

DATE : 15.5.70

- INFORMANTS : (1) NDAMBI MKHONTA
REGIMENT : LONDOLEZI
HEARD FROM: FATHER
- (2) MACULA MKHONTA
REGIMENT : SAHENI
HEARD FROM: FOREFATHERS : HIS FATHER MJILIVANE
- (3) NDIYA MADONBELA
REGIMENT : MASOTSHENI
HEARD FROM: MBABANE & MSHAFUTSE
- (4) MLUMBI MAVUSE
REGIMENT : MATOSHENI
HEARD FROM: FOREFATHERS
- (5) LUSHAWULE DLAMINI
REGIMENT : MASOTSHENI
HEARD FROM: UNCLE, MASHILA MNDZEBELE

AREA : ESULWINI

SOMHLOLO VISITS SHAKA

The significance of Somhlolo's visit to the Zulu king Shaka was the mystery of the Swazi cattle, which had been captured by Zulu impis prior to the visit. Obviously, although it is a rather incredible, it was the cattle mystery which led to the visit. The Zulu king became curious and wanted to see the Swazi king.

Zulu impis had captured the imfukwana cattle of Somhlolo. They took them home to Zululand. When they killed some of the cattle the survivors mourned their dead like humans; they cried tears. As a result the cattle were said to be for Zulu people, and thus they released them. The cattle journeyed back to Swaziland by themselves.

Later Shaka invited Somhlolo to pay him a visit. Somhlolo responded, and on his arrival on Zulu soil a heavy rain greeted him. It was surprising because there had been no rain for a long time. On the morning of the following day Somhlolo was to meet Shaka for the first time. At the sight of Somhlolo Shaka collapsed. But, as Shaka was a great man he did not show his cringing at the sight of the bright Swazi king, who had all the kingly dignity. Of course it was Somhlolo's dignity that brought Shaka down. There was no discussion because of the incident. But Shaka aimed at blackmailing Somhlolo, but his plot was hindered by his mother's reluctance. So Shaka told the Swazi escort that although he had fallen at the sight of the Swazi king it did not mean a failure in arms too. However, he honoured him for rain-making, and termed him the rain king, whilst he himself remained a war king. Then he permitted him to leave untouched, but still he was surreptitiously plotting to kill him. But his mother stopped him. The following day the Swazi king had gone before dawn, and after him heavy rain fell, so much that any treacherous tricks would not succeed. Then Somhlolo went back home in peace. That is the reason why Shaka never again tried to subdue the Swazi

THE BATTLE OF LUBUYA

It was fought during the days of king Mbandzeni. That war against the Zulu showed great tact and skills on the part of a handful of Swazi warriors. The Zulu used to throw spears, whilst the Swazi came in at close quarters to a man and stabbed him with one spear, which each was armed with. Of course, many people on the Swazi side fell in that war - such people as Luguba of the Kunene clan.

One defect or mistake made in that war was the division of the warriors. A major portion of the Swazi force attacked from above the hills, while a comparatively minor portion attacked at the foothills. Unfortunately

NDAMBI MKHONTA & OTHERS OF ESULWINI cont...

the smaller group of Swazi warriors met the major group of Zulu warriors. It was in this smaller group that Dambuza showed his valour and discretion before he fell. He had realised that they were already doomed, but before he fell he was prepared to play his part which he did. The advantage Dambuza had was the fluency of the Zulu tongue. In the evenings he used to steal into the Zulu camps and meet the war officer, like one of their warriors. The next moment Dambuza would be heard "Ye Dambuza" as he struck a surprise blow at the unwary Zulu officer and stabbed him. Then off he would bolt. Later Dambuza hid in a cave fortress at the Mkhondo River. But the Zulu were not satisfied until they had killed him. They followed him to the fortress. There he stabbed and killed many warriors before one of them got him. One got away from the cave and hit him with a stone. He wearily continued to stab them, but his strength ebbed and he could no longer stand it. Then he gave his spear to a ~~woman~~ woman (even women were hidden there), and she bravely played her part in blocking the entrance and killing the Zulu warriors. They nearly gave up until Dambuza finally yielded. Just before they stabbed him he told them not to kill him in the cave, and agreed to come out. As he emerged they still feared him, but he was stungless and they killed him. The brave Dambuza Lukhele's death was followed by ~~many~~ many other Swazi warriors. Indeed it was a tragic scene. The Lubyu River remained red with blood for a long time, and the place ~~is~~ was littered with bones for years. By the spear throwing system the Zulu army nearly swept away all the Swazi army. As you can notice we Madonsela clan swear 'Luguba eLibuya', where one of our forefathers known as Luguba fell. He was the father of Ngongoma, the father of Mbabane - the ancestor of the clan. Mbabane was also a ~~chief~~ war veteran, who fought during Mswati's reign at the battle of Mshadza. That is the reason for the Madonsela people being chiefs, because they obtained it through bravery.

After the Zulu had beaten the Swazi they were not content still. In fact most of the remainder of the Swazi had fled into the caves which the Zulu did not know of, and these caves were impregnable. The next thing the Zulu did was to go and burn the villages. They were again frightened because the fire did not burn the main hut of each Royal homestead. The rest of the huts burned - all but the main village hut, indlunkulu. As there were no people around the Zulu thought that perhaps something worse was hidden, so they ran away to their homelands in Zululand. Esulwini village is said to have been twice burnt, but each time the main hut did not burn.

It seems that wars have been fought in Swaziland since the days of the establishment of the Swazi ~~kingdom~~ kingdom. But it is impossible to remember them all. I remember that during the days of Mswati, after every first fruit ceremony there used to be a war, against people we can no longer remember, ~~but~~ but mainly against ~~Sotho~~ Sotho. One time in the battles against the Sotho clans the Swazi had been ~~out~~ out to fight and on their return the enemy ambushed them. Unwarily they stumbled over the ~~sleeping~~ sleeping enemy. Then they heard a thrilling scream and the enemy was upon them, plus their captives. The poor Swazi were scattered in confusion, whilst the Sotho made shots at random, and killed a lot of the running foe.

THE BATTLE OF HULU

The Battle of Hulu was one of the worse episodes ever endured by the Swazi. It was after the death of Mswati. The war officers, namely Matsabeni, decided to make a ritual war, 'to cleanse spears after the death of a king', against the prominent enemies of the day, the Sotho. But the Queen mother ~~is~~ turned down the suggestion, taking into consideration the fact that each time a war is waged the king should remain ^{at} fasting at his home, so that the army is victorious against the enemy. But at that juncture who could perform this as the king was late. But the war officers argued and pointed out that a medicine man could do what the king should do. The Queen also told them that what she ~~knew~~ knew was that when the successor of the late king takes ~~power~~ power, he is the one to effect the cleansing battle, with the hope that he would

NDAMBI MKHONTA & OTHERS AT ESULWINI cont...

perform the rituals himself. Despite all these warnings the defiant and ambitious war officer forced his way into setting a battle at Hulu. The Queen mother was reluctant and told them to do that ~~wix~~ without her word or consent. They went and did it ~~wix~~ against her will. The result was the worst ever undergone by the Swazi. The princes fell in that war like the leaves in autumn, and the country mourned the insupportable loss of the poor and the rich; the noble and the common man; valient and ~~a~~ villians fell alike. The Swazi unwarily ^{went} ~~wix~~ into a trap of hills at Hulu. When all the army was in the Sotho started to shoot them. Remember that a Swazi had no arms, only spears. The Sotho shot and the rest of the army was scattered without killing even a single enemy. The Queen mother of the day was LaZidze: the main war officer was Matsefeni at H¹ohho, Mswati's ~~wix~~ village.

THE EXTENT TO WHICH MSWATI ATTACKED.

It appears that Mswati attacked as far east as Soshangane. The evidence for this is my father's words: who disclosed the name of the regiment of Soshangane who attacked 'Nyamayenlowu Regiment'.

NDAMBI MHKONTA AND OTHERS AT EZULWINI - CONTINUED .

The Royal kraal of Ezulwini is just like the others of Lozitha etc. It is for a sub-wife (Inhlanti). There have never been incwala ceremonies here. There was no fruit fruit from the main wife. But on the first conception a miscarriage occurred and on the second a son was born safely, in the midst of cheers. Then the plant (the son) was transplanted to the main wife, but it had already been declared as a prodigy, because they had lost hope of getting one since the first was spoiled. This plant was named Somhlolo, which meant the prodigy, the son of Ndungunya. Somhlolo later was a king and died during warfare in the area of eDlangeni, but he was not buried there; his body was ~~xxx~~ taken to Mbilaneni in the Royal burial place of Zikhotheni area in the Shiselweni district.

QUESTION A

Who was the head induna of Somhlolo?

It was Nyozwa Nkambule, after whom came Ngeplmga who was later killed. The ~~thirrd~~ was Mangcamane Mavimbela; after Mangcamane had died Phazimane Nkambule was mde induna. He later fled to Mgwenya, where he died. Then Ndungunye Nhlabatsi became a temporary induna. At his death other princes were put in his place until later Mashalimane was made induna. Mashilimane was a former slave so he never had his house in the Royal homestead, but adjoined. The Queen was Mswati's wife, who had come with both male and female slaves. The princes of Ezulwini are Sivubelo, Mantinti, Njaphu etc. * (Mphahle)
Mavelebaleni came here due ~~x~~ to bad health. He came here for the hot water springs. Then he remained here with Maplavu. Mavelebaleni's mother stayed at Zombodze, but later she came to stay here. Shalimane did not want to take chieftainship and was punished (?) for this. He was fined £3 because of his resistance. The original indunas of this village were Nkambule people. The queen who came here came from Njeletwane.

Mswati used to come to the mother of Salimane who had her home in the area. It appears as if there had been no wife of Mswati here. The first queen to come here was Somnjalose, followed by Mavelebaleni's mother.

When the village migrated from Shiselweni to here the Bhembe man was carrying the key or foundation pole of the cattle kraal. The mat of the Queen mother was carried by Maphoka Khumalo's father. The original clans of Ezulwini are: Nhlabatsi, Bhembe, Mavimbela, Nkambule, Maduna. The Ezulwini village was burnt twice by the Zulu. Then the place of burning was named " Twice-burnt".

The Queen mother of Ezulwini left by the king here was Sikanekise Magagula.

Boshiwe was the wife of ~~Sonx~~ Somhlolo.

QUESTION B

Were the Mthethwa people ever here as medicine men?

I don't know.

Apparently they might have had their work, but there was one man who had been amongst ~~h~~ the warriors. In fact it was just like the Sukati man who left his home at Godlwako, which is there even as we speak. Of course the Sukati people came in place of Mbhabha Sibandze, who was the war officer of Sibhejane regiment, and was later killed by the king. Hence the Kings demotion to the name of a paramount chief.

QUESTION C

As Somhlolo left Shiselweni do you know the places at which he camped on the way?

Yes. For example KwaNtshingila near Hlathikhule at Mbulungwane Hill. That was the real Zulwini village. Then from KwaNtshingila he came to this place with these clans: Mavimbela, Bhembe, Nhlabatsi, Thabede, Vilikati, Madonsela, Maduna etc. Here at this place the forefounders were the Mncina people and others. The Mncina people who were found here had ancestors who ~~was~~ once enjoyed privileges. The king had them under his control. Then one of them was given charge of the kin 's cattle ranch known as Bhangumane. Prior to this this man had had his homestead at Emphini Farm in the Malagwane Hill. When later he took charge of Bhangumane cattle ranch at Mdzimba mountain.

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The movement of the Ezulwini kraal from Shiselweni in the south to where it is today in the north ; It started from Shiselweni and camped at Mbulangwane hill, south east of Hlathikhulu. There Somhlolo camped. In fact the Ezulwini stemmed from the Old Lobamba and was built at "Mhahubili". It was twice burnt during the days of Somhlolo. Somnjaloze experienced miscarriage and that oetus was given the name of Cebisa.

*

Nojiba was the great Queen mother and Somnjaloze a sub-queen. Unfortunately the great queen could not produce - her assistant Somnjaloze did but experienced miscarriage first. Both women were Simelane. When the second pregnancy was a success they termed the infant a prodigy. The plant (son) was transplanted to the elder sister of Somnjaloze who could not produce (Nojiba) yet she had the Ngwane queenship. The son was called Somhlolo , meaning that it was a prodigy, born in Shiselweni, when Ezulwini kraal was there. The homestead moved to Kulolubovu in the Ezulwini Valley, from there it went to Ntswelamkhono where Somnjaloze died; from there to Nshakabili (Twice burnt)- all these places were at Ezulwini Valley. From Nshakabili it moved to Maboeleni; from there to Nongini at Mdangalezini; from there to the store; from the store to Ndulo, from there to Kopopzane's field; from there it went up; from there it went to where Mnyasa's home is.

The first Ezulwini village induna was Nyezi Nkambule, followed by Ndephula, followed by Mavimbela, followed by Phazimane, followed by Ndungunye Mhlabathi. Then from there the princes were acting as indunas. From there Mzsalimane carried on the work smoothly. On his death Mashalimane took over, but his chieftainship did not prove successful. When they moved to this place Mvuka Bhembe carried the key pole of the cattle kraal, and Sigane, son of Mshaba carried the mat of the queen mother Somnjaloze. There were many other clans as have been enumerated.

Lutsango Mdzebele was a medicine man.

During the days of Mswati was brought the mother of Salimane, but she had her home adjoining this village. She was from Ekufinyeni, to which she had come from Hhohho. She had many slaves. During the days of Mbandzeni came Sikacekiso.

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