

KUNENE, CLEOPAS

<Typescript copies of the evidence given below are to be found in Files 6, 12, 25 and 27 of the Stuart Collection - eds.

21.12.1898

File 74, p. 91.

91 Swaziland - conduct of women. In connection with what has already been related under this head, Cleopas (a member of the deputation to England in 1894),¹ adds that he does not agree with John Gama² in attributing the killing of Mamgangeni and many other women with her, to the growing independence of women, which Mbandeni tried to check.³ It seems a daughter of Langalibalele⁴ was procured as Ludonga's wife; he died before she had given birth to a child. She afterwards bore a son. This child was doctored, washed, and charmed with medicines of *chieftainship* by Mamgangeni at Inkanini,⁵ in every way to indicate that it was the rightful heir to the throne. Mbandeni heard of this conspiracy. He ordered a man (whose name Cleopas gave) to go to Nkanini and poison the infant. The man went, but could not get an opportunity of poisoning the infant. He returned to Mbandeni who said that he was not to come back until he had carried out the order. He proceeded again to Nkanini and was successful in administering the poison, which caused the death of the child in a couple of days. The death of the child was reported by Mamgangeni to Mbandeni who thereupon accused her of having put it to death. Mamgangeni remonstrated and said it was unnatural to suppose that a woman should destroy her own flesh and blood. Upon this Mbandeni ordered the killing of Mamgangeni and the women with her who, he considered, were implicated in the conspiracy.⁶ Thus the main cause of the killing of Mamgangeni etc. was the fact of conspiracy. There may have been other reasons, but this Cleopas regards as the *source* of the whole incident or proximate cause.

Cleopas thinks the fundamental cause of the present unsatisfactory conduct of women is the protection extended over the sex by British law, which law they have come to know and see the justice of, as well as putting a stop to killing off. Another factor is that England's great sovereign is a woman.

John Gama is distinctly against European influence being held as the true cause; his opinion must carry great weight as he has had first-class experience in the country.

KUNENE

Notes

¹After the signing of the second Swaziland convention in November 1893, in terms of which Britain agreed to the South African Republic's establishing a virtual protectorate over the Swazi kingdom, a deputation of Swazi leaders went to London to request British protection. Kunene was interpreter to the delegation. See Garson, 'The Swaziland question and a road to the sea', Archives Year Book, 1957, part 2, chs. 4 & 5; Matsebula, History of Swaziland, pp. 73-6.

²Another of Stuart's informants.

³Mamgangeni (Lamgangeni) was the mother of Ludvonga, who succeeded Mswati as king of the Swazi on the latter's death, c.1868. Ludvonga died in 1872 while still a minor, leaving no issue. Lamgangeni continued as Queen Mother, and in the place of Ludvonga chose as her 'son' his half-brother, Mbandzeni, who became king of the Swazi. (Matsebula, History of Swaziland, pp. 28-9.)

⁴Chief of the Hlubi in the colony of Natal.

⁵Lamgangeni's place of residence.

⁶For a different account of the quarrel between Mbandzeni and Lamgangeni, see Matsebula, History of Swaziland, pp. 29-31.