence to reconstruct the events of Shaka's assassination.[96] Piecing together evidence drawn from the *JSA*, Fynn's *Diary*, and Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama*, Laband began by examining the first assassination attempt made against Shaka in 1824. As is well known, Shaka succumbed following a second attempt on his life in 1828, made by a party which included several of his own brothers. Although the precise details of these attacks are disputed within the evidence, Laband's study was sensitive to the contested nature of the accounts of Shaka's demise and reviewed a range of potential explanations. The most valuable feature of the book is its thorough analysis of the historical context in which Shaka was killed.

While he did not forward a new interpretation of the events which culminated in Shaka's killing, Laband did present what took place in a new way by discussing them in a narrative form. Seemingly aware that an attack on his life was imminent, in June or July of 1828, Shaka had ordered an unprecedented military attack against the distant Gaza kingdom. According to Laband, the raid was remarkable in its ambitiousness.[97] Aside from the distance required to be covered by the troops, the attack also took place hot on the heels of a prior raid against the Mpondo – the significance of which was that the Zulu warriors had

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[94] Whitelaw, "Economy and Cosmology", 108-119.
[95] Ibid, 116-121.
[96] John Laband, *The Assassination of King Shaka: Zulu History's Dramatic Moment* (Cape Town: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2017).

[97] Ibid, 119-127. According to Laband, it was in all likelihood a manoeuvre to distance the king from the conspirators threatening his life.

not had time to recover.[98] The close proximity of the raids shocked and dismayed Shaka's warriors, who were deprived of any opportunity to construct new homesteads.[99] Under-resourced, fatigued, and forced to march through malaria infested territory, the campaign proved disastrous. Indeed, Laband speculated it likely contributed to the Qwabe insurrection under Nqetho in 1829, in which many of the kingdom's subjects and much of its wealth in cattle was lost.[100]

Laband further recognised that both Shaka and Dingane had understood the importance of the hunter-traders, for each had sought to bring them under their authority. According to Laband, there were several reasons why they would have done so. Firstly, the muskets in the traders' possession were recognised by the Zulu kings as a powerful tool of war. Through maintaining trade relations, each king had sought to acquire greater numbers of muskets.[101] Secondly, the presence of the hunter-traders along the east coast was useful to the Zulu kings. With each of traders serving in the capacity of a chief under the king's authority, their settlement and the African followers they attracted essentially afforded the king proxy control over the region.[102] Thirdly, the traders presented Shaka with a unique diplomatic access to the Cape Colony's government. Indeed, by 1828, Shaka was eager to treat with King George and establish an alliance. It was for this purpose that he had dispatched James Saunders King on his ill-fated diplomatic mission.[103] The hunter-traders were thus viewed as potential middlemen.[104]

Part 3: Producing Decolonial History

Part 3.1: Interlocutors as Actors

In a series of papers written between 2011 and 2016,[105] Wright outlined how an article he had written in 1996, his 'Making the James Stuart Archive', had overlooked the role played

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[98] Ibid, 119-127. Known in the Zulu kingdom as Bhalule, this territory was well over 700 kilometres away from Shaka's kwaDukuza *ikhanda*.

[99] Ibid, 119-123. According to Laband, Shaka was also known to have called on men who were elderly or otherwise unfit to serve in battle to participate in the attack, although he would later retract this order.

[100] Ibid, 152, 156.

[101] Ibid, 76-79.

[102] Ibid, 71-72. Dingane would later encounter greater difficulty with the traders than Shaka owing to their growing support among refugees and outcasts, as well as their mounting insurrection, particularly following the arrival of the Boers in the region. Thus, in April 1838, Dingane fought, defeated, and subsequently sacked the British presence at Port Natal, albeit the hostilities proved temporary.

[103] Henry Francis Fynn, Daniel. McK. Malcolm and James Stuart (eds.), *The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn: Compiled from Original Sources* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter & Shooter, 1950), 154-155.

[104] Laband, *The Assassination*, 82-86. Shaka's ill-fated diplomatic mission to the Cape derailed this prospect.

[105] See John Wright, "Ndukwana kaMbengwana as an Interlocutor on the History of the Zulu Kingdom, 1879-1903", *History in Africa* 38, no. 1 (2011), 343-368; John Wright, "Socwatsha kaPhaphu, James Stuart, and Their Conversations on the Past, 1897–1922", *Kronos* 41, no. 1 (2015), 142-165; Cynthia Kros and John Wright,

by Stuart's interlocutors in the production of historical evidence. In the wake of the transition toward the source-critical approach, Wright had come to acknowledge that the James Stuart Papers were not only the product of Stuart's individual labours, but were shaped collectively by Stuart's views, those of his interlocutors, and those of the intermediaries on whom each had drawn.[106] The interlocutors, in this respect, were not merely suppliers of information as Wright had previously viewed them, but actors in its production. Wright thus set about problematising the roles played by a number of Stuart's most prominent interlocutors by conducting a series of biographical articles. He began with an examination of the background of Ndukwana kaMbengwana and this was later followed by further papers exploring the backgrounds of Socwatsha kaPhaphu and Thununu kaNonjiya respectively.

Wright and the co-editor of the *JSA* Colin Webb had first recognised the importance of individual interlocutors in shaping Stuart's perception of the Zulu kingdom back in 1986.[107] In the preface of the fourth volume of the *JSA*, they had commented that Ndukwana was likely to have 'exercised considerable influence on the presuppositions about Zulu society and history which Stuart took with him into his interviews.'[108] By 2011, however, Wright had recognised that he had previously overlooked the testimonies of interlocutors as intellectual productions in their own right. By engaging the backgrounds of interlocutors such as Ndukwana's (as far as possible), Wright had thus set about examining the factors which might have influenced their commentary on the Zulu kingdom and how this had shaped Stuart's writings in turn.[109]

Given the important role interlocutors had played in the production of Stuart's notes, Wright argued that the notion of 'oral tradition' was problematic because it overlooked Ndukwana's agency. Drawing on the work of David Cohen,[110] Hamilton,[111] and Isabel

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"Isithunguthu – one who knows but is made to forget" (Paper presented to the Centre for Indian Studies in Africa, University of the Witwatersrand, 2016); John Wright, "Ndukwana, Socwatsha, Thununu and Stuart, and their Living Archive of History", *The Digging Stick* 33, no. 3, (2016), 15-19.

[106] Wright, "Living Archive of History", 15. This argument was originally put forward by Hamilton. See Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty*, 59-69.
[107] Wright, "Ndukwana kaMbengwana", 343.

[108]Colin Webb and John Wright (eds.), *The James Stuart Archive* 4 (1986), xv.
[109] Wright, "Ndukwana kaMbengwana", 344-246. Notably, what is known of Ndukwana's past comes from Stuart's notes – knowledge of Stuart and Ndukwana is thus closely entwined.

[110] See David William Cohen, "The undefining of oral tradition", *Ethnohistory* 36, no. 1 (1989), 9-18.

[111]See Hamilton, et al, " Preindustrial SA History'; Carolyn Hamilton, "'Living by Fluidity': Oral Histories, Material Custodies and the Politics of Archiving" in Carolyn Hamilton, Vern Harris, Michèle Pickover, Graeme Reid, Razia Saleh, and Jane Taylor (eds.), *Refiguring the Archive* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 226-227.

Hofmeyr,[112] Wright argued that 'in many African societies knowledge of the past is to a large extent not enshrined in formal narratives, but it is made and remade in discussions between ordinary people in everyday social and political interactions.'[113] Ndukwana was, in this respect, producing evidence shaped by his own life experiences and his own ideas about the past. His ideas were in turn shaped by his specific historical context – they were not, as they had previously been treated, factual statements conveying timeless truths.[114] Wright further argued that the notion of the 'interview' (referring to Stuart's and Ndukwana's work communicative work) should be discarded as it was suggestive of a transmission of historical facts. Rather, Wright argued that the term 'conversation' or 'discussion' was more appropriate for conveying Stuart's and Ndukwana's co-production of ideas about the past.[115]

The 2016 paper in which Wright and co-author Cynthia Kros wrote a brief biography of Thununu merits further discussion on account of its investigation of the term *izithunguthu* - a word which is of historiographical significance.[116] The term appeared within a phrase[117] written down by Stuart in the margin of a notebook following a discussion with Thununu on 10 June 1903.[118] This phrase first came to the attention of Wright in 2013 as he was preparing the sixth volume of the *JSA* for print. Unable to establish a clear meaning for *izithunguthu* at this time, Wright had speculated it derived from the term *ukuthungulula* – which meant to have one's eyes opened.[119] It was not until the following year that Wright discovered the singular form of term '*isitunguthu*' in the fourth edition of Bishop John

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[112] See Isabel Hofmeyr, *'We Spend Our Years as a Tale That is Told': oral historical narrative in a South African chiefdom* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1993).

[113] Wright, "Living Archive of History", 18.

[114] Wright, "Ndukwana kaMbengwana", 345-346. Wright based his approach on an approach for interpreting oral evidence pioneered by Hamilton in *Terrific Majesty*.

[115] Wright, "Ndukwana kaMbengwana", 345-346.

[116] An updated version of the paper was presented in May 2017. This revised edition included an amendment to their title following commentary at the November 2016 Archive and Public Culture workshop held in Cape Town. See Cynthia Kros and John Wright, '"You can write and remember, but we are simply izithunguthu'" (Paper presented to the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of the Witwatersrand, 2017).

[117] 'You can write and remember but *tina si izitungutu nje*' – for our part we are simply *izitungutu*."

[118] Statement of Thununu kaNonjiya in Colin Webb and John Wright (eds.), *The James Stuart Archive* 6 (2014), 289. The original note can be found in the papers of the James Stuart Collection at the Killie Campbell African Library in Durban. See File 60, nbk. 26, 12.

[119] Kros and Wright, "Izithunguthu", 4-5.

Colenso's *Zulu-English Dictionary* published in 1905. Its meaning was given as: 'one flustered or put out, made to forget by being scolded or cross-questioned, though well-informed'. [120]

Wright immediately recognised the importance the meaning *izithunguthu* had for the phrase Stuart had written down back in 1903. As Wright wrote in a letter to Hamilton in August 2014: 'Is Thununu not saying to Stuart, 'You can write and remember, but for our part we, who know our history well, are being made to forget as written history takes over?''[121] As Wright recognised, Thununu was aware as that written memory was beginning to disrupt non-written history.[122] With the term *izithunguthu*, Thununu thus appears to have been referring to the difficulties facing him and other custodians of oral evidence. Hamilton, for her part, observed that Thununu's comments to Stuart likely reflected the discussions which were taking place among rural African intellectuals at this time. Consequently, she proposed using i*zithunguthu* as the title for her forthcoming 2015 conference.[123] By doing so, Hamilton drew greater academic attention to what she and Wright considered a concept central to the study of historical knowledge production in the south-east African context.[124]

Kros became involved in unpacking the implications of the word *izithunguthu* after hearing Wright discuss the concept at the launch of volume six of the *JSA* in mid-2014. Kros had previously come across the concept of oral history facing an 'onslaught' from written narratives within her own work and was consequently interested in conducting critical readings of evidence from prior to the colonial era.[125] In contrast to Wright's 'contextualising' approach for engaging Stuart's notes, Kros' reading probed their textuality to uncover what this would reveal about the nature of the conversations which took place between Stuart and his interlocutors.[126] The first version of Kros' and Wright's paper engaging the term *izithunguthu* and their reading of the evidence produced by Thununu and Stuart followed in 2016.

Part 3.2: *Tribing and Untribing*

In the two-volume book *Tribing and Untribing the Archive: Identity and the Material Record in Southern KwaZulu-Natal in the Late Independent and Colonial Periods*, published in

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[120] John William Colenso, *Zulu-English Dictionary*, fourth edition (Pietermaritzburg: Vause, Slatter & Co., 1905), 627.

[121] Kros and Wright, "Izithunguthu", 5.

[122] Wright and Kros concluded that it was likely Thununu's recognition of the longevity written accounts possess which motivated him to discuss his historical knowledge with Stuart. Kros and Wright, "Izithunguthu", 9.

[123] Ibid, 4-5. Hamilton had initially consulted Wright on a title for the conference as she had intended it to be drawn from the *JSA*. It was this which had moved Wright to re-examine the meaning of the term izithunguthu in the first place. The full title of the conference was: '*Izithunguthu*: Southern African Pasts before the Colonial Era, Their Archives and Their Ongoing Present/Presence'.

[124] Ibid, 5-6.
[125] Ibid, 6.
[126] Ibid, 7.

2016,[127] Hamilton and co-editor Nessa Leibhammer oversaw a comprehensive cross-disciplinary inquiry featuring essays by numerous influential academics into the character of the archive and nature of the evidence it contains.[128] The volumes feature essays which examine the ways in which the past 500 years are reimagined in the present and how this period has been shaped by stereotypes embedded within the archive. The 'tribal' character of colonial histories, the notion that African groups prior to Shaka (and prior to colonialism) practised an ethnically distinctive way of life, is foremost among these stereotypes.[129] As Jeff Guy articulated, this 'tribal' conception of African societies prior to colonialisms reflects a Western interpretation of the African context which has not only long pervaded the historiography, but which was actively constructed during the early colonial period to serve an administrative purpose.[130]

Tribing and Untribing critically probed how the notion of the 'tribal' has shaped the material record. Conceptions of 'tribe', it was recognised, remain closely associated with notions of the 'traditional' and the 'timeless'.[131] *Tribing and Untribing* aimed to turn collected ethnographic items into archival objects tied to the specific time and place in which they were made. An obstacle to this objective was nomenclature. As Anitra Nettleton observed, material collections have historically been labelled to reflect perceived ethnic categories and continuities which are oversimplified or misrepresentative.[132] *Tribing and Untribing* also interrogated how the very notion of what constitutes 'archive' has been shaped by the

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[127] The 'Tribing and Untribing the Archive' workshop which preceded the creation of the book took place in March 2012. The programme featured many of the papers which were later published after several years of delay.

[128] Carolyn Hamilton and Nessa Leibhammer, "Tribing and Untribing the Archive" in Carolyn Hamilton and Nessa Leibhammer (eds.), *Tribing and Untribing the Archive: Identity and the Material Record in Southern KwaZulu-Natal in the Late Independent and Colonial Periods* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2016). Hamilton and Leibhammer also sought to put forward essays which established the case for a new cross-disciplinary notion of archive; one which recognised how archival evidence attains the status of 'archive' and incorporates sources which have historically been excluded from this label.

[129] The pair recognised that archaeological evidence is also prone to viewing the past through a 'tribal' lens given that the material evidence is frequently meaningless without drawing on ethnographic data to guide the formulation of conclusions. See Hamilton and Leibhammer, "Tribing and Untribing the Archive", 19-21.

[130] See Jeff Guy, "The Tribal History Project, 1862–4" in Carolyn Hamilton and Nessa Leibhammer (eds.), *Tribing and Untribing the Archive: Identity and the Material Record in Southern KwaZulu-Natal in the Late Independent and Colonial Periods* 1 (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2016), 217-237. As Guy has convincingly demonstrated, Theophilus Shepstone's location project had the effect of propagating the conception of 'tribe'. This was because Shepstone provided Africans with land on the basis of the supposed geographical location of their ancestral tribal lands; loosely described areas which were consequently marked as territorial borders and transcribed on maps.

[131] Hamilton and Leibhammer, "Tribing and Untribing the Archive", 13-51.

[132] See Anitra Nettleton, "Curiosity and Aesthetic Delight: The Snuff Spoon as Synecdoche in Some Nineteenth-Century Collections from Natal and the Zulu Kingdom" in Carolyn Hamilton and Nessa Leibhammer (eds.), *Tribing and Untribing the Archive: Identity and the Material Record in Southern KwaZulu-Natal in the Late Independent and Colonial Periods* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2016).

colonial emphasis on documentary evidence and the methodological practices in place for its preservation. Just as Bhekizizwe Peterson had previously recognised that vernacular writings had been overlooked as sites of evidence, additional forms of evidence including artworks, everyday objects, sketches, and photographs had never previously been subjected to an archival approach.[133]

An overarching argument made within *Tribing and Untribing* is that overcoming the notion of the 'tribal' demands interrogation not only of how African societies have changed over time, but also of how sources change over time. According to Hamilton and Leibhammer, drawing on Hamilton's 2011 article,[134] there are two forms of changes sources incur. The first are the changes they undergo prior to being designated as sites of evidence (during which time they exist as materials with a social purpose). The second type of change is those which affect sources after they have become recognised as a site of evidence. It is following their recognition as evidence that these sources become subject to a preservation strategy with a particular methodology (as well as the effects of changes in that regime of preservation over time).[135] Drawing on Hamilton's 'Archives, Ancestors and the Contingencies of Time',[136] Hamilton and Leibhammer further argued that archival items are shaped by political, public, and academic discourses which themselves also shape sources. Sources and archival items thus mutually shape and reshape one another across time.[137] This is a point which speaks to a blurring of the distinction between sources and historiography.

A further observation of importance, one discussed by Jeff Guy,[138] is that visual representations of the early colonial period are characterised by a 'paralysis of perspective'.[139] This is because very notion of the 'traditional' African is constructed in opposition to that of 'modernism'.[140] This 'paralysis' is also the basis of Mbongiseni

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[133] One of the first critical analyses of the material culture of southern African groups was conducted by Sandra Klopper. See Sandra Klopper, "The Art of Zulu-speakers in Northern Natal-Zululand: an Investigation of the History of Beadwork, Carving and Dress from Shaka to Inkatha" (Ph.D. thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1992).

[134] See Hamilton, "Life of the JSA".

[135] Hamilton and Leibhammer, "Tribing and Untribing the Archive", 20-22. For example, regimes of labelling objects in museums are subject to change. At various points in time, the same array of material items might have been labelled as 'Nguni', 'Northern Nguni', or 'Zulu'. See 16-17. Hamilton has also discussed the limitations archival conventions impose on the material record elsewhere. See Hamilton, "Archives, Ancestors and the Contingencies of Time".

[136] See Hamilton, "Archives, Ancestors and the Contingencies of Time".

[137] Hamilton and Leibhammer, "Tribing and Untribing the Archive", 192-24.

[138] See Jeff Guy, "'A Paralysis of Perspective': Image and Text in the Creation of an African Chief" in Carolyn Hamilton and Nessa Leibhammer (eds.), *Tribing and Untribing the Archive: Identity and the Material Record in Southern KwaZulu-Natal in the Late Independent and Colonial Periods* 2 (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2016).

[139] This notion of a 'paralysis of perspective' was derived from Mahmood Mamdani's *Citizen and Subject*. See Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996.

[140] Guy, "A Paralysis of Perspective", 356-377.

Buthelezi's epilogue essay in which he argues that attempts to grapple with this binary become frustrated by the limitations of the available terminology.[141] As Buthelezi convincingly argued, the very ways in which the 'traditional' is articulated in contemporary society is steeped in colonial imagery, such that the very use of the term 'traditional' evokes a colonial perspective. It is for this purpose, Buthelezi asserted, that new terminology must be created to escape the confines of colonial thought.[142]

Part 3.3: The Five Hundred-Year Archive

In this section I turn my attention to some of the challenges facing the production of literature on the late independent era in a contemporary setting. My perception of these challenges is greatly informed by my informal association with the Archive and Public Culture Research Initiative (APC), an interdisciplinary collective based at the University of Cape Town. Although the work of the APC is not confined to the late independent era, its bi-annual research workshops are a fertile ground for relevant discussions pertaining to the critical questioning of southern African history, socio-political identities, evidence and its numerous forms, and research methodologies. A pressing point is that the study of south-east Africa prior to the onset of colonialism remains a largely neglected area of research. Indeed, as I discuss shortly, research projects such as the *Five Hundred-Year Archive* (*FHYA*), one of the projects of the APC, have been undertaken for the specific purpose of stimulating further scholarship.[143]

There are several factors which might explain the paucity of research into the late independent era. On the one hand, there are political considerations. In the context of South Africa specifically, the country's first democratic election in 1994 created an urgent need for the production of a new national narrative which would facilitate inter-racial reconciliation and promote socio-cultural diversity. As Peterson described in *Monarchs, Missionaries and African Intellectuals*: '[democracy] ushered in an historical phase profoundly statured with contending hopes, aspirations and fears, all loosely held together by the idea that the society is experiencing a 'transition.''[144] Within this context, the study of the late independent era has been discounted in favour of an emphasis on liberation history.[145]

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[141] See Mbongiseni Buthelezi, "We Need New Names Too" in Carolyn Hamilton and Nessa Leibhammer (eds.), *Tribing and Untribing the Archive: Identity and the Material Record in Southern KwaZulu-Natal in the Late Independent and Colonial Periods* 2 (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2016), 584-599.
[142] See Buthelezi, "We Need New Names Too", 584-599.
[143] Carolyn Hamilton and Grant McNulty, "FHYA: Decolonial Digital Humanities" (Archive and Public Culture Seminar Paper, Cape Town, 2019), 2-3.
[144] See Bhekizizwe Peterson, *Monarchs, Missionaries and African Intellectuals: African Theatre and the Unmaking of Colonial Marginality* (New York: African World Press, 2000), preface.
[145] A point I would argue based on my analysis of the works I have examined in this chapter is that an understanding of the history of the late independent period is essential for overcoming the constrained image of 'traditional' African identities. This is because the construction of identities capable of overcoming the weight of colonial constraints depend on deconstructing the stereotypical notion of the 'traditional' and instead bringing to light the rich and complex socio-cultural and political dynamics of the African groups of this period.

A further factor is that persistent features of the colonial era narrative continue to restrict commonplace perceptions of the African societies of the late independent context. The notion of 'tribe', its association with the allegedly 'timeless' African past, and aspects of 'traditional' African way of life, all remain pervasive within the public and the academic sphere alike. Indeed, not only do these notions inhibit the recognition of a need for further scholarship, but they have also shaped the very praxis by which the existing literature was produced. As Hamilton has argued, the perceptibility of past events in the present context is possible because these events have a history across time which has been made visible through a form of knowledge production.[146]

As works such as *The Deaths of Hintsa* and *Tribing and Untribing* have sought to unpack, not only has the archive shaped the evidence on which understandings of the late independent period are based, but it has also dictated the very types of evidence which are permitted to attain the status of 'archive'.[147] As knowledge practices established during the colonial era remain in place, many forms of evidence continue to be overlooked or remain unknown. The full scope of the available evidence – that which is offered by everyday objects, trade items, vernacular writings, artworks, and sonic sources, for example – thus remains confined by the methodologies and the conventions in place for engaging them.[148] Recently, Hamilton has made a further argument: that vernacular language is itself a type of archive because language possesses its own connotations and variants which are lost in translation.[149]

A contemporary project which is seeking to overcome these issues is the FHYA. The project's name echoes the '500 Year Initiative'.[150] Proposed in 2012 and established in two phases between July 2013 and June 2016, the FHYA is run by the APC, although it has drawn material from the KwaZulu-Natal Museum, Wits Historical Papers, and the Killie Campbell Africana Library among others.[151] The project is working to establish a digital archive: one with an online framework enabling access to a variety of different materials, including those which have traditionally been overlooked as archive.[152] Its envisioned purpose is the

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[146] Hamilton has examined this point in a lecture delivered in 2018 which has also taken the shape of an unpublished seminar paper. See Carolyn Hamilton, "The Persistent Precolonial and the Displacements of Discourse" (Archive and Public Culture Seminar Paper, University of Cape Town, 2018).

[147] See Lalu, *The Deaths of Hintsa*, 1-30; Hamilton and Leibhammer, *Tribing and Untribing* 1, 13-51. Notably, *Tribing and Untribing* was produced as the result of a workshop specifically tailored to critique the 'ethnologisation of the past'. *Tribing and Untribing*'s findings have also directly informed the FHYA. See Carolyn Hamilton, "The Five Hundred-Year Archive Online Project" in Lungisile Ntsebeza and Christopher Saunders (eds.), *Papers from the Pre-Colonial Catalytic Project* (Cape Town: Centre for African Studies, 2014), 65-79.

[148] Hamilton, "The FHYA", 65; Hamilton and McNulty, "Digital Humanities", 7. As Hamilton and McNulty have noted, much of the ethnographic evidence which exists is scattered, disorganised, or incorrectly labelled.

[149] See Carolyn Hamilton, "The long southern African past: enfolded time and the challenges of archive", *Social Dynamics: A Journal of African Studies* 43, no. 3 (2017), 338-357.

[150] As I have mentioned, the *FYI*'s name was itself chosen to challenge Christoffel Muller's 1969 book. See Christoffel Muller, *500 years: A history of South Africa* (London: Academia, 1969).

[151] Hamilton, "The FHYA", 66.

[152] Ibid, 68-69.

creation of a research tool capable of advancing cross-disciplinary research from fields such as history, archaeology, ethnology, and botany and thus also to extending the very notion of 'archive' by moving beyond the confines of the existing framework.[153] The period in question is the 500 years which took place immediately prior to the establishment of colonialism in southern Africa.[154] The regional focus is that present-day KwaZulu-Natal, but the scope of the project extends beyond its borders into eSwatini and the northern reaches of the Eastern Cape region.[155]

An eminent feature of the FHYA is its research methodology – one which is characterised by its efforts to track and make visible its archiving processes and all earlier forms of curatorial processing to which its items were subjected. These include elucidating its categorisation and preservation of materials and acknowledging how these procedures have changed over time. Combining the approaches of Cohen and Jan Vansina in the manner first articulated by Hamilton in 2002,[156] the express intention of the project to supply as much information as possible on the origin, production, and meaning of the items, and interrogate the ways in which these items have been modified or circulated over time.[157] For example, the FHYA recognises that materials dating from the colonial period – at which time these items were shaped by the praxis in place for their interrogation in that context - were sometimes used by researchers to explain occurrence from even earlier periods in time. The materials are thus a product of layering, or as Hamilton has put it: 'The 'sources' are not survivals of that past time in the present, but travellers across time that have changed shape and accrued new meanings through time.'[158]

Conclusion

In chapter four I have examined the historical literature produced between the mid-2000s and 2016. I have argued that the scholarship of this period has been shaped by further developments within the source-critical approach. Between 2006 and 2008, scholars working with the *Five Hundred Year Initiative* began to stimulate greater cross-disciplinary reengagement with south-east Africa's past 500 years. The initiative, however, ignored the developments in source criticism which had taken place over the previous two decades. The *Five Hundred-Year Archive* was formed during the early 2010s to address this shortcoming. The ongoing work of the initiative has transcended the disciplinary conventions of the archive by admitting evidence which has not previously been viewed as 'archivable'.

In the first section of this chapter I discussed the formation of the *Five Hundred Year Initiative*, its 2007 conference, and its role in promoting greater cooperation between

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[153] Hamilton and McNulty, "Digital Humanities", 10-12.
[154] The project recognises that for much of the early colonial period, little changed occurred.
[155] Hamilton, "The FHYA", 66; Hamilton and McNulty, "Digital Humanities", 6-7.
[156] Hamilton, "Living by Fluidity", 226-227.
[157] Hamilton, "The FHYA", 67.
[158] Ibid, 69.

archaeologists and historians. I then examined several important essays published as part of the *Cambridge History of South Africa Volume 1*. Next, I discussed a 2009 book by Premesh Lalu in which he argued that the archive continues to shape our conceptions of the past. According to Lalu, the continued existence of the archive is an obstacle to the production of decolonial histories. By contrast, in a 2012 paper, Carolyn Hamilton outlined a methodology for reading the materials treated as archive as artefacts shaped by changing conditions from across their lifespan. Her concepts of 'backstory' and 'biography' were developed to interrogate the contextual influences which shaped a record both before and after that record entered an archival repository.

In part two, I discussed Hamilton's and Simon Hall's notion of 'inheritances' - a concept which has helped bridge the methodological divide between archaeologists and historians. I then discussed Elizabeth Eldredge's 2015 book, which despite engaging the 'invention' debate, overlooked key features of Hamilton's argument. Next, I examined Linell Chewins' 2015 master's dissertation. Chewins made a meaningful critique of David Hedges' thesis by demonstrating that he had overestimated the scale of cattle trade. Her point re-raises questions about the state-formation debate. I then examined Gavin Whitelaw's Ph.D. thesis. Whitelaw argued that Marxist-structuralist approaches remain useful for uncovering socio-economic relationships within pre-capitalist African societies, adding that they also help anchor ethnographies within their social context and symbolic system. Lastly, I examined John Laband's 2007 book on Shaka's assassination. Laband thoroughly unpacked the historical context of Shaka's assassination but otherwise contributed little new to the historiography.

In the third section I discussed a succession of papers by John Wright in which he examined the roles of a number of James Stuart's interlocutors in shaping the history of the Zulu kingdom. The latest of these papers, co-authored with Cynthia Kros, is of particular importance because of its scrutiny of the term *izithunguthu*, a word which seemingly acknowledged that written history was displacing oral history. I also discussed the important 2016 book *Tribing and Untribing*, whose essays tackled the issues associated with turning ethnographic materials into historical ones. I concluded this section with a discussion of the ongoing work of the *Five Hundred-Year Archive*, whose digital archiving practices transcend historical conventions.

My examination of the literature in this chapter has led me to conclude that the work of the *Five Hundred-Year Archive* has initiated a 'turn' within the scholarship - an extension of the 'historic turn' discussed in the previous chapter. What characterises this 'turn' is the FHYA's approach: it has re-curated forms of evidence which have previously been obscured as 'archive' (by the protocols which exist for interpreting them), such as archaeological objects and artworks, so that they can be used historically. Utilising Hamilton's concepts of biography and backstory as a tool for making visible the processes by which ethnographic collections are turned into a digital collection suitable for use as historical sources, the *Five Hundred-Year Archive* has begun the process of drawing together all forms of available evidence on south-east African from the past 500 years into a single searchable framework.

Final Conclusion

In this dissertation I have provided a detailed assessment of the historical works which have been produced on south-east Africa's late independent era. My focus has been on the KwaZulu-Natal region, although my examination has extended to include materials concerning parts of eSwatini and Maputo Bay (Delagoa Bay). My analysis of the historiography began with the earliest written historical productions – the witness accounts of a number of European travellers – and has continued all the way up until 2016. It also includes the documentation of ongoing scholarship. Its scope extends to contributions from the fields of anthropology, archaeology, art history, literary criticism, and the exiled Black Humanities. Furthermore, this study has examined the processes which underlay how the productions of black intellectuals were consigned out of the discipline of history during the colonial and apartheid eras. It has also tracked how they have recently begun to re-enter it. As such, the dissertation is the most comprehensive historiographical assessment of the topic area which has been produced to date.

This study has pinpointed where there are intertextual connections between different works. Noting these is useful for analysing how some threads of argument have developed in conversation with one another. In places, this dissertation has also clarified bibliographical detail which has been muddled or conflated elsewhere. The dissertation has also discussed a number of highly significant unpublished works within their correct setting – works which are frequently dropped from historiographies because their arguments are unpublished. In addition, this study has acknowledged cases where gaps between the time of a work's completion and that work's publication have disrupted the apparent chronology of an ongoing debate. A related point is that I have acknowledged where different versions of the same production entered the historical discourse at different points in time. By noting these frequently unpublished earlier versions of texts, this dissertation assists historians in tracking how the final form of certain works took shape. Making these connections helps illustrate when certain ideas first entered the discourse – a factor which is frequently obscured when consulting published material alone.

A further contribution this dissertation has made is that it has recognised the influence that various nineteenth-century texts have had in defining what types of evidence were rendered appropriate for the production of the history of era prior to colonialism. The effect of compilations of papers, annals, and records was that they shaped the parameters of historical evidence - a point which had not received significant attention prior to this study. Chapter one in particular has explored how a particular body of records came to be recognised as the most credible and authoritative. These records consequently became the basis for the history of the entire region and have continued to shape the works which have followed in their wake. More recently, the publication of the *James Stuart Archive* has had a major influence on the scholarship. Having made large quantities of oral source material

accessible to scholars with each successive volume's publication, this dissertation has helped track how the *JSA* has influenced the production of historical literature over the past several decades.

This study has also raised critical questions about the nature of the divide which has conventionally been drawn between sources and historiography. Where historiography is conventionally understood to have been shaped by the source material on which it draws, at many points in this dissertation, it is clear that the historiography has also shaped its sources in turn. Furthermore, this study has demonstrated that histories can become sources and that sources can become histories. Historiography and sources, in this respect appear to reciprocally influence one another, a process which leads to the reshaping of historiography and of sources over time. A further contribution of this study is that it has recognised 'breaks' that point to the disruption of this reciprocal interaction at certain points in time. It is these 'breaks' which expose the epistemological assumptions which guided the production of history within a particular context.

Another point concerns the supposed distinction between 'primary' and 'secondary' sources. My analysis suggests that the distinction is unstable, even artificial, and that it serves to obscure the complexity of the sources themselves. There are numerous cases which help to illustrate this point. One example is Isaacs' *Travels*. The significance of Isaacs' account is that it established a narrative which later became the basis for written productions of late independent era history. It was treated as first-hand testimony by Europeans and was thus regarded as a 'primary' source by early researches and later academics alike. The problem with this conception of *Travels* is that it does not consider *Travels*' sources: Isaacs' familiarity with the Zulu kingdom's history and his understanding of the socio-political practices of its people could not have come through observation alone. He must have either consulted local sources (which might have required the intervention of translators), or come by his information through discussions with fellow Europeans who had. When these factors are taken into consideration, *Travels* begins to appear less like a 'primary' source and more like a 'secondary' one.

A further example can be made of Alfred Thomas Bryant's *Olden Times.* A greatly influential work, following its publication in 1929, *Olden Times* put the lineaments of a new theory of the early population of the KwaZulu-Natal region in place. Sometime between the 1930s and the publication of John Omer-Cooper's *The Zulu Aftermath* in 1966, however, *Olden Times* began be treated as an anthology of collected oral 'traditions' rather than as a synthesised historical study. It had, in this respect, shifted from the status of a 'secondary' source to a 'primary' one. In my view, this demonstrates that the status of particular sources as either 'primary' or 'secondary' can, in certain circumstances, be renegotiated over time.

I have argued that the development of the historical literature has been shaped by a number of influential ideas and approaches to the evidence which arose at specific points in time and made a significant impression on the historical productions being made in that

context. In some cases, entire schools of thought were developed in accordance with sets of conventions which established the confines within which knowledge production took place. A question I posed in the introduction of this dissertation was whether or not the epistemological changes which took place within the historiography are sufficient to constitute what Thomas Kuhn called paradigm shifts, or alternatively, what Michel Foucault called epistemic ruptures. To determine this, I now briefly review each of the major 'breaks' I have identified within the historiography in turn.

The first major historiographical change was triggered by the onset of colonialism in the KwaZulu-Natal region beginning with the arrival of the hunter-traders during the 1820s and the establishment of the Colony of Natal in the 1840s. Prior to this time, the Africans who inhabited the region produced history and disseminated it in oral form. The transmission of oral texts was the primary means of circulating and establishing new ideas in African societies. In addition, oral history was an important site of ideological restructuring: the past was renegotiated by different political groups as their political setting changed over time. The onset of colonialism, which steadily disrupted this approach to the production of history, thus appears to be site of epistemological rupturing which took time to be fully realised.

The arrival of the colonists corresponded with the introduction of written histories to the region. These texts, written by Europeans, established sets of pre-existing assumptions about Africans and the African past within the historical record. Furthermore, with these records, the Western positivist notion of 'facts' was introduced – the belief that because written records remained fixed in form, their evidence was unchanging over time and could be treated as objective sources. By the time of James Stuart's discussions with Thununu kaNonjiya in the May-June period of 1903, Thununu appeared to comment that oral history was being displaced by written histories. In my view, the changes caused by the introduction of written history to south-east African substantiate the proposition that an epistemic rupture had taken place.

A series of historiographical changes began to take place following the year 1910. During the preceding (early colonial) era, written productions had frequently drawn on evidence supplied by Africans interlocutors. Following the formation of Union of South Africa, however, a series of socio-political changes were initiated, leading to an embrace of ethnological ways of thinking. By the 1920s, the disciplines of Bantu Studies and anthropology had been created to study the ethnological features of Africans in their contemporaneous colonial setting. At the same time, oral sources were excluded as a form of historical evidence. A notable exception to the trend was Bryant's 1929 *Olden Times*. Although he worked in the discipline of Bantu Studies, Bryant's extensive use of oral history was influential in canonising 'tribal' understandings of African groups. But while Bryant's work was greatly influential, it was nevertheless overshadowed by the conventions which established written texts alone as historical sources. The use of oral sources subsequently

dropped out of the historiography. The establishment of these disciplinary conventions, I argue, marked the realisation of a paradigm shift.

The exile of the African past from the discipline of history was closely associated with the decline in the influence of African interlocutors. Following the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910, the introduction of ethnic-based policies accelerated a shift toward ethnological ways of thinking about Africans. By the early 1920s, influenced by the emerging discipline of social anthropology, the systematic observation of Africans' cultural practices had become an established research methodology. Where African interlocutors had been recognised as important sources during the second half of the nineteenth-century, by the early twentieth-century, they had themselves become the subject of study. This distinction between Africans as sources and as subjects is significant because it reflects how the agency of African interlocutors had been excluded from the study of African societies. Further research is required if the interplay between this displacement of interlocutors as sources, the increased emphasis on written records as sites of historical evidence, and the rise ethnological approaches to the study of African societies, is to be better understood.

In the body of this dissertation I argued that the decolonisation movement in Africa had begun to influence scholars' thinking by the early 1960s. I identified three prominent threads of scholarship which were shaped by this anti-colonial influence. The first of these was the historiological approach – a methodology pioneered by the work of Jan Vansina between the 1950s and the early 1960s. Vansina viewed oral sources as 'traditions' which contained untapped historical facts which could be extracted if oral traditions were subjected to 'scientific' analysis. The significance of this was that his approach reintroduced the notion that oral testimony could act as a meaningful site of historical evidence. By the 1970s, academic historians were beginning to draw on previously overlooked oral sources – such as the James Stuart Papers – as sites of evidence, and were increasingly collecting oral testimonies.

Although Vansina's contribution was significant, the changes his approach initiated within the historiography were not triggered by an epistemological rupture, but by an extension of the application of 'scientific' positivism. Where previously written texts alone were granted the status of historical evidence, Vansina's methodology extended this convention to include oral 'traditions' so as long as they were subjected to the necessary analysis which enabled them to be mined for facts. Vansina's work had thus redrawn the boundaries of what evidence could be, but it had not reshaped the underlying treatment of material recognised as evidence. Indeed, since oral sources had previously been viewed as a site of evidence during the early colonial period, Vansina's work was just as much a revival as it was a methodological breakthrough.

A second thread of literature developed following the publication of Omer-Cooper's 1966 book *The Zulu Aftermath*. Omer-Cooper's work had generated renewed interest in the African past in South Africa as a subject of historical study. Building on the notion of

'devastation' in the literature, Omer-Cooper depicted the late independent era as a period of revolution in which the Zulu kingdom rose to prominence under the remarkable leadership of Shaka. According to Omer-Cooper, the upheavals he called the Mfecane were triggered by a population crisis – one which Shaka succeeded in resolving by exerting greater regional control. Omer-Cooper's narrow and militaristic explanation for African state-formation, however, was soon rivalled by new theories proposing more encompassing explanations for the socio-political development which had taken place. The trade hypothesis and the ecological argument were prominent theories which were developed to challenge the population theory. But while this thread of scholarship was prominent within the literature between mid-1960s and the late-1980s, it did not mark a theoretical departure from the existing approaches to the production of history. Consequently, this shift in the historiography was not an epistemic rupture, nor a paradigm shift.

A third thread known as historical materialism began to develop in the literature during the early 1970s. At this point in time, historians were primarily occupied with analyses of the origins of the African polities which had emerged during the late eighteenth-century and the nineteenth-century. The materialist approach was characterised by its incorporation Marxist theory and was also strongly influenced by structuralist ideas. Historical materialists primarily explained socio-political development by theorising the mode of production and the relations of production which existed within pre-capitalist African groups. In my view, the rise of historical materialism marked a further paradigm shift which changed the way historians approach the analysis of African pre-capitalist polities.

By the late 1980s, escalating political tensions in South Africa had turned the history of the KwaZulu-Natal region into a site of contestation. Historical works examining the socio-political inequalities of pre-capitalist African polities were encountering backlash from Africanists whose nationalist narrative was coming under threat. It was in this context that Carolyn Hamilton began to interrogate questions of identity and ethnicity in greater depth. Hamilton also made an important contribution to the historiography by recognising that ideology was an important factor in the shaping of oral evidence. Furthermore, in the wake of Julian Cobbing's controversial 'alibi' argument 1988, there was a growing recognition that sources and their biases demanded greater interrogation. Scholars began to probe the production of colonial era evidence – analysis which included the interrogation of how these sources were produced, by whom, and for that purpose. This new source-critical approached triggered debate over whether or not colonial era sources should continue to be used as sites of historical evidence. In addition, debate over whether or not history was 'invented' became prominent during the 1990s.

The source-critical approach is still evolving. Indeed, in chapter four, I argued that several important developments have taken place within the source-critical approach over the past two decades. Firstly, during the early 2000s, scholars began to pay greater attention to the role of the archive in the shaping of the evidence. At this time, it was becoming established

that the archive was not a site for the extraction of facts, but a site of knowledge production. In addition, academics were recognising that 'archive' was itself a status which had been applied to specific types of written evidence. These sources were distinguished from other sources, such as the exiled Black Humanities, which were denied the status of archive.

As I explored in chapter four, by the mid-2000s, a further development was set in motion by the work of the *Five Hundred Year Initiative* as it sparked greater engagement with the past 500 years. Some of the initiative's scholars, however, had completely ignored the development of the source-critical approach. They had, in this respect, resisted the onset of a paradigm shift despite stimulating greater engagement with the period prior to colonialism. It was not until the work of a further project - the *Five Hundred-Year Archive* - that the source-critical approach began to displace the prevailing adherence to historical materialism and ethnographic evidence. By working to transform ethnographic items into individual historical sources, and treating artworks, photographs, sonic materials and excavated remains as archival materials, the project has transcended the disciplinary conventions which have excluded these sources from the status of archive. The ongoing work of the project has initiated a 'turn' having introduced a further methodological shift.

The long interval between the epistemic rupture initiated by the onset of colonialism in the mid nineteenth-century and the realisation of the paradigm shift in 1910 raises questions about the duration of time which is required for the impact of a rupture to be fully felt. Oral history's shift in status from the dominant approach for producing history prior to colonialism to its eventual exclusion from the discipline of history in the 1920s suggests that new approaches to knowledge production take time to become dominant. Indeed, the slow development of epistemic ruptures over time suggests that a 'decolonial rupture' might already be in progress. Hints of this possible rupture can be seen in the rise of the Rhodes Must Fall movement at the University of Cape Town – itself a reaction against prevailing colonial era conventions. Only time will tell whether such a shift will ever be realised.

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