

## GAMA, JOHN

<Typescript copies of portions of Gama's evidence below are to be found in Files 6, 12, 25, and 27 in the Stuart Collection. We have not followed the typescripts but Stuart's original manuscript records - eds.>

17.12.1898

File 74, p. 52.

Also present: Zulu

- 52 John Gama is of the Giba regiment, about two years older than Offy Shepstone;<sup>1</sup> he is therefore about 56 or 57. He was educated at Edendale, Natal, and can read and write. His chief informants were old Edendale men; also Mpikeleli (deceased) of Endhlinembi; Maloyi (deceased), father of Mtiti; an *old man* at Mjokovu's kraal (deceased); Macungela (deceased) of the Nhlabati; Masoso, one of Gama's relations, whom Gama addressed as 'Baba' and who was an *imbongi*; and Ndabambi (*brother of Mswazi*). Macungela was an old man when Sobuza came to the (Swazi) throne. Gama learnt from Mpikeleli latterly.<sup>2</sup>

John began by giving a list of Swazi kings which exceeds in number those given by either Shepstone or Miller.<sup>3</sup> He went on to say that it was in the Tonga king Mtonga's reign that his (Mtonga's) brother Mswazi (the one listed among the names below, Samukedi) came to occupy country along the base of or on the Ubombo mountains. The legend is this. Mswazi wanted to *cultivate crops* because he wanted food. Mtonga on the other hand wanted to *hunt game*. This was the origin of the separation, which was not due to a quarrel. Mswazi wished to fight with other peoples and obtain cattle, some of which were paid as tribute to his elder brother. Mtonga received these cattle, *slaughtered* and ate them. Thus the Swazi kings proper begin with Mswazi, for those before him are Tonga kings.

John says when the Swazis proceeded to build Etshiselweni (near Mahamba) they came from the Ubombo through *the passes cut by the Ngovuma and Pongolo (rivers)*. (The Usutu is not referred to in old native accounts.) The Makanye people entered the Swazi nation, it seems, during the first Mswazi's time or during (the rule of) one of the kings immediately following. Tshaka did not *trouble the Ngwane people* and did not *make war* on them. It was Zwide or Zide<sup>4</sup> who did that. The Tongas have for a very long period occupied the land they are at present living in. People after people have passed this part of the country from the north on the way to Zululand,

Natal, Pondoland, etc., whilst the Tongas have remained stationary in Tongaland.

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File 74, p. 126.

- 126 Kings of Swaziland<sup>5</sup>
- 1 Ngwane (Bunu)
  - 2 Dhlamini (Mbandeni) *who is Ludonga*<sup>6</sup>
  - 3 Mavuso (Mswazi)
  - 4 Ngwane (Sobuza, Somhlolo)
  - 5 Zikode (Ndungunya)
  - 6 Ngwane
  - 7 Dhlamini <praise omitted - eds.> *It is said that he was a scourge to other peoples. He lived at the Ubombo.*
  - 8 Hlubi. *Hlubi fathered Ndhlela and also Dhlamini. The chieftainship should have gone to Ndhlela, but he had two younger full brothers, so lost it. It was taken by Dhlamini, another son of Hlubi. The Ngwane people said, 'You lost the chieftainship because you had two younger brothers.'*<sup>7</sup> *Hlubi himself had taken the place of Magudulela, who was left-handed. A left-handed person does not take over the chieftainship among the Ngwane people.*
  - 9 Ludonga. *He is praised for his prowess as a warrior. He called out his impi, attacked, killed, and returned home all on the same day. 'Ludonga who went against the Embo and returned the same day.'*
  - 10 Mavuso
  - 11 Lange
  - 12 Nkosi
  - 13 Nkomikabako. *Nkomo and Kabako were different people. The latter was a junior brother to the former, being the son of a co-wife subordinate to the mother of Nkomo.*<sup>8</sup>
  - 14 Samukiti with Mbova. *As in the case of Nkomikabako, a brother by a co-wife succeeded to the position of the son of the main wife.*
  - 15 Sihuba
  - 16 Msimude. *It is said that he was very good-looking because of his youthful appearance.*
  - 17 Mswazi. *He came from the house of the fathers of Mtonga, who became chief of the Tonga and spread out into the country near the sea. It was he who fathered the Tonga of Makasane.*<sup>9</sup> *Mswazi fathered the Swazi people of Sobuza. It is said that he was a person of great energy. It was he who began to make people wise. Warfare also began with him.*
  - 18 Sikulamaloyi
  - 19 Dulunga
  - 20 Hlubi
  - 21 Hili
  - 22 Mboholo. *The Ngwane people are doubtful about him. See notes (below under date 18.12.1898),*
  - 23 Lange
  - 24 Dondobala
  - 25 Kabingwe

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- 26 Zimase
- 27 Gebase [33]<sup>10</sup>
- 28 Nkosi [34]
- 29 Dhlamini [35]
- 30 Holo [36]
- 31 Sidwaba so Lutuli [37]. *It is said that Lutuli and Sidwaba were different people. It is like the previous cases of succession through a co-wife, but they are named as one, as Sidwabasolutuli.*
- 32 Luwamba [38]
- 33 Luwalala [39]
- 34 Wawawa [40]
- 35 Ngwekati [27]
- 36 Cebisa [28]. *Some say he did not rule, but died still young. When the ancestral spirits are praised he is usually counted as a minor.*
- 37 Ndhlovu [29]
- 38 Mdhlasomo [30]
- 39 Sukuta [31]
- 40 Qomazita [32]
- 41 Mkuluwankosi we ku Nene.<sup>11</sup> *It is Wawawa whom people name as the last of their kings, though I have heard Mkuluwankosi mentioned.*

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File 74, p. 125.

- 125 Notes on list (above). John Gama prepared the list last night on paper after he had given from memory that shown in pencil on Giba's list.<sup>12</sup> In drawing up this list on paper he had the use of Miller's and Shepstone's lists,<sup>13</sup> which lists, especially Miller's, were given by himself. He remembers giving both Shepstone and Miller information re kings, but what he said to them was not as carefully considered as the list given me, which, as revised again this morning, is the very best he can do. He feels that as far as, and including, Sikulamaloyi, the list is correct. He has no doubt as far as that; but beyond, although he has heard all the names referred to by Swazis, especially when *the ancestral spirits are praised*, yet he is not sure whether each name is that of a king or only of some well-known prince or man of high standing. In course of time it is quite likely that error crept in, and those not really entitled to be included have, by the sanction of custom, a right to be given a place; and it is impossible to discriminate between those who were or were not kings. Gama feels that the list is as complete as it can be, as his information was always obtained from the very best sources and men who, then at a great age, died many years ago.
- Gama came to Swaziland shortly after Mswazi's death, but not until Mbandeni came to the throne, which was about the time of the Langalibalele rebellion (1873). He was born in Swaziland, but left with his father at the age of 2 or so for Natal for fear of being killed or 'eaten up'.
- Gama thinks Mboholo, as he is very frequently mentioned by Swazis, should be brought next to Sikulamaloyi. Luwamba, Luwalala, and Wawawa come at the very end of the list, whilst Mkuluwankosi, the last name ever referred to by Swazis, must be taken as the end

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of the list, if indeed it can be included, for kings are not named after that person, although the name Wawawa is sometimes used.

I took down these words from Gama: *Among the Ngunane people the ancient names of one's forebears do not die out; they are preserved. When the child of an important person is born, and it is a chief, the elders of the family are called together to name it. It is given the name of one of its forebears by the old people. They do this to preserve the essence of the chiefship of their house. Among us a chief is not named after the chiefs of other peoples, as is done among the Zulu, Basutu, etc. If some of the names given are from outside, one that truly belongs to their house will be chosen as his chiefly name. For instance, Mbandeni was not originally named Dhlamini. The names he was given by his mother's people were Mbandeni and Mawandhle. These were his names before he had become chief. When he became chief, the people of his house were called to give him a name. They called him Dhlamini, naming him after one of the ancient chiefs of his people.*

More interesting information: *Among the Ngunane the custom is beginning of appointing a king who has younger brothers (even if only one). They wanted to appoint Masumpa, being unhappy about the appointment of Ngunane. If Nomvetshe ka Dukuza (wife of Mbandeni) had given birth to a boy, the chieftainship would have been his. There would have been no further discussion. But she gave birth to a girl, which upset the situation.*<sup>14</sup>

See number eight in the list (Hlubi). John Gama says: *Magudulela was not left-handed to begin with. He was made so by his mother, who did not want him to succeed to the chieftainship. She said the chieftainship brought nothing but troubles. Her son would come to harm, and she too would come to harm. So one day when beer was being brewed, she took the child and dipped his right hand into the mash (into the porridge-like preparation for the beer) and scalded it. The other women cried at her, 'Hawu! What are you doing?' She answered, 'I have done it because the chieftainship brings trouble. I do not want my child to be chief.' And so the child became used to using his left hand.*

18.12.1898, Sunday.

File 74, pp. 118-20.

Also present: Zulu

118 About the year 1862-1864 the Swazis found themselves harassed by the Zulus on the one side and the Boers on the other, although they feared the Zulus most. As the messengers they sent to Sir T. Shepstone in Pietermaritzburg were, on their way through Zululand, interfered with (were killed, had property seized, etc.) by Zulus, who refused them permission to pass through the country, men like Malunge and Mpikelleli strongly advised Mswazi to present Sir T. Shepstone (then Mr) with a princess of the blood royal in order to establish a most intimate connection between him and themselves, so that he would protect Swaziland, especially on the Zululand side.

119 It was urged that it made no difference if Mr Shepstone was a white man; he could accept a girl and, if he liked, give her to his native *induna*.

Messengers were accordingly sent to Mr Shepstone to convey the

resolution arrived at by the nation. They had to go via Majuba or what is now called Charlestown and Newcastle. Mr Shepstone accepted the girl who was offered, and expressed his thanks and *sent many presents in praise*. He called upon Mpande to send messengers to him, and when these men arrived he directed them to inform Mpande of what the Swazis had done. He said he desired that his bridal party should pass through Zululand unmolested by anyone, as the shortest way to Natal from Swaziland was via that country, viz. Sirayo's district. He said that the Swazis were his relations now and Mpande was to leave off troubling them and not to send any *impi* to raid or harass them in any way. Mpande obeyed these injunctions and the bridal party with cattle and other belongings passed through Zululand via Sirayo's (who had received definite orders from Mpande) to Natal, not only being unmolested by anyone but receiving from everyone the best treatment and hospitality, cattle and so on being killed for them.

Tifokati was the name of Mr Shepstone's bride. She was accompanied by others as well, according to Swazi custom, which other girls also belonged to Mr Shepstone. As she was a gift Mr Shepstone of course paid no *lobola*. On her arrival in Natal Mr Shepstone gave Tifokati to Ngoza, his *induna*, who had children by her, several of whom are now young men.

Not long after this Mswazi died. Mpande applied to Sir T. Shepstone for permission to go and *mourn*. Mr Shepstone asked what they meant by *going to 'mourn'*, what it involved. Did it not mean that Mpande would send an *impi* to Swaziland with a view to fighting with the Swazis and carrying off their cattle? The messengers sent replied in the affirmative - *that was what mourning for a king entailed*. Thereupon Mr Shepstone refused to grant the permission, although he said a party might go and condole. John Gama says he knows this incident very well indeed. He had *reached the age of puberty*. Offy Shepstone must have been still at school. This would be about the year 1868. Mpande sent a party (an *impi*) but, although Swazis fled from before it, yet it did nothing; it participated in the mourning and returned to Zululand. [Respecting the effect of this incident on Swaziland in respect to *lobola*, see (subsequent evidence by Gama,)] Mpande's party *put up* at Nobamba (*Somhlolo's capital*) on their way to *the mourning*.

It seems Ngoza preferred Sikutana to Tifokati. Mswazi resented this and killed Samukedi and his whole kraal, seized property, etc., for his daughter Sikutana's offence. Although Sir T. Shepstone paid no *lobola* for Tifokati, yet two waggon loads of goods (blankets etc.) were sent to Swaziland to be bartered away for cattle which then were to be paid over to Mswazi as *lobola* paid by Ngoza for Tifokati. The goods were accordingly bartered - Mswazi himself purchased some - and the cattle were formally handed over. What Sir T. Shepstone gave in the shape of *many gifts* as above referred to was not as *lobola* but as a present. Tifokati's *umgano*<sup>15</sup> was sent to Natal, and all formalities in regard to the marriage were properly observed. (No *izimbedu*<sup>16</sup> were sent as they were not required in Natal, but probably elephant tusks were, as Mswazi wished to make the transaction of very great importance.) After this the relations  
120 between the Swazis and Sir T. Shepstone were of the warmest and most cordial character. The Swazis regarded this as a lasting alliance

between Mr Shepstone and themselves. Sir T. Shepstone asked Mswazi for horns, and a hunting party went out and killed all kinds of buck. The horns went back in the two waggons above referred to.

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File 74, p. 121.

.... <Generalized description of jealousy and squabbling among wives and within families omitted - eds.>

121 I know that abusing of parents by their own sons has greatly increased in this country. The behaviour of today is beyond me. Your own child can abuse you even as he helps himself to your food. I think that it all came from the killing of many people in their own homes, in their own country. They would be killed: their homes would be surrounded, and they would be stabbed. I say that this is what ruined behaviour. People were surrounded by the blood of their own kin which they were spilling. The country was filled with cries against the killing. 'We are being destroyed by our own people as if we were foreigners.'

Another reason is this. The practice of former chiefs, such as Mswazi, was acceptable. He would call up the army and it would go out and do battle with other peoples. When it came back it would be tamed, and there would be none of these happenings. It would be well disposed to its own people. It would show respect to the elders. In what killing there was, such as when an umtakati was to be killed, only those sent out by the king would go and put that umtakati to death. There would not be a single beast or item of property that they would conceal: it would all go to the king. Even the grain of the man who had been killed would be secured by the king's law; this they would also take to him.

That is how matters were under former kings. Then came what has brought ruin to us today. When royal messengers went out to put an umtakati to death, they would take his forfeited property for themselves. It would not all be taken to the king. They would distribute all the valuable things among themselves, and the king would count for nothing. That was the evil state of affairs that has ruined matters here. When the king called in the cattle, they would refuse to give them up; in their cunning they would lie low, and the king would be powerless. This is still the case today.

This wicked practice began with the death of Ludonga. The Ndwane people became angry and killed Ndwandwe,<sup>17</sup> claiming that it was he who had killed Ludonga. They seized his enormous herd of cattle, and divided it among themselves. The whole impi received a full share. There was not even an inquiry about the looting of the cattle. Even though the matter was spoken about, even though there were suspicions about what had happened, no order came for the army to give up the cattle of the king. That is how the izinduna of the Ndwane acquired their wealth. Even the king received some of the cattle, they were so numerous.

That is where the ruin started, when they dared to seize confiscated property that belonged to the king. At that time Mbardeni had not yet reached maturity, and had not yet been made king. By the time he died he too had had painful experience of being robbed, and of not receiving all the cattle that were forfeit to him. He repri-

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manded the Ndhlavela regiment;<sup>18</sup> he wept. At the time of his death this matter was causing him great anger. If he had lived longer he would have killed those who had plundered his stock. He upbraided Nogeogco, Mvelapansi, Magumeni, and others.<sup>19</sup>

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File 74, p. 120.

120 Gama admits that women are not as respectful towards their husbands or other men as they used to be. This he attributes primarily to the action of Mamgangani or Lamgangani, mother of Ludonga, who used to permit or encourage women to come and sit with her in an assembly of men, instead of doing as Lazide, Mswazi's mother, did during that king's minority, viz. to allow no woman to attend a council meeting except the girl or woman who kept her snuff. The general disrespect now observable seems due to this action as well as that of Tibati (Madolomafitsha)<sup>20</sup> and Labutibeni (Ngwane's mother). The two latter were in the habit, and the latter is still in the habit, of bringing women into the council. John says he has himself spoken about this to the Swazi authorities, saying that women would go and tell others what was said at council meetings. The reply was, they would never dream of doing any such thing.

Mr Shepstone on several occasions referred to this attitude of the women. John thinks that such action as this has caused women to feel as if they were the equals of men; consequently they do not show the same respect as before. I pressed him as to the cause of Mamgangani acting as she did. He agreed that European influence was clearly felt in the days of Ludonga, and it may be that the knowledge that women are protected by Europeans is a factor in the present very unsatisfactory state of affairs, but it is not nearly as important as the other. John used to speak to the *indunas* about this attitude of women but they always backed out of doing anything. Nabutibeni has quite a lot of women whom she permits to attend council meetings. Mbandeni strongly resented this attitude of women, so much so that he caused Mamgangani (mother of Ludonga) and over thirty of her women to be put to death. Mamisa ka Mhlanga, an old man, was deputed to do this killing off.<sup>21</sup> [See evidence of Cleopas Kunene.]

18.12.1898

File 74, pp. 105-6.

Also present: Zulu

105 *I am not sure where the practice of lobolo among the Ngwane came from. The custom of the Ngwane with which I am familiar I observed when I was young. The important thing was the relationship established when a man gave his daughter in marriage to another man. He would say, 'Look after her for me, this child of my house.' And so it would be. In this case it was sufficient for the husband to hand over only one beast. Alternatively, if he slaughtered a beast for the girl's parents, that was enough. It was also acceptable if he provided lobolo of two or three goats for her. Before the time when cattle began to be used for this purpose, it was normal practice to use goats; cattle belonged only to the great people. When a marriage*

took place among the great people, lobolo would be given in the form of brass bars. It was sufficient if one beast were handed over. The great people would do this among themselves. When a great person came to send off his daughter to the man she was marrying, some of this metal would be taken with her, and she would marry with it. For it had a high value among the Nguni. A high price would be paid for it - five head of cattle and a large ox. It was not common among the people; only among the great.

The Nguni custom was that a man who provided lobolo in the form of a cow that was in calf had done what was required; no more was expected of him. This beast would go to the bride's mother. Providing lobolo of three or five cattle was done for the daughter of a great man. If a child of the king provided lobolo of five beasts there would be great admiration, for this was lobolo indeed.

The point about lobolo was that it strengthened relationships, like a mutual contract. Wives were not bought among the Nguni. This practice is appearing only now. If people tell you that providing lobolo is the same as buying, you can contradict them. For among the Nguni, lobolo is provided for only one daughter, and then her many sisters follow without having lobolo provided for them. They go to join their sister, and that is the end of it; there are no further matters to be discussed. It would be an injury if the husband did not care for them properly.

Under their recent kings, starting with Mswazi, the Nguni people have begun to demand cattle if the sisters are taken. It is similar to the practice in the country of the whites, where great numbers of cattle are demanded as lobolo. This matter caused distress among the Nguni; they did not like it. People did it in the desire for cattle.

Nowadays if a man chastises his wife, he thinks of the beasts with which he lobola'd her. Before, he would not cry for his cattle (saying, 'Oh for the cattle which I have lost!'); he would simply beat her.

This practice of lobolaing with a large number of cattle began among the Nguni when they heard that it was the custom in Natal. When these practices became known among the Nguni, they said, 'Let us continue to provide lobolo as we have always done; we know nothing about the laws of other peoples. But when people from Natal take wives from among us, let us demand the number of cattle that they demand when lobolaing among themselves. Let them lobolo among us according to their own laws.' Men from Natal often used to come to find wives from among the Nguni. What began this practice was the marriage of Tifokati, a daughter of the king, to Theophilus Shepstone. Shepstone gave her to his induna Ngoza. No sooner had this taken place than people from Natal came in numbers to the Nguni country, driving cattle. Some would come to friends or relations to ask for girls.

If this custom of providing lobolo resembles buying, it originated among the Nguni with this affair of Tifokati. It had not been even in the least bit the practice before. Tifokati was given to Shepstone about 35 years or so ago.

The Ngongoni famine (ingongoni is a type of grass, a species of *umsingizane*) is known in Zululand as the Mbeti famine. It began



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at the time of the birth of the Zulu Ngobamakosi age-grade. Tifokati had not yet started on her journey, but was about to set out.<sup>22</sup> Shepstone had not asked for Tifokati. [See (above), for the whole story.]

18.12.1898

File 74, p. 27.

- 27 (Circumcision). It is a custom which originated very long ago. Circumcision is the great custom of the Nguni people. When a youth is circumcised he enters manhood. He is given advice and instruction, and conducts himself according to the ways of an adult; he has the mind of a man, and casts aside the ways of youth which he formerly followed. This is necessary if he is to marry, for an uninitiated youth is unable to do so.

This practice of circumcision was ended by Mswazi, even though he had been circumcised himself. All the members of the Inyati, the age-regiment to which Mswazi belonged, had been circumcised. Mswazi ordered that circumcision should cease. It was prohibited after Muzili (Mr Allison)<sup>23</sup> had left. I do not know whether or not Mbandeni ever tried to revive the custom during his reign.

18.12.1898

File 74, pp. 71-2.

- 71 John Gama cannot account for the name 'Swazi', but here are his words:

This usage, of calling the Nguni people Swazis, perhaps originated from a nickname. For when we asked our old people about it, some of them said that one of our chiefs of long ago used to hit the boys with a switch (uswazi). So a person who was born at that time came to be called a Swazi, and eventually the word came to be applied to all the people. A person who was born at that time came to be called a child of the chief.

- 72 On the other hand, the word may have come from the name of the chief Mswazi who separated from Mtonga, or it may have arisen even before his time, from another Mswazi.

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File 49, item 10, pp. 1-10.

<Though the informant who made the statements that follow is not named in the original, internal evidence leaves no doubt that it was John Gama - eds.>

- 1 On Mbandeni. Nandi, the mother of Mbandeni, was the eldest child of Matikweni.<sup>24</sup> Her sister Madolomafitsha, mother of Nongogco, followed her in age, and became a co-wife. Madolomafitsha was a name given by the people in her praises. The name given by her father was Tibati.

Latibeni or Nabutibeni.<sup>25</sup> She was given this name because she was born on the day when Mswazi sent out an impi to attack Tibeni, a Sutu chief living near Mqwenya (Barberton).

The Nguni people said (of Bunu's succession), 'We are dissatis-

fied, for our house will be harmed if a man of the Mhhluli people becomes chief.<sup>26</sup> A man of the Mhhluli has never before become chief.' Also, Nabutibeni, the girl taken by the king in his youth, could not bear the successor in the Ngwane house,<sup>27</sup> even though her father Mvelase used to be an induna of Sobuza. Furthermore they said, 'We are dissatisfied; the isokancanti does not succeed; he is not made chief.<sup>28</sup> This man Ngwane<sup>29</sup> is the first-born'.

.... <The evidence at this point about the perpetuation of names was transcribed by Stuart on p. 125 of File 74; see above - eds.>

3 'Ukunene'. The last-born son would be referred to as 'great one of the chief, you of the right hand!' The expression 'we ku nene!' is still used today. It is the same as saying, 'Ndabezita!' in Zululand. It is not a title but a form of adulatory address - 'You of the right hand!'

There are two places in the country of the Ngwane where the graves of kings are found. One is at Ngovuma in the Tshiselweni district. In charge of it was Ngolotsheni of the Mkats'wa section of the Nxumalo.<sup>30</sup> The other is up at Motane in the Mbilaneni district; in charge of it was Malambule of the Telela, who lived at the place of Mtshengu's people and was the son of Somduba (?).<sup>31</sup> Magongo buried.<sup>32</sup>

At the burial place cared for by Ngolotsheni the people call on the name of Ndungunya, and also of Londonga.<sup>33</sup> The greater name is Idungunya (Zikode). At Mbilaneni the great name is Dhlamini. It is here that Mswazi, the father of Mbandeni, is buried. There are many buried where Ndungunya is. We don't know if they took away those at the Ubombo.<sup>34</sup> Both burial places are very old. They are cared for, and there is no burning of the bush there.

4 I feel that Tikuba's<sup>35</sup> evidence diverges from what the elders of the Ngwane people used to state. The Ngwane and Tonga did not originate on the coast. Rather, I am told, they came from the north. At first their huts were like those of the Bushmen. They would stay at one place for a few years and then move off and settle at another. Food was not plentiful. They depended on hunting game. When the numbers of game in one place dwindled they would go on to another. In the course of these migrations they came into contact with other peoples, with whom they had disagreements and fought. They passed on, leaving the others.

There came a time when Mswazi parted from Mtonga. Mtonga went down-country, as Tikuba suggests, while Mswazi left and went along the Ubombo. We do not know where the chiefs of the Ubombo died; no-one knows. I was told, on questioning Mhlaba, that there is a mound where the Ngwane chiefs are buried (a small hillock that looks as if it was man-made, like an isivivane<sup>36</sup>).

All our people say that they came from the north. They say that other peoples came along and passed by, but our people stayed settled. Many peoples came by, but ours stayed where they were. They were continually going into hiding, for the peoples quarrelled with one another. Those who were passing by would attack those whom they found already there, and then in turn move on. Others would meet and depart peacefully.

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I feel that the increase in numbers of the people came about through births, but we do not really know, because all the people  
6 say they came from the north. The Sutu of Mshweshwe, and those of Sigonyela, and those of Wezi, all came from the north.

.... <Rough list of matters discussed with John Gama omitted - eds.>

John does not know about the incest referred to by Tikuba. There might be some truth in it for Magongo was a big *induna* and a *blood-relative* and therefore likely to know.<sup>37</sup>

Magongo was killed. People informed against him, saying that he was on the side of Somcuba, Mswazi's brother. (His people, sheltered agents, concealed people from other tribes. (He was) killed by Mswazi. The agents were from Somcuba who had defected from the Swazis and lived at Mgwenya (Barberton district).<sup>38</sup>

The father of Mtonga was Sikulamaloyi. So Sikulamaloyi was a  
7 Tonga king, and all kings before him are Tonga kings.

Ndhlela built at Mahamba. He fathered Lula and Lula fathered Ncilaba. It is not known if Ndhlela's existence caused Dhlamini to live on or near the Ubombo.<sup>39</sup>

(Gama) does not know under what circumstances it became a rule that a boy, if followed by another (brother), could not become king. Among the Ngwane a left-handed person does not succeed to the chieftainship.

When other sons are born after the designated successor, he relinquishes his position. It is acceptable among the Ngwane if the eldest child is a girl and a son is born later.<sup>40</sup> The latter will be the chief. If the first child is a son, the chiefs and relatives warn the king, saying, 'You must not sleep with this wife of yours again; you must give her her own household, for perhaps she will have another son, and upset matters.' This law is very important; they really give him a strong warning, and he heeds them. The  
8 elders of the woman's family also admonish her, saying, 'Be wise, and act like a virgin when your husband wants you.' They act accordingly, and there is no trouble.

Maize and sorghum. John said the first people were like Bushmen. This is supported by the following fact: originally there was no maize; only sorghum was known, and the people were dependent on it. It was sorghum that was greatly prized.

I am of this opinion because often when I was a boy I saw them cultivating maize in small plots only, to provide a little food for the autumn.

It is clear that sorghum was the first crop, for I and others used to ask why little maize was cultivated, and why it was not liked as much as sorghum. The old people would reply that maize had been unknown before and had been introduced only recently. They  
9 thought that maize seed had come from the small settlement of whites at Ndinisa.<sup>41</sup> That is all they said.

The old people who told me this were Masoso (deceased long ago), Macungela, and others. Macungela was very old indeed. I spoke to him

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when I was a boy; he was then looking after my mother. He used to give evidence in disputes over long-standing issues among the Ngunane. They would send for him in Natal, for he had been driven out with Masoso as the result of a dispute over cattle belonging to the great house.

.... <The evidence at this point on *lobolo* was transcribed by Stuart on p. 105 of File 74; see above - eds.>

- 10 When Mswazi died, Ndwandwe, a brother *by a co-wife*, acted as regent, the same as Nogcogco and Mbandeni.<sup>42</sup>

.... <The evidence at this point on circumcision was transcribed by Stuart on p. 27 of File 74; see above - eds.>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Theophilus Shepstone, born 1843, son of Sir Theophilus Shepstone.

<sup>2</sup>We have been unable to identify all the persons named by Gama in this paragraph. Mpikheleli (Mphikeleli) may have been the son of Ngangaza, who was a son of Mswati. Maloyi was a brother of Mswati. 'Mjokuva' may be a variant spelling of Jokovu. Somhlolo's brother Malunge had a son of this name, and a Jokovu was one of Bhunu's chief regents. (Based on information given by P. Bonner, and on genealogical table in Matsebula, History of Swaziland, opp. p. 4.)

<sup>3</sup>See Appendix I.

<sup>4</sup>Ndwandwe chief in the first two decades of the nineteenth century.

<sup>5</sup>Gama's list differs from lists given by other informants. See for example Giba, below; Bryant, Olden Times, p. 314; Matsebula, History of Swaziland, opp. p. 4; and Kuper, African Aristocracy, p. 232.

<sup>6</sup>In some recorded Swazi genealogies, Dlamini (Mbandzeni) is shown as succeeding his brother Ludvonga. Gama's identification of Dlamini with Ludvonga is doubtless due to the circumstances of the succession. On Ludvonga's death as a minor, his mother was instructed by the royal council to choose another of Mswati's sons as the 'son' whom she would accept in the place of Ludvonga. The youth chosen was Mbandzeni, who was given the title of Dlamini. See Matsebula, History of Swaziland, p. 28, and Kuper, African Aristocracy, p. 100.

<sup>7</sup>Kuper, African Aristocracy, pp. 88, 102, points out that the Swazi make 'a conscious attempt to overcome the lines of fission that are likely to endanger...unity.... Swazi criticize the Zulu because seizure by force characterized their line of succession.' She adds that possibilities of strife and usurpation are increased if the king has younger full brothers, as these are often favoured by the mother.

<sup>8</sup>The case seems to be similar to that of Ludvonga and Dlamini. Kuper, African Aristocracy, p. 100, writes that in Swazi custom provision is made 'against failure of male issue to the main wife. If she is barren, or bears only daughters, or if her son dies before he reaches manhood, the son of a co-wife is "put in her stomach".'

<sup>9</sup>Makhasana, who lived in the first half of the nineteenth century,

was chief of the Mabudu (Maputju, Mapoota) Tsonga living on the coast south of Delagoa Bay. See Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 303-4; Junod, Life of a S.A. Tribe, vol. 1, pp. 16 & 24; Theal, Records of S.E. Africa, vol. 2, p. 488.

<sup>10</sup>The enumeration from this point on was revised in the original. The revisions are shown in brackets.

<sup>11</sup>In subsequent evidence, Gama describes '*we ku Nene*' as a form of adulatory address for the Swazi king, equivalent to the Zulu '*Ndabezitha!*'

<sup>12</sup>See Appendix II.

<sup>13</sup>Appendix I.

<sup>14</sup>This passage refers to the succession dispute that arose on the death of Mbandzeni, c. 1889. Masumpa's claims were stronger than those of Ngwane (Bhunu) as his mother, Ncenekile Simelane, came from one of the small group of clans recognized by the Swazi as entitled to provide the queen mother. Wishing to avoid a long regency at a time of strained relations with the South African Republic, the national leaders selected as main wife and future queen mother Gwamile Mdluli (Labotsibeni), whose son Bhunu, aged about 16, was the eldest of Mbandzeni's male heirs. (Based on information supplied by P. Bonner, and on Kuper, African Aristocracy, p. 26.) We have been unable to find further information on Nomvetshe or educe her role in the dispute.

<sup>15</sup>One of the cattle accompanying the bride on her wedding day.

<sup>16</sup>Bands or flat rings of solid brass worn round the neck by chiefs as decorations of the highest class.

<sup>17</sup>Regent for Ludvonga. See Matsebula, History of Swaziland, pp. 25 & 27.

<sup>18</sup>Enrolled by Ludvonga.

<sup>19</sup>Nogcogco (Logcogco) was half-brother, by a co-wife of Mswati, to Mbandzeni.

<sup>20</sup>A co-wife of Mbandzeni's mother Nandzi, and queen mother during the latter part of Mbandzeni's reign.

<sup>21</sup>For a different account of the reasons for the killing of Manganeni (Lamganganeni), see Matsebula, History of Swaziland, pp. 29-31.

<sup>22</sup>The Ngobamakhosi age-grade, according to Bryant, was born c.1850-3. The Mbethe famine, he suggests, occurred in the late 1840s. (Olden Times, pp. 42-4, 646.) This is inconsistent with Gama's evidence that Tifokati was about to set out to 'marry' Shepstone at the time of the Mbethe famine, 'about 35 years or so ago', i.e. in the early 1860s. Other of Stuart's informants also place the Mbethe famine in the early 1860s.

<sup>23</sup>Rev. James Allison, a Wesleyan missionary who worked among the Swazi in the period 1845-6.

<sup>24</sup>Of the Nkambule clan. See Kuper, African Aristocracy, pp. 232-3.

<sup>25</sup>Labotsibeni of the Mdluli clan, mother of Bhunu.

<sup>26</sup>The choice of Bhunu as successor to Mbandzeni gave rise to misgivings among some of the traditionalists, as Labotsibeni was from the Mdluli, which was not one of the clans which normally provided the queen mother. Kuper writes, 'Power and property are inherited from men and acquired by them, but are transmitted through women, whose rank more than any other factor determines the choice of main wife, i.e. mother of the heir.... In exceptional circumstances the woman's character is the main consideration.'

- See African Aristocracy, p. 26, and The Swazi, pp. 20-1.
- <sup>27</sup>Kuper, African Aristocracy, p. 91, writes: 'The idiom of the succession states that "A first wife does not dispute the homestead", i.e. she is not a claimant for the position of first wife.... She is known as *sisulamsiti* (wiper-away of darkness), the woman who raises a man from immaturity to maturity.... Her pedigree is unimportant....'
- <sup>28</sup>The *lisokancanti* or 'first-circumcised', i.e. the first son, is normally precluded from the succession, but becomes 'his father's confidant: he is told how the family property is distributed and who his father considers should be the heir....' (Kuper, African Aristocracy, p. 92. See also Marwick, The Swazi, pp. 14-15.)
- <sup>29</sup>i.e. Bhunu.
- <sup>30</sup>According to P. Bonner, Ngolotsheni was a son of Zwide the Ndwandwe chief. He was given refuge by Somhlolo after the destruction of Ndwandwe power by Shaka, c.1818, and was placed in charge of the royal burial ground at Shiselweni.
- <sup>31</sup>Stuart's query mark, apparently a later insertion, may reflect uncertainty either about the identity of Somduba or about the spelling of the name. 'Somduba' may be a corruption of 'Somcuba', the name of one of Mswati's brothers, but it is highly unlikely that these are one and the same person. Further uncertainty surrounds the identity of the Malambule mentioned in this paragraph. Though 'Malambule' was the name of another of Mswati's brothers, it is unlikely that he is the person to whom Gama is referring. According to P. Bonner, a man named Mtshengu Mdluli was senior *insila* to Mswati, and was placed near Gege in the south of the Swazi kingdom to guard the approaches from Zululand. This may be the Mtshengu referred to by Gama. (For an explanation of the term *insila* see Kuper, African Aristocracy, pp. 78-9.)
- <sup>32</sup>Magongo was *induna* to Sobhuza (Somhlolo). Stuart's notes at this point become so terse as to make interpretation difficult.
- <sup>33</sup>Ludonga?
- <sup>34</sup>The implications of this sentence are obscure.
- <sup>35</sup>Chief *induna* at the time of Mbandzeni's death (c.1889), and another of Stuart's informants.
- <sup>36</sup>A cairn or heap of stones, grass, and other objects situated alongside a path or road, usually at some prominent place. Made by travellers placing good-luck tokens by the wayside.
- <sup>37</sup>Magongo was Tikuba's father. According to one tradition, the Swazi separated from the Tsonga because of a quarrel occasioned by a Tsonga committing incest with his sister.
- <sup>38</sup>For an account of Somcuba's defection, see Matsebula, History of Swaziland, p. 17.
- <sup>39</sup>The Dhlamini (Dlamini) referred to is almost certainly no. 7 in Gama's list of kings. In Matsebula's genealogical table (History of Swaziland, opp. p. 4), Ndhlela (Ndlela) is shown as one of Dlamini's sons and a brother to Ngwane, the successor. According to P. Bonner, Ndlela broke away from his brother and established himself near Mahamba in the south of present-day Swaziland.
- <sup>40</sup>Kuper, African Aristocracy, p. 102, writing of the Swazi concern to avoid a succession dispute between brothers, states: 'Swazi prefer a woman married as queen mother to bear daughters before a son, for if a son were followed by a girl, people would not be relieved of their anxiety until the end of the period of pregnancy.'

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<sup>41</sup>At Delagoa Bay.

<sup>42</sup>Nogcogco was half-brother, by a co-wife, to Mbandzeni.