

Nhlabatsi Synopsis (PB)

The second testimony deals only with the history of the Nhlabatsi and explicates puzzling aspects of the 1970 testimony.

It begins with a genealogy of the Nhlabatsi. The speaker Nyandza is born of Mzila, born of Zameya, born of Manimani, born of Mantini, born of Langa who he thinks is born of Nhlabatsi. Somhlolo is claimed to be the brother of Nhlabatsi.

Manimani was installed at Mbelebeleni (or Dwaleni) by Somhlolo. He was responsible for cattle there. Manimani objected when Somhlolo married his sister LoZinyanga. He was killed for this offence. Manimani son's Zameya and Mnyamane quarrelled over the succession. Somhlolo arbitrated and installed Zameya. This decision seems to have been unpopular and Zameya was warned by Sibandze *tindvuna* of a plot against him. He fled to Somhlolo. Somhlolo sent two representatives, a Mavimbela man and a Mathungwa man, to take Zameya to Bhukwane. The king separated Zameya and Mnyamane. Mnyamane remained in the New Haven area. Zameya was given a new chiefdom.

**RE: THIS INTERVIEW WAS DONE WHEN WE WERE STILL STANDARDISING
VARIANT PRONUNCIATION IN THE TEXT TO WHAT WE CONSIDERED TO BE
THE CORRECT SISWATI ORTHOGRAPHY - NEED TO CHANGE BACK TO JOTTER-
FORMAT**

Endnote format as done by CH in first edit

Title: '... it appears that the king selected a young girl.'

Date: 3 September 1983

Interviewed at: *kaZameya*ⁱ

Narrators: Nyandza Nhlabatsiⁱⁱ (NN)
(*libutfo*: Balondoloji)ⁱⁱⁱ
Danyela Nhlabatsi^{iv} (DN)
(*libutfo*: Masotja)
Hlobane Nhlabatsi^v (HN)
(*libutfo*: Sikhonyane)
Elias Dlamini (ED)
(*libutfo*: Malindane)

Information heard from: Mzila Nhlabatsi^{vi}
(*libutfo*: Nyonibovu)

Also present: Gaka Dlamini
(*libutfo*: Sikhonyane)
Macigane Tfwala
(*libutfo*: Malindane)
Abraham Dlamini
(*libutfo*: Malindane)
Sibangani Tfwala^{vii}
(*libutfo*: Masotja)
Les Witz^{viii}

Interviewers: Carolyn Hamilton (CH)
Henry Hlahlamehlo Dlamini (HD)

Transcriber
and Translator: Billy Mavimbela.

* *

(NN)[p3] I am Nyandza of the Nhlabatsi. Nyandza is born of Mzila. Mzila is born of Zameya, Zameya is born of [p4] Manimani. Manimani himself is born of Mantini, Mantini is born of Langa. Langa—I do not know there—of Nhlabatsi, *bekunene*^a, because it appears that the king selected a young girl^b. Her name^{cix} was Nhlabatsi.

(HD) Who was the king that married this girl^d here?

(NN)It would appear it is Somhlolo because Somhlolo is the brother of Nhlabatsi, we were Langenis, we were of yours, of the Dlamini.

* *

Then we were changed, we the Nhlabatsi people, and our kingship—this chieftainship—derives from there.[p24] /They <the Dlamini and the Nhlabatsi> separated here, when they were here at Shiselweni^x.

* *

There it was Zameya who led the *imphi*.

(HD)It was Zameya who was leading the *libutfo* of Somhlolo.

(CH) Zameya was then an Nhlabatsi or Dlamini?

(DN)He was then Nhlabatsi.

(NN)We were then *lunyiswe*^e, we were eating the black sheep^{si}.

* *

But my father was by then not eating it.

(DN)[p25] Mzila was not eating a sheep.

(CH)[p5] <What are the *tinanatelo* of the Nhlabatsi?>

(NN)'Mantini *wa*Langa,

Mabhalaⁱ kophe^s one like the Ngwenyama^{xixiii}!

Then it changes and goes back to the praises of the Dlaminis.

* * [p6]

[p7] We *dzabuka^d* from there, down there, from the people of Mantini.

(CH)[p8] Is Mantini a chief^h?

(NN)He was an *indvuna*.

* *

^a*bekunene*: section of general praise *nina bekunene*, literally 'you of the right hand', a praise of the Dlaminis, but often applied more widely as a polite form of address.

^bOriginal has : *intombi*.

^cOriginal has: *igama*.

^dOriginal has: *intfombatana*.

^e*lunyiswe*: this is a term used to denote a ritual process whereby one is initiated to eat certain kinds of food which customarily one was not supposed to eat.

^f*Mabhala*: The word *bala* (*bhala*) can be used in the sense of *kubala ubuso* which means to cut incisions on the face (Doke & Vilakazi, *Dict.*, p.21). *Mabhala* then may be the nominative form.

^g*Kophe*: could mean to bleed.

^hOriginal has: *sikhulu*.

Where our kingship began is with *kubo* Mantini of Langa.

**

[p9] [We were still Langenis <then>.](#)

**

Yes, we were of the Dlamini people. We were then separated by this king. We were then called the Nhlabatsi people, Mantini of Langa.

(CH) Was Mantini an *indvuna* in the time of Somhlolo?

(NN) No, he was an *umntfwanenkhosi*.

**

<Nyandza Nhlabatsi (NN) had sent for Danyela Nhlabatsi (DN), who at this point joined the conversation.>

(DN) [p12] [I am Danyela, born of Zimpeka of the Nhlabatsi. Zimpeka \[p13\] was born of Zameya of Nhlabatsi. Zameya was begot by Manimani.](#)

**

Manimani was born of Mgabhe.

(NN) Mgabhe was called Manimani.

(DN) *Wo*, Mgabhe was called Manimani.

**

(NN) [p14] [He knows them^a. ** Put them right because you are taped, there next to you.](#)

**

Mgabhe is Manimani, <from there, we go> to Mantini, Mantini of Langa, then to Shaladi.

(DN) /When we came here we saw the grave of Manimani.\

** [p15]

(HD) [p16] [You say the grave of Manimani is where?](#)

(NN) This is it, also his *induna*.

(HD) It is there behind?

(NN) *Nhenhe^b*.

(DN) There on the mountain.

(HD) It is up on the hill.

(NN) *Nhenhe^c*, he was killed.

(DN) He was buried amongst the rocks^{dxiv}.

**

[p17] [He was killed by the *imphi* of *kwaZulu*. \[RE.do we keep kwaZulu, KwaNgwane??\]](#)

(NN) No, of *kwaNgwane*'s. Manimani had said to the king, he has done wrong when <the king> married his^a sister^b, LoZinyanga.

^a'them' presumably refers to the names of the genealogy.

^b*nhenhe*: expression of agreement.

^c*nhenhe*; expression of agreement.

^dOriginal has: *ematjeni*.

^aThis 'his' would appear to refer to the king who, in marrying his kinswoman, could be described as marrying his 'sister'. The 1970 interview makes it clear that LoZinyanga was the daughter of Manimani [See p. create cross reference].

^bOriginal has: *indadewabo*.

* *

The king said, "Go and kill Manimani. He has insulted me, saying I have married my sister"

* *

[p18] Manimani was then killed by the king of *kwa*Ngwane.

(HD)Who was this king?

(NN)*Awu*, I do not know exactly whether it was Somhlolo, I do not know.

* *

Because it was long ago.

* *

(4)^{sv}[p21] This *babe* <who> has narrated, he knows things <that> were neglected in the books.

(NN)In fact, everything was written. Then the *isokanchanti*^{xvi} hid the books. The names of old kings of *ka*Ngwane were also written down, and where they came from. It was written about Mantini and Nhlabatsi, where they came from, and also about them of Ngwahlamba^{xvii}.

(HD)Who was writing this for you?

(NN)The old man who begot me.

* *

[p22] I was the installed^d. *Isokanchanti* then hid the book. I would not be having problems^e.

* *

(HD)Is he still alive?

* *

Your brother?

(NN)He died.

* *

(HD)Are any of his wives still alive?

(NN)They all died with his sons.

* *

(NN)[p30] Manimani was not an *induna*. Manimani just became a chief from down there.

* *

(HD)[p31] Where about was his area?

(NN)It is this one, where he was installed^a by Somhlolo.

* *

(4) * * He installed^b him at Mbelebeleni^{xviii} * * over and beyond this mountain.

(NN) * * In actual fact he herded cattle.

* *

(4) [p32] The king came and installed him <Manimani> there because it <is> written here that he was installed^c.

^c*isokanchanti*: the first circumcised, ie. the first son of the first wife, even when the son is born after the children of other wives (see endnote xvi).

^dOriginal has: *bekwa*.

^eThe implication here is Nyandza Nhlabatsi would not be having problems if books were still accessible.

^aOriginal has: *bekwa*.

^bOriginal has: *beka*.

(NN)<The king> placed him at Dwaleni^{xix}.

(HD)Why did he leave?

* *

(NN)&(DN)[p33] <Manimani did not leave, he was killed whilst his residence was there.

* *

(NN)It was the children of Manimani who came here, who were then quarrelling over the kingship^d.

(NN)&(DN)Those were Zameya and Mnyamane.

(DN)[p34] Zameya was buried in this place. Mnyamane himself too is buried in there.

* *

On Sishosha.

(NN)There at Mcicimbeni.

(HD)You say who was buried in there?

(DN)It is Zameya.

(NN)Manimani is over there. His grave is here, beyond there or across there.

* *

(DN)[p35] This Zameya and this Mnyamane are both born of Manimani, he is their father. * *
There is a quarrel [p36] over kingship^c. Their deputy, someone who was not related to them, who stayed with them * *

(NN)Kele^{xx}.

(DN)Kele, he then hid the *litfusi*^f of this one who was to be installed^g here.

* *

(NN)Then Somhlolo arbitrated between them.

* *

(NN)He installed Zameya.

* *

(HD)[p37] What was <Kele's> *sibongo*?

(NN)I do not know it.

* *

(DN)[p38] After that had happened, they informed this Zameya about those who were coming to kill him, so he had to run away.

* *

(HD)Who were those who told Zameya to pay heed?

(DN)He was cautioned by men of the Sibandze^{xxi}.

(NN)--- It seems that you are continuing, yet you are continuing with what is not right^a.

^cOriginal has: *bekwa*.

^dOriginal has: *bukhosi*.

^eOriginal has: *bukhosi*.

^f*limatfusi*: this word is used for both brass and copper. Brass is not know to have been indigeniously forged in southern Africa.

^gOriginal has: *bekwa*.

* *

[p39] They cautioned him about what?

(DN)They said he should go to the king because they were coming to kill him.

* *

(NN)[p40] Cala^{xxii} and Gila^{xxiii} were the *tindvuna* here.

* *

(HD)[p41] Their *tibongo*?

(NN)Sibandze.

* *

(HD)The other one?

(NN)Sibandze.

* *

(DN)[p43] After that had happened they left here. It was Zameya who left and went to the king for refuge because the *lusendvo*^b wanted to kill him. The whole of the Dlamini combined. Unfortunately, *babe*, I do not know what to say now.

(NN)Which one of Dlamini?

(4)This one of Nhlabatsi.

(NN)Of the Nhlabatsi's, these Mnyamane's.

* *

[p44] * * Zameya then went to the king for refuge. The king accepted Zameya. Then he sent two representatives who [p45] were Mhlahlo of the Mavimbela^{xxiv} and Gugendluyakhe of the Mathunywa^{xxv}. The king said to these two men, "Take Zameya to Bhukwane^{xxvii}". * * <The king was> arbitrating between Zameya and Mnyamane. Zameya had a dispute with Mnyamane, his brother. Somhlolo said, "I install Zameya." That is all, thank you^a.

[p65] /The king separated them, sending Zameya with his family to Bhukwane. Zameya was to *khonza* and to settle on a sizeable <piece of> land^b because he had a large family of people with him.

* *

(HD)What happened to Mnyamane?

(NN)He stayed put.

* *

(HD)Where did he remain?

* *

(NN)[p66] The New Haven^{xxvii} area.

* *

[p46] Bhukwane was of the Dlamini.

^aAt this point in the account, in a confusing exchange, Nyandza Nhlabatsi (NN) and Danyela Nhlabatsi (DN) disagreed over who had informed Zameya of the plot to murder him.

^b*lusendvo*: a group of common descent; family or clan.

^aUnclear whether the last sentence was spoken by Nyandza Nhlabatsi, or whether he was still reporting the words of Somhlolo.

^bOriginal has: *sizwe*.

* *

(HD)Did Zameya send <the king> a beast?

(NN)Zameya sent a beast to the king to say thank you.

* *

(NN)I end there, *babe*.

* *

(HD)Who was Bhukwane Dlamini?

(NN)Bhukwane was an *umntfwanenkhosi*.

* *

(HD)Whose child was he?

(NN)I do not know whether it was Tfwolo^{xxviii}.(DN)[p47] [Indeed, he was of Tfwolo.](#)

(NN)It would appear he was a child of Tfwolo.

* *

(HN)[p48] [Vezi^{xxix} is a brother of Bhukwana, he is of Tfwolo.](#)

* *

(HD)[p49] [By the way, do you know who was the mother of Mnyamane and Zameya?](#)

* *

(NN)Zameya's mother was of the Sibandze

(HN)That is Vosho.

(NN)That is Vosho of the Sibandze who was a mother.

* *

(HD)[p51] [Where is she from?](#)

* *

(NN)She was from Zombodze^{xxx}.

* *

(HD)Was she a child of Masenjana^{xxxi}?(NN)It appears so because they were very old^a *babe*.

* *

(HD)This *sibongo* of the Nhlabatsi started from whom?

* *

(DN)[p52] [The king said, "You can take your sister. She is your sister, even if you take her", meaning laZidze^{xxxii}.](#)

* *

(HD)[p53] [Who was saying this, babe?](#)

(DN)It was the king of the Ngwane? Zwide of Langa said, "It is LaZidze, the king's mother."

* *

He said, "Even if you take your sister, she is your sister. You will not multiply, because you won't have children with her." [check translation]

* *

(NN) They say, indeed, this Nhlabatsi --

^aOriginal has: *badzala*.

(DN)[p54] [---- died without having children. \[check tape for translation\]](#)

**

(HD)[p55] [During Somhlolo's reign did the Nhlabatsi people use to *gida incwala* with him at Zombodze?](#)

(NN)Yes.

**

They *gidá'd*. The one sent to the *imphi* was this Zameya. He was the one appointed to lead the *imphi*.

**

(HD)[p56] [Where did he do that?](#)

(NN)At Ngwane's country, but I do not know where exactly it was, whether it was Shiselweni.

**

(HD)Was there any special thing that the Nhlabatsi did for the king? **

** [p57]

(NN)They were *inyanga*.

**

(HD)Which people do the Nhlabatsis not marry^{bxxxiii}?

(NN)Those of the Ndzabukelwako^{xxxiv} of Langa, then it goes to Mantini of Langa.

**

(HD)[p58] [Are they relatives? Were they once relatives?](#)

(NN)It appears so, Dlamini. These people *dzabuká'd* from one place with the Ndzabukelwako people long ago^a because we do not marry^b one another. [\[check translation here, *nchanti*\]](#)
[/\[p62\] ** I was ** advised by my father I should not marry a Ndzabukelwako woman because you will give birth to idiots.](#)

** [p63]

(HD)Where are the Ndzabukelwako people to be found?

**

(NN)They are there at Ntfulini^{xxxv}.

**

It is Mankayane area^c.

**

(HD)[p59] [Do the Nhlabatsi people call themselves *bemdzabuko*?](#)

(NN)Yes.

**

(HD)[p60] [What about the matter of the *silulu*?](#)

**

(NN)I hear that spoken of.

(ED)[p61] [Can I also say something because I know something about that?](#)

^bOriginal has: *teka*.

^aOriginal has: *nchanti*

^bOriginal has: *teka*.

^cOriginal has: *indzawo*.

(HD)No *babe*, you will mislead us. This is not an ordinary meeting where everyone can answer.
 (NN)This concerns the Nhlabatsi.

(HD)They say what we want them to tell us [check translation], as for you, you must listen, because
 if[of] you they must say anything they do not know what to say.

** [p64, 65, 66]

When Somhlolo left for Mdzimba did the Nhlabatsi people remain behind?

(NN)The Nhlabatsi stayed behind and Somhlolo gave them a place^d to settle.

**

(HD)[p67] Was there anything they were told to do when they were left behind to settle here?

(NN)Something like what, *babe*?

(HD)Something similar to what you have said, concerning the wars with the Zulus.

**

(NN)*Awu*, it was not said that Zameya should settle in a strategic point where he could view^e the
 area^f.

** [p68-72]

(HD)[p73] Where did you hear <these stories> and who was telling them to you?

(NN)I was told by my father.

**

He is Mzila of Nhlabatsi.

**

[p74] He belonged to Nyoni lembovu^{xxvi}.

(HD)What about you, Nhlabatsi^a, who told you what you have been telling us?

**

(DN)From Mzila.

^dOriginal has: *indawo*.

^eOriginal has: *wanika*.

^fOriginal has: *indawo*.

^aaddressing Danyela Nhlabatsi.

i. *kaZameya*: *umphakatsi* of Nhlabatsi, in the Phekamgenkhosi area. This latter name may be a reference to the Nhlupekhhu area, which lies just north east of Ngudzeni.

ii. Nyandza Nhlabatsi is the chief of the Nhlabatsi chiefdom which is located about 20km east south-east of Hlatikhulu and south west of the Mamba chiefdom.

iii. Note that in an interview on the 21 June 1970 Nyandza Nhlabatsi gives his *libutfo* as Masotsheni.

iv. Danyela Nhlabatsi is the son of Nyandza's father's brother, Zimpela. See geneological information on p.530.

v. [CH note: if HN is but a youngster, then I would guess that he is Hloobane Nhlabatsi of the younger Sikhonyane]]

vi. Mzila Nhlabatsi: father of Nyandza Nhlabatsi. See geneological information on p.530.

vii. Sibangani Tfwala: an *indvuna*, at the *umphakatsi* of Nyandza Nhlabatsi. [During fieldwork - lets get biographical info]]

viii. Les Witz: Visiting historian from the University of the Witwatersrand who attended the interview.

ix. "Her name was Nhlabatsi": Original has *ligama* (name). However, the burden of the story as narrated here and in the 1970 interview is that her *sibongo* was Nhlabatsi.

x. Shiselweni: area in southern Swaziland extending south as far as the Phongolo river and eastward to the Lubombo mountains. Occupied by the early Swazi kings, Ngwane and Ndvungunye, and by Somhlolo in the earliest phase of his reign. Somhlolo had an early residence here, near Mhlosheni, [re: what is reference??], but according to Matsebula this was the name of a residence of Ndvungunye (*History* (new edition), p.7).

xi. The Dlamini people do not eat the meat of a black sheep.

xii. Ngwenyama: literally the lion, a title for the king of Swaziland.

xiii. *'Mantini waLanga Mabha, kophe lonjengengwenyama'*
One interpretation of this praise could be 'incisions which bleed'. [RE more]

xiv. 'buried amongst the rocks': sign of royalty. Kuper notes that the graves of ordinary people become part of the homestead where they died, whereas kings are buried in caves (H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, p.193-194)

xv. Possibly Hlobane Nhlabatsi for information left out on p.20 of original transcript suggests that his very young. [RE what? Don't see the connection]

xvi. *isokanchanti*: Kuper notes that the First Circumcised is the father's confidant, is told how the family's property should be distributed, and who the father thinks the heir should be. The First Circumcised is an influential member of the Council that selects the heir, and in turn becomes the heir's advisor (Kuper 1961, *An African Aristocracy*, p.92).

xvii. Ngwahlamba:

xviii. Mbelebeleni: Logwaja Mamba gives Mbelebeleni as the *umuti* of the 19th century Mamba chief Maloyi [create cross reference]. Bonner locates Mbeleni on the edge of the Middleveld, near Ngudzeni. According to Mphita Dlamini, Mbelebeleni was given to LaMncina (whose senior born son was Mantinti) by her husband, Somhlolo.

xix. Dwaleni: literally . place of rocky ground. There are a number of sites with this name in Swaziland. 1) 15km outside of Mhlosheni along the road to Nthonga. 2) about 15km south west of Manzini on the northern bank of the Lusutfu river. 3) Dwaleni kop (hill) between Sidvokodvo and Hlatikhulu on the west bank of the Mkondvo river. We have been unable to locate a place of this name near the Nhlabatsi chiefdom. [check, Mphita Dlamini interview also has a reference to Dwaleni near Mbelebeleni]

xx. Kele: we have been unable to identify this person any further.

xxi. The Sibandze (variant Nsibandze) chiefdom lies to the south of the Nhlabatsi. It occupies an area centered on the Zombodze royal residence, close to the present day border between Swaziland South Africa.

xxii. Cala Sibandze:

xxiii. Gila Sibandze:

xxiv. Mhlahlo of the Mavimbela: the Mavimbela were originally a *beSutfu* group, living in northern Swaziland (Bonner, *Kings, Commoners and Concessionaires*, p.31).

xxv. Gugendluyakhe of the Mathunywa: Kuper lists the Mathunywa (variant: Mathunjwa) as being *labafik'emuva*, ie. of Sotho origin (Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, p.233). Note that in the 1970 interview Nyandza Nhlabatsi gives a different name for the second representative.

xxvi. Bhukwane: According to Joseph Dlamini, Bhukwane was a scion of the house of Liba [cross reference when available]. Matsebula (*History* (new edition), chart opposite p.18) gives Liba as a brother of Ndvungunye and son of Ngwane. Jones gives Bhukwane as a brother of Somhlolo and a son of Ndvungunye (see pp.249-266)[re: these pp refs are obviously incorrect, but can't find any ref to Bhukwane in Jones!!]. It is possible that Jones has used 'brother' literally and is not sensitive that the possibility that the relationship is one of classificatory brother. Joseph Dlamini claims that Vezi, an elder brother of Bhukwane was the rightful heir but fell in battle and was succeeded by Bhukwane. Joseph Dlamini claims that Bhukwane was posted to Lucolweni as a sentinel against Zulu raids (see Joseph Dlamini's genealogy of the house of Dlamini on p.[cross referenc when available]). The testimony of Logwaja Mamba (SWOHP, 25-8-1983, original transcript pp.92-97) confirms Somhlolo sent out the *umntfwanenkhosi* Bhukwane to take charge of a section of the Mamba kingdom at Lucolweni.

xxvii. New Haven: About 7.5km east from the turning off the Hlatikhulu Mhlosheni junction along the road to Maloma.

xxviii. See endnote xxvi.

xxix. See endnote xxvi.

xxx. Zombodze: [see in other interview, two sites of this name]]

xxxi. Masenjana Nsibandze: *indvuna* of the royal residence, Zombodze *emuva*, in the time of Ndvungunye/Ngwane. According to Jones p.271, he was the son of Mkuzanto Nsibandze. [CH we have dozens of cross references]]

xxxii. LaZidze (variant Tsandzile, Thandile) daughter of the Ndwandwe king Zwide, who married Somhlolo and acted as regent for Mswati after Somhlolo's death.

xxxiii. The exogamy rule prohibits inter-marriage between related *sibongo*.

xxxiv. Ndzabukelwako people (Sidleni). Possibly chiefdom on the Ngwempisi river? East of Mankankayane? [check]]

xxxv. Ntfulini: name of an early Mamba ancestor; also the name given to [sentence bot complete]]

xxxvi. Nyonibomvu (variant Nyoni lembovu; Inyoni-ebovu): a *libutfo* of Mbandzeni. For further information on the Nyonibomvu, see appendix on *emabutfo*.

Jotters	CH1	PB read	CH2	RE enter	edit	edit	edit
3	yes		yes	yes	Hlophe		
<p>Date of print out: 11 6 2021 [we still need to write biographical sketches on NN and DN eg born, became chief, other events in his life, wife(ves), children, work??]</p> <p>[Was NN father Mzila the Nhlabatsi chief before NN?] 'that is all' [p45]</p>							