

STUART, C. T.

22.12.1901- <evidence given 12.12.1901>

File 71, pp. 237-8.

237 Matabeleland, natives of.

On 12th instant, I had a conversation with Charlie (C.T. Stuart),¹ of which the following is a short and condensed account.

The first thing that struck C. on arriving in the country was the lack of physique in the men and women, but especially the men. The building of huts is done in a different way than that practised in Zululand; there walls and mats are freely used. The roof is first made on the ground before it is placed on the walls which are about five feet high; the doorway is three to five feet high. The hut is round with rather a flattened roof.

Headrings are worn by the older men; these rings are about 3 inches in diameter, are placed rather forward on the top of the head and do not take a polish and shine; they are kept low or close to the skull.

The people referred to are Matabeles, that is, Amandebele. The Amandebele are divided into two main sections, the *abenzansi* and the *abenhla*; the *abenzansi* came up with Mzilikazi from Zululand. The *abenhla* were picked up by Mzilikazi on his way up and so came to be called Amandebele.²

C.'s district lies south of Bulawayo, his own residence being 25 miles south-east. In this district are the Amandebele (the 2 sections referred to) and the Amahole. Now the Amahole people are the aboriginals of the country and consist of several different tribes; the most numerous of these tribes is the Amakalanga; this tribe speaks a language of their own but all can also speak Zulu. The word 'Amahole' means 'slaves' and appears to be a name given during Mzilikazi's time. Mzilikazi turned all the aborigines into slaves and they had to work for the Amandebele. The '*abenzansi*' people come first in the social system, then the '*abenhla*'. The Amahole are looked down on, although they are expected to address the others by their respective tribal names or patronymics. The three classes of people are frequently found living in one and the same kraal. The *abenzansi* and *abenhla* can take an iHole woman to wife, but an iHole cannot take an *ezansi* woman.

There are still living natives who came up with Mzilikazi.

238 The people are polygamists; the aboriginals pay *lobola*, namely ten things, viz. hoe, beads, chopper, goats etc. They cannot be said to be cattle owners. The

Amandebele do not even now *lobola*, but the father has a claim on the progeny; he has at least the 1st girl. *Lobola*, before the outbreak of rinderpest,³ used to exist only fitfully, sometimes 1, 2 and 3 beasts being paid. There are no cattle now and no *lobola* is paid. The regular *lobola* died out during Lobengula's reign.⁴

Mzilikazi and Lobengula were the only kings. Lobengula has several sons living, but it is not decided which is the heir. Nyamanda is the eldest son, but there is also Njube, a younger son, by the woman Mpoyiyana - this boy Njube is being educated at Cape Town by Cecil Rhodes and would be about 25 years of age.⁵

Bulawayo is where Lobengula's principal kraal stood, known as eBulawayo. Government House now stands on the site of the kraal, this site being about 3 miles from the town of Bulawayo.

The Amakalanga people believe in *mlimo* and this belief has spread to the Amandebele. Lobengula used himself to send presents to the god. Lobengula was the biggest rain-doctor. *Mlimo* is said to be an invisible person supposed to exist in Matabeleland. The belief in him is kept alive by a sort of priesthood who are called 'sons of *mlimo*'. If there is anything wrong a journey to the kraal of one of the priesthood follows for purpose of consultation. The priest conducts the man to the spot where it is supposed an interview with *mlimo* can take place. This spot may sometimes be a hut overgrown at the doorway with weeds or grass, or it may be a rock. Conversation ensues between the inquirer and *mlimo* who replies to questions in an unearthly tone of voice. The belief in *mlimo* is strong, so much so that failure in crops is taken to mean the *mlimo* has not been propitiated (it has been made illegal by the Government to do this). When locusts invaded the country and rinderpest raged, recourse was had to the *mlimo* for help and deliverance.

22.12.1901

File 71, pp. 238-40.

Further conversation with C.T.S. this day.

239 Non-payment of *lobola* by Matabeles has given rise to pernicious practices; daughters no longer remain moral as heretofore; they cohabit with any young man they fancy. Internal intercourse is had, not *hlobonga*, and children are born of this promiscuous connexion. Natives take no advantage of the *lobola* tariff framed by the Govt. Formerly all cattle belonged to the king; certain individuals became possessed of cattle, called *izinkomo zamatanga* (personal property), invariably acquired through loot on occasion of raid into neighbouring territory;⁶ then there were *izinkomo zebuto*, i.e. cattle given by the king in trust to the tribe (which amounted to something more than *sisad* because not recalled);⁷ then came *cattle of the king* (*izinkomo zenkosi*), which meant nine tenths of the cattle of the country. It was not rinderpest that stopped the payment of *lobola*; its payment stopped in Lobengula's reign (this king died in 1893). The Matabeles claim the first child of a marriage (of daughter) so that the parent is only concerned in respect to the children following the first child. Most marriages take place without any ceremony at all. These remarks refer to the Matabeles only, not Amahole.

The aboriginals speak their own language and dialects among themselves but converse in Zulu to Matabeles and Europeans.

STUART, C.T

Rhodes is known as uLozi or Mlamulankunzi.

The following are authorities on the country: William C. Thomas (called uMisTomase), Native Commissioner (aet. 35 or 36 - born at Shilo in Matabeleland); F.C. Selous; Rev. D. Carnegie (Centenary Mission, Bulilima); Johann Colenbrander. [Rev. J.S. Moffat - J.S.]⁸

The Matabeles use assegais but many have guns (of all descriptions) bought in Khama's country on return from work in Kimberley.⁹

Women do nothing to their hair.

Kraals have various numbers of huts, not unlike Zulus as to number.

Some leading natives are: Gambo (Lobengula's favourite *induna*); Mapisa; Mlugulu (a sort of 'kingmaker'); Mtuwane (head chief - is a young man - in the Matopos); Babaiyana (died about 3 years ago); Faku, a big chief.¹⁰

No history of the natives would be complete without mention of Carl Kumalo. This man pretends to be a Matabele; formerly worked at Kimberley; he had the ear of Lobengula; speaks and writes English fairly well; C. has seen and spoken to him many times; about 48 to 50 years of age; dressed as a white man; appears to be a Fingo, certainly not a Matabele or an aboriginal of the country; held responsible, in
240 the mind of many, for traitorous acts committed during the time of the murders of Europeans in March et seq. 1895; now in custody under martial law as a dangerous individual; his life has been attempted on several occasions, not known exactly by whom; lives in Matopo District; married; Kumalo was the King's tribal name; he (C.K.) became an adopted Matabele.

There is a lot of witchcraft, especially bone-throwing.

There were regiments in the King's time.

Lack of parental control is very noticeable in the country; this is brought about by the peculiar system of *lobola*, payment of children. The late king did not control the people as his father did; he let things slide. There is an air of absolute indifference in men, women and children; they appear to have a don't-care sort of look.

Notes

¹ Charles Stuart was a younger brother of James. He worked as a Native Commissioner in Southern Rhodesia from 1896.

² *Abenzansi* (*Abasenzansi*) means 'those from down-country'. *Abenhla* (*Abasenhla*) means 'those from up-country'. Mzilikazi kaMashobana of the Khumalo was the first ruler of what came to be the Ndebele kingdom.

³ A reference to the devastating outbreak of rinderpest which swept through southern Africa in 1896-7.

⁴ Lobhengula, a son of Mzilikazi, ruled the Ndebele kingdom from 1870 until the kingdom was attacked and broken up by the forces of the British South Africa Company in 1893. He died early in 1894.

⁵ Cecil Rhodes died in Muizenberg near Cape Town in March 1902, three months after the interview here recorded.

⁶ *Izinkomo zamatanga* translates as 'the cattle of the cattle-posts'. Bryant, *Dictionary*, p. 611, gives *itanga* (*ithanga*, pl. *amathanga*) as '... a "makeshift" cattle-kraal i.e.

STUART, C.T

one erected for any particular reason (temporary or enduring) away from the residential kraal ...’.

⁷ *Izinkomo zebuto* translates as ‘the cattle of the *ibutho*. For *ibutho* and *ukusisa*, see the Glossary to this volume.

⁸ William Thomas, son of missionary T.M. Thomas, was born and brought up in the Ndebele country. Frederick Selous, a hunter and trader, was the author of Travel and Adventure in South-East Africa (London, 1893). David Carnegie, a missionary who had worked among the Ndebele from 1882, was the author of Among the Matabele (London, 1894). Johannes Colenbrander was the British South Africa Company’s agent at kwaBulawayo in the early 1890s, and Chief Native Commissioner in Matabeleland in 1894-5. He pursued private business interests in Rhodesia from 1895 to 1900. John Smith Moffat, son of missionary Robert Moffat, founded the first mission station in the Ndebele country in 1859 and in the later 1880s was a native affairs official in the newly established British colony of Bechuanaland.

⁹ Khama ruled the Ngwato people in the north-east of what is now Botswana from 1875 until his death in 1923.

¹⁰ Gambo, Maphisa and Babayiyana were leading *izinduna* in the Ndebele kingdom during the reign of Lobhengula. We have been unable to identify Mlugulu, Mtuwane and Faku.