

KUMALO, JOHANNES

11.9.1900 - <evidence given 10.9.1900>
Royal Hotel, Ladysmith.

File 74, p. 141.

Also present: Ndukwana

- 141 Zulu regiments. I had a conversation with Johannes Kumalo yesterday afternoon on this subject. He says he is of Dingana's Dhlambedhlu regiment,¹ that he and Sir Theophilus Shepstone, whom he knew well, used to discuss the point as to which was the elder of the two, he or Sir T.S. This fact tends to fix the age of this regiment. Sir T.S. died in --, 189- at the age of 7-, having been born on --, 182-.² Johannes Kumalo, whose father-name is Nhlabati (not father's but father-name, i.e. name given him by his father), says that when Tshaka died he was a herd boy. Assuming his age then to be at the lowest for a herd boy, 7 or 8, and that Tshaka was killed in September 1828, this would tend to fix his age at about 81 or 82. I think, however, as there is no doubt the Dhlambedhlu was Dingana's first regiment, so, as Dingana began to reign at once after Tshaka's death, we should reckon Kumalo as beyond 81 or 82, say about 85 or 86. He is a wonderfully hale and hearty man; he does not look very old at first sight, but after consideration (Ndukwana was present when I examined him) I think his age now might fairly be fixed at about 85 [or 87 - 11.11.1900]. I must find out at what age regiments were as a rule *buta'd*.

13.9.1900, 7.45 p.m. - <evidence
given 10.9.1900 and 11.9.1900>

File 74, p. 141.

On 11.9.1900, after writing the above, I saw J. Kumalo for a minute. He says when Tshaka died he was a *mat-bearer*, and indicated for me the size, about 14 years of age I should think. This therefore tends to fix his age at 85 or 86.

On 10th I made notes during the conversation and immediately afterwards (five minutes after), Ndukwana assisting. J. Kumalo said - I write from these notes - that Tshaka's oldest or first regiment was Ufansimba and the last Izinnyosi; that Ufansimba was followed by Zibolela, then Jibinqwanga (Jubinqwanga), Ngqobolondo, Tshoyisa, Dubinhlangu, Gibabanye, and Ndabenkulu, followed last by Izinnyosi as already stated. Another name for Izinnyosi was Ingcobinga. The regiments Gibabanye, Dubinhlangu, Tshoyisa, Ngqobolondo, and Jibinqwanga were all thrown together and known by the name Izimpohlo. J. Kumalo appeared to me to be in some doubt as to the proper order

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or sequence of the regiments between Ufansimba and Izinnyosi. It is possible he may have omitted a regiment or two, and it is possible those included under Izimpohlo are not correctly given.³

Mswazi, king of Swaziland, Kumalo says, threw a number of regiments together and called them Inyati, just as Tshaka did in regard to Izimpohlo.

Dingana's first regiment was Dhlambedhlu, then Imvoko, then Imikulutshane, Ihlaba, and Ndabakawombe (Ukokoti). The Dhlambedhlu (Dingana's) was known as 'Mgamule ka Nomakwele' and as the Izindhlovu. *The Izinnyosi and Dhlambedhlu were 'palane' regiments. 'Palane' means a great or extra-sized regiment like the Ngobamakosi. [Bryant has a different version.]*⁴

Tshaka, according to Ndukwana, once ordered the Jibinqwanga regiment to cut off their *headrings* because they were still so young and had not attained an age of dignity. He said they were to *drink from the udders like boys* again.

'Ndabakawombe ate a horse.'

Ntengo was *induna* of the Dhlambedhlu. He once said, '*Even if the king should kill me, the Dhlambedhlu will still perform great deeds (referring to war)*'. Ntengo had a very long neck.

26.9.1900

File 74, p. 141.

[Per Ezra Msimango. Johannes Kumalo is probably over 85 years of age, especially as he is of Dingana's first regiment. Ndukwana says that Dingana *buta'd* the Dhlambedhlu first, then the Inhlekane, which he *incorporated* into the Dhlambedhlu, so that regiment might be looked on as *the Little Dhlambedhlu*.]

Notes

¹Formed c.1829; age-group born c.1809.

²The Dictionary of South African Biography, vol. 1, p. 715, gives Shepstone's date of birth as 8.1.1817. He died on 23.6.1893.

³For other lists of regiments see Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 645-6; Samuelson, Long, Long Ago, pp. 235-6.

⁴Bryant (Dictionary, p. 482) gives *upalane* (*uphalane*, pl. *ophalane*) as meaning 'Egyptian vulture...generally going in pairs; hence jocularly applied to lovers...or to certain regiments of Dingane, Cetshwayo etc. which regularly accompanied each other in a fight'.