

## MGUNDENI KA MATSHEKANA

&lt;11.7.1918&gt;

File 58, nbk. 16, pp. 32-8.

- 32 Mgundeni ka Matshekana ka Maqoboza ka Mbekelo ka Ndhlovu ka Mtila ka Nongweni *of the Nzuza people*. He is *induna* of Chief Mpatesita. He is of the Ngobamakosi regiment.<sup>1</sup> His father *crossed over* with Mbuyazi at Dhlokweni in 1856, Mgundeni being about three years old.<sup>2</sup> Matshekana *died at the Mtshezi, at Nobamba*.<sup>3</sup>
- My father was of the Imdhlenevu regiment.<sup>4</sup> My uncle was Nozitshada, the great warrior.<sup>5</sup> He and my father were the sons of Maqoboza, and both of the same hut.
- 33 Nozitshada was killed at Maqongqo, the same day or so that Ndhlela died.<sup>6</sup> He was *induna to Dingane*. He fought on Dingane's side, against Mpande and the Boers. There seems some question as to whether Nozitshada had actually been appointed an *induna*, or whether he was merely a great warrior. [See last words on p. 61 as settling this point.]<sup>7</sup>

.... <Praises of Nozitshada omitted - eds.>

Nozitshada kept on stabbing and stabbing at Maqongqo until heaps of corpses lay all around him like a *screen*. His right stabbing arm eventually got swollen, upon which he started stabbing right and left with his left. When at length he was exhausted, he sat down and said that now his king was dead it mattered nothing, therefore they could come and put an end to him, which they accordingly did.

Zulu version. *The fighting qualities of Nozitshada ka Maqoboza of the Nzuza people.*

- He was given the praise, 'He doesn't just lay one corpse on another; he raises a whole heap', because as one man came at him he would stab him and lay him on the ground, and as another came at him he would lay him out on top of the other. Then a whole company (*iviyo*) was seen to charge at him. He continued to stab them, throwing them down on top of the others, forming heaps round him. This continued. They did not know when he had arrived, for he was suffering from swollen feet: the army was over there (i.e. a mile away) and he was over here, for his feet were painful. No sooner had he come up with the enemy than they moved away, even though the fighting was still going on. He felled men here, he felled men there, until they were lying in heaps. He stabbed and stabbed and stabbed with his throwing arm, until it became swollen. He then moved his shield to this side, i.e. to his right, and took his stabbing assegai in his left hand, for his right arm was tired. The enemy had now surrounded him, and were throwing assegais at him and
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then running away, because afraid of his lion-like rushes. Eventually, when his left arm became tired, he sank to the ground. He cried, 'Woh! Come on, stab me,' even letting his assegais fall to the ground. They came up and stabbed him. He cried, 'Stab me! Woh! The king is dead. Come, stab me.' They did so.

He died still a young man (*insizwa*), before he had put on the head-ring, before he had married.

35 Dingana's power was now broken, for he was driven away to the uBombo mountains. They knew that a king who left his home and went to the mountains was finished. Ndhlela escaped. His death followed soon after. He went to the king, who at once asked about Nozitshada and other warriors like him in the Dhlambedhlu. The king said, 'Woh! Where is Ndhlela? My army has been ruined by him, for those warriors of mine are dead. It was he who held it back (*u yi bambile*); it is he who has ruined it. He too must die. It was he who used to say that Mpande was less than nothing.<sup>8</sup> I see that it is he who has ruined my army as well.' He was then put to death. A little later the king also met his death; he was killed by the Swazis.<sup>9</sup>

Nozitshada ka Maqoboza is known among the Mpondo, because of all the fighting he did when Dingana was making war and sending armies everywhere. Nozitshada was about my size, not very tall. People say that I resemble him. [See p. 38.]

36 When Mpande crossed over into Natal, a grudge arose.<sup>10</sup> It was said that Nozitshada had called out at the Tukela as Mpande was crossing, 'Woh! It is clear that we shall not be ruled by a little thing of the *msizi*.'<sup>11</sup> It was apparent that he was referring to the Zulu who were with Mpande. It was said that it was Nozitshada who had called out. When Mpande returned home and became king he held this as a grudge. Nothing happened for a while. Then Mpande asked my father Matshekana, brother of Nozitshada, about this matter. He made him stand up in the assembly (*umpakati*) at Nodwengu.<sup>12</sup> My father was an unmarried youth (*insizwa*) at the time. The king made him turn round, inspecting him. He said, 'Ha! Ha! Ho! Look at Nozitshada's elder brother. Ha! Look, a Zulu! Zulu, are you able to extinguish a powerful house?' Matshekana said, 'Yes, Nkosi; we are a powerful house. If today something came to harm the king, I would die right there with him.' Mpande said, 'Ha! Listen, Zulu! Do you hear what the son of Maqoboza says? What does he say? Is it not a powerful house? He says that Nozitshada was fighting for his own house, that of the Zulu [i.e. his native country, Zululand]. You, Zulu, do you think that a grudge should exist because Nozitshada destroyed my army? Ho! It is a powerful house; he speaks the truth when he says that he would die where I died.'

He, i.e. Matshekana, was then presented with an *iklwa assegai*; he was presented with it by Mpande. [Added by Pindulimi, 13.7.1918.]

Nozitshada was older than my father, Matshekana, among the children of their house. First came Nozitshada, then a girl, Nomapela, then my father, Matshekana. Nozitshada was of Dingana's Dhlambedhlu regiment, and Matshekana of the Mdhlenevu. Among the regiments, the Dhlambedhlu and the *imiHaye* were *upalane* regiments, i.e. equal to one another, and also unmarried (*izinsizwa*).<sup>13</sup> When matters of war were being discussed, a man of the Dhlambedhlu would say to a man of the *imiHaye*, 'O! We

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would overcome you!' The Kandempemvu and Ngobamakosi were upalane regiments, in respect of their time of being buta'd, and in respect of their numbers.

37 This story about Nozitshada was told to us by my father Matshekana, and also by my other 'fathers', old men who were of his age-grade; they told it to me; that is how they told it. I too tell it to my children; I tell them how Nozitshada fought. Some say when his right arm got swollen he took the assegai in both hands and stabbed. That was not so. He stabbed with his left, holding the shield in his right.

My grandfather Maqoboza was a great warrior like Nozitshada. He died in an expedition against Bungane, against the Hlubi people, very long ago.<sup>14</sup> He stabbed one of the enemy war-doctors. As he was pulling out the assegai the man said, 'I am not to be stabbed!' He pulled out the assegai and at once a mass of maggots covered Maqoboza. He died. The impi returned to the Zulu country, leaving him there. Maqoboza was of the age-grade of Manyosi ka Dhlekezele of the Mbata people.<sup>15</sup>

.... <Praises of Maqoboza kaMbekelo, Matshekana kaMaqoboza, Mbekelo kaNdllovu, and Silaja kaMaqoboza omitted - eds.>

38 I am told by people that I am like Nozitshada. [See p. 35.] He was of medium height, dark, thickset. He was given large presents by the king. He had a sweetheart (*ingodosi*) of Myandeya's Mpukunyoni people, but, being a youth (*insizwa*), had not married.

[I take Mgundeni's photo today. Mgundeni is just about five feet nine inches in height, thick-set, strong, dark, and of the Ngobamakosi regiment. His kraal is within two or three miles of Mpatesita's Emfanaye one.]

[Has since died, early 1921 or thereabouts.]

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Formed in 1873 of youths born in the early 1850s.

<sup>2</sup>In 1856 a battle for the succession to the Zulu kingship was fought between the forces of Cetshwayo and his half-brother Mbuyazi at Ndongakusuka near the mouth of the Thukela. After the defeat and death of Mbuyazi many of his followers crossed into Natal. Dlokweni is a locality on the lower Thukela.

<sup>3</sup>The Mtshezi river is marked on maps as the Bushmans. Nobamba is the Zulu name for Weenen.

<sup>4</sup>Formed in the 1840s of youths born in the early 1820s.

<sup>5</sup>On Nozitshada see also Stuart Archive, vol. 1, p. 126, vol. 2, pp. 179, 184.

<sup>6</sup>Dingane fled to the Lubombo mountains after his forces had been defeated by those of his half-brother Mpande in a battle fought at the amaQongqo hills, south of present-day Magudu, in January 1840. Ndlela kaSompisi of the Ntuli people was one of Dingane's principal *izinduna*, and was in command of the king's forces in the battle.

<sup>7</sup>The reference is to a statement made by Phindulimi kaMatshekana, who told Stuart that Nozitshada had not been an *induna*. Phindulimi's evidence will appear in a subsequent volume of the Stuart Archive.

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- <sup>8</sup>Numerous traditions recount that Ndlela dissuaded Dingane from executing Mpande on the grounds that the latter represented no threat to the king's position. See for example Stuart Archive, vol. 1, pp. 6, 127, 196, 197, vol. 2, p. 200.
- <sup>9</sup>According to Lugg, Historic Natal and Zululand, pp. 162 ff., Dingane was killed by the Nyawo people of the chief Sambane.
- <sup>10</sup>Mpande led a large secession movement from the south of the Zulu kingdom into Natal in September 1839.
- <sup>11</sup>At a certain point in the annual *umkhosi* ceremonies, the chief or king, daubed with powdered medicines (*umsizi*), was required to spend the night in a specially prepared hut in the *isigodlo*. There he would be attended by a selected wife, or a girl from the *isigodlo*, with whom he might have intercourse. A child born of the connection was held to be of inferior rank in the chiefly family. Cf. the evidence of Jantshi kaNongila, Stuart Archive, vol. 1, p. 198.
- <sup>12</sup>The precise meaning attributed to the word *umpakathi* varies from one authority to another. According to Fynn, 'The followers of the chief, while in attendance on him at his kraal, are generally designated "Amapakati", understood by Europeans to mean "counsellors". This is an incorrect interpretation.... "Pakati" simply means "within" - and "Amapakati" is understood to mean those who are at the time "within" the chief's circle' (cited in Bird, Annals, vol. 1, p. 119). Colenso, Dictionary, p. 450, gives *umpakati* as 'all the men of a kraal...above the ordinary, common people, people noticed by the chief and indunas, though not specially distinguished....' Bryant, Dictionary, p. 481, defines it as 'all the commoners or "people" of the land (exclusive of the *izinDuna*, *izikulu*, or others in official position) who would... be called up to the king's kraal for the *um-Kosi* festival....' Gibson, Story of the Zulus, p. 121, writes, 'No man who "bore a shield" could be put to death without the King's authority. These bore the proud designation of "Umpakati"'.  
<sup>13</sup>Bryant, Dictionary, p. 482, writes that the term *u-Palane* (*uphalane*) was applied 'to certain regiments of Dingane, Cetshwayo, etc. which regularly accompanied each other in a fight'.  
<sup>14</sup>Bhungane kaNsele was chief of the Hlubi who lived about the upper Mzinyathi (Buffalo) river in the later eighteenth century.  
<sup>15</sup>Manyosi kaDlekezele(?) of the Mbatha people was a notable warrior of Shaka's time.