

NDABAMBI KA SIKAKANA

25.3.1909

File 59, nbk. 32, pp. 27-33.

- 27 Ndabambi ka Sikakana ka Mlisa of the Dhlamini people, of oDidini (royal kraal), Swaziland. [One of the witnesses R.C. Samuelson got down for Rex vs. Mkipeni and Nzolo, but was not called.]¹

I am of the Ngobamakosi regiment and was *induna* of the Nodwengu section of that regiment - the section being known as uNtabazwe.²

Mgungundhlovu was between the Unzololo and Mkumbane streams.³ The Unzololo enters the Mkumbane prior to the Ipokwe stream and on the side opposite to it.

Mgungundhlovu is the biggest kraal in Zululand, bigger than Dukuza, Nodwengu or Ondini.⁴

The origin of the name is probably from the great bend of the kraal towards the double gate [see *isingungu* or *isangungu* (Colenso)]⁵, for one standing at the back of the kraal on high ground would see clearly these great curves going to meet one another.⁶



Tshaka caused a pregnant woman to be cut open to see if the child lay in the womb as a calf in the womb of a cow.

- 28 Dingana would send a man out to be killed, and after taking him some way he would send to call him back and say, 'What are you leaving behind that is good?' 'I am leaving a child that is at the age when it begins to walk, and when it begins to speak and say "Father".' He (D.) would then say, 'Let him be!' and they would release him. To another he might ask the same question, and if he said, 'I leave a newly married wife, who looked about her as she danced,' D. would then say, 'Put him to death, for he is a rascal.' Dingana did these things by way of a joke.

Water was drawn from the *unKumbane* for those at Mgungundhlovu. There are stones, small and large, on the ridge where Mgungundhlovu stood, also trees - *mimosa*, *thorn-trees*, and *acacias*. There are also *euphorbia* trees and *aloes*. Inside and *intungwa* grass is to be found there.⁷ *Ntungwa* grass is used to weave the mats used for thatching huts.

I have asked *amaNtungwa* people the origin of their name, and they said it originates from the *intungwa* grass (*entungweni yo tshani*).⁸
 29 This grass will stick in clothes and prick one. That is, the name arose from the grass used for thatching huts. Grain-baskets (*izilulu*) are also made of *intungwa* grass.

I am sure the name in question comes from the grass. I asked my grandmother (father's mother) and she gave me this story. She had relatives who were *amaNtungwa*, not being one herself. I know a tribe, the *aba kwa Mtolu*, this name being derived from the *mtolo* tree (has small thorns). Here then is an analogous case.

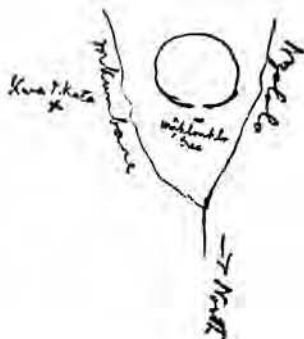
Lusizana ka Tinta of the *Dhlamini* people can declaim praises. He is of *Yamela's* tribe, and lives near the *Mbombotshane*.⁹ He is living but is an *invalid*. He is better than *Tshingana*.¹⁰ *Mkosana ka Sangqwana* of the *Sengwayo* people (an offshoot of the *Mdhlalose* tribe), of the *iTshitshi* regiment, lives at *Mahlabatini* near *Jack Osborn's*.¹¹ He can praise *Tshaka*, *Dingana*, *Senzangakona* and *Cetshwayo*. He is better than *Lusizana*.

There is a hill (called) *Isandhlwana* on the *White Umfolozi*, just on the north side. It has a *fastness*, and *leopards*. When the *Undi kraal* was burnt in 1879 we took refuge there.¹² The *Isandhlwana* of *Nqutu*
 30 district is a larger hill than the other.¹³ There are many bucks about here.

A Boer - I do not know his name - is at present living next to the *euphorbia* tree of Mgungundhlovu, i.e. close to the main gate. The *euphorbia* tree is a mere stone's throw from where the gate was. This Boer's wife is a great doctor of chest complaints. Many go to her to be cured.

Huts at Mgungundhlovu were very close up against one another. There were nine rows of them. In winter, when the grass is burnt, one could see clearly the outline of the great kraal, where huts were, etc., etc.

The killing off was done after crossing the *Mkumbane*.



It is my father who gave me these details. The Mtonjaneni store is quite close to my kraal. My father, Sikakana, is living with me.

- 31 My father says he 'ate the horse' (of the *Kokoti*), for he was of that regiment.¹⁴ He says *they were on campaign* when they ate it, not going out to *break wattles*, as Lunguza says;¹⁵ and that, having nothing else to eat, they saw and killed the horse for food purposes. My grandfather, Mlisa, came to Zululand from Swaziland.

I know Mgungundhlovu kraal site very well. I live 15 or 16 miles from it now, and formerly lived three or four miles off. The Umkumbane is the main stream; the Unzololo enters the Umkumbane. The royal kraal site was between these two streams. It looked north, towards the junction of these two streams, and the main gate was only about half a mile from the junction. The *hearths* of the huts are still visible; so are the sites of the huts.

The killing of people took place at Kwa Nkata, i.e. people were led out of the main gate and across the Umkumbane.¹⁶

The king's *amabele* and *milking cattle* with their *herders* stayed in the small kraals known as Emapotweni at the back of Mgungundhlovu.

- 32 These kraals were also known as iBeje. One *made oath* by saying, 'I shall go into Emapotweni.'

The *euphorbia* tree that stood a stone's throw from Mgungundhlovu gate is still standing, though a large portion has collapsed. I saw part of it standing last winter.

There was a small hill in the rear of Mgungundhlovu. This was known as Kwa Nkosinkulu.¹⁷ I do not know how it came to get that name.

Nqiwana ka Nyanya of the *Dhlamini* people is a doctor who escaped when Tshaka sprinkled blood about the *isigodhlo*, by saying it had been done by *the heavens above (izulu elipezulu)*.¹⁸

My father is of the Ndabakawombe (uKokoti) regiment. He became *inceku* to Langazana ka Gubetshe of the *Sibiya* people, the *inkosikazi* who bore Nzibe.¹⁹ Nzibe died with Dingana at the *Iubombo* mountains.²⁰

Bongoza, who *decoyed* the Boers, was of the Cebekulu tribe. I do not know his father. [Cf. p. 37.]²¹

- 33 I have come down with Mhanjana, two young men and two girls, under subpoena by Counsel for the Defence, R.C. Samuelson, in Rex vs. Mkipeni and Nzolo.

I am prepared to take Mr Stuart about the Mgungundhlovu kraal site should he visit that part.

[See extract from Mr Champion's journal, p. 202 of *Bird's Annals*, vol. I, for a description of Mgungundhlovu, showing huts were in some places six or eight deep. This goes to agree with Lunguza.]²²

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Also present: Mhanjana

Mhanjana and Ndabambi.

Fasimba (T), Dukuza (T), Nobamba, Kangela (D), Siklebeni, Nodwengu (M), Undi (C), Bulawayo (M), Engwegweni (M), Endhlo-ndhlweni (M), Ndabakawombe (M), Emdomezulu, Emlambongwenya (M), Zwangendaba, Gqikazi, Olandandhlovu, Ekubazeni, oKandempemvu, Kwa Guqu, Embelebeleni, eQwageni, Undolubomvana, Emangweni: these are names of royal kraals which existed in Mpande's reign, on both sides of the White Mfolozi, but quite close to that river.²³

34 Mhanjana agrees with the account given by Ndabambi of the streams about Mgungundhlovu [vide plan on p. 27].

Notes

¹R.C.A. Samuelson, a Natal attorney, had a long association with the African peoples of Natal and Zululand, and served as a defence lawyer in some of the trials (including that of Dinuzulu) which followed the Natal disturbances of 1906-8. The trial of Mkipheni and Nzolo is discussed in Marks, Reluctant Rebellion, pp. 293-6.

²The inGobamakhosi *ibutho* was formed by Cetshwayo in 1873 of youths born in the early 1850s. Nodwengu was a Zulu royal *umuzi*.

³EmGungundlovu was Dingane's principal *umuzi*. The Mkhumbane flows into the middle reaches of the White Mfolozi from the south.

⁴KwaDukuza was one of Shaka's principal *imizis*. KwaNodwengu and oNdini were the principal *imizis* of Mpande and Cetshwayo respectively.

⁵Colenso, Dictionary, p. 9, gives *isangungu* as 'Bullock with horns curved towards each other very much, so as nearly to meet over the head = *isingungu*'. On p. 395 he gives *isingungu* as 'large *tshwala*-pot, whose curve resembles that of such horns'. *Utshwala* is the Zulu word for beer.

⁶Sketch-plans of emGungundhlovu, drawn by Stuart under the guidance of Lunguza kaMpukane, are reproduced on pp. 309 and 340 of vol. 1 of the Stuart Archive.

⁷*Insinde* grass (*Themeda triandra*) is much prized as grazing. *Intungwa* grass (a variety of *Hyparrhenia*) is used for mat-work and basketry.

⁸For information relating to the term *Ntungwa* see Bryant, Olden Times, chs. 1, 29; Marks, 'The traditions of the Natal "Nguni"', in Thompson, ed., African Societies, ch. 6; Marks and Atmore, 'The problem of the Nguni', in Dalby, ed., Language and History in Africa, pp. 120-32; Stuart Archive, vols. 1-3, indexes.

⁹'Yamela's tribe' probably refers to people living under the authority of the successors of a man, Yamela, who had been in the employ of Melmoth Osborn (British Resident in the South Zululand Reserve, 1880-87; Resident Commissioner in Zululand, 1887-93). He was rewarded for his services by being appointed as a chief in the Eshowe area.

¹⁰Shingana, one of Mpande's sons, was a noted *imbongi*.

¹¹AmaTshitshi (amaShishi) was an alternative name for the isAngqu *ibutho*, formed in the early 1850s of youths born in the early 1830s.

¹²In the latter stages of the Anglo-Zulu war, the British forces burnt

- down a number of the Zulu royal *imizi*, including uNdi (uluNdi, oNdini).
- ¹³The Isandlwana hill in the Nquthu district is where the British were defeated by the Zulu on 22 January 1879.
- ¹⁴The uKhokhothi *ibutho* was formed in the late 1830s of youths born some twenty years earlier. One of its praises was 'the Khokhothi which ate a horse'.
- ¹⁵According to Lunguza kaMpukane (Stuart Archive, vol. 1, p. 304), men of the Khokhothi killed and ate a horse when they had 'gone out to collect wattles from umqandane bushes for building the *isigodhlo* fence.'
- ¹⁶The place of execution near emGungundlovu was also known as kwa-Matiwane.
- ¹⁷The name kwaNkosinkulu is usually taken to refer to the grave of Nkosinkulu, who is given in some recorded traditions as the founder of the Zulu chiefly line. The exact location of the grave, while supposedly in the vicinity of emGungundlovu, is not known.
- ¹⁸The informant is here referring to a frequently recounted story, according to which Shaka tested the *izangoma* of his kingdom by sprinkling blood about the *isigodlo* and then asking them, individually, to determine who was responsible. Those who failed the test were put to death. The phrase *izulu eliphezulu* is a play on the word *izulu* (the heavens above), meaning that it had been done by Shaka. For other versions of the story see Stuart Archive, vol. 1, pp. 9, 330-31; vol. 3, p. 67.
- ¹⁹Other sources give Nzibe's mother as Songiya kaNgotsha of the Hlabisa people. See for example Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 52, 670; Stuart Archive, vol. 1, pp. 168-9; vol. 2, p. 252.
- ²⁰Other sources state that Nzibe died on the Bhalule campaign to Soshangane's country in 1828, i.e. more than ten years before Dingane's death in the Lubombo mountains in 1840. See for example Bryant, Olden Times, p. 670; Stuart Archive, vol. 1, pp. 191, 194; vol. 2, pp. 216, 250; vol. 3, p. 80.
- ²¹Bhongoza kaMefu won fame in the Zulu kingdom for leading a party of Boers into an ambush during a campaign by the Voortrekkers against the Zulu in December 1838. He is usually given as being of the Ngongoma or Ngcobo people, not the Cebekhulu. The reference to p. 37 of the original is to statements made by two others of Stuart's informants, Socwasha kaPhaphu and Lunguza kaMpukane. The former gives Bhongoza as of the Ngcobo people, while the latter gives him as of the Cebekhulu.
- ²²Lunguza's evidence appears in vol. 1 of the Stuart Archive. See especially p. 308.
- ²³In the preceding list the initials T, D and M presumably represent contractions of 'Tshaka', 'Dingane' and 'Mpande' respectively.