

MGOQO

19.11.1898

File 74, pp. 11-12.

- 11 (*Lobola*). Swaziland, per Mgoqo, 19.11.1898. Rinderpest has greatly affected *lobola* because most people have no cattle to *lobola* with.¹ At present people pay money to fathers-in-law as they are able; there is no fixed amount. Ngwane has not yet proclaimed a *law on this*, although
- 12 it may be within his right to do so.² People expect cattle to return, when the old form of *lobola* will be resumed. In the old days people *lobola'd* with *hoes*, also *brass neck-bands (izimbedu)*. A man now giving money is expected to give more at a later date as he is able, or to give cattle when he obtains them.

19.11.1898

File 74, p. 14.

- 14 (Ornaments (personal)). Swaziland, per Mgoqo, under-*induna* to Madolomafitsha, the Queen Regent, 19.11.1898.³ Girls at their bridals wear amongst other things, *izingcubu* (in Zulu *izindondo*). [Colenso (gives) '*Dondo (in)*' (as) 'small round brass ball or bead'.]⁴ These Mgoqo says, were manufactured by natives in the old days.

19.11.1898

File 74, p. 18.

- 18 (Metallurgy). Swaziland, per Mgoqo, 19.11.1898. *Izingcubu* are brass ornaments (small balls) used by a bride at the wedding ceremony. These were manufactured by natives in old times [= *izindondo*?].

19.11.1898

File 74, pp. 38-40.

- 38 (Customs). Swaziland, per Mgoqo, 19.11.1898. The custom of smelling out (*pengula* and *nuka*) and its consequent 'killing off'. It is the custom of the Swazis for them to *bula*, or *pengula* as they call it. This may be done independently of the king. But if people desire to take the matter further, i.e. want to have the person or persons who have been found guilty by their doctors of *working evil (loyaing or takataing)* punished, they must then comply with the law or order of the king, and proceed to the king and ask for instructions. On such application being made, it is customary for the king to summon his own doctors (*izinyanga*), cause them to *ngenisa* or put up at a kraal in the immediate neighbourhood of the royal kraal at which the king

at that particular time is living, then for the king to nominate or appoint say two men who are not *izinyanga* to go and superintend the *bulaing*, which function the Swazis know as *mhlahlo*, and to take the necessary steps if the person complained of be found guilty by the witchdoctors of having *loya'd*, i.e. cause him to be killed. The two commissioners will then go to where the doctors have *ngenisa'd*, and with them, the complainant or complainants, the accused, spectators, *powerful young men (jaras)*, etc., proceed to some spot close by but in the veld or open country (*in the hills, out in the open*), and there in the grass (*long grass*) proceed to hold the *mhlahlo*.

Now suppose the accused is found guilty by the king's witch-doctors, he is then immediately seized by those present, is held down on his back, i.e. made to lie down face up; some one [or more?] is deputed to kill him. The way he is killed is by being struck with a knob-kerrie over the region of the heart (i.e. on the breast-plate), as well as over the region of the urine bladder, and his ribs are also broken in on both sides. He is not struck on the head. He is not stabbed with an assegai or knife or anything. Mbaba's case was therefore contrary to Swazi custom.⁵ When dead, the person is either left where he was killed or cast or hurled into some donga or other place, and there, uncovered, left to decompose. After this deed, those concerned in the actual killing go off to the river and wash.

[Note. This custom (see note p. 38) is, I think, a good one for enabling one to see (where) law begins and where custom ends.⁶ The king is in a large degree the maker of customs; he himself may abide by hereditary custom which has the force of law. I should therefore say law is customs the disobedience of which involves punishment of some kind. Some customs may be infringed with impunity, others not. 19.11.1898.]

Mgoqo says there are a large number of witchdoctors in Swaziland. He does not know who is greatest among them. Now suppose a man is accused of *loyaing*, for which the punishment is death, he comes before the witchdoctors. Should one of the witchdoctors insist that the accused is not guilty, pointing out that the quarrel he had with the complainant was purely a matter of words, and succeed in getting the accused off, it is then customary for the accused to present the witch-doctor with a beast or cow '*because he pulled him away*', i.e. he upset or defeated the charge brought against him. It should be noted that no man may be killed without the king's permission.

Additional: There is no difference between *bula* and *pengula*; *bula* is the Zulu and *pengula* the Swazi word for one and the same thing. The 40 *ukwepula* beast is given not to any one of the first set of doctors who were *pengula'd* prior to coming to the king, but to one of the king's *izinyanga*. People *pengula* independently of the king so as to have definite evidence to go on before lodging a complaint.

The ancient custom of the Swazis was this, in spite of what is said above. When a man suspected another of *loyaing* him, he *pengula'd*, then he proceeded to the king and entered a complaint. The king then as a rule ordered men to go and kill the person who had been *smelt out* without himself appointing his own witchdoctors to examine into the charge. Therefore any man could in this way *lay a charge against* another to the king. The reason why the king afterwards caused his own witch-doctors to look into the charge was because of the advent of the white

MGOQO

people (Europeans).⁷ [I found Mgoqo firm on this point.]

Mgoqo adds that when Mbandeni fell ill it was by his own order that witchdoctors were appointed to find out who had caused him to get ill.⁸ Mgoqo was ill himself at the time, but was on the place nevertheless and saw everything take place. Mbandeni, in his own case, was of course mindful of the presence of whites when he caused an *mhlahlo* to be held; but it must not be regarded as due to European influence that this *mhlahlo* was held, for what he did was in accordance with old custom. The king always *bula'd* or *pengula'd* if he fell ill. Magongo, Tikuba's father, was killed after having been *smelt out* at an *mhlahlo* for *working evil against* King Mswazi.⁹ (Mswazi got swollen feet - what Zulus know as *izikunkulo* or *ibulawo*.) Sandhlana, Mswazi's prime minister, of the Zicele regiment (*the age-grade of Mswazi*) was killed after he had been *smelt out* at an *mhlahlo*, his offence being (that) he had *worked evil against* Mbandeni.¹⁰ No man may be killed without the king's permission, even if he has been smelt out.

19.11.1898

File 74, pp. 81-2.

- 81 (History). Swaziland per Mgoqo, an under-*induna* of Madolomafitsha, the Queen Regent. He is in the Giba regiment (was *incorporated* into the Inyati), and is I think about 58 years of age.¹¹ He says the Swazis came from Tongaland somewhere about King Zikode's time.¹² He is sure of
82 their coming from Tongaland, but is not sure of the time or the king in whose reign it was done. [See Mkonkoni's and Giba's information, pp. 84-85, which is more reliable.]¹³

Authorities on Swazi history would be Mtshengu, the chief, who was *body-servant to Mswazi* and is about 83-85 now, also Mamisa; but the latter is not as good as Mtshengu, nor so old, being of the Zicele regiment. Malunge and Mgoqo's fathers are dead. The best historians are those who lived at headquarters and always near the king.

The kings, especially later ones, were named after preceding ones, e.g. Ngwane after a previous Ngwane, Mbandeni was called Dhlamini after a previous king, Ludonga also after a previous one.

Sandhlana, who was Mswazi's great *induna*, was killed near Embeke-lweni and close to Mr Shepstone's office.¹⁴ He was killed according to custom. [Vide pp. 38-39, especially latter.] Mbaba was not killed according to custom. The Queen Regent, Madolomafitsha, and her council *bamba'd*, i.e. respected, Queen Victoria's wish or order about killing-off. In Mbaba's case, knowing this instruction, it was evaded by the ordinary native custom not being complied with, and because the death of this man and his servants was reported as accidental, though, as the inquiry proved, it was intentional.

Notes

¹The rinderpest outbreak of the mid-1890s caused widespread cattle losses over large parts of southern Africa, including Swaziland.

²Ngwane (Bhunu, Mahlokohla) kaMbandzeni was Swazi king from 1890-1899.

³Madvolomafisha (Tibati) was a co-wife of Nandzi, whose son, Mbandzeni, was king from 1875-1889. She was recognised as queen mother during the course of Mbandzeni's reign. Mgoqo is listed as *induna* to Madolo-

mafitsha in the evidence given by Giba kaSobhuza, Stuart Archive, vol. 1, pp. 151, 363.

⁴The reference is to Bishop J.W. Colenso's Zulu-English Dictionary.

⁵Mbhabha Sibandze, a senior *induna*, was put to death at Ngwane's Zombodze *umuzi* in April 1898. See Matsebula, History of Swaziland, p. 134.

⁶On p. 38 of File 74, Stuart writes: 'I think a good way of distinguishing native customs from native laws, where all of course are unwritten, is to take customs as being those habitual practices which people do or perform which require no reference to the king or law-giver, and laws as only those customs in which the royal will can be distinctly traced.'

⁷There was increasing white political influence in the affairs of the Swazi kingdom from the late 1880s onwards.

⁸The illness which caused Mbandzeni's death in October 1889 is said to have been jaundice. See Matsebula, History of Swaziland, p. 83.

⁹Magongo is given by Giba kaSobhuza, Stuart Archive, vol. 1, p. 152, as one of Sobhuza's *izinduna*. His son, Tikhuba, another of Stuart's informants, was a principal *induna* under Mbandzeni and the queen mother, Madvolomafisha. Mswati (Mswazi) ruled c.1845-1865.

¹⁰According to Giba kaSobhuza, Sandlana Zwane was *induna* to both Mswati and Mbandzeni. See Stuart Archive, vol. 1, pp. 151-2, 363-4. The same informant, p. 153, gives the Zicele (Zicelecele) as an *ibutho* formed of men of the same age-group as Mswati.

¹¹The evidence of Giba kaSobhuza, Stuart Archive, vol. 1, p. 153, indicates that the Inyatsi (Inyati) would have been formed in the 1840s of youths born in the 1820s, and that the Giba would have been formed c.1860 of youths born c.1840.

¹²For Mgoqo's placing of Zikodze in the Swazi royal line see Stuart Archive, vol. 1, p. 360.

¹³The relevant passage is reproduced under the evidence of Giba kaSobhuza, Stuart Archive, vol. 1, p. 149.

¹⁴Theophilus ('Offy') Shepstone became involved in Swazi affairs in 1887, when he was appointed resident adviser to the Swazi king. His office was at Manzini (Bremersdorp).