

## MESENI KA MUSI

9.8.1904

File 42, item 14, p. 1.

1 Conversation with Meseni ka Musi *of the Qwabe people*.<sup>1</sup>

Qwabe and Malandela, also Zulu, lived at Babanango.<sup>2</sup> An old kraal site belonging to Malandela is still to be seen there, and that should be the locality in which Malandela was buried.

It was Nqeto ka Kondhlo and another [named] who first *konza'd* Tshaka.<sup>3</sup> This happened before Pakatwayo was attacked by Tshaka.<sup>4</sup> After Pakatwayo's defeat, Nqeto claimed he should be made chief over the Qwabe tribe. Tshaka refused to do this, holding that Godolozzi, the dead man's heir, should succeed.<sup>5</sup> Recognizing his high position, Tshaka presented Godolozzi with a large tuft of made-up feathers (*idhlokolo*). Friendly feeling sprang up between the two, and so the subsequent stabbing of Tshaka in the arm by Qwabe people is unaccountable, more especially as the incident took place at the *small gateway* of the *isigodhlo*, which none but members of the Zulu tribe were allowed to enter or approach.<sup>6</sup> Not Qwabe men, so Meseni says, but Zulus, committed this deed, and Tshaka scouted the idea that the Qwabe people were responsible.

Tshaka had a kraal at the head of the Bay (Natal), probably Kangelala by name. [Ngidi denies this.]<sup>7</sup> The rumour is common that he used to go to the large rock at the foot of the Bluff and bathe. [I see in The Irruptions of Hordes of Natives into the Eastern Frontier of the Cape Colony (in Library), or some title such as that, that there were two kraals established by Tshaka at Port Natal.<sup>8</sup> At the same time it is odd Tshaka never visited the settlement between 1824 and the time of his death; at any rate neither Isaacs nor Fynn makes mention of it.<sup>9</sup>]

Meseni considers he holds the highest rank among all the natives of Natal; he, moreover, says the Qwabe tribe is really of higher rank than the Zulu one, owing to Qwabe being senior to his brother, Zulu.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Meseni kaMusu was chief of the Qwabe in the Mapumulo, Indwedwe, Lower Tugela, and Inanda divisions until 1906 when, after becoming involved in the Natal rebellion, he was found guilty of high treason, imprisoned and deposed. For his position in the Qwabe chiefly line see Bryant, Olden Times, p. 186.

<sup>2</sup>Qwabe and Zulu, reputedly the founders of the Qwabe and Zulu chiefly lines respectively, were, according to many traditions, both sons of Malandela.

## MESENI

<sup>3</sup>Nqetho kaKhondlo was Qwabe chief in the time of Shaka. After the death of the latter in 1828, and the succession of Dingane, Nqetho seceded from the Zulu kingdom with a large following.

<sup>4</sup>Phakathwayo kaKhondlo, who preceded Nqetho in the Qwabe chieftainship, was defeated by Shaka c.1818.

<sup>5</sup>Bryant, Olden Times, p. 186, gives Nqetho and Godolozi as brothers of Phakathwayo.

<sup>6</sup>According to a number of traditions, Qwabe men were responsible for an unsuccessful attempt on Shaka's life in 1824. For an account of the incident see Fynn, Diary, pp. 83 ff.

<sup>7</sup>This sentence appears in the original as a marginal insertion. Ngidi kaMcikaziswa was another of Stuart's informants. His evidence will appear in a subsequent volume of the Stuart Archive.

<sup>8</sup>The reference is presumably to R. Godlonton, A Narrative of the Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes into the Eastern Province of the Cape of Good Hope, 1834-1835, Grahamstown, 1836.

<sup>9</sup>Shaka was killed in 1828. Isaacs and Fynn were members of the white hunting and trading settlement established at Port Natal in 1824. Isaacs was the author of Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa, London, 1836; excerpts from Fynn's writings were published in J. Bird, ed., The Annals of Natal, vol. 1, Pietermaritzburg, 1888.