

MINI, STEPHEN

24.6.1899

File 73, p. 13.

- 13 (Marriage). Natal, per Stephen Mini. Stephen is the chief over the *kolwas* of Edendale.¹ He said to me today that there is no divorce by Zulu custom. The plan was to punish the husband as a means of softening the wife's attitude to him - excite her compassion. Matters would then be placed in a fair way for being repaired. The husband could be ordered to pay back all expenses incurred by the wife on account of food during such time as he had lived apart from his wife, and, in addition to this, he could be ordered to pay a fine to the chief (state).

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File 73, p. 33.

- 33 (Contact with civilized races). I had a conversation with Stephen Mini today, who is the chief in charge of the *kolwas* at Edendale. He says he believes there is very little prostitution among the *kolwas* at Edendale. The root of prostitution, in his opinion, is the facility given to divorce. It is the divorced women that become prostitutes. A few girls may become dissolute, but the evil is in the married women. [Stephen's opinion does not correspond with that of Nontimba (woman) on p. 28.]²

<24.6.1908?>

File 42, item 12, p. 1.

- 1 Stephen Mini says his own *sibongo* is Zolo. He is addressed as Mzolo. The Zulus took their appellation from the amaZolo who were called after the sky and sun - the only race to be so called.³ They are a tribe of very high rank and always make themselves to the front wherever they go. One will always find a Zolo man next to a king or chief.

The Umngeni was known as the Umsonganyati.

24.6.1908

File 42, item 12, pp. 3-4.

- 3 Conversation with Stephen Mini - about 11.30 a.m., 24.6.1908. The original owners of all this part of Natal were the amaZolo. They lived here from time immemorial. Their habitat was the Msonganyati (i.e. Umngeni), beginning some way below Table Mountain and going right

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up to the sources of that river.⁴ The Msonganyati is an obsolete name for the Umngeni. Now these amaZolo are no longer a tribe, but were broken up by Tshaka, and members thereof dispersed in all directions.⁵ Some went to Zululand, others to Swaziland, in each case becoming closely attached to the royalty of that country. The *staff of office* (*induku yo ku busa*) was given to the Zulu king by the amaZolo. They also supplied the eating utensils (*pots*). The amaZolo were the owners of the sky; they were the rain-makers; they were addressed as 'Zulu! *Dhlangamandhla!*'.⁶ A prominent member of the tribe was Nongalo ka Ngwekazi. The Zulus took from them the power of sovereignty - they being the original holders thereof. The amaZizi and amaBele were off-shoots of the amaZolo.

The amaHlubi, amaNgwane and abeSutu sprang from two men, Msutu and Swazi, the chief of these being Msutu. These two are the ones who came down from the north. They quarrelled. When they came down to these parts, the amaZolo were already in situ.

The amaSwazi are descended from the abasemaVaneni people, whose place of residence is away in the north, say, in the neighbourhood of the Zambezi. The Tongas are an off-shoot of them, not vice versa. The Embo people of Natal are an off-shoot of the Swazis, just as the Pondos are.⁷

The amaNtungwa are said to have come down in the *grain-basket* (*isilulu*), *by means of the grain-basket* (*ngesilulu*).⁸ This means that they came floating down the river in this *silulu*. (The *silulu* seems to have been made of skins sewn together, Stephen says.). Stephen heard this tradition of an old man in the Free State some thirty years ago. The river referred to may be the Zambezi. I mentioned that the *silulu* was *rolled* from some mountain near Sikukuku's land; but he refused to believe in the idea.⁹

The Hlubi people want to make out that they are the most ancient in these parts. That is not so. The amaZolo were here before they arrived.

Xosa is also in some way connected with Msutu and Swazi above mentioned, and he is the ancestor of the amaXosa of the Cape colony, who are spoken of as abeNguni.¹⁰

The amaLala down along the coast, i.e. those who existed before Tshaka's day, are also sprung from the amaZolo.¹¹

It is a peculiar characteristic, but there is a natural inclination or tendency in the amaZolo always to associate themselves with the royalty of various countries. They have a bearing that enables them always to come forward into prominence with the authorities.

I asked Stephen to give me a list of the amaZolo chiefs. He enumerated about eight, including Mzolo, Zulu, Ndaba, Gasa and Nongalo ka Ngwekazi.¹² He would not let me write them down, but I remember that these are correct. He wants me to give him a copy of the list of Swazi kings given me by John Gama.¹³ I also asked him to write me an account of the amaZolo people. This he did not actually promise to do, so I thought I would commit to paper as much of his views as I can remember from the half-hour chat we had.

He made some reference to the occasion when the binding up of the private parts with a skin gave way to the wearing of the *prepuce cover* (*umfece*), but as he only touched slightly on the matter, I will not venture to say any more in regard to it.

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Stephen is, I believe, a descendant of the amaZolo, and this no doubt accounts for his rather glowing version of their history.

9.2.1916 - <evidence given 7.2.1916>

File 70, p. 110.

110 The Zulu tribe as arising out of the amaZolo (amaTolo). I had a chat about this with Stephen Mini of Edendale, day before yesterday. It is the second time he has brought the subject to my notice, the first occasion being about six years ago when I was Assistant Secretary for Native Affairs.

He says that old men of, I believe, the amaZolo tribe, now living at or near Waschbank, told him years ago that the Zulu tribe is an offshoot of the much older amaZolo.¹⁴ What chieftainship and pre-eminence or outstandingness the Zulu tribe had was derived from the amaZolo. Neither Zulu nor his father Malandela were *chiefs*.¹⁵ Their original *sibongo*, Lufenulwenja, was also derived from the amaZolo.¹⁶ Associated in antiquity with the amaZolo are the amaZizi. Both these tribes originally came from Swaziland, a country which was inhabited by the Swazis from very ancient times. The amaZolo used to live at the Qudeni, and were rain-makers like the Swazis.¹⁷ Missions were sent to them from surrounding tribes when rain was wanted. Stephen mentioned about eight of their chiefs, ending with the name Mbungela.

In a very ancient age lived three men: Mswazi, Msutu and ... <sic>. These are the progenitors of the Swazis, abeSutu and ... <sic>. Nothing more can be said of them but that, and that they came from the far north, where all the ordinary tribes of South Africa come from.

As evidence of the fact that the Zulus derived their *chiefship* from others, Stephen cites the inability to go more than a limited way back with their genealogy, and even beyond Mageba it is shaky.¹⁸ The Swazis, on the other hand, carry their kings back very much further.

A branch of the amaZolo, under the name of amaTolo, is living somewhere near Harding. The amaBaca are blood relations of the Zulus.

[I see in Part V, 49, 51 of Proceedings, Native Affairs Commission, 1852, the names of tribes: amaBaca and amaTolo, with 'Dushani' as the first tribe's chief, living, prior to the great Zulu invasion of Natal, on the 'site of Pietermaritzburg to Umgeni', and, in 1852, at 'Umzi-mkulu, northern branch'. The amaTolo chief is given as Dibinhlela, living, prior to the invasion referred to, on the 'Umtyezi', and, in 1852, 'beyond Umkomanzi, high up'. In Bird's Annals of Natal, I, 136, 142, 145, 147 are short accounts of the amaBaca, amaZizi, amaTolo and amaTolo-Tunzi. These accounts should be read.]

[I asked Stephen to get one of his informants to come here to me. This he promised to do.]

<11.1.1922>

File 59, nbk. 28, pp. 10-13.

10 Stephen Mini, born 1855.

The story of the amaZolo. Starting with me and going backwards, I know the following: I am the son of Stephanus Mini, and then Stephanus

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is the son of Mxoko ka Gasa ka Mbungela ka Nongalo ka Ngwekazi ka Ngonyama ka Ndaba ka Zulu ka Mnisi - of the amaZolo people. The sky was ruled by these whom I have named. Gasa was the last rain-maker -
11 he was killed on account of it; he was killed by Tshaka. Tshaka said to him, when he had been summoned to make rain, 'Bring rain, not thunder, only rain.' But thunder sounded. Tshaka said, 'You see; you have troubled me by bringing thunder. Do not do this again.' But on another occasion when he wanted Gasa to make rain the thunder sounded. This time Tshaka sent a force to kill him. He was killed near his mountain, Qudeni.

He used to make rain in this way. He had eight pots, which were carried by as many men. These men said that when Gasa was going to make rain he would go to the foot of a cliff and speak to his fathers. His father Mbungela was dead. He would speak to Mbungela, and his request would be taken by Mbungela to his father Nongalo. In turn Nongalo would take it to Ngwekazi, Ngwekazi to Ngonyama, Ngonyama to Ndaba, Ndaba to Zulu, Zulu to Mnisi, Mnisi to others whose names I have forgotten, until it reached the very last one. He would then take it to the one above who created the earth.

Then when Gasa came away from the cliff he would be like a very sick person, one sick for the thing he had asked for. It was said that he sweated, he cried, he was depressed, he was humble, from wanting the
12 thing that he had asked for. Then he would emerge and summon the eight men. The pots would be placed in a reed hut (uhlaka). Then to the side a firestick would be twirled, for a fire was needed. When fire appeared, Gasa himself would rise and light up wood already there and arranged under all the pots. Smoke came forth, and incense (impepo) too, and rose up. With the rising of the smoke a cloud would appear in the sky. He would see that this plea had been heard, and would now wait for the rain.

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I heard from a very old man at the Ngunwenya, beyond the Swazi country, near Delagoa Bay.¹⁹ This was about 90 years ago. He spoke to me about 40 years ago. This is what he said.

There are three kinds of people. The first were Zulu, Msutu, and Swazi. The foremost was Zulu, followed by Msutu, and then Swazi. They came down from up-country. Msutu and Swazi came down, while Zulu remained behind; he was the isizinda son.²⁰ Then Msutu and Swazi quarrelled up on the Drakensberg. They fought, and Msutu was defeated by Swazi. Swazi then went down towards the uBombo. Msutu remained there in the high country.

Today Zulu people can still be found in the country to the north, as also Ngonyama people, Mnisi people and Gasa people.

13 This man Zulu ka Malandela took the place of the man who was really the first to be called Zulu. For the great umuzi of the amaZolweni people was Kwa Noboma. A man, an isikulu of the Zolweni people, took a cat (impaka) from his umuzi beyond Kwa Noboma and took it to another umuzi beyond Kwa Noboma.²¹ He released it there. At once it ran off, and passed through the great one's place at Kwa Noboma. It was seen passing through, making for the isikulu's umuzi, the one from which he had taken it. A fight ensued because of this. The amaZolo fought among themselves. Then the ancestors of the present Zulu, who were the izikulu at our place, raised an impi and took away the title of Zulu

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chiefship.

All people know that the address-name of the Zulu is that of the amaZolo, the name which is used among them, 'Zulu! Dhlangamandhla!'

.... <Praises of Mgungela, Gasa, and Mxoko omitted - eds.>

Notes

- ¹Edendale was a mission station near Pietermaritzburg. Chief Mini appears in a photograph in Samuelson, Long, Long Ago, foll. p. 108.
- ²The reference is to the evidence of Qalizwe, which will appear in a subsequent volume of the Stuart Archive.
- ³The Zulu word for sky is *izulu*.
- ⁴According to Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 357-8, the Zolo (Tolo) once lived in two sections on the upper Mtshezi (Bushmans) and upper Mkhomazi rivers.
- ⁵For variant accounts of the dispersal of the Tolo chiefdoms see Bryant, Zulu History, pp. 33-4, and Olden Times, pp. 357-8.
- ⁶According to Bryant, Olden Times, p. 358, Dlangamandla was 'the great ancestor' of the Tolo.
- ⁷For discussion of the term Embo (Mbo) see Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 7 ff, 232 ff; 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 and 2, indexes.
- ⁸For discussion of the term Ntungwa see the works cited in note 7 above. The meaning of the expression pertaining to the grain-basket is discussed by Bryant in Olden Times, p. 14, Zulu People, pp. 20-2, Dictionary, p. 365; and by Doke and Vilakazi, Dictionary, p. 467.
- ⁹The reference is presumably to the territory occupied by the nineteenth century Pedi chief, Sikhukhuku, in the east of the present-day Transvaal.
- ¹⁰For discussion of the term Nguni see the works cited in note 7 above, and also Hedges, 'Trade and politics', pp. 254-7.
- ¹¹For discussion of the term Lala see the works cited in note 7 above.
- ¹²None of these names is mentioned by Bryant in his discussion of the Tolo (Zolo), Olden Times, pp. 357-8. The names Zulu and Ndaba feature in most versions of the Zulu chiefly genealogy.
- ¹³For Gama's list of Swazi kings see Stuart Archive, vol. 1, pp. 133-34 and 363-5.
- ¹⁴The village of Wasbank is situated some twenty kilometres south-west of Dundee in northern Natal.
- ¹⁵Zulu kaMalandela is commonly regarded as the founder of the Zulu chiefly line.
- ¹⁶On 'Lufenulwenja' as an *isibongo* of the Zulu see also Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 13, 221, 369-70; Stuart Archive, vol. 1, p. 202.
- ¹⁷The Qudeni mountain range lies to the east of the lower reaches of the Mzinyathi (Buffalo) river, close to its confluence with the Thukela.
- ¹⁸Cf. the Zulu chiefly genealogies in Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 32-3.
- ¹⁹The Ngwenya river is marked on maps as the Crocodile.
- ²⁰In a chiefly household, the wives and their children were grouped in sections or 'houses'. Although the *isizinda* ranked below the other

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sections (*indlunkulu, inqadi, ikhohlo*), the senior son of the *isizinda* would, on the death of the chief, or the latter's removal to a new homestead, remain at the old chiefly homestead as its formal guardian. See Bryant, Dictionary, pp. 729-30, Zulu People, pp. 418-19.

²¹Bryant, Dictionary, p. 480, gives *i-mPaka (impaka)* as 'Cat possessed by an *um-takati* as a "familiar", and sent by him on villainous errands....'