

# **THE HISTORY AND REPRESENTATION OF THE HISTORY OF THE MABUDU-TEMBE**

**by**

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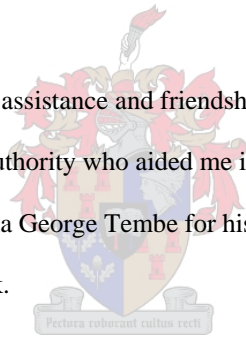
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To my father whose guidance and financial assistance has enabled me to continue my studies. Thank you for allowing me to fulfil my dreams and to reach my goals in life.

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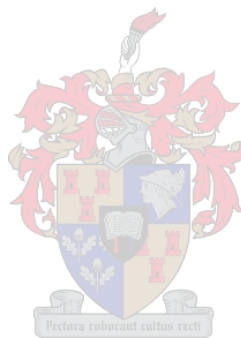
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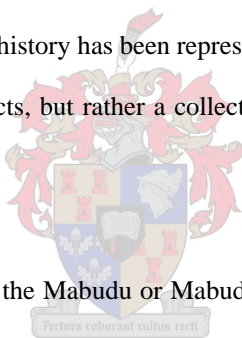
# ABSTRACT

## **The History and the Representation of the History of the Mabudu-Tembe**

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History is often manipulated to achieve contemporary goals. Writing or narrating history is not merely a recoding or a narration of objective facts, but a value-laden process often conforming to the goals of the writer or narrator. This study examines the ways in which the history of the Mabudu chiefdom has been manipulated to achieve political goals. Through an analysis of the history of the Mabudu chiefdom and the manner in which that history has been represented, this study illustrates that history is not merely a collection of verifiable facts, but rather a collection of stories open to interpretation and manipulation.



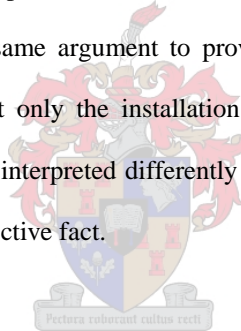
In the middle of the eighteenth century the Mabudu or Mabudu-Tembe was the strongest political and economic unit in south-east Africa. Their authority only declined with state formation amongst the Swazi and Zulu in the early nineteenth century. Although the Zulu never defeated the Mabudu, the Mabudu were forced to pay tribute to the Zulu. In the 1980s the Prime Minister of KwaZulu, Mangusotho Buthelezi, used this fact as proof that the people of Maputaland (Mabudu-land) should be part of the Zulu nation-state.

By the latter part of the nineteenth century Britain, Portugal and the South African Republic laid claim to Maputaland. In 1875 the French President arbitrated in the matter and drew a line along the current South Africa/ Mozambique border that would divide the British and French spheres of influence in south-east Africa. The line cut straight through the Mabudu chiefdom. In 1897 Britain formally annexed what was then called AmaThongaland as an area independent of Zululand, which was administered as 'trust land' for the Mabudu people.

When deciding on a place for the Mabudu in its Grand Apartheid scheme, the South African Government ignored the fact that the Mabudu were never defeated by the Zulu or incorporated into the Zulu Empire. Until the late 1960s the government recognised the people of Maputaland as ethnically Tsonga, but in 1976 Maputaland was incorporated into the KwaZulu Homeland and the people classified as Zulu.

In 1982 the issue was raised again when the South African Government planned to cede Maputaland to Swaziland. The government and some independent institutions launched research into the historic and ethnic ties of the people of Maputaland. Based on the same historical facts, contrasting claims were made about the historical and ethnic ties of the people of Maputaland.

Maputaland remained part of KwaZulu and is still claimed by the Zulu king as part of his kingdom. The Zulu use the fact that the Mabudu paid tribute in the 1800s as evidence of their dominance. The Mabudu, on the other hand, use the same argument to prove their independence, only stating that tribute never meant subordination, but only the installation of friendly relations. This is a perfect example of how the same facts can be interpreted differently to achieve different goals and illustrates that history cannot be equated with objective fact.



Keywords: ethnicity, homelands, Ingwavuma Land Deal, KwaZulu, Mabudu, manipulation of history, Maputaland, Mozambique, south-east Africa, Tembe

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

‘It is not the past as such that has produced the present or poses the conditions for the future (this was the fatal delusion of Naturalism), but the way we think about it.’

André Brink

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on the history of the Mabudu and the ways in which it has been represented at different times to attain diverse political objectives. The representation of the history of the Mabudu is a prime example of how the past can be manipulated to serve contemporary political goals. This was highlighted in 1982 when the government of South Africa attempted to cede the Ingwavuma District<sup>1</sup> in Northern KwaZulu-Natal to Swaziland. The government argued that there were historic and genealogical ties that linked the Mabudu and the other inhabitants of Ingwavuma with Swaziland. Inkhata, lead by Gatsha Buthelezi, launched a counter offensive using historical evidence to show that the Mabudu were in fact tributaries of the Zulu King. Commissioned reports<sup>2</sup> and academic articles<sup>3</sup> used the same historical evidence to show that the Mabudu were neither tributaries of the Zulu nor the Swazi, but instead a kingdom in their own right. This issue was not settled in 1982 and remained heavily debated. At the coronation of the current chief of the Mabudu in 2001, the Zulu King, Goodwill Zweletini, made it clear in his address to the audience that the Mabudu are and have historically been part of the Zulu nation. Although the new Mabudu chief has followed his father’s example by not

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<sup>1</sup> The Ingwavuma District is at present known as the Umhlabayalingana District of the Umkhayakhude Municipality.

<sup>2</sup> F.R. Tomlinson, J.C. Bekker, N.E. Wiehahan, C. Hanekom, J.J. Wessels, C.V. Bothma, J.F. Preller and K. Woerner, *Verslag van die Komitee van Deskundiges oor die Etniese an Historiese Verbintenisse van die Inwoners van Ingwavuma* (Unpublished report, 1982).

<sup>3</sup> See J.J. Van Wyk, ‘Ingwavuma – ‘n Etno-historiese oorsig’, *Journal of Racial Affairs*, 1983, Vol. 34 (2) and P. Harries, ‘History, ethnicity and the Ingwavuma land deal: the Zulu northern frontier in the nineteenth century’, *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, 1983, Vol. VI.



openly defying the Zulu King, the issue that the Mabudu are independent of the Zulu Royal House is put forward time and again at meetings of the Mabudu Royal Council. Furthermore, rumours of covert meetings between representatives of the Mabudu ruling lineage and the Swazi royal family, as well as meetings with chiefs from Southern Mozambique, an area that was historically ruled by the Mabudu, are rife amongst the inhabitants of Manguzi, the town where the 'Tribal Office' of the Mabudu is located.

This study does not propose to present a definitive answer as to whether the Mabudu were historically an independent kingdom or tributaries of the Zulu or Swazi. Instead, it traces the history of the Mabudu from the time of the establishment of the Mabudu chiefdom in the latter part of the eighteenth century and then examines the different representations of the history of the Mabudu. The aim is not to provide a definitive answer on the historical allegiance of the Mabudu, but to illustrate how history can be re-invented, manipulated, contorted and re-imagined to serve specific political objectives. This illustrates that the contents of and manner in which a specific history is related, is determined primarily by the aims of the narrator and not by the truth of 'what really happened'.

Probably the best known example of history being dictated by the goal of the narrator is the re-invention of the history of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in the first half of the twentieth century, especially the role of Stalin in that revolution. The history of South Africa is coloured with similar examples. Closely related to this study, is manner in which the history of the Zulu nation was manipulated and altered by various narrators. Hamilton<sup>4</sup> and Walker<sup>5</sup> have shown how the life history of Shaka Zulu has been manipulated by various groups in South Africa to attain their ends. Colonialists in the nineteenth century presented a history of Shaka as a ruthless and bloodthirsty tyrant to justify planned campaigns against the Zulu. On the other hand, Zulu nationalists have created a different and glorious image of Shaka and the history of the nineteenth century Zulu Empire to fulfil their nationalistic needs.

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<sup>4</sup> C. Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty. The Powers of Shaka and the Limits of Historical Intervention* (Cape Town, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> C. Wylie, *Savage Delight. White Myths of Shaka* (Natal, 2002).

Using the example of the conflicting narrations of James King on the character of Shaka, Hamilton<sup>6</sup> clearly illustrates how the contents of history can be determined by the goals of the person relating a particular history. King, who had previously been employed by James Farewell, had set up an independent trading station at Port Natal in 1825. After the deterioration of relations between Shaka and the traders, and, after his company had experienced problems at Port Natal, King returned to the Cape to obtain cargo. When he first reached the Cape, King's reports about Shaka were positive. He described Shaka as 'obliging, charming and pleasant.' However, after his appeal to the colonial authorities for assistance failed, King painted a different picture of Shaka in an article in the *South African Commercial Advertiser*. He described Shaka as a 'despotic and cruel monster' and asked for assistance in rescuing his company from Port Natal. By doing this he was able to gain the necessary assistance to fit a new vessel and to set sail for Port Natal.

In a similar manner Coetzee<sup>7</sup> has shown how Afrikaners, who before the 1990s adamantly refused any connection between themselves and the historical inhabitants of Africa have, in an effort to 'find a connection with an African identity', reinterpreted the story of Krotoä, remembering her as 'our mother'. Krotoä was the wife of Pieter van Meerhoff, a Danish surgeon who joined the Dutch East India Company in 1659 and settled at the Cape. When her husband died the two children of the Khoikhoi woman, Krotoä, were removed from her. Her children were placed with a white mother and Krotoä was banished to Robben Island. Her banishment to Robben Island had long been considered a fitting end to life and her role as 'biological ancestor' of many Afrikaners has long been denied in all Afrikaner versions of the story. But now, as Coetzee<sup>8</sup> says, 'those whose ancestors denied any relation with her ancestors' claim her blood. Afrikaners now use their ancestry to this woman as a 'legitimate access to the new rainbow family.'

With regards to the history of the Mabudu, Dominy<sup>9</sup> argues that the manipulation of the history of Ingwavuma, especially the 'brouhaha' that erupted with the plans of the South African government to

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<sup>6</sup> C. Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty. The Powers of Shaka and the Limits of Historical Intervention* (Cape Town, 1998) pp. 38-43).

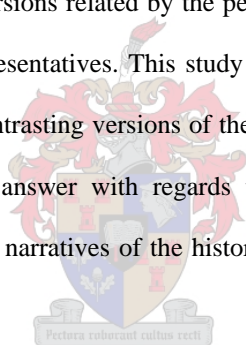
<sup>7</sup> C. Coetzee, 'Krotoä remembered: a mother of unity, a mother of sorrows?' S. Nuttall & C. Coetzee, *Negotiating the Past: The Making of History in South Africa* (Oxford, 1998), pp.113-116.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>9</sup> G.A. Dominy, 'The Ingwavuma dispute revisited: African trade route and European buffer zone', *Kleio*, 1986, Vol. XVIII., p. 71.

cede Ingwavuma to Swaziland, is an excellent example of what H. R. Wright has termed the 'burden of the present'. Because history is used too directly to 'underpin ideology, justify current policies and as ammunition in quarrels with political opponents' Dominy argues, with Wright, that the present has become a 'burden to good historical practices.' Therefore Dominy argues that with regards to the Ingwavuma Land Deal we are faced with the 'burden of the present.' Dominy clarifies by saying that politicians and 'interested parties of all hues and persuasions used some historical facts and much historical fantasy to justify their actions and to revile their opponents'.

It will be illustrated throughout this study how historical facts were used and sometimes turned to fiction by different role players in their assessments of the history of the Mabudu. As stated above, the 'burden of the present' has not been relieved with regards to the people of Ingwavuma, especially with regards to the Mabudu. The history of the Mabudu, as related by the representatives from Nongoma and Ulundi differs sharply from the versions related by the people from KwaNgwanase and also from the version dictated by the Swazi representatives. This study looks at the events that took place that enabled and, for some, necessitated contrasting versions of the same history. It is, as stated above, not an attempt to provide the definitive answer with regards to the history of the Mabudu, but an exploration into the ways in which the narratives of the history of the Mabudu changed through time and when different groups narrated it.



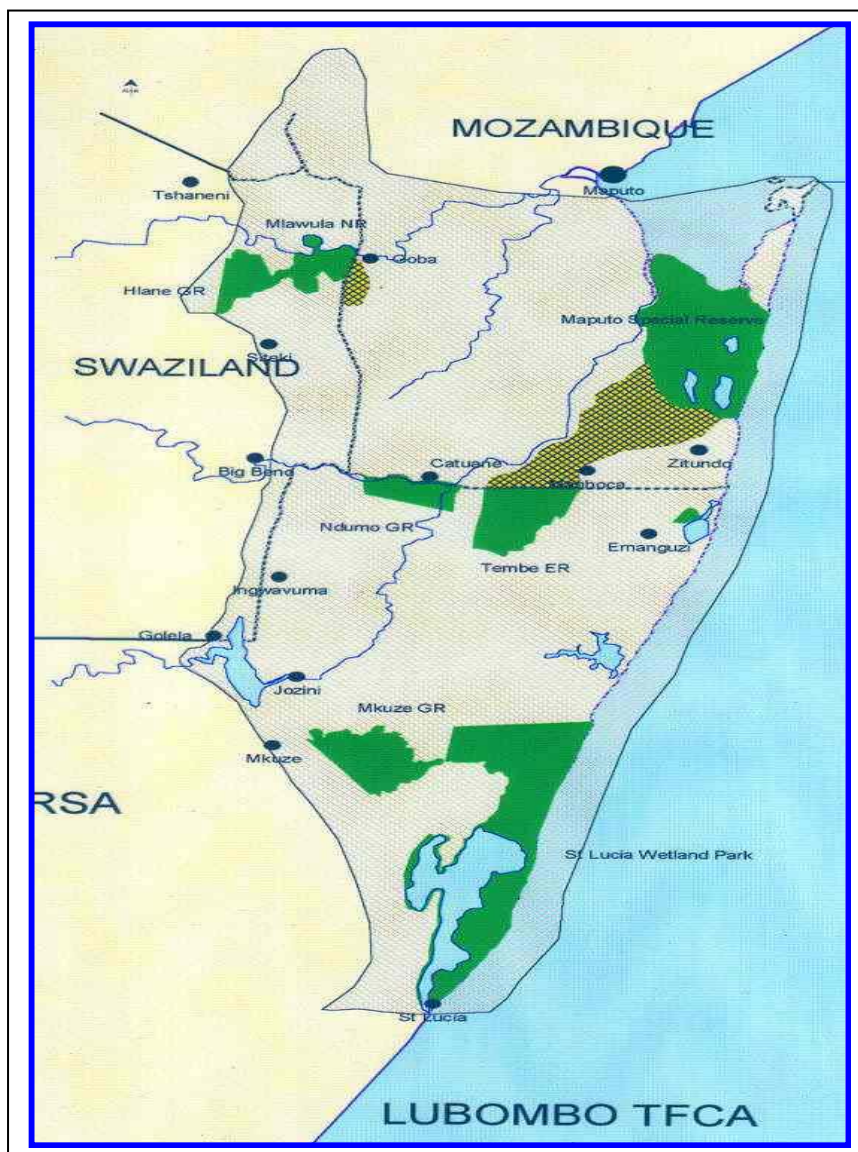
The remainder of this chapter provides information on the early history of the Mabudu and on the geography and ecology of the area. It is followed with a discussion on the methods used to conduct the research and an examination of the primary and secondary sources used for the research. The chapter ends with an introduction to the rest of the study and the presentation of the layout of the dissertation.

## 2. MAPUTALAND: THE AREA AND ITS PEOPLE UP TO 1750.

### 2.1. Aspects of the natural environment

Captain W. Owen of the British Navy first called the area stretching from Delagoa Bay in the north to Lake St. Lucia in the south, bounded in the west by the Pongola (Maputo) River and in the east by the Indian Ocean 'Mapoota' Land in 1822 (see Map 1).<sup>10</sup>

**Map 1: Maputaland**



Source: Map compiled by James Culverwell, Global Environment Facility

<sup>10</sup> A.T. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* (London, 1965) p. 290.

The name Maputaland, as well as the name of the Maputo River (Pongola River) and Maputo Bay is derived from the Mabudu or Mabudu-Tembe who claimed authority over this vast area when Captain Owen visited the area.<sup>11</sup> Nowadays Maputaland is used colloquially to refer to the Umkayakhude Municipality in northern KwaZulu-Natal. The Umkayakhude Municipality covers the entire area between the Lubombo Mountains and the Indian Ocean and between the Mozambique/South Africa border and Lake St. Lucia.<sup>12</sup> In this study Maputaland is used to refer to the original area under the authority of the Mabudu stretching from Delagoa Bay (Maputo Bay) to Lake St. Lucia and from the Pongola (Maputo) River to the Indian Ocean.

Maputaland lies at the southernmost part of a low-lying coastal plain that borders Africa's eastern seaboard stretching from Somalia in the north to northern KwaZulu-Natal in the south.<sup>13</sup> In Zulu the area is called 'Umhlaba'yalingana' which literally means the 'earth that is flat'. The region classified in this study as Maputaland encompasses five interlocking ecological zones. These ecological zones run from north to south parallel to the coastline. Lying to the east of the Lubombo Mountains is the Pongola zone, which includes the floodplain and extensive pan system of the Pongola River.<sup>14</sup> The floodplain plays a major role in the economic life of the people living in the area. Fish caught in the pans are a major food source in the area while the grasses on the floodplain offer good grazing for cattle, especially in winter months when the surrounding veldt is dry. The alluvial deposits on the sides of the river are furthermore valued for their agricultural potential.<sup>15</sup> Between the Pongola zone and the Muzi Swamp lies the Sand Forest Zone.<sup>16</sup> The Sand Forest Zone is the most sparsely populated area in Maputaland due to its lack of water, there being virtually no surface runoff when it rains. Its major value to local people lies in rich veldt resources and pasture.<sup>17</sup> The third zone is called the Muzi Swamp and Palm-belt Zone. This area was once a shallow waterway that linked Delagoa Bay with

<sup>11</sup> D.W. Hedges, *Trade and Politics in Southern Mozambique and Zululand in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, PhD., London School of Oriental and African Studies (London, 1978) p. 135.

<sup>12</sup> A. Mountain, *Paradise Under Pressure* (Johannesburg, 1990) p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> M.N. Bruton & K.H. Cooper (eds.), *Studies on the Ecology of Maputaland* (Cape Town, 1980) pp. xvi-xvii.

<sup>14</sup> A.B. Cunningham, *The Resource Value of Indigenous Plants to Rural People in a Low Agriculture Potential Area*, PhD, University of Cape Town (Cape Town, 1985) p. 10.

<sup>15</sup> P.J. Derman & C. Poultney, *The social Dynamics of Smallhold Farming in the Sipondweni District of the Makathini flats*, Report S-92, (Human Sciences Research Council, 1983), p.35.

<sup>16</sup> A.B. Cunningham, *The Resource Value of Indigenous Plants to Rural People in a Low Agriculture Potential Area*, PhD, University of Cape Town (Cape Town, 1985) p. 10.

<sup>17</sup> A. Mountain, *Paradise Under Pressure* (Johannesburg, 1990), pp. 41-43.

Lake St. Lucia via the Muzi and Mkhuze Swamps.<sup>18</sup> The area was once very rich in wildlife and the *ilala* palms (*Hyphaene coriacea*) have always played an important role in the socio-economic lives of the local people, being tapped for palm wine.<sup>19</sup> The Coastal Lake Zone is made up of a chain of barrier lakes, lagoons and swamps. A line of high littoral-forested dunes divided the Coastal Lake Zone from the Coastal Zone.<sup>20</sup>

The ecological characteristics of Maputaland played an important role in the history of the Mabudu. It would appear that ecological factors more than anything else prevented the Zulu and other groups from settling in Maputaland and subjugating the local people.<sup>21</sup> More attention will be paid to these factors in Chapter 2. Here it is important to note that Maputaland as a whole used to be fever-ridden and that Tsetse fly made cattle keeping almost impossible. In a visit to Maputaland in 1875 Leslie<sup>22</sup> remarked that 'As the birthplace of mankind was Asia, so, I believe, the birthplace of the mosquito-kind must have been upon the Usutu.' There were five different species of tsetse fly in the area that made trypanosomiasis (sleep sickness) endemic to the area. Together with trypanosomiasis, gall-sickness, heartwater and biliary fever made cattle keeping almost impossible, especially in the summer months and when droughts lowered these animals' physical resistance. Because of these reasons local people often preferred to keep pigs and fowls or goats that were resistant to blood parasites carried by tsetse flies<sup>23</sup>, not preferred by Zulu, Swazi and Gaza peoples who raided the area.

Local people in Maputaland were predominantly cultivators<sup>24</sup> and to a large extent collectors. A large part of their diets used to, and still is to a large extent, made up of fish caught in the rivers and pans of the area and wild fruits that they collect from the forest (See Plate 1 and Plate 2). Furthermore, over

<sup>18</sup> A.B. Cunningham, *The Resource Value of Indigenous Plants to Rural People in a Low Agriculture Potential Area*, PhD, University of Cape Town (Cape Town, 1985) p. 10.

<sup>19</sup> A.B. Cunningham & A.S. Wehmeyer, 'Nutritional value of palm wine from *Hyphaene coriacea* and *Phoenix reclinata* (Arecaceae)', *Economic Botany*, 1988, Vol. 42 (3), pp. 302-303.

<sup>20</sup> A. Mountain, *Paradise Under Pressure* (Johannesburg, 1990), pp. 47-78.

<sup>21</sup> W.S. Felgate, *The Tembe Thonga of Natal and Mozambique: An Ecological Approach* (Durban, 1982) p. 11.

<sup>22</sup> D. Leslie, *Among the Zulus and AmaThonga* (Glasgow, 1875) p. 247.

<sup>23</sup> A de V. Minnaar, 'Nagana, big-game drives and the Zululand game reserves (1890s-1950s)', Natal and the Union period. A collection of papers on developments in Natal 1910-1961, presented at a workshop at the University of Natal, October 27-28 1988, Department of Historical Studies, University of Natal, (Pietermaritzburg, 1989), pp. 1-3., P.A. Harries, *Work, Culture and Identity. Migrant Laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, c. 1860-1910* (Johannesburg, 1994) pp. 10-11.

<sup>24</sup> C. Ballard, 'Trade, tribute and migrant labour: Zulu and colonial exploitation of the Delagoa Bay hinterland 1818-1879', *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, 1978, Vol. I, p. 102.



centuries they have developed certain agricultural techniques foreign to the Nguni-speaking peoples living to their south.<sup>25</sup> The principal agricultural technique used is slash-and-burn, swidden or shifting agriculture.<sup>26</sup> In this system, a piece of land is cleared by cutting down any large trees and slashing away the undergrowth. After the remaining tangles of grass and weeds have dried, it is set on fire. The ash from the vegetation provides a natural fertilizer for the soil. Farmers harvest their crops at different times so that there are always crops growing in the fields. Between the planting and harvesting of crops, relatively little effort is needed from the farmer, except for weeding and protecting crops from wild animals. After several years the nutrients in the soil become depleted and weeds start to dominate again. The plot is then abandoned and a new plot is cleared for cultivation.<sup>27</sup> Because of this technique a Portuguese explorer, Manuel de Mesquita, named Maputaland *Terra dos Fumos* (Land of Smoke) in 1557.<sup>28</sup> These agricultural techniques were foreign to the Zulu who not adopt them and were thus not able to survive in the area.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, considering the importance of cattle in Zulu culture it is plain to see why they did not wish to settle in Maputaland.<sup>30</sup>

Ecological factors do not only account for the fact that surrounding African groups did not colonize Maputaland, visiting Europeans where as frightful of what was known as 'Delagoa Bay fever'. 'Delagoa Bay fever' was in all probability a combination of Malaria, yellow fever and typhoid fever. These three fevers were especially prevalent in the summer months.<sup>31</sup>

These then are some aspects of the natural environment of Maputaland that played a determining role in the history of the Mabudu. These points will be highlighted throughout the study to illustrate their importance.

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<sup>25</sup> W.S. Felgate, *The Tembe Thonga of Natal and Mozambique: An Ecological Approach* (Durban, 1982) p. 11.

<sup>26</sup> R.J. Kloppers, *The Utilisation of Natural Resources in the Matutaine District of Southern Mozambique: Implications for Transfrontier Conservation*, MA, University of Pretoria (Pretoria, 2001) p. 102.

<sup>27</sup> D. Hicks & M.A. Gwyne, *Cultural Anthropology* (New York, 1996) p133.

<sup>28</sup> A. Mountain, *Paradise Under Pressure* (Johannesburg, 1990) p. 12.

<sup>29</sup> W.S. Felgate, *The Tembe Thonga of Natal and Mozambique: An Ecological Approach* (Durban, 1982) p. 11.

<sup>30</sup> See E.J. Krige, *The Social System of the Zulus* (Pietermaritzburg, 1985) pp. 185-189.

<sup>31</sup> P. Harries, *Work, Culture and Identity. Migrant Laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, c. 1860-1910* (Johannesburg, 1994) p.11.

## 2.2. History of the local people of Maputaland to 1750

Little information is available on the history of Maputaland prior to the 1750s. The historical evidence available suggests that before the period of state formation in south-east Africa the inhabitants of Maputaland lived in numerous, scattered, small-scale political units. These units varied in size from a few hundred to several thousand square kilometres and in population from fewer than a thousand individuals to several thousand individuals.<sup>32</sup>

According to Kuper<sup>33</sup>, a social anthropologist, the best term to use when describing the political units of pre-conquest south-eastern Africa is chiefdoms. These chiefdoms were made up of diverse populations, yoked together by a leader. It was only when colonial leaders established them that stable political communities and tribal, ethnically homogenous chiefdoms came into being. Allegiance to and authority of the various autonomous chiefs was at any time questionable. Furthermore, the social and geographical boundaries of any chief's domain were always contentious, with a common leakage of commoner households from central control.<sup>34</sup>

Schapera<sup>35</sup> remarked in this regard that 'the creation of new tribes by fission is a constantly recurring feature of the political system. Disputes among members of the royal family often cause one of them to move away, and if accompanied by enough people he will usually start his own tribe. The great majority of existing tribes ... are said to have originated in this manner'.

Chiefdoms were thus usually fluid and unstable entities being continuously reconstituted through enlargement, splitting and reformation.<sup>36</sup> These structural problems were exacerbated by the fact that chiefdoms were oftentimes multilingual and ethnically plural. Groups within the chiefdom were

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<sup>32</sup> J.Wright & C. Hamilton, 'Traditions and transformations. The Pongola-Mzimkhulu region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.' A. Duminy and B. Guest (eds.), *Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910. A New History* (Pietermaritzburg, 1989) pp. 57-58.

<sup>33</sup> A. Kuper, 'The academic frontier. History and Social Anthropology in South Africa.' P. McAllistar (ed.), *Culture and the Commonplace. Anthropological Essays in Honour of David Hammond-Tooke* (Witwatersrand, 1997) p. 74.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, p. 74.

<sup>35</sup> I Schapera, *Government and Politics in Tribal Societies* (London, 1956) p. 27.

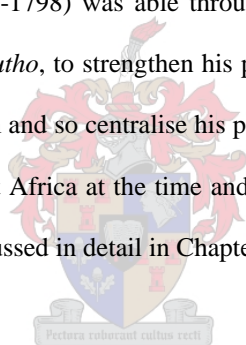
<sup>36</sup> J.Wright & C. Hamilton, 'Traditions and transformations. The Pongola-Mzimkhulu region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.' A. Duminy and B. Guest (eds.), *Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910. A New History* (Pietermaritzburg, 1989) p. 58.



organised into a hierarchy according to their origins and cultural affinities. Highest status was appropriated to those members who could claim direct ascendancy from the founding ancestor of the chiefdom or affinity to the chiefly line. Next in line were those communities who shared the language and culture of the core group. At the bottom of the hierarchy were the outsiders, forbidden to hold cattle and to reside in the main centres.<sup>37</sup>

The fluidity and instability of these early chiefdoms in south-eastern Africa was an indication of the degree of decentralisation of power in the chiefdoms. There were no institutions through which a chief could exercise more than a temporary control over the armed men of the chiefdom as a whole. Usually men mobilised on a local basis under local community leaders. The chief could therefore not command enough firepower to be able to subdue dissident groups and so prevent subordination.<sup>38</sup>

In Maputaland chief Mabudu (c. 1740-1798) was able through a transformation of the functions of groups of young men, known as *amabutho*, to strengthen his power and exert the necessary control to subdue dissident groups in the kingdom and so centralise his power. As stated above, this was part of a broader process occurring in south-east Africa at the time and was linked to the expansion of trade at Delagoa Bay. This process will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.



The Mabudu or Mabudu-Tembe is the junior branch of the Tembe or Tembe-Thonga clan.<sup>39</sup> According to Harries<sup>40</sup>, anthropologists and historians have long relied and used the boundaries of ethnic classification to bring a neat, Cartesian logic to the understanding of the peoples of Southern Africa. Junod, a missionary who lived in and around Lourenco Marques during 1889-1895 and again from 1907-1921, classified the Tembe or Tembe-Thonga as part of the Thonga tribe. More specifically, the Tembe were classified as being part of the Ronga clan (see Map 2).<sup>41</sup>

<sup>37</sup> A. Kuper, 'The academic frontier. History and Social Anthropology in South Africa.' P. McAllistar (ed.), *Culture and the Commonplace. Anthropological Essays in Honour of David Hammond-Tooke* (Witwatersrand, 1997) p. 75.

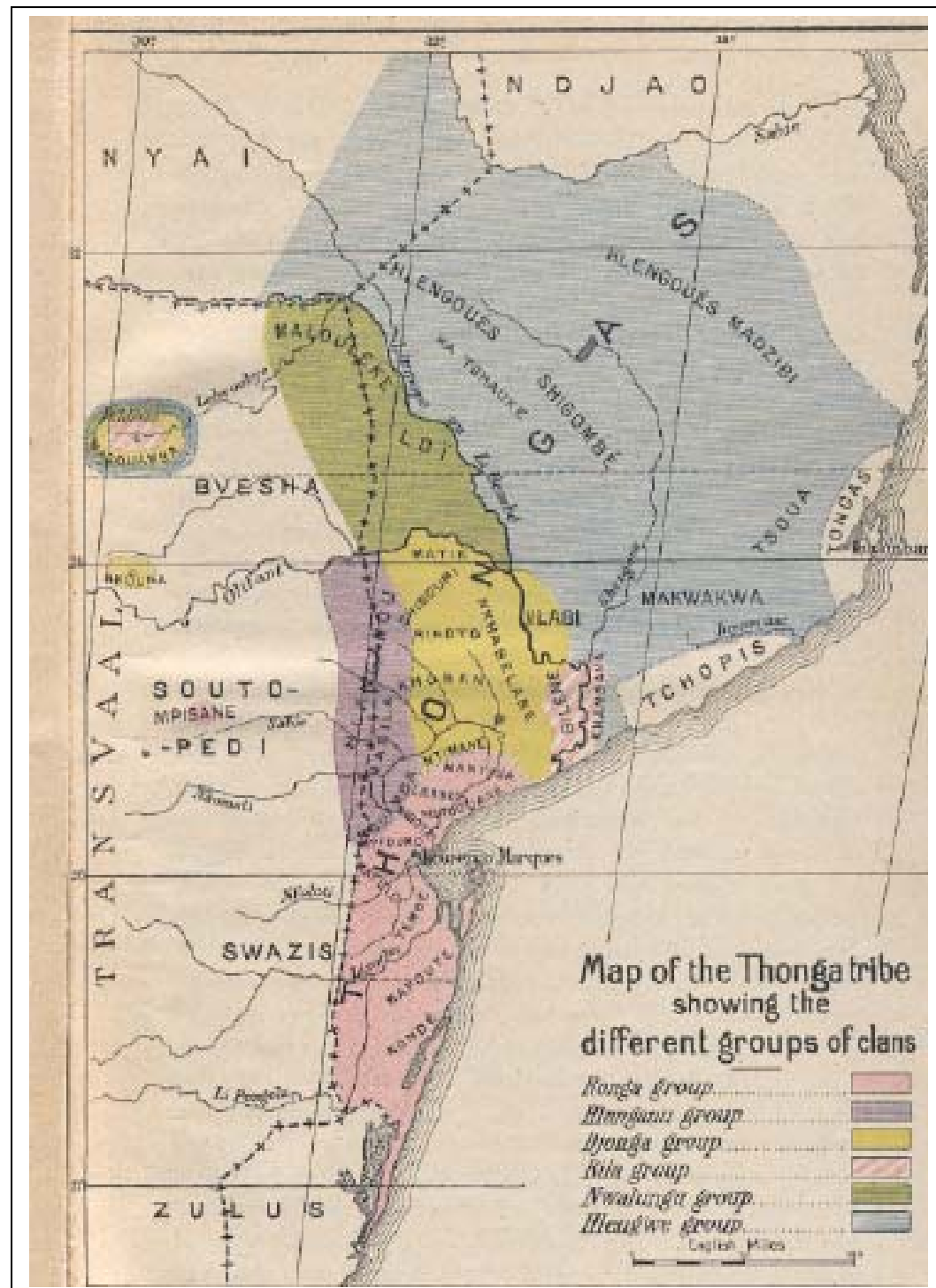
<sup>38</sup> J. Wright & C. Hamilton, 'Traditions and transformations. The Pongola-Mzimkhulu region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.' A. Duminy and B. Guest (eds.), *Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910. A New History* (Pietermaritzburg, 1989) p. 58.

<sup>39</sup> W.S. Felgate, *The Tembe Thonga of Natal and Mozambique: An Ecological Approach* (Durban, 1982) p. 1.

<sup>40</sup> P. Harries, *Work, Culture and Identity. Migrant Laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, c. 1860-1910* (Portsmouth, 1994) p. 1.

<sup>41</sup> H.A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe. Volume I: Social life* (New York, 1962) p. 16.

**Map 2: An early 20<sup>th</sup> century representation of the distribution of the Tsonga clans in south-east Africa**



Source: H.A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe. Volume 1: Social Life* (New York, 1962) p. 16.

According to Bryant<sup>42</sup> the 'Tembe Tongas' form part of a group he classified as the Tonga-Nguni. Both Junod and Bryant classified the Tembe as part of the Thonga tribe on the grounds that their language and customs resembled that of the people living to their north.<sup>43</sup>

Historians and anthropologists (with some exceptions) have adopted this ethnic classification of the people of south-eastern Africa without question. In a report written by De Bruin<sup>44</sup> in 1987 he states that the Tembe belong to the Tsonga tribe who historically inhabited four different regions in Southern Africa. Likewise, in 1983, an ethnologist at the University of Pretoria, J.J. van Wyk<sup>45</sup>, stated that the Tembe belonged to the Tsonga grouping, although, according to him, they have strong ties with the Swazi.

The strong link between the Swazi and the Mabudu is also evidenced in oral accounts. One local version relates that the father of Thonga or Tsonga had twins who were both sons. To distinguish them from one another he made a scar on one's face and called him Swazi. The other son was called Tsonga. Thus, the Tsonga and the Swazi share, according to this relation, a common ancestry. The Swazi also recognise this common ancestry with the Tembe. Accordingly, they claim that Ngwane, the founder of the AmaNgwane kingdom moved from Maputaland and crossed the Lubombo Mountains while his brother, Tembe, stayed behind in Maputaland.<sup>46</sup> This became a contentious issue in the 1980s as the government of Swaziland made strong claims to the Ingwavuma District, the northern part of the Umkhayakude Municipality. The South African government accepted the claims on conditions that the Bantustan of Kangwane also be incorporated into Swaziland. The Zulu, however, claimed to have ruled the area for more than 100 years.<sup>47</sup> The so-called Ingwavuma Land Deal never materialised and today the area is still under the authority of the South African government, although the Swazi and Zulu still claim authority on the grounds of common ethnicity.

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<sup>42</sup> A.T. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* (London, 1929) p. 286.

<sup>43</sup> H.A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe. Volume I: Social life* (New York, 1962) pp. 14-16; A.T. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* (London, 1929) pp. 286-293.

<sup>44</sup> J.P. De Bruin, *Die Onvoltooide Sendingtaak in Maputaland* (Pretoria, 1987) p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> J.J. Van Wyk, 'Ingwavuma – 'n Etno-historiese oorsig', *Journal of Racial Affairs*, 1983, Vol. 34 (2), pp. 60-62.

<sup>46</sup> F.R. Tomlinson, J.C. Bekker, N.E. Wiehahan, C. Hanekom, J.J. Wessels, C.V. Bothma, J.F. Preller and K. Woerner, *Verslag van die Komitee van Deskundiges oor die Etniese en Historiese Verbintenisse van die Inwoners van Ingwavuma* (Unpublished report, 1982) p. 28.

<sup>47</sup> P. Harries, 'History, ethnicity and the Ingwavuma land deal: the Zulu northern frontier in the nineteenth century', *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, 1983, Vol. VI, p.1.

Although this ethnic classification is a convenient way of organising the peoples of south-eastern Africa, it is a distortion of the reality. The people classified as being Thonga had a very different sense of identity, more closely tied to a clan or a chief.<sup>48</sup> The same holds true for the classification of people as for example being Swazi, Zulu and Sotho, since, as stated above, people tied their identity more closely to a clan or chief.

Thus, although the classification of the Tembe or Mabudu as being Thonga is questionable, it is interesting to examine the reason why Junod, Bryant and scholars after them classified the Tembe as being part of the Thonga (Tsonga) tribe. At the time when Bryant lived in south-eastern Africa the idea of a 'bounded tribe' as the characteristic political and social unit of Africa was central in British Social Anthropological thought. The 'tribe' was seen as 'a group of people occupying a specific territory under the political authority of a hereditary chief. It was economically more or less self-sufficient, politically more or less autonomous, and to a large degree united by ties of kinship, culture and language.'<sup>49</sup> Thus, based on similar language and political and social organisation the Tembe came to be seen as part of the Tsonga or Thonga tribe. Thonga (Tsonga) is an appellation that the people themselves do not accept<sup>50</sup> and which was used by the Nguni-speaking groups living to their south to classify them.<sup>51</sup> According to Junod<sup>52</sup> the Zulu term Ronga (Tsonga) means orient or dawn and was used by the Zulu to refer to all the people living north of them on the eastern coast of Africa. Junod also states that the word is equivalent to slave and is thus not preferred by the people classified thus. An informant of James Stuart told him in 1902 that the word Tsonga is an *isicilo* (an appellation that causes a person embarrassment) and that the proper name for the people living in Maputaland is *AbakwaMabudu*, which means the people of Mabudu.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> P. Harries, *Work, Culture and Identity. Migrant Laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, c. 1860-1910* (Portsmouth, 1994) p. 3, see also P. Harries, 'Exclusion, classification and internal colonialism: the emergence of ethnicity among the Tsonga speakers of South Africa.' L. Vail (ed.), *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (London, 1989).

<sup>49</sup> J. Wright & C. Hamilton, 'Traditions and transformations. The Pongola-Mzimkhulu region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.' A. Duminy and B. Guest (eds.), *Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910. A New History* (Pietermaritzburg, 1989) p. 53.

<sup>50</sup> Zululand Lands Delimitation Commission, 'Brief sketch of the Zulu history during the last century and a half', Annexure G, Final Report, 1902-1904.

<sup>51</sup> H.A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe. Volume I: Social life* (New York, 1962) p. 15.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>53</sup> C. De B. Webb & J.B. Wright (eds.), *The James Stuart Archive of Recorded Oral Evidence Relating to the History of the Zulu and Neighbouring Peoples, Volume 2* (Durban, University of Natal) p.157.

One version of a local tradition in Maputaland is that Tsonga or Thonga is a word of Arabian descent. Accordingly, early Arabian traders called the people of east Africa Thonga which meant hunter. Apparently this name was given to the people because of their renowned skill as hunters due to the goods they traded with the Arabian traders. Apart from local oral tradition no similar evidence could be found to support this theory.

According to Felgate,<sup>54</sup> the Tembe claim to have migrated from Kalanga or Karanga in present-day Zimbabwe to the area surrounding Delagoa Bay. However, recent archaeological research as well as research on the recorded oral traditions of KwaZulu-Natal shows that 'the historically known African societies of the region did not 'migrate' into it in fixed ethnic units, but emerged locally from long-established ancestral communities of diverse origins and heterogeneous cultures and languages'.<sup>55</sup>

The Tembe take their name from Tembe, the founder of their clan. According to Bryant, it is not certain to which clan Tembe belonged. Because of the language the Tembe people spoke when Bryant worked amongst them he argues that Tembe's ancestors must have been closely related to the ancestors of the Ndau (from Sofala in Mozambique), the Karangas (from Zimbabwe) and the local people from Nyassaland.<sup>56</sup> According to an oral tradition there is indeed a very strong link between the Mabudu and the Ndau. It is said that before the people of Maputaland were called Thonga or Mabudu they were called *abaNdau*, an appellation that links them with the people from Sofala Province in Mozambique. Recent research by Yong-Kuy Chang<sup>57</sup> in KwaNgwanase in Maputaland has shown that local diviners claim to be possessed by Ndau spirits and that they claim Ndau spirits as lineage ancestors.

Junod<sup>58</sup> had no doubt that the Tembe migrated southwards from Karanga to Mozambique. He argues that Tembe people greet each other with the salutation, Nkalanga (man from the north or of Kalanga country). Junod also relates the legend that the Tembe migrated southwards on an island of papyrus

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<sup>54</sup> W.S. Felgate, *The Tembe Thonga of Natal and Mozambique: An Ecological Approach* (Durban, 1982) p. 10.

<sup>55</sup> J. Wright & C. Hamilton, 'Traditions and transformations. The Pongola-Mzimkhulu region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.' A. Duminy and B. Guest (eds.), *Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910. A New History* (Pietermaritzburg, 1989) p. 56.

<sup>56</sup> A.T. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* (London, 1929) p. 292.

<sup>57</sup> Y. Chang, *Doing Business: Practice of Divination in KwaNgwanase, KwaZulu-Natal. Searching for Symbolic Exegesis and Sociological Interpretation*, Ph.D, University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg, 2001) p. 53.

<sup>58</sup> H.A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe. Volume I: Social Life* (New York, 1962) p. 23.

crossing the Nkomati and Tembe rivers before settling south of Delagoa Bay. According to Junod, although there are 'legendary traits' in this tradition, there is no doubt that the Tembe migrated from the north.

Whether the Tembe migrated from Karanga or whether they had always been in the vicinity of Delagoa Bay, it is certain that by the middle of the sixteenth century they were in the area surrounding Delagoa Bay. The Portuguese chronicler, Perestrello mentions a chief called Tembe living near Lourenco Marques in 1554. Bryant takes this chief to be the ancestor of the Tembe clan.<sup>59</sup> If this is true, then there was roughly a period of 250 years of unity in the Tembe clan before the division between the Mabudu and Matutwen branches occurred.

The Tembe clan was divided into two branches after the death of Silamboya in 1746 (see Figure 1).<sup>60</sup> According to Bryant<sup>61</sup> the division of the Tembe clan must have taken place earlier when the father of Silamboya, Ludahumba died in 1728. He attributes this to the fact that Ludahumba was buried at the old Tembe home on the banks of the Mtembe River, whereas both Mangobe and his son Mabudu were not buried there. He does not, however, state where Silamboya was buried. However, in the genealogy of the Tembe chiefs presented by Bryant<sup>62</sup> he illustrates that the sons of Silamboya, Muhali and Mangobe are the respective heirs of the senior (Matutwen) and junior (Mabudu) branches of the Tembe. Silamboya's oldest or senior son, Muhali did not reign, but died during his father's lifetime. His descendants settled in the area between the Umbeluzi (English) River and the Maputo River. The descendants of the younger son of Silamboya, Mangobe settled in the area between the Maputo River and the Indian Ocean.<sup>63</sup>

According to Bryant,<sup>64</sup> the junior branch was culturally superior, although by birth inferior, to the senior branch. In Bryant's argument culture is seen to be the result of the ways in which human groups adapt to their natural environment. The junior branch is thus judged to be culturally superior because of

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<sup>59</sup> A.T. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* (London, 1964) p. 293.

<sup>60</sup> W.S. Felgate, *The Tembe Thonga of Natal and Mozambique: An Ecological Approach* (Durban, 1982) pp. 1-2.

<sup>61</sup> A.T. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* (London, 1965) p. 290.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, p. 293.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 290-293.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, p. 291.

superior means of utilising natural resources to their advantage. For instance, they owned more cattle and were better agriculturists than the senior branch. The junior branch were also extensively involved in trade, while the senior branch was dependent on the junior branch for many of their supplies.

The language and customs of the Tembe (both branches) differed markedly from that of their Nguni neighbours (Zulu, Swazi and Xhosa) to the south. They had more in common with people who lived in the area extending to the north of present-day Maputo Bay (see Map 2). According to Bryant,<sup>65</sup> when compared with the Nguni tribes, they were 'a race physically much inferior, timid and unwarlike, yet withal much more industrious, artistic and keen on commerce'.

After Mangobe had secured his authority in the lowland area between the Umbelusi and the Maputo rivers he established his capital near present-day Madubula in the southern part of the Maputo Province in Mozambique. According to Hedges the site of Mabudula offered several advantages. Firstly, the area was naturally protected with the Pembenduene River to the West and the Maputo River to the east. In the south was Lake Mandjene and during a substantial part of the year perilous marshes lay in all directions from the capital. Secondly the hinterland of Mabudula was more attractive for elephant hunting than northern Tembeland (Catembe) and also more suited to cattle keeping. Furthermore the fertile soils of the Maputo River offered additional advantages. Thirdly the capital where Mangobe settled was within twenty kilometres of the confluence of the Usuthu and Pongola rivers where they form the Maputo River. This allowed Mangobe to control all passage to the southern and western areas.<sup>66</sup>

Mangobe further ensured his control of the lowlands by the placing of his sons. His chief wife, Mitshydyhlwate had three sons. Each of these sons took responsibility for a different province of the area under Mangobe's control. Nkupo was placed in control of the northern province bordering Delagoa Bay. Mpanyela ruled eMatutuine (near Mabudula). Mabudu, his youngest son, was placed in

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<sup>65</sup> A.T. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* (London, 1965) p. 290.

<sup>66</sup> D.W. Hedges, *Trade and Politics in Southern Mozambique and Zululand in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, PhD., London School of Oriental and African Studies (London, 1978) p. 135.



control of the area south and east of the Maputo River. A fourth son of Mangobe, Ndumu was appointed to the area near the confluence of the Usuthu and Pongola rivers.<sup>67</sup>

Mangobe died in the period between 1758 and 1765. His eldest son, Nkupo succeeded him. However, Nkupo did not move his capital from the northern part of Tembeland to where his father had settled. His physical distance from his brothers and the fact that he did not possess the same leadership skills his father had led his brothers to declare themselves independent. The division in the Tembe clan widened in the remaining decades of the eighteenth century largely due to the evolution of a new kingdom south of the Maputo under the leadership of Mangobe's third son from his principal wife, Mabudu.<sup>68</sup> This kingdom, which is the focus of this study, reached its military and political apogee during the rule of Mabudu (c.1740-1798). The process whereby Mabudu established and broadened his power and influence over the area will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

### 3. HISTORIOGRAPHY

The principal primary sources on the history of Maputaland before the arrival there of literate observers are the works of A.T. Bryant<sup>69</sup> and James Stuart. Stuart's original notes, which were previously inaccessible, have been translated and edited by Webb and Wright and published between 1976 and 1986. According to Duminy and Guest,<sup>70</sup> it 'would be difficult to overemphasise the impact this project has made on the study of Zulu history. It was seized upon by several scholars who, employing new techniques in the interpretation of oral evidence, have been able to piece together a history of preliterate south-east Africa that overturns much of what appeared in the earlier histories, with their heavy reliance on the work of A.T. Bryant during the 1920s and 1930s.'

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, p. 136.

<sup>68</sup> D.W. Hedges, *Trade and Politics in Southern Mozambique and Zululand in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, PhD., London School of Oriental and African Studies (London, 1978) p. 137.

<sup>69</sup> A.T. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* (London, 1965) and *A history of the Zulu and Neighbouring Tribes* (Cape Town, 1964).

<sup>70</sup> A. Duminy & B. Guest (eds.), *Natal and Zululand from Earliest Times to 1910. A New history*. (Pietmaritzburg, 1989).



Wright and Hamilton<sup>71</sup> sketched a critique on the work of Bryant and the way in which scholars have uncritically accepted many of his interpretations, despite recent research showing flaws in the information he provided. The main critique levied against Bryant's work is that his interpretation of the history of south-east Africa is based on two false assumptions. In the first place Bryant believed that the oral histories he collected could be taken as fact. According to him relatively little information can be gathered through oral traditions since they deal mainly with warfare and raiding. Thus, when historical information does survive in oral traditions they must be founded on fact. During fieldwork for this dissertation it has however been clear that although a large percentage of oral history deals with warfare and raiding one cannot simply take the historical information that does survive as fact. Oral relations are constantly reshaped and manipulated. Plainly stated, people remember events and relate those events in ways that glorify themselves or the groups they belong to. One must therefore be extremely careful to simply accept oral history as fact. Rather, oral histories should be used as guidelines. This can either be to put one on the right track towards finding the truth of 'what really happened' or, as in cases where oral relations are clearly fabricated or manipulated, they illustrate certain emotions or events which a person or group feel ashamed of or wish to have transpired in a different manner. A lot of the time the value of an oral history is thus not factual, but rather in what it reveals about peoples' feelings and interpretations of their own history. This does not only hold true for oral traditions, but for all representations of history. As was discussed in the introduction to this chapter, the way in which history is narrated is influenced and determined by the objective of the narrator.

The second 'false' assumption found in Bryant's work, identified by Wright and Hamilton,<sup>72</sup> is that he believes the oral histories he collected reflect the histories of discrete and unchanging 'clans.' The question of ethnicity and ethnic classifications has already been dealt with above. It was argued that the classification of the peoples of south-east Africa into neat groups (clans, tribes) based on a model of Europe in the pre-historic era is a distortion of reality. Before the era of state formation in south-east

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<sup>71</sup> J.Wright & C. Hamilton, 'Traditions and transformations. The Pongola-Mzimkhulu region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.' A. Duminy and B. Guest (eds.), *Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910. A New History* (Pietermaritzburg, 1989) pp. 50-57.

<sup>72</sup> J.Wright & C. Hamilton, 'Traditions and transformations. The Pongola-Mzimkhulu region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.' A. Duminy and B. Guest (eds.), *Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910. A New History* (Pietermaritzburg, 1989) pp. 50-51.

Africa people lived in fluid ever changing social groupings (chiefdoms). Thus, Bryant's misconception is based on the fact that he presents his information to be 'read as the histories of discrete polities.'<sup>73</sup>

However, despite these shortcomings in the works of Bryant, his work should not be disregarded. It still provides valuable information on the region and are, as Wright and Hamilton rightly say, 'indispensable works for the historian, but now less as histories than as source-books for the rewriting of history.'<sup>74</sup>

Another writer whose documents on the Tembe are seen as authoritative is Henri-Alexandre Junod. Like Bryant, Junod was a missionary. He lived in Lourenco Marques from 1889-1895 and from 1907-1921.<sup>75</sup> His authoritative work, *The Life of a Southern African Tribe* is a collection in two volumes of a broad spectrum of social customs and religious beliefs of the peoples of south-eastern Africa. Junod's focus was primarily on the people he classified as the Tsonga tribe. As stated above, he saw the Tembe as part of the Tsonga tribe, more precisely he classified the Tembe amongst the Southern Tsonga or Ronga clan.<sup>76</sup> As is the case with Bryant it would be unfair for the modern-day scholar to level undue critique on Junod's ethnic classification, although it is not accepted anymore. As was stated earlier, at the time when they were writing the notion of the bounded 'tribe' as the primary social and political unit in Africa was central in British Social Anthropological thought.<sup>77</sup>

Junod was primarily interested in recording the social customs and religious beliefs of the people he lived amongst before these became extinct due to continuous contact with white people and the effects of industrialisation.<sup>78</sup> His information on the history of the 'Tsonga' in general and the Tembe in particular is therefore sketchy and superficial. He merely provides a brief overview of the main historical events in the area.

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, p. 55.

<sup>74</sup> J.Wright & C. Hamilton, 'Traditions and transformations. The Pongola-Mzimkhulu region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.' A. Duminy and B. Guest (eds.), *Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910. A New History* (Pietermaritzburg, 1989) p. 56.

<sup>75</sup> P. Harries, *Work, Culture and Identity. Migrant Laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, c. 1860-1910* (Portsmouth, 1994) p. xi.

<sup>76</sup> H.A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe. Volume I: Social Life* (New York, 1962) p. 16.

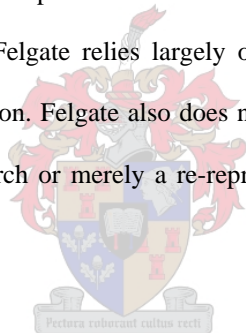
<sup>77</sup> J.Wright & C. Hamilton, 'Traditions and transformations. The Pongola-Mzimkhulu region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.' A. Duminy and B. Guest (eds.), *Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910. A New History* (Pietermaritzburg, 1989) p. 53.

<sup>78</sup> P. Harries, *Work, Culture and Identity. Migrant Laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, c. 1860-1910* (Portsmouth, 1994) p. xi.

Similar to Junod, other anthropologists who worked in the area also provide information on the history of the Tembe in general and the Mabudu in particular. The focus of all these works is however on anthropology and historical information presented is thus not as in-depth. Of particular importance is a collection of manuscripts and ethnological reports written by J. Bradley who served as state ethnologist in Ingwavuma in the 1970s and the works of Walter Felgate and David Webster.

Bradley's reports provide base-line information on the people and the area and the true value of it lies in the fact that he regularly updated information on the ruling lineage in the area. This work did not, however, extend much further than a regular update of the genealogy of the ruling Mabudu family.

Walter Felgate did research in Maputaland in the 1960s. He defined his study as an 'ecological approach' of the Tembe of Natal and Southern Mozambique. Although the largest part of his work focuses on the way in which people in Maputaland utilise natural resources, one chapter is devoted to the history of the Tembe. However, Felgate relies largely on the works of Bryant and Junod and presents very little additional information. Felgate also does not always stipulate whether information he presents is based on his own research or merely a re-representation of facts stated by Junod and Bryant.



Although David Webster did research for his PhD in Mozambique on identity in Chopi society, he did, thereafter spend time in Maputaland. He published two articles on his work in Maputaland entitled, 'Abafazi Bathonga Bafihlakala. Ethnicity and Gender in a KwaZulu Border Community' and 'Tembe-Thonga Kinship: The Marriage of Anthropology and History.' As the title of the latter article implies Webster paid particular attention to history as an explanation for social factors in Maputaland. Webster did not write the history of the area himself, but relied heavily on the work of respected historians, especially David Hedges.

David Hedges's PhD, *Trade and Politics in Southern Mozambique and Zululand in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, is an extraordinary work concerning the early history and rise of the Mabudu. Hedges argues that the trade in ivory at Delagoa Bay played a defining role in the centralisation of the Mabudu chiefdom. This argument is widely accepted, since, according to Wright

and Hamilton<sup>79</sup> there is no other hypothesis that adequately explains why political centralisation and expansion should have occurred in this region in the late eighteenth century.

Concerning the history of the Mabudu in the Nineteenth and early Twentieth centuries, the most important works, apart from those already mentioned, are those by Harries and Ballard. Harries, *Work, Culture and Identity. Migrant Laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, c. 1860-1910* and 'History, Ethnicity and the Ingwavuma Land Deal: The Zulu Northern Frontier in the Nineteenth Century' like Ballard, 'Migrant Labour in Natal 1860-1879: With Special Reference to Zululand and the Delagoa Bay Hinterland' and 'Trade, Tribute and Migrant Labour: Zulu and Colonial Exploitation of the Delagoa Bay Hinterland 1818-1879' focus primarily on economic forces in the history of south-eastern Africa. However, through these discussions valuable information is presented on events in Maputaland in general and within the Mabudu chiefdom in particular.

All recent prominent studies on the history of Maputaland have tended to focus on the economic history of the area and the influence of trade and migrant labour on the area and its people. There can be no doubt that economic factors played a determining role in the history of the Mabudu. However, the question has to be asked whether economic factors alone can account for so much. For instance, it is argued that trade at Delagoa Bay caused political centralisation and expansion in the Mabudu chiefdom, however, at the same time the Ndwandwe and Mthethwa chiefdoms were experiencing similar processes, although it is not directly linked to the Delagoa Bay trade. Thus, although the rise of the Mabudu can be explained in terms of the Delagoa Bay trade, the fact that similar processes took place amongst other chiefdoms in south-east Africa at the same time that cannot be explained by economic factors alone casts some doubt on single-factor explanations, like the expansion of the Delagoa Bay trade. It is however to date the most convincing argument put forward and is examined in the next chapter in more detail.

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<sup>79</sup> J.Wright & C. Hamilton, 'Traditions and transformations. The Pongola-Mzimkhulu region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.' A. Duminy and B. Guest (eds.), *Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910. A New History* (Pietermaritzburg, 1989) p. 62. Also see J. Laband, *Rope of Sand. The Rise and Fall of the Zulu Kingdom in the Nineteenth Century* (Johannesburg, 1995), pp. 13-14.

#### **4. METHOD**

A combination of historical and ethnographic methods was used in the conduct of research for this dissertation. Primary and secondary sources were consulted for information on the history of the region and specifically for information on the Mabudu. Ethnographic methods were used to record oral accounts on the history of the Mabudu. These included the genealogical method and key informant interviews.

##### **4.1. Historical methods**

###### **4.1.1. Primary sources**

Primary sources available on the history of the Mabudu are limited. The most important works are the Stuart Archive (discussed above), reports by state ethnologists, as well as a report drawn up by a government commissioned committee of specialists in 1982 on the ethnic classification of the clans of the area and a report by Ds. De Bruyn on the mission of the church in Ingwavuma.

The reports by state ethnologists are located in the Archives of the Secretary for Native Affairs, Natal Archives Depot as well as at the Magistrate's Offices at Ingwavuma. The files contain up to date information on the Mabudu peoples, covering all aspects of succession as well as problems that occurred within the chiefdom. It also contains genealogies of the Mabudu ruling lineage that were used to ensure that genealogies drawn in the conduct of research were accurate. Furthermore, the files contain the minutes of various meetings held between the state appointed magistrate and the ruling family. In its totality the information is factual, without elaborate detail on specific events.

The report by the specialists on the ethnic groupings in the Ingwavuma District drawn up in 1982 contains the results of research by respected ethnologists and historians on the origins of the clans living in Ingwavuma. The report is the result of a government commissioned research endeavour on whether Ingwavuma should have been incorporated into Swaziland or remained as a part of KwaZulu. The findings of the committee are that there are very strong ethnic and historical links between the

inhabitants of Ingwavuma and the inhabitants of Swaziland. As stated above, the government of South Africa proposed in the 1980s to incorporate Ingwavuma in Swaziland and so provide Swaziland with access to the sea on condition that the previous Bantustan of Kangwane is also incorporated into Swaziland. Although the findings of the commission, chaired by F.R. Tomlinson, were based on archival work on the history of the region, it should be borne in mind that the commission was formed on accounts of a political agenda of the previous South African government. It should be noted that Prof. J.C. Bekker, Prof. N.E. Wiehahn and Prof. C. Hanekom all decided not continue with the workings of the committee. What their motives were is not stated clearly in the report. Considering other sources on the history of the Mabudu it would appear that the information on the history of the Mabudu is based on fact, although some of the conclusions as to the ethnical ties of the people living in Ingwavuma may be questioned. The content of this report is discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

The report by Rev. J. P. de Bruin on the tasks of the church in Maputaland draws largely on the history of the Mabudu as found in Junod<sup>80</sup> and Bulpin.<sup>81</sup> The sketch is brief and in essence a synopsis of work done by other researchers.



#### **4.1.2. Secondary sources**

Secondary sources consulted in the research for this dissertation were discussed in paragraph 3 under the heading of Historiography.

#### **4.2. Ethnographic methods**

Fieldwork was conducted from July 2001 to March 2002. The genealogical method as well as key informant interviewing were used in the conduct of research.<sup>82</sup> With the aid of *inkosi* Mabudu Israel Tembe people were identified who were knowledgeable on the history of the Mabudu. Whilst compiling the genealogy people were asked to relate information on specific persons and events that took place in their time. Follow-up interviews were conducted with people who showed a marked

<sup>80</sup> H.A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe. Volume I: Social Life* (New York, 1962).

<sup>81</sup> T.V. Bulpin, *Natal and the Zulu Country*, (Cape Town, 1969).

<sup>82</sup> See J. Mouton & H.C. Marais, *Metodologie van die Geesteswetenskappe: Basiese Begrippe* (Pretoria, 1989).

knowledge on the history of the Mabudu. Information thus gained, was compared with reports of the state ethnologist and information gained in primary and secondary sources.

## **5. LAYOUT OF DISSERTATION**

The following three chapters trace the history of the Mabudu from the creation of the Mabudu chiefdom in the mid-1700s. It is done through an analysis of three different, although in some respects, related events that caused a gradual decline in the social and political authority of the Mabudu in south-east Africa.

Chapter 2 deals with the processes of state formation amongst the Zulu, Swazi and other northern Nguni groupings in the early nineteenth century and how these processes influenced the socio-political authority of the Mabudu. The chapter opens with a discussion of the traditional use of the *mfecane* as an organising concept for the events that took place in the early nineteenth century in south-eastern Africa. It moves on to illustrate how trade at Delagoa Bay and later at Port Natal caused a restructuring of political units in the area. At first these processes led to the formation of the Mabudu chiefdom. As other united political communities in the area started to compete for control over trade in the area the Mabudu lost its ascendancy and entered a tributary system with the Zulu. Although never completely under the authority of the Zulu, the Mabudu were vassals of the Zulu until the Zulu empire itself fell in 1879.

Chapter 3 looks at how the colonisation of south-east Africa influenced the socio-political authority of the Mabudu. As introduction the history of European presence in south-east Africa is traced. Attention is then focused on the division of the Mabudu chiefdom between Portugal and Britain along the current South Africa/ Mozambique border. The impact of the fragmentation is highlighted through an analysis of the contrasting policies of colonial administration followed by Portugal and Britain. Portugal disregarding traditional customs and authority structures (centralisation and assimilation) and Britain using traditional authority structures to rule (indirect rule). The chapter concludes with a relation of the flight of the Mabudu king from his traditional homestead in northern Maputaland (Mozambique) to his new home in British AmaThongaland (South Africa).

Chapter 4 examines the ways in which ethnic identity can, like history, be manipulated. It looks at the incorporation of southern Maputaland in the KwaZulu Homeland in 1976 and the impact thereof on the socio-political authority of the Mabudu. As discussed above, the people of Maputaland were traditionally classified as Southern Thonga (Tsonga) or Ronga. In 1976 however, southern Maputaland became part of KwaZulu, the 'nation-state' created for the Zulu people in line with the National Party's apartheid policy. Up to 1976 southern Maputaland was administered as trust land for the Mabudu. In 1976 this area was placed under the authority of the KwaZulu government and the people of Maputaland were now classified as Zulu. This 'imposed' ethnic identity became a problem for the South African government in 1982 when the government tried to cede northern KwaZulu to Swaziland. Studies were launched to assess the 'real' ethnic identity of the people of Maputaland, the government hoping that it would prove the people to be Swazi so that the government could justify giving this area to Swaziland.

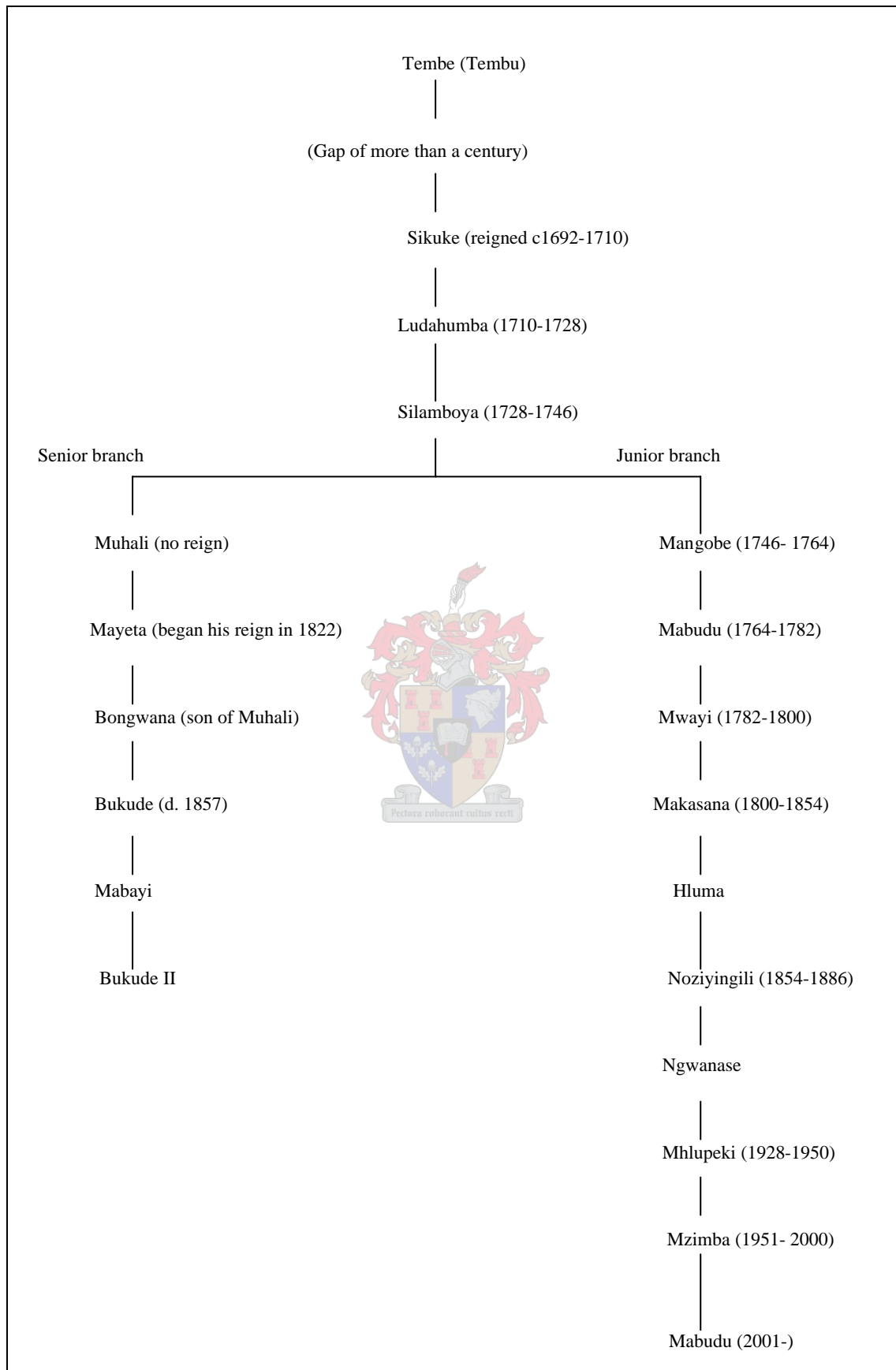
The fifth chapter of this dissertation serves as a concluding chapter. It examines the ways in which the history of the Mabudu was represented at various times and by various protagonists to attain their ends. The disputes that arose about the history of the Mabudu centred around one principal theme- was the Mabudu historically (i.e. before the colonisation of south-eastern Africa by European powers) an independent kingdom or a tributary of the Zulu or Swazi kingdoms? This issue first came to light after the defeat of the Zulu nation at the hand of the British Empire and the subsequent incorporation of Zululand in Natal. Britain annexed the disputed southern sections of the Mabudu chiefdom arguing that it was part of the Zulu area. The British did, however, not incorporate the Mabudu chiefdom on these grounds, thus illustrating that Britain viewed the Mabudu chiefdom as independent of the Zulu Kingdom. The Mabudu chiefdom was only formally annexed by Britain in 1897 as British AmaThongaland. In 1910 it fell under the authority of the Union government. From that time until 1976 the area was administered as a trust land for the Mabudu chiefdom. In 1976, as stated above, the area was placed under the control of the Zulu nation-state government. It was not, however, until 1982 that the issue of the 'truth' of the history of the Mabudu became a much publicised issue. Just as ethnologists tried to show or disclaim the cultural bonds between the Mabudu and the Swazi on the one hand and the Mabudu and the Zulu on the other, so historians tried to prove and disprove the historical allegiances and tributary relationships of the Mabudu. As stated in the introductory paragraph to this



chapter, the issue is still contentious and was put on the table once more by the Zulu King during the coronation of chief Israel Mabudu Tembe in 2001.



Figure 1: Genealogy of the Tembe *amakhosi*



## CHAPTER 2

# THE INFLUENCE OF STATE FORMATION AND POLITICAL CENTRALISATION IN SOUTH-EAST AFRICA ON THE AUTHORITY OF THE MABUDU IN MAPUTALAND (1750-1879).

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the effects of political centralisation and state formation in south-east Africa on the authority of the Mabudu chiefdom in Maputaland. More specifically, this chapter looks at how state formation amongst the Zulu, Swazi and other northern Nguni groupings in the early nineteenth century challenged the authority of the Mabudu as the strongest political unit in south-east Africa.

Traditionally, historians used the Zulu term *mfecane* (Sotho: *difaqane*) to explain the rise of political states in Southern Africa and the subsequent wars of conquest and socio-political turmoil that followed it. The use of the *mfecane* as an explanatory concept is no longer widely accepted by historians. Van Aswegen<sup>1</sup> published an article on the history of the use of the *mfecane* concept and recent developments in explanations on the events in south-east Africa in the eighteenth century. For purposes of the present study it is thus only necessary to briefly examine the use of the *mfecane* concept and arguments made against it.

Historians like Theal<sup>2</sup>, Bryant<sup>3</sup>, Walker<sup>4</sup> and MacMillan<sup>5</sup> all explained the political transformation of south-east Africa in the eighteenth century as being the result of the genius of one man, Shaka of the Zulu clan. Basically, it is related that Shaka, the bastard son of Senzagakhona, chief of the Zulu clan,

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<sup>1</sup> H.J. Van Sweden, 'Die *Mfecane*. Werklikheid of mite?', *Historia* Vol. 39(1), May 1994.

<sup>2</sup> G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa*, Vol. 5 (Facsimile issue, Struik, Cape Town, 1964), p. 434.

<sup>3</sup> A.T. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* (London, 1929).

<sup>4</sup> E.A. Walker, *A History of Southern Africa* (London, 1957), p. 203.

<sup>5</sup> W.M. MacMillan, *Bantu, Boer and Briton* (London, 1963), pp. 30-32.

rose from obscurity to usurp the chieftainship of the Zulu clan after the death of his father. Driven by his thirst for power, Shaka, the Black Napoleon, conquered clan after clan to eventually establish his authority over much of south-east Africa. Shaka's wars of conquest caused a chain reaction of warfare and terror that led to the reorganisation of the political structure in Southern Africa. This chain reaction of warfare and destruction is referred to as the *mfecane*. At the same time, it is relayed that the *mfecane* caused the resettlement of black people in South Africa, which effectively opened the interior for white settlement.

Max Gluckman was the first historian to put forward an alternative to the 'great man' explanation of state formation in south-east Africa in the eighteenth century. Gluckman argued that the political changes that took place in south-east Africa in the late eighteenth century was the result of intensifying conflicts over scarce resources due to the expanding population of the region.<sup>6</sup> Gluckman's theory was reiterated and build upon by J.D. Omer-Cooper and his adherents.<sup>7</sup>

Evidence to back up the idea that it was an increase in population that caused conflict over resources has however remained tenuous. A variation of this theory suggests that it was not so much an increase in population that caused intense conflict over scarce resources, but that there was a decline in the productivity of agricultural and grazing land due to centuries of unscientific farming.<sup>8</sup>

According to Wright and Hamilton<sup>9</sup> the most persuasive argument put forward is that the initial dynamic for the political transformation of south-east Africa was the expansion of trade in slaves and ivory at Delagoa Bay. Led by Julian Cobbing, a number of historians have gone so far as to argue that the demand for labour in the Cape colony and the subsequent penetration of whites into the interior in search of slaves provided the initial dynamic for state formation and political centralisation in south-

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<sup>6</sup> M. Gluckman, 'The rise of a Zulu Empire', *Scientific American*, 1963, p. 202.

<sup>7</sup> J.D. Omer-Cooper, *The Zulu Aftermath: A Nineteenth Century Revolution in Bantu Africa* (London, 1966), pp. 24-27.

<sup>8</sup> J. Guy, 'Ecological factors in the rise of Shaka and the Zulu kingdom.' *Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa* (Hong Kong, 1980), pp. 102-103.

<sup>9</sup> J. Wright & C. Hamilton, 'Traditions and transformations. The Pongola-Mzimkhulu region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.' A. Duminy and B. Guest (eds.), *Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910. A New History* (Pietermaritzburg, 1989) p. 61.

east Africa.<sup>10</sup> According to Van Aswegen<sup>11</sup>, Cobbing based his argument on three important insights: that the process of state formation in south-east Africa started before the creation of the Zulu kingdom; that it did not originate in Zululand, but north of Zululand in the area surrounding Delagoa Bay and; that the events were caused by external forces (i.e. Portuguese slave traders) and not by internal forces (i.e. the exploits of Shaka).

Although Van Aswegen disputes some of the interpretations made by Cobbing, notably the role of Portuguese slave traders before 1823 in Cobbing's argument<sup>12</sup>, two points are clear. Firstly, state formation and centralisation in south-east Africa first occurred in the middle of the eighteenth century amongst the Mabudu, Ndwandwe and Mthethwa. Secondly, attempts by various chiefdoms surrounding Delagoa Bay to secure the lucrative trade routes and commodities transferred on them led to territorial expansion of chiefdoms and the strengthening of the political power of ruling chiefs over their subjects to control the trade routes.

The wars of conquest and expansion that accompanied state formation caused a total restructuring of the political landscape of south-eastern Africa and in areas beyond that.<sup>13</sup> The authority of the Mabudu chiefdom in Maputaland, which was the strongest state in south-east Africa during the latter half of the eighteenth century<sup>14</sup>, was challenged by these events. Although the Zulu, or groups fleeing the onslaught of the Zulu, never conquered the Mabudu, the Mabudu were forced to enter into a tributary relationship with the Zulu that lasted until the 1860s.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, various individuals and groups of refugees came to settle, either temporarily or permanently in Maputaland. Some of these groups, notably the followers of Soshangane, put pressure on the Mabudu people to provide them with

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<sup>10</sup> J. Laband, *Rope of Sand. The Rise and Fall of the Zulu Kingdom in the Nineteenth Century* (Pietermaritzburg, 1995), p. 14.

<sup>11</sup> H.J. Van Aswegen, 'Die Mfecane. Werklikheid of mite?', *Historia* Vol. 39(1), May 1994, p. 29.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 31-32.

<sup>13</sup> See J.D. Omer-Cooper, *The Zulu Aftermath. A Nineteenth-Century Revolution in Bantu Africa*, (Norfolk, 1975).

<sup>14</sup> D. Webster, 'Tembe-Thonga kinship: the marriage of Anthropology and History', *Cahiers d'etudes Africaines*, 1986, Vol. 104, p. 614.

<sup>15</sup> Zululand Lands Delimitation Commission, 'Brief sketch of the Zulu history during the last century and a half', Annexure G, Final Report, 1902-1904.

resources like cattle, goats and crops.<sup>16</sup> Together these events caused a decline of the authority of the Mabudu in Maputaland.

In the first part of this chapter the formation of the Mabudu state is examined. It is argued, in line with leading historians on the subject<sup>17</sup>, that the expansion of trade at Delagoa Bay played a pivotal role in the formation and expansion of the Mabudu state. The second part of this chapter analyses the ways in which the Mabudu's authority was challenged by the formation and expansion of other states in south-eastern Africa.

## 2. FORMATION OF THE MABUDU KINGDOM

As was stated in Chapter 1, the Mabudu rose to political prominence in south-east Africa during the reign of Mabudu (c. 1740-1798). Although Mabudu was not appointed to succeed his father, he had, at the time of the death of Mangobe already established his rule over the southern part of his father's chiefdom.<sup>18</sup>

Mangobe was succeeded by Nkupo, the oldest son of his principal wife. However, Nkupo had neither the leadership skills nor the character that his father possessed to keep the area under his control. It thus transpired that Mabudu, who was placed in control of the area south and east of the Maputo River by his father, eventually established his control over the entire area over which Mangobe ruled and beyond that.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> J.D. Omer-Cooper, *The Zulu Aftermath. A Nineteenth-Century Revolution in Bantu Africa*, (Norfolk, 1975), pp. 57-63.

<sup>17</sup> D.W. Hedges, *Trade and Politics in Southern Mozambique and Zululand in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, PhD., London School of Oriental and African Studies (London, 1978) pp. 127-154; H.J. Van Aswegen, 'Die Mfecane: Werklikheid of mite' *Historia*, 1994, Vol. 39(1), J.Wright & C. Hamilton, 'Traditions and transformations. The Pongola-Mzimkhulu region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.' A. Duminy and B. Guest (eds.), *Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910. A New History* (Pietermaritzburg, 1989), pp. 61-63; J. Laband, *Rope of Sand: The Rise and Fall of the Zulu Kingdom in the Nineteenth Century*, (Johannesburg, 1995), p.14.

<sup>18</sup> D.W. Hedges, *Trade and Politics in Southern Mozambique and Zululand in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, PhD., London School of Oriental and African Studies (London, 1978) p. 135.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 135-138.

The centralisation of political control during Mabudu's reign is explained by a process through which the functions of the *amabutho* were transformed<sup>20</sup> and an accompanying restructuring of the political relations between the ruling clan and subordinate groups within the Mabudu chiefdom.<sup>21</sup>

Originally, *amabutho* were formed when a ruling chief summoned a number of young men of similar age from the people who recognised his authority for the purpose of conducting them through initiation rites. In essence the *amabutho* thus made up a circumcision (initiation) school. Such groups had their own 'names, insignia, and corporate loyalties' and were **temporarily** under the ritual authority of the chief and could be turned to his services.<sup>22</sup>

The expansion of trade at Delagoa Bay and the escalation of the demand for ivory in the outside world provided an incentive for the chief to turn these *amabutho* toward hunting elephants on his behalf. The goods earned from the sale of ivory provided the chief with wealth that he in turn used to increase his own influence thereby enlarging his circle of dependents and clients. This increased the coercive power at the chief's disposal.

'More coercive power ultimately meant more wealth, both in the form of imported prestige goods acquired through the ivory trade, and also in the form of increased tribute, especially cattle, extracted from subject groups. More wealth, in turn, meant the enhancement of the ruling chief's capacity to distribute largess to politically important subordinates and to the *amabutho*, and hence the further strengthening of the *amabutho* system.'<sup>23</sup>

With the increase of the power of the chiefs over the *amabutho*, they used the *amabutho* in conflicts with each other. The *amabutho* were also used as standing forces continuously ensuring the authority of the chief over subjected people and increasing tribute extracted from subjected communities. The

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 153-154.

<sup>21</sup> J.Wright & C. Hamilton, 'Traditions and transformations. The Pongola-Mzimkhulu region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.' A. Duminy and B. Guest (eds.), *Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910. A New History* (Pietermaritzburg, 1989) p. 63.

<sup>22</sup> J.Wright & C. Hamilton, 'Traditions and transformations. The Pongola-Mzimkhulu region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.' A. Duminy and B. Guest (eds.), *Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910. A New History* (Pietermaritzburg, 1989) p. 63.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p. 63.

increase of the power of the chief within his own clan was thus paralleled with the expansion of the geographic area under the control of the chief.<sup>24</sup>

There is thus a direct link between the expansion of trade at Delagoa Bay and the formation of the Mabudu chiefdom. Hedges<sup>25</sup> and other historians<sup>26</sup> back the idea that the process of internal centralisation and the expansion of chiefdoms in the Delagoa-Bay region coincided with the revival of European ivory trade at Delagoa Bay from the mid-eighteenth century.

Since the middle of the sixteenth century a spasmodic trade in ivory had been conducted by European traders, mainly Portuguese, at Delagoa Bay.<sup>27</sup> The local people staying in and around Delagoa Bay first came into contact with Europeans between 1502 and 1552, and, of the African inhabitants on this part of the sub-continent have had the longest history of contact with Europeans.<sup>28</sup> Traders from Portugal landed at the Island of Mozambique and, when conditions were favourable, sailed to the mainland to trade with the indigenous population. During the expedition of Lourenço Marques in approximately 1544 the Portuguese discovered what was described as vast quantities of ivory in the possession of the local inhabitants.<sup>29</sup> A ship from either Sofala or Mozambique Island came to trade with the local people on an annual basis. This fuelled the growth of the ivory trade between the people of Zululand and the Mabudu and the other Ronga-speaking clans of Maputaland.<sup>30</sup> The discovery of these valuable trade goods (as well as a strong hint that there was gold in the interior) led the Portuguese to safeguard

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, p. 63.

<sup>25</sup> D.W. Hedges, *Trade and Politics in Southern Mozambique and Zululand in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, PhD., London School of Oriental and African Studies (London, 1978) pp. 138-139.

<sup>26</sup> A. Smith, 'The trade of Delagoa Bay as a factor in Nguni politics, 1750-1835.' L. Thompson (ed.), *African Societies in Southern Africa: Historical Studies* (London, 1969), pp. 171-189; A. Smith, 'Delagoa Bay and the trade of South-east Africa.' R. Gray and D. Birmingham (eds.), *Pre-Colonial African Trade: Essays on Trade in Central and Eastern Africa Before 1900*, pp. 265-289; H. Slater, *Transitions in the Political Economy of South-east Africa*, Ph.D., University of Sussex (Brighton, 1976) Chapters 7 and 9.

<sup>27</sup> J. Wright & C. Hamilton, 'Traditions and transformations. The Pongola-Mzimkhulu region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.' A. Duminy and B. Guest (eds.), *Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910. A New History* (Pietermaritzburg, 1989) p. 61.

<sup>28</sup> A.T. Bryant, *A History of the Zulu and Neighbouring Tribes*, (Cape Town: 1964) p. 105.

<sup>29</sup> J.L.R. Torres, 'The AmaThonga people of Maputaland with special reference to the inhabitants of the Pongola floodplain area', M.N. Bruton and K.H. Cooper (eds.), *Studies on the Ecology of Maputaland* (Cape Town, 1980) p. 461.

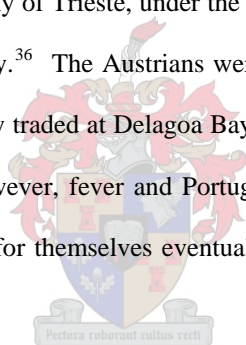
<sup>30</sup> N. Parsons, *A New History of Southern Africa*, (Hong Kong: 1993) p. 33.



very carefully their knowledge on these vast trade possibilities as well as their knowledge of the indigenous people from competing Dutch and British traders.<sup>31</sup>

Efforts by Portugal to keep trade with Delagoa Bay to herself were, however, in vain. In 1688 Portugal, Britain and the Dutch all established trading stations at Delagoa Bay.<sup>32</sup> The most important item traded was ivory, and everyone wanted to partake in the trade in gold in the hinterland of south-east Africa. In 1721 the Dutch East India Company established a fort at Delagoa Bay from where they hoped to control the gold trade in this particular geographical area.<sup>33</sup> However, before they could even begin to set up trade, the Dutch were struck down with malaria and were forced to retreat to Europe.<sup>34</sup>

After the Dutch had left, a party of Portuguese traders from Mozambique tried to set up a fort at Delagoa Bay, but also did not succeed.<sup>35</sup> In 1777 Austrians were lured by the promise of gold. In that same year the Austrian Asiatic Company of Trieste, under the management of William Bolts, managed to gain control of trade in Delagoa Bay.<sup>36</sup> The Austrians were very successful in their dealings with the local population. The price of ivory traded at Delagoa Bay was double to that of the price of ivory traded from Mozambique Island. However, fever and Portuguese efforts to oust the Austrians from Delagoa Bay to monopolize the trade for themselves eventually led to the departure of the Austrians from Delagoa Bay.<sup>37</sup>



The Portuguese realised that they did not possess the strength to protect their trading interests in Southern Mozambique with the use of force alone. The answer, they thought, was diplomacy. In 1794 as conflict broke out among the local people, the Portuguese promised an alliance to the strongest local chief in exchange for the deed to his land. After the Portuguese had obtained the deed from the strongest chief, they started to construct a fort on the land allocated to them in accordance with the

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<sup>31</sup> J.L.R. Torres, 'The AmaThonga people of Maputaland with special reference to the inhabitants of the Pongola floodplain area', M.N. Bruton and K.H. Cooper (eds.), *Studies on the Ecology of Maputaland* (Cape Town, 1980) p. 461.

<sup>32</sup> A.T. Bryant, *A History of the Zulu and Neighbouring Tribes*, (Cape Town: 1964) p. 108.

<sup>33</sup> A. Smith, 'The trade of Delagoa Bay as a factor of Nguni politics 1750-1835', L. Thompson (ed.), *African Societies in Southern Africa*, (London: 1972), p. 173.

<sup>34</sup> A.T. Bryant, *A History of the Zulu and Neighbouring Tribes*, (Cape Town: 1964) p. 108.

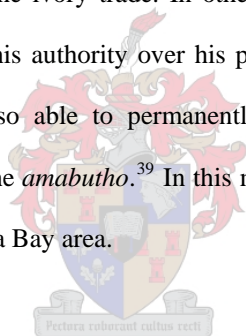
<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, p. 108.

<sup>36</sup> D.W. Hedges, *Trade and Politics in Southern Mozambique and Zululand in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, PhD., London School of Oriental and African Studies (London 1978) p. 129.

<sup>37</sup> A. Smith, 'The trade of Delagoa Bay as a factor of Nguni politics 1750-1835.' L. Thompson (ed.), *African Societies in Southern Africa*, (London: 1972), p. 174.

deed. However, they had barely finished building the fort when the French came in 1796 and forced them to retreat. Despite this setback, the Portuguese returned in 1799 and tried to obtain further land concessions from the indigenous people.<sup>38</sup>

The trade at Delagoa Bay before the middle of the eighteenth century was however too intermittent and on too small a scale to have any lasting political effects on the chiefdoms beyond the vicinity of the Bay. From the mid-eighteenth century the ivory trade expanded to an unprecedented scale over a period of thirty years. English merchants were particularly active in the trade in beads and cloths that originated from the area south of the Bay. Prior to this time ivory was merely a by-product of hunting elephants for food. With increased demand for ivory at Delagoa Bay the social value of ivory and the domination of the ivory trade routes grew in importance to chiefdoms in or near ivory-producing regions. In some chiefdoms this growth had detrimental effects as subordinate groups tried to assert their own authority and control over the ivory trade. In other chiefdoms, most notably amongst the Mabudu, the chief was able to assert his authority over his people and so increased his control over available manpower. Mabudu was also able to permanently subordinate neighbouring chiefdoms because of his increased control over the *amabutho*.<sup>39</sup> In this manner then the trade in ivory initiated a socio-political revolution in the Delagoa Bay area.



Due to his successes not only in establishing his authority over his own people, but also over peoples who lived outside the area originally granted to him by his father, Mabudu is known as the *ihosi* (chief) who 'lit the fire'.

The expansion of the power of Mabudu did not, however, go unopposed. By the middle of the eighteenth century a 'number of centres of power' were located in the area between the Maputo and Mkhuze River. For instance, in the northern sections of the area lived people called the emaLangeni. Some of them appear to have accepted Mabudu's authority with little resistance. Other sections of the emaLangeni, however, offered resistance. Moreover, it is probable that the lineage that later became the ruling Ngwane-Dlamini lineage of the Swazi were dislodged by the Mabudu during these wars of

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<sup>38</sup> A.T. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* (London, 1964) p. 299.

<sup>39</sup> J.Wright & C. Hamilton, 'Traditions and transformations. The Pongola-Mzimkhulu region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.' A. Duminy and B. Guest (eds.), *Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910. A New History* (Pietermaritzburg, 1989) pp. 61-62.

conquest. As was stated in the previous chapter, there are claims that the Swazi and Mabudu share a common ancestry. There is also evidence to suggest that the expansion of the Mabudu to the northern sections of Maputaland forced the Ngwane-Dlamini to move to the western side of the Lubombo Mountains, where they eventually established the Swazi kingdom.<sup>40</sup>

In the southern sections of Maputaland the authority of Mabudu was also challenged by chiefdoms claiming to be the 'original owners of the land'. It is argued that the Mabudu never effectively occupied the southern sections of Maputaland, but that occasional military groups were sent into the area to demand tribute.<sup>41</sup>

Among the groups in the southern part of Maputaland there was a strong Khumalo lineage, as well as Gumede and Ngubane lineages claiming to be the original owners of the area. Wars were fought between the Mabudu and Khumalo causing the deaths of many people. Some of the Khumalo fled, while others, together with Gumede people, accepted Mabudu's reign, although they still claimed authority as the 'original owners of the land.'<sup>42</sup>

The Ngubane, who live in the coastal region near Kosi Bay have a similar claim to be the 'original owners of the land'. In the 1960s Walter Felgate found that Ngubane men owned 99 homesteads out of 565 in the Kosi Bay Lake area.<sup>43</sup> According to Mabudu tradition the Ngubanes were relatively easily defeated, since they only had rudimentary knowledge of iron workings and so did not offer any real resistance to the Mabudu troops.<sup>44</sup> In contrast to this Ngubane tradition relate that the Mabudu were assisted by white people and so were able to conquer them.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> D.W. Hedges, *Trade and Politics in Southern Mozambique and Zululand in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, PhD., London School of Oriental and African Studies (London, 1978) p. 138.

<sup>41</sup> W.S. Felgate, *The Tembe Thonga of Natal and Mozambique: An Ecological Approach* (Durban, 1982), p. 12.

<sup>42</sup> D.W. Hedges, *Trade and politics in Southern Mozambique and Zululand in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, PhD., London School of Oriental and African Studies (London, 1978) p. 138.

<sup>43</sup> W.S. Felgate, *The Tembe Thonga of Natal and Mozambique: An Ecological Approach* (Durban, 1982), p. 12.

<sup>44</sup> D.W. Hedges, *Trade and Politics in Southern Mozambique and Zululand in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, PhD., London School of Oriental and African Studies (London, 1978) p. 139.

<sup>45</sup> W.S. Felgate, *The Tembe Thonga of Natal and Mozambique: An Ecological Approach* (Durban, 1982) p. 12.

Despite the successes of the Mabudu in exerting their authority over the southern parts of Maputaland, the expansion of Mabudu authority did not result in the complete demise of the authority of clans who lived in the areas. Until recently, for instance, the Ngubane and Khumalo continued to officiate at rituals and religious ceremonies.<sup>46</sup>

Informants relate that Madingi, a grandson of Mabudu was appointed by his father, Mwayi to establish his rule over the area of the Ngubanes. The story goes that Mwayi had two sons, Mkasane and Madingi (see Figure 1). Madingi was the junior son and Mkasane the senior son. Madingi troubled Mwayi because he would not take a wife. Madingi then told his father that he wants a wife who never ages, meaning that he wanted land to rule over. Subsequently, his father made him chief of the area between the present South Africa/ Mozambique border and Lake St. Lucia (see Map 1). His father also gave him cattle and a wife. Hedges<sup>47</sup>, Malan<sup>48</sup> and Van Wyk<sup>49</sup> support this oral tradition.

An alternative version of this history goes that Mwayi was not the father of Madingi, but his twin brother and that both Mwayi and Madingi were the sons of Mabudu, and not his grandsons. In this version, related by the late Mabudu *inkosi*, Mzimba Tembe, to the state ethnologist, Mwayi got angry with his father when the latter told him to marry, saying that he wants a wife who would never die. As a consequence of his anger he took up arms and subverted the Ngubane's in the area around Kosi-Bay under his rule. Mwayi apparently had a restless soul and a fierce temperament and due to his personality he was killed by another brother of his, whereupon the area he conquered was placed under the authority of his twin brother, Madingi.<sup>50</sup> Mabudu was succeeded by, Makhasane, his brother, and not by one of his sons. Therefore the descendents of Madingi claim to be the senior and not the junior branch of the Mabudu-Tembe.<sup>51</sup> This version of the history of the Madingi-Tembe could however not be verified by any of the people interviewed or by any of the literature consulted. Informants, as well as

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<sup>46</sup> E.J. Krige, *Report on 'An Ecological Study of the Tembe-Thonga of Natal and Mozambique'* (Durban), pp. 133-136; W.S. Felgate, *The Tembe Thonga of Natal and Mozambique: An Ecological approach* (Durban, 1982), p. 12.

<sup>47</sup> D.W. Hedges, *Trade and Politics in Southern Mozambique and Zululand in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, PhD., London School of Oriental and African Studies (London, 1978) p. 140.

<sup>48</sup> J.S. Malan, State Ethnologists Report, July 1971, Ingwavuma Magistrate File, p. 2.

<sup>49</sup> J.J. Van Wyk, 'Ingwavuma – 'n Etno-historiese oorsig', *Journal of Racial Affairs*, 1983, Vol. 34 (2), p. 61.

<sup>50</sup> N1/1/3(18)4, Voorloopige Verslag oor die Samestelling van die Tembe-Thonga Stam, Distrik Ingwavuma, State Ethnologist Report, Ingwavuma Magistrate File, p. 4479.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, p. 4479.

literature consulted are in agreement that Mwayi first seceded Mabudu and, on his death, his brother, another son of Mabudu, Makhasane seceded him (see Figure 1). There is no other mention of Mwayi and Madingi being twin brothers and Madingi therefore being the rightful heir to Mwayi instead of Makhasane.

This succession dispute and the fact that the differing relations of the genealogy cannot be verified is not only a problem for the historian, but one that surfaces time and again at Royal Council meetings in the Mabudu chiefdom. There are frequent rumours about the complete political secession of the descendants of Madingi from the rest of the Mabudu branch. The descendants of Madingi are known as the Madingi-Tembe or Makhuza-Tembe. The Madingi-Tembe are in control of the area around Kosi-Bay, stretching to Lala Nek in the south. Informants relate that Madingi was succeeded by Mwai II, Makusa, Mnini and Mvutshane. After Walter Tembe served as regent, Ncelaphi took over and is currently heading this branch of the Mabudu.

However, Hedges<sup>52</sup> relates that despite this apparent division in authority, the Mabudu ruling lineage has maintained its integrity. On succeeding his father, Makhasane displayed his power by attacking all his brothers, including Madingi, although he lived in peace with them thereafter. According to Malan<sup>53</sup> the Madingi-Tembe are an autonomous group within the Mabudu chiefdom. Accordingly, they have power over internal affairs, appointing their own *amakhosi* and *izinduna*. They do, however, acknowledge the authority of the '*inkosi yamakhosi*' (Mabudu ruling lineage) and have at times paid tribute to the Mabudu chiefs.<sup>54</sup>

At the end of the eighteenth century then the Mabudu had established their control over the area stretching from Delagoa Bay to Lake St. Lucia and from the Pongola River to the Indian Ocean. At the same time as Mabudu centralised his power to forge the Mabudu kingdom, similar processes were taking place amongst the Ndwandwe<sup>55</sup> and Mthethwa.<sup>56</sup> State formation in south-east Africa would

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<sup>52</sup> D.W. Hedges, *Trade and Politics in Southern Mozambique and Zululand in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, PhD., London School of Oriental and African Studies (London, 1978) p. 140.

<sup>53</sup> J.S. Malan, State Ethnologists Report, July 1971, Ingwavuma Magistrate File, p. 2.

<sup>54</sup> N1/1/3(18)4, Voorloopige Verslag oor die Samestelling van die Tembe-Thonga Stam, Distrik Ingwavuma, State Ethnologist, Ingwavuma Magistrate File, p. 4479.

<sup>55</sup> P. Bonner, *Kings, Commoners and Concessionaires: the Evolution and Dissolution of the Nineteenth-Century Swazi State* (Johannesburg, 1983), p. 12.

eventually lead to conflict between the newly formed states over trade routes and grazing areas for cattle. The Zulu, under Shaka, would eventually prove to be the strongest state in south-east Africa, thereby usurping the dominant role once played by the Mabudu.

The early nineteenth century saw states pitted against each other in the struggle for dominance in south-east Africa. The wars of conquest forced many groups to leave the area and to resettle in other areas in Southern Africa. For the purpose of this study it is especially important to analyse the treks of Soshangane, Zwangendaba, Ngwane, Nxaba and their followers through the Mabudu kingdom from where they eventually settled in other parts of Southern Africa. These treks, together with tribute demanded by the Zulu contributed to the impoverishment of the natural environment and inhabitants of Maputaland.

### **3. THE FORMATION OF STATES THAT CHALLENGED THE AUTHORITY OF THE MABUDU**

#### **3. 1. The establishment of Zulu predominance in south-east Africa**

Together with the Mabudu, the Ndwandwe, living between the Mkhuze and Black Mfolozi rivers, and the Mthethwa, settled between the lower Mfolozi and Mhlathuze rivers, were the strongest states in south-east Africa at the start of the nineteenth century.<sup>57</sup> Smaller states that had also been established in the area by the early nineteenth century were the Qwabe, the Mbo, the Ngcobo, the Hlubi and the Dlamini-Ngwane. These states were, however, less stratified and centralised than the Mabudu, Mthethwa and Ndwandwe.<sup>58</sup>

By 1810 the conflict between the Ndwandwe and the Mthethwa had come to overshadow other conflicts in the region with the Ndwandwe pushing southwards across the Mkhuze River toward the

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<sup>56</sup> C.A. Hamilton, *Ideology, Oral Traditions and the Struggle for Power in the Early Zulu Kingdom*, MA, University of the Witwatersrand (Johannesburg, 1985) pp. 110-115.

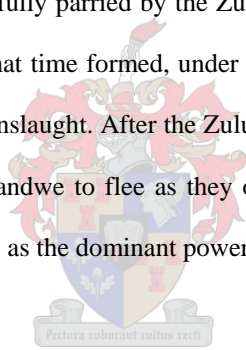
<sup>57</sup> J. Laband, *Rope of Sand. The Rise and Fall of the Zulu Kingdom in the Nineteenth Century* (Johannesburg, 1995), p. 15.

<sup>58</sup> J.Wright & C. Hamilton, 'Traditions and transformations. The Pongola-Mzimkhulu region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.' A. Duminy and B. Guest (eds.), *Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910. A New History* (Pietermaritzburg, 1989) pp. 64-65.

Black Mfolozi and the Mthethwa moving inland up the valley of the White Mfolozi.<sup>59</sup> There was a strong linkage between the Mthethwa and the Mabudu. Dingiswayo turned to the Mabudu for military assistance and commercial attachments when he started to establish himself as the leader of the Mthethwa. This aid was of 'decisive importance' in growth of Mthethwa power.<sup>60</sup>

The conflict between the Ndwandwe and the Mthethwa came to a head in 1817 when the Ndwandwe defeated the Mthetwa and killed Dingiswayo. The Ndwandwe were set to dominate the entire area from the Pongola to the Tugela, but for the budding Zulu state under Shaka kaSenzangakhona.<sup>61</sup>

The Zulu state had up to that time been a tributary of the Mthethwa. Dingiswayo had encouraged the Zulu to create a firm regional basis against the Ndwandwe to act as a buffer between the Mthethwa and the Ndwndwe. The Ndwandwe launched their first attack on the Zulu in 1818.<sup>62</sup> A second attack, launched in the same year was successfully parried by the Zulu.<sup>63</sup> In 1819 the Ndwandwe launched a third attack on the Zulu, who had by that time formed, under the leadership of Shaka, a powerful war machine able to resist the Ndwandwe onslaught. After the Zulu won a battle fought on the banks of the Mhlathuze River they forced the Ndwandwe to flee as they overran the Ndwandwe territory. In this manner the Zulu established themselves as the dominant power in the Pongola-Thukela region.<sup>64</sup>



### 3. 2. The impact of the wars in south-east Africa on the Mabudu

The Mabudu were particularly affected by wars of conquest in the northern part of Zululand. According to Bryant<sup>65</sup>, since they were not a warlike people, the Mabudu would easily have been destroyed had the might of Shaka's army been unleashed upon them. Fortunately for the Mabudu,

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>60</sup> D.W. Hedges, *Trade and Politics in Southern Mozambique and Zululand in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, PhD., London School of Oriental and African Studies (London, 1978) p. 153.

<sup>61</sup> J.Wright & C. Hamilton, 'Traditions and transformations. The Pongola-Mzimkhulu region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.' A. Duminy and B. Guest (eds.), *Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910. A New History* (Pietermaritzburg, 1989) pp. 66-67.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, p. 67.

<sup>63</sup> J. Laband, *Rope of Sand. The Rise and Fall of the Zulu Kingdom in the Nineteenth Century* (Johannesburg, 1995), p. 19.

<sup>64</sup> J.Wright & C. Hamilton, 'Traditions and transformations. The Pongola-Mzimkhulu region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.' A. Duminy and B. Guest (eds.), *Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910. A New History* (Pietermaritzburg, 1989) p. 67.

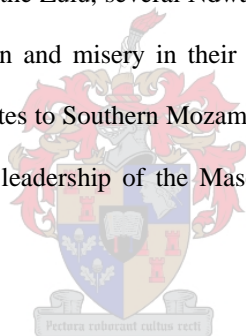
<sup>65</sup> A.T. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* (London, 1964) p. 292.



Shaka was assassinated before this could happen. Furthermore, it appears to have been in Shaka's, and his followers best interest not to incorporate the Mabudu, but merely to install a tributary relationship with them due to their worth as traders with Delagoa Bay.<sup>66</sup>

There was a long history of trading between the Mabudu and the chiefdoms that were to become part of the Zulu kingdom. Mabudu had both a military and trading alliance with Dingiswayo, Shaka's 'predecessor' that was cemented by a marriage alliance. After Dingiswayo's death, the Mabudu continued this relationship with Shaka. It was only after Shaka had established his kingdom that the Mabudu started to pay tribute to the Zulu, although he recognised their independence.<sup>67</sup> This issue will be dealt with below. In the first part of this section the ravages caused by fugitives who fled northwards from KwaZulu because of the conflicts that originated there will be examined.

After the Ndwandwe were defeated by the Zulu, several Ndwandwe leaders fled northwards with their followers and left a path of destruction and misery in their wake.<sup>68</sup> Two of them, Soshangane and Zwangendaba, went along different routes to Southern Mozambique. Two other chiefdoms, the Msene and the Maseko, combined under the leadership of the Maseko chief Nxaba, also fled to Southern Mozambique.<sup>69</sup>



Soshangane and his followers settled near the present-day Maputo Bay, just north of the Mabudu chiefdom. The Mabudu escaped the worst part of Soshangane's tyranny by moving southwards along the coast.<sup>70</sup> Soshangane and his followers did, however, extract tribute from Lourenco Marques and took many women and children from the surrounding chiefdoms.<sup>71</sup> After being nearly defeated by an army sent after him by Shaka, Soshangane fled further northwards and settled in the vicinity of the Save River, the same area where Zwangendaba and Nxaba had settled. The three groups were loosely

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<sup>66</sup> D.W. Hedges, *Trade and Politics in Southern Mozambique and Zululand in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, PhD., London School of Oriental and African Studies (London, 1978) p. 141.

<sup>67</sup> D. Webster, 'Tembe-Thonga kinship: the marriage of Anthropology and History', *Cahiers d'etudes Africaines*, 1986: Vol. 104, p. 614.

<sup>68</sup> H.J. Van Aswegen, *Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika tot 1884* (Goodwood, 1991), p. 248.

<sup>69</sup> J.D. Omer-Cooper, *The Zulu Aftermath: A Nineteenth Century Revolution in Bantu Africa* (London, 1966), p. 57.

<sup>70</sup> W.S. Felgate, *The Tembe Thonga of Natal and Mozambique: An Ecological Approach* (Durban, 1982), p. 10.

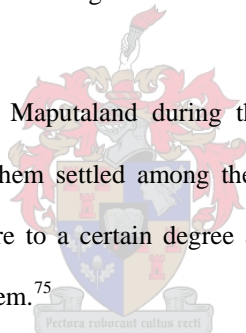
<sup>71</sup> P. Harries, 'History, ethnicity and the Ingwavuma land deal: the Zulu northern frontier in the nineteenth century', *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, Vol. VI, 1983, p. 2.



associated for a short period, but conflict soon flared up between the leaders. Soshangane defeated Zwangendaba in 1831. Thereafter, Zwangendaba and his followers fled westward through present-day Zimbabwe. A war between Soshangane and Nxaba broke out soon afterwards. When Nxaba had been defeated, the Maseko-Msene army broke up. The Msene followed Nxaba westward on the same path that Zwangendaba had taken, while the Maseko fled northwards and finally settled in present-day Tanzania. With the opposition out of the way, Soshangane established the mighty Gaza Empire in the area surrounding the central Sabi River. From here, he sent plundering expeditions in all directions.<sup>72</sup>

Although the Mabudu suffered at the hands of Soshangane<sup>73</sup>, his actions did not result in the destruction of the Mabudu either as a political or as a social unit. Soshangane's actions did, however, result in various migrations of Mabudu people to the south. Makhasana, then chief of the Mabudu, and his son sent armies to the southern parts of Maputaland and to the western areas of Southern Mozambique to conquer independent clans living there.<sup>74</sup>

Various other people passed through Maputaland during the reigns of Shaka and Zwile, either individually or in groups. Many of them settled among the Mabudu. Over time, this caused the Mabudu to lose their distinctive culture to a certain degree and to incorporate many aspects of the culture of the peoples living south of them.<sup>75</sup>



As this process continued more and more prestige was attached to being Zulu and to the Zulu language. Mabudu men had learned to speak Zulu even before the reign of Shaka from people with whom they traded. This trend increased once there were Zulu people in their midst. The women, however, especially in the southern regions of Maputaland did not feel the need to learn to speak Zulu.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> J.D. Omer-Cooper, *The Zulu Aftermath: A Nineteenth Century Revolution in Bantu Africa* (London, 1966), p. 58.

<sup>73</sup> P. Harries, *Work, Culture and Identity. Migrant Laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, c. 1860-1910* (Johannesburg, 1994), p. 4.

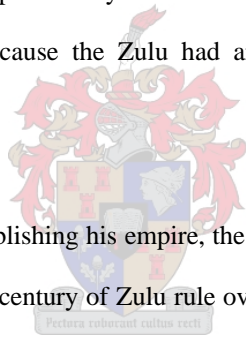
<sup>74</sup> W.S. Felgate, *The Tembe Thonga of Natal and Mozambique: An Ecological Approach* (Durban, 1982) p. 11.

<sup>75</sup> A.T. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* (London, 1964) p. 292.

<sup>76</sup> W.S. Felgate, *The Tembe Thonga of Natal and Mozambique: An Ecological Approach* (Durban, 1982) p. 11.

The people who fled the onslaught of the Zulu only stayed in Maputaland for a short period before they moved on. As was discussed in Chapter 1, the predominant reason for this was the ecology of the region in which the Mabudu lived. Due to prevailing ecological conditions in the region, people who decide to settle there are compelled to follow a certain economic pattern with respect to hunting, fishing and practising horticulture in the nutrient-poor sandy soils. These patterns are still observed in the present situation in Maputaland (see Plate 3 and Plate 4).<sup>77</sup> The high incidence of malaria and tsetse fly in the low-lying parts of the region also made the area unfavourable to Zulu and Swazi invaders who relied heavily on cattle. The result was that the Mabudu were left in relative peace to pursue their own way of life, even if they were never absolutely secluded from happenings in Zululand and Natal.<sup>78</sup>

The ecological conditions in Southern Mozambique were not the only reason why the Zulu never waged war against the Mabudu. A supplementary reason was that it was never necessary for the Zulu to wage war against the Mabudu, because the Zulu had an overlord-vassal relationship with the Mabudu.<sup>79</sup>



When Shaka was in the process of establishing his empire, the Mabudu saw fit to start to pay tribute to the Zulu. This introduced nearly half a century of Zulu rule over what used to be Mabudu suzerainty.<sup>80</sup> Although the Mabudu saw fit to pay tribute to the Zulu, they were 'not raided or conquered by the Zulu forces and, after the defeat of the Zulu at the hands of the British, they retained their autonomy.'<sup>81</sup> Paying Tribute was a well-organised annual political and economic activity, with special collectors

<sup>77</sup> R.J. Kloppers, *The Utilisation of Natural Resources in the Matutaine District of Southern Mozambique: Implications for Transfrontier Conservation*, MA, University of Pretoria (Pretoria, 2001) p. 63.

<sup>78</sup> J.L.R. Torres, 'The AmaThonga people of Maputaland with special reference to the inhabitants of the Pongola floodplain area', M.N. Bruton and K.H. Cooper (eds.), *Studies on the Ecology of Maputaland* (Cape Town, 1980), pp. 460-461; D. Webster, 'Abafazi Bathonga Bafihlakala. Ethnicity and gender in a KwaZulu border community.' A.D. Spiegel & P.A. Mcallister, (eds.), *Tradition and Transition in Southern Africa: Festschrift for Phillip and Iona Mayer. African Studies Special Issue 50* (1&2), (Johannesburg, 1991), p. 248.

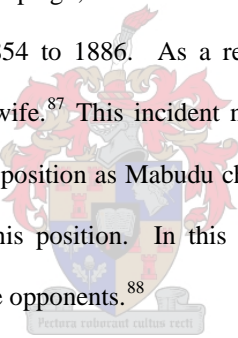
<sup>79</sup> C. Ballard, 'Trade, tribute and migrant labour: Zulu and colonial exploitation of the Delagoa Bay hinterland 1818 – 1879.' J.B. Peires (ed.), *Before and After Shaka: Papers in Nguni History*. (Grahamstown, 1981), p. 102.

<sup>80</sup> D. Webster, 'Abafazi Bathonga Bafihlakala. Ethnicity and gender in a KwaZulu border community.' A.D. Spiegel & P.A. Mcallister, (eds.), *Tradition and Transition in Southern Africa: Festschrift for Phillip and Iona Mayer. African Studies Special Issue 50* (1&2), (Johannesburg, 1991), p. 247.

<sup>81</sup> D. Webster, 'Tembe-Thonga kinship: the marriage of Anthropology and History', *Cahiers d'etude Africaines*, Vol. 104, 1986, p. 614.

appointed by Shaka and the Zulu kings who followed him.<sup>82</sup> Despite the fact that the Mabudu paid tribute to the Zulu they were at the same time able to extract tribute from several of the small chiefdoms living as far south as the Mkhuzi River.<sup>83</sup>

The Zulu king, Mpande, was furthermore able to tighten the hold of the Zulu over the Mabudu in 1854 when he intervened in the politics of the Mabudu to help settle a dispute in his own favour. The grip the Zulu had over the Mabudu was only weakened after the Zulu Civil War in 1856.<sup>84</sup> The dispute in the Mabudu chiefdom that Mpande settled in 1854 came about as follows: when the paramount chief of the Mabudu, Makhasana, died he left his throne to his second eldest son Noziyingili, after his eldest son Hluma had died (see Figure 1).<sup>85</sup> However, Makhasana's brother, Nonkatsha, had as regent acquired a considerable amount of autonomy and a huge following, and had usurped the throne. Noziyingili fled to Zululand to ask Mpande to intervene. Mpande sent seven regiments to reclaim the Mabudu throne for Noziyingili, and after a long campaign, succeeded in doing so.<sup>86</sup> Noziyingili returned to Maputaland where he reigned from 1854 to 1886. As a reminder of his obligations to the Zulu, Mpande presented Noziyingile with a wife.<sup>87</sup> This incident not only increased the Zulu hold on the Mabudu, but also secured Noziyingili's position as Mabudu chief. As long as Noziyingili paid tribute to the Zulu king, he was assured of his position. In this way, his ties to the Zulu royal family strengthened his power against would-be opponents.<sup>88</sup>



It was the responsibility of the Mabudu chief to organise hunting parties to obtain ivory, hides and feathers or to organise groups of people to harvest their crops as tribute for the Zulu king. This

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<sup>82</sup> C. Ballard, 'Trade, tribute and migrant labour: Zulu and colonial exploitation of the Delagoa Bay hinterland 1818 – 1879.' J.B. Peires (ed.). *Before and After Shaka: Papers in Nguni History*. (Grahamstown, 1981), p. 102.

<sup>83</sup> P. Harries, 'History, ethnicity and the Ingwavuma land deal: the Zulu northern frontier in the nineteenth century', *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, Vol. VI, 1983, p. 7.

<sup>84</sup> P. Bonner, *Kings, Commoners and Concessionaires. The Evolution and Dissolution of the Nineteenth-Century Swazi State* (Cambridge, 2002) p. 132.

<sup>85</sup> N1/1/3(18)4, Voorliopige Verslag oor die Samestelling van die Tembe-Thonga Stam, Distrik Ingwavuma, State Ethnologist, Ingwavuma Magistrate File, p. 4479.

<sup>86</sup> C. De B. Webb & J.B. Wright (eds.), *The James Stuart Archive of Recorded Oral Evidence Relating to the History of the Zulu and Neighbouring Peoples, Volume 2* (Durban, University of Natal) p. 142.

<sup>87</sup> P. Harries, 'History, ethnicity and the Ingwavuma land deal: the Zulu northern frontier in the nineteenth century', *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, Vol. VI, 1983, p. 8.

<sup>88</sup> C. Ballard, 'Trade, tribute and migrant labour: Zulu and colonial exploitation of the Delagoa Bay hinterland 1818 – 1879.' J.B. Peires (ed.). *Before and After Shaka: Papers in Nguni History*. (Grahamstown, 1981), p. 102.

tributary system started in 1820 and continued up to 1860.<sup>89</sup> According to Laband<sup>90</sup>, Zulu authority over the Mabudu reached an apex in 1833 after a highly successful Zulu military expedition that succeeded in killing the 'uncooperative' governor at Delagoa Bay and replacing him with a more favourable substitute. Tribute was paid in the form of sending elephant tusks to the Zulu king,<sup>91</sup> and also in hides, skins and trade goods.<sup>92</sup> In exchange for the tribute paid, the Zulu recognised the Mabudu as leaders of a vast territory, and this, to an extent, secured their positions.<sup>93</sup>

The relationship between the Mabudu and the Zulu differed markedly from that which the Zulu instituted with other chiefdoms. Ballard<sup>94</sup> states that in comparison with chiefdoms south of St. Lucia the Mabudu kingdom enjoyed much more independence although the Mabudu 'paid tribute to the Zulu kings and co-operated on a military and economic level'.

Cetshwayo, who succeeded Mpande as king of the Zulu, was even more successful in managing his hold over the Mabudu and thereby his control of the trade with Delagoa Bay. Like his predecessors, he collected ivory, vervet monkey tails, skins and calabashes from the Mabudu. It was in his time that trade with Delagoa Bay took on a renewed importance. In the 1860s and 1870s, coastal trade was dominated by the sale of firearms. Control of the trade route from Zululand to Delagoa Bay became extremely important since it was the only way in which the Zulu could obtain firearms after the British and the *Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek* made it nearly impossible for the Zulu to obtain firearms through any other channel.<sup>95</sup>

Zulu control of the coastal trade route waned by the end of the 1860s. The reason for this was twofold: a succession dispute between the two sons of Soshangane, Mzila and Mawewe, in the Gaza Empire from 1858 to 1862, and an ecological disaster. When the succession dispute over leadership of the

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*, p. 103.

<sup>90</sup> J. Laband, *Rope of Sand. The Rise and Fall of the Zulu Kingdom in the Nineteenth Century* (Johannesburg, 1995), p. 73.

<sup>91</sup> C. De B. Webb & J.B. Wright (eds.), *The James Stuart Archive of Recorded Oral Evidence Relating to the History of the Zulu and Neighbouring Peoples, Volume 2* (Durban, University of Natal) p. 285.

<sup>92</sup> C. Ballard, 'Migrant labour in Natal 1860-1879: with special reference to Zululand and the Delagoa Bay hinterland', *Journal of Natal and Zulu history*, Vol. I, 1978, p. 32.

<sup>93</sup> J. Bradley, 'Manuskrip: Die Stamme van die Makhatini-Vlakte, State Ethnologist Report, Ingwavuma Magistrate File, March 1974.

<sup>94</sup> C. Ballard, 'Migrant labour in Natal 1860-1879: with special reference to Zululand and the Delagoa Bay hinterland', *Journal of Natal and Zulu history*, Vol. I, 1978, p. 36.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*, p. 106.

Gaza Empire broke out, Mzila turned to the Portuguese for military assistance and Mawewe turned to the Swazi kingdom. After Mzila had defeated Mawewe, Mawewe fled to Swaziland. Noziyingili, the then chief of the Mabudu, aligned his forces with Mawewe and succeeded in defeating Mzila in the early 1870s.<sup>96</sup>

These political upheavals coincided with an ecological disaster. The *Mbethe* or *Ngongoni* famine struck much of south-eastern Africa and it was especially the area around Delagoa Bay that was hit extremely hard. A lack of ground water, combined with lung disease, killed nearly all the cattle, while the human population was struck down by smallpox.<sup>97</sup>

These factors made it difficult for the Mabudu to provide the necessary tribute to the Zulu king. The years of tribute paid to the Zulu king had depleted most of the fauna in the area and the drought further disabled the Mabudu, making it hard for them to pay the tribute.

However, the drought was also a reason for increased labour migrations from Maputaland to Natal, as people were unable to grow enough crops to fulfil their needs.<sup>98</sup> The effects of the ecological disaster, together with an increase in the demand for labour in Natal in the last few years of the nineteenth century transformed the tributary system that existed between the Zulu and the people living to their north. Cetshwayo assisted the government of Natal in recruiting Mabudu and other Ronga-speaking people as labourers in exchange for a share in their wages, which he perceived as commission for their recruitment.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*, p. 108.

<sup>97</sup> P. Harries, *Work, Culture and Identity. Migrant Laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, c. 1860-1910* (Johannesburg, 1994), p. 12; C. Ballard, 'Trade, tribute and migrant labour: Zulu and colonial exploitation of the Delagoa Bay hinterland 1818 – 1879', J.B. Peires (ed.). *Before and After Shaka: Papers in Nguni History*. (Grahamstown, 1981), p. 108.

<sup>98</sup> P. Harries, *Work, Culture and Identity. Migrant Laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, c. 1860-1910* (Johannesburg, 1994), p. 10.

<sup>99</sup> C. Ballard, 'Trade, tribute and migrant labour: Zulu and colonial exploitation of the Delagoa Bay hinterland 1818 – 1879.' J.B. Peires (ed.). *Before and After Shaka: Papers in Nguni History*. (Grahamstown, 1981), p. 108.

In 1859 the Natal Legislative Council passed Law 13, which provided for the legal entry of Tsonga-speaking labourers on a three-year contract to Natal.<sup>100</sup> This law caused problems for Cetshwayo, the Zulu king at the time. Due to a deteriorating natural environment in Maputaland,<sup>101</sup> Cetshwayo had already lost a lot of the annual tribute from that area paid in hides, skins and trade goods. Cetshwayo was therefore reluctant to allow the people from Maputaland to cross Zululand freely because he feared losing this important resource base.<sup>102</sup> Mabudu and other Ronga-speaking labourers, who lived in the area, were also disinclined to sign a contract on a three-year basis.<sup>103</sup> However, the continuing impoverishment of Maputaland forced many labourers to enter Natal to seek work. In 1863 the Zulu king, Mpande, complained that the tribute paid to him by the Mabudu had declined due to the many Mabudu migrants working in Natal. In a similar fashion the governor of Lourenco Marques complained in 1865 of the number of Mabudu who abandoned agriculture to work in Natal. Oral evidence shows that during the reign of the Mabudu chief, Noziyingile (1854-1876) 'large numbers' of Mabudu men sought work in various parts of South Africa.<sup>104</sup>

Due to the inevitable increase of Mabudu men leaving Maputaland to work in South Africa, the Zulu king, Cetshwayo, eventually expressed his willingness to allow workers from areas north of Zululand to cross through Zululand. By the end of 1873, five migrant rest stations had been established along the coastal route and a promise had been obtained from Cetshwayo not to molest labourers travelling through his country in exchange for a commission paid to him.<sup>105</sup> This agreement appears to have functioned effectively apart from a period toward the end of the 1860s when a dispute between the Zulu and Mabudu chiefs temporarily halted the movement of Mabudu men through Zululand.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> C. Ballard, 'Migrant labour in Natal 1860-1879: with special reference to Zululand and the Delagoa Bay hinterland', *Journal of Natal and Zulu history*, Vol. I, 1978, p. 29.

<sup>101</sup> R.J. Kloppers, *The Utilisation of Natural Resources in the Matutui District of Southern Mozambique: Implications for Transfrontier Conservation*, MA, University of Pretoria (Pretoria, 2001) p. 71.

<sup>102</sup> C. Ballard, 'Migrant labour in Natal 1860-1879: with special reference to Zululand and the Delagoa Bay hinterland', *Journal of Natal and Zulu history*, Vol. I, 1978, p. 33.

<sup>103</sup> P. Harries, *Work, Culture and Identity. Migrant Laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, c. 1860-1910* (Johannesburg, 1994), p. 19.

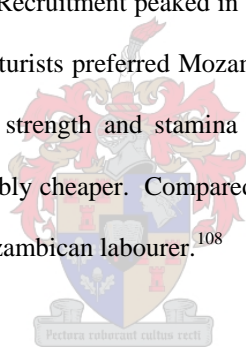
<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>105</sup> C. Ballard, 'Trade, tribute and migrant labour: Zulu and colonial exploitation of the Delagoa Bay hinterland 1818 – 1879.' J.B. Peires (ed.). *Before and After Shaka: Papers in Nguni History*. (Grahamstown, 1981), p. 114.

<sup>106</sup> P. Harries, *Work, Culture and Identity. Migrant Laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, c. 1860-1910* (Johannesburg, 1994), p. 19.

The dispute between the Mabudu and the Zulu in the late 1860s was the result of the marriage of the then Mabudu chief, Noziyingile, to a daughter of Mswati, the king of the Swazi and furthermore because the Mabudu attacked and increased their power over the Matutwen-Tembe. The Zulu were suspicious of the ties between the Swazi and the Mabudu on the one hand and of the increase of Mabudu power over the Matutwen-Tembe, who were a tributary of the Zulu. The Mabudu's control over the Matutwen-Tembe also weakened the power of the Zulu over the trade route from Zululand to Delagoa Bay. For this reason the Zulu tightened their hold on the Mabudu so that by the early 1870s both the Portuguese and the British agreed that the Portuguese presence at Lourenco Marques was 'contingent upon their alliance with the Zulu'.<sup>107</sup>

There are no exact figures for the amount of Mabudu men who came to work on the farms in South Africa during this time. Overall, the number of Mozambicans entering Natal on the government-recruiting scheme increased annually. Recruitment peaked in 1878, with 5 000 Mozambicans entering Natal through Zululand. White agriculturists preferred Mozambican labour to Indian labour, because, they said, Mozambicans have greater strength and stamina to perform manual tasks than Indians. Mozambican labour was also considerably cheaper. Compared with the £30 it cost to obtain an Indian worker, it cost only £1 to employ a Mozambican labourer.<sup>108</sup>



The number of Ronga-speaking labourers working in Natal changed the tributary system that existed between these groups (amongst them the Mabudu) and the Zulu. Although Cetshwayo was unwilling to co-operate with the Natal authorities at first, he later recruited men to work in Natal himself. The reason for this was that Cetshwayo began to see the value of the hard currency in which tribute was now paid. The government of Natal paid Cetshwayo a third of the wages earned by labourers that Cetshwayo forced the Mabudu chief at the time, Noziyingile, to send to Natal.<sup>109</sup> With this money, Cetshwayo

<sup>107</sup> P. Harries, 'History, ethnicity and the Ingwavuma land deal: the Zulu northern frontier in the nineteenth century', *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, Vol. VI, 1983, p. 12.

<sup>108</sup> C. Ballard, 'Trade, tribute and migrant labour: Zulu and colonial exploitation of the Delagoa Bay hinterland 1818 – 1879.' J.B. Peires (ed.). *Before and After Shaka: Papers in Nguni History*. (Grahamstown, 1981), p. 115.

<sup>109</sup> P. Harries, *Work, Culture and Identity. Migrant Laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, c. 1860-1910* (Johannesburg, 1994), p. 27.



could buy cattle and other goods perceived as superior to the traditional tribute he had received from an already depleted natural resource base in Maputaland.<sup>110</sup>

Labour migration from Maputaland to South Africa was encouraged even further after the discovery of diamonds in the Orange River in 1867. Once diamonds had been discovered in other parts of South Africa, larger and larger numbers of labourers left Maputaland in search of work.<sup>111</sup>

Workers were attracted to Kimberley by wages and weapons. Firearms were easily available in Kimberley and many traditional leaders sent parties of young men to the mines so that they could purchase firearms. Even after the sale of firearms had been stopped, many young men still went to the area for the high wages which enabled them to buy consumer goods, increased their status and provided them with the necessary money for *lobola*.<sup>112</sup> *Lobola* refers to goods handed over by a bridegroom's family to the father or guardian of the bride to supplement a marriage.<sup>113</sup>

Money earned for *lobola* increased in importance, due to raids from the Gaza Empire on the people of Maputaland which made it nearly impossible for young Mabudu men to transfer *lobola* in the form of cattle, because their cattle was stolen during the raids. People in Maputaland were stripped of most of the cattle necessary for *lobola*, and they could not enter into customary marriage without transferring *lobola*. Initially, hoes were used as *lobola* instead of cattle, but with the increase in migrant labour, *lobola* came to be transferred in consumer goods. This had a detrimental effect on the authority that lineage heads had traditionally exerted over their sons, since the lineage heads had traditionally provided the cattle their sons used to get married. Hence, wages earned in the mines in Kimberley and in the sugar plantations in Natal initiated a social revolution in northern KwaZulu-Natal and southern Mozambique.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> C. Ballard, 'Trade, tribute and migrant labour: Zulu and colonial exploitation of the Delagoa Bay hinterland 1818 – 1879.' J.B. Peires (ed.). *Before and After Shaka: Papers in Nguni History*. (Grahamstown, 1981), p. 116.

<sup>111</sup> M. Newitt, *A History of Mozambique* (Indiana, 1995), p. 483.

<sup>112</sup> M. Newitt, *A History of Mozambique* (Indiana, 1995), p. 484.

<sup>113</sup> C.M. Doke, D.M. Malcolm, J.M.A. Sikakana & B.W. Vilakazi, *English-Zulu Zulu-English Dictionary* (Johannesburg, 1996), p. 460.

<sup>114</sup> M. Newitt, *A History of Mozambique* (Indiana, 1995), p. 484.



In 1886, the demand for labour from Maputaland increased dramatically with the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand. To ensure a steady influx of workers, the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, established in 1896, set up labour recruiting stations in Southern Mozambique.<sup>115</sup>

The tributary system that existed between the Zulu and the Mabudu was starting to disintegrate from the 1860s onwards. After the death of Noziyingile in 1876, his brother Muhena became regent with the aid of the Zulu. However, after the defeat of the Zulu at the hand of the British in 1879, Noziyingile's Swazi wife, Zambili secured the throne for her son, Ngwanase by declaring herself queen regent and by exiling Muhena and his supporters. The Mabudu then ceased to pay tribute to the Zulu.<sup>116</sup> During the same period Maputaland was divided between a Portuguese dominated northern part and a British dominated southern part. The southern part, known as British AmaThongaland was annexed by Britain in 1897 and in that same year incorporated, with Zululand, into Natal.<sup>117</sup> The northern part became part of the Portuguese colony of Mozambique.<sup>118</sup>

Thus ended a period of domination of the Mabudu by the Zulu. From this period colonial powers and their policies dictated the fate of the Mabudu. In northern Maputaland the Portuguese followed a policy of assimilation and centralisation, forcing the people to adopt Portuguese culture.<sup>119</sup> In the southern part of Maputaland the British followed a policy of indirect rule, leaving the Mabudu chiefs largely to rule as they traditionally did. From 1910 onwards the southern area was divided into 'crown land' and 'trust lands'. In reality, the Mabudu enjoyed a large amount of freedom, especially from the Zulu. This was to change drastically in 1976 when the then South African government decided to change the identity of the local people from Tsonga to Zulu and to place the Mabudu under the direct authority of the Zulu with the incorporation of southern Maputaland into KwaZulu. Webster calls the period that followed 1976 the 'apogee of Zulu influence' in the area.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> *Ibid*, p. 492.

<sup>116</sup> P. Harries, 'History, ethnicity and the Ingwavuma land deal: the Zulu northern frontier in the nineteenth century', *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, Vol. VI, 1983, p. 12.

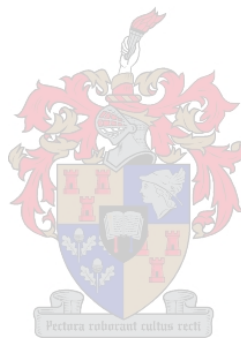
<sup>117</sup> Natal Government Gazette, 29 December 1897, pp. 1876-1877.

<sup>118</sup> D. Webster, 'Tembe-Thonga kinship: the marriage of Anthropology and History', *Cahiers d'etude Africaines*, Vol. 104, 1986, p. 615.

<sup>119</sup> W.S. Felgate, *The Tembe Thonga of Natal and Mozambique: An Ecological Approach* (Durban, 1982) p. 18.

<sup>120</sup> D. Webster, 'Abafazi BaThonga Bafihlakala. Ethnicity and gender in a KwaZulu Border Community.' A.D. Spiegel and P.A. Mcallister (eds.), *Tradition and Transition in Southern Africa*:

The prelude to and incorporation of southern Maputaland in the KwaZulu homeland will be the focus of Chapter 4. In the next chapter contact between Europeans and the Mabudu that eventually led to the fragmentation of Maputaland will be examined in more detail.



**Plate 1: Woman fishing with traditional *fonyo* basket, Maputaland.**



Photo: Callie, June 2001

**Plate 2: Offering *buganu* (marula beer) to the ancestors**



Photo: Callie, February 2001.



**Plate 3: Women carrying marula beer to the festival, February 2001**



Photo: Callie, February 2001.

**Plate 4: Fishing with nets in the pans, Maputaland**



Photo: Callie, March 2001

### **Plate 5: Meeting to trade on the Mozambique/ South Africa border**

The 1875 MacMahon Award split the Mabudu chiefdom in two parts. Today people from both sides of the divide meet weekly to trade at this border market at KwaPuza.

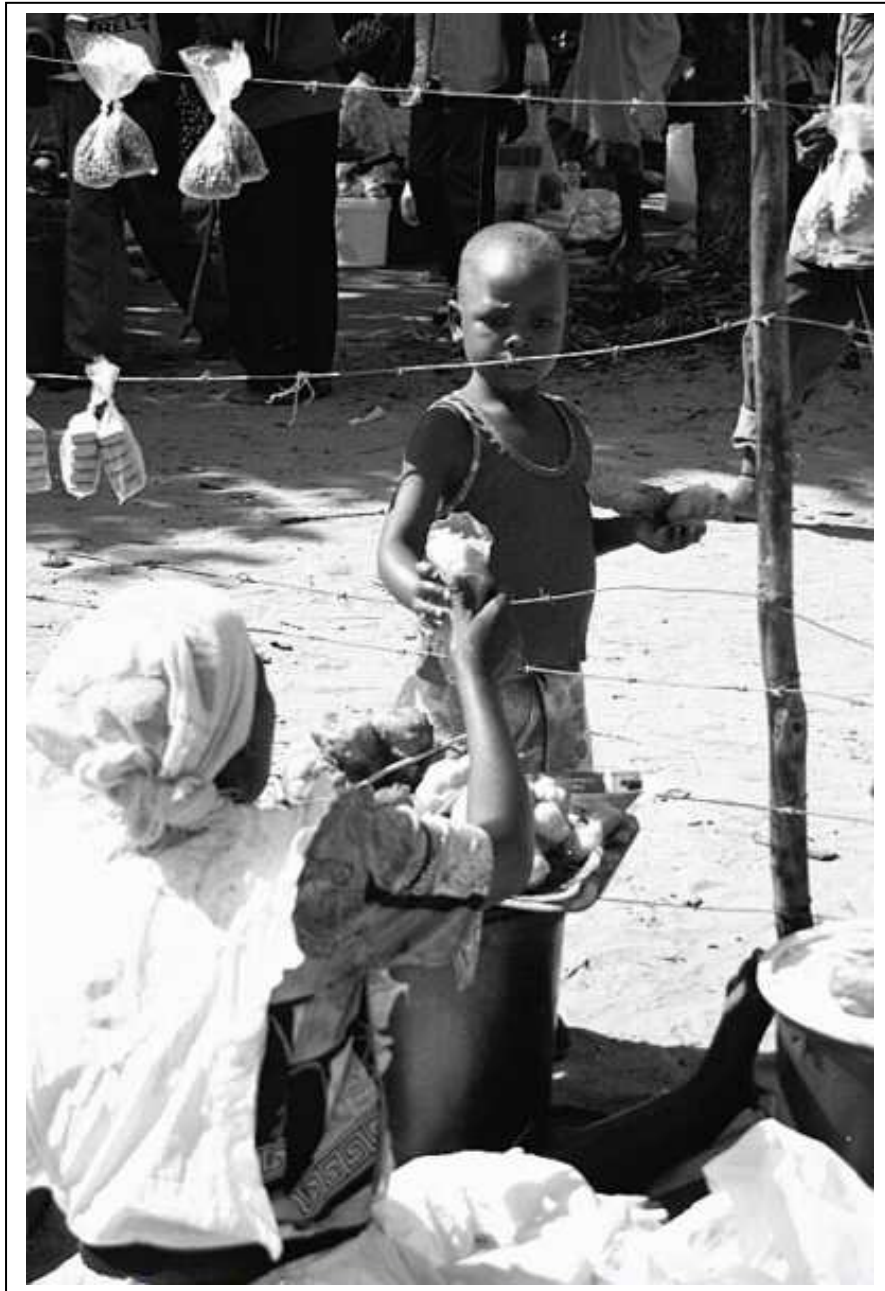


Photo: Hannie du Plessis

**Plate 6: Crossing the Mozambique/South Africa border, KwaPuza**



Photo: Hannie du Plessis



**Plate 7: Inkosi Israel Mabudu Tembe at his inauguration, March 2001.**

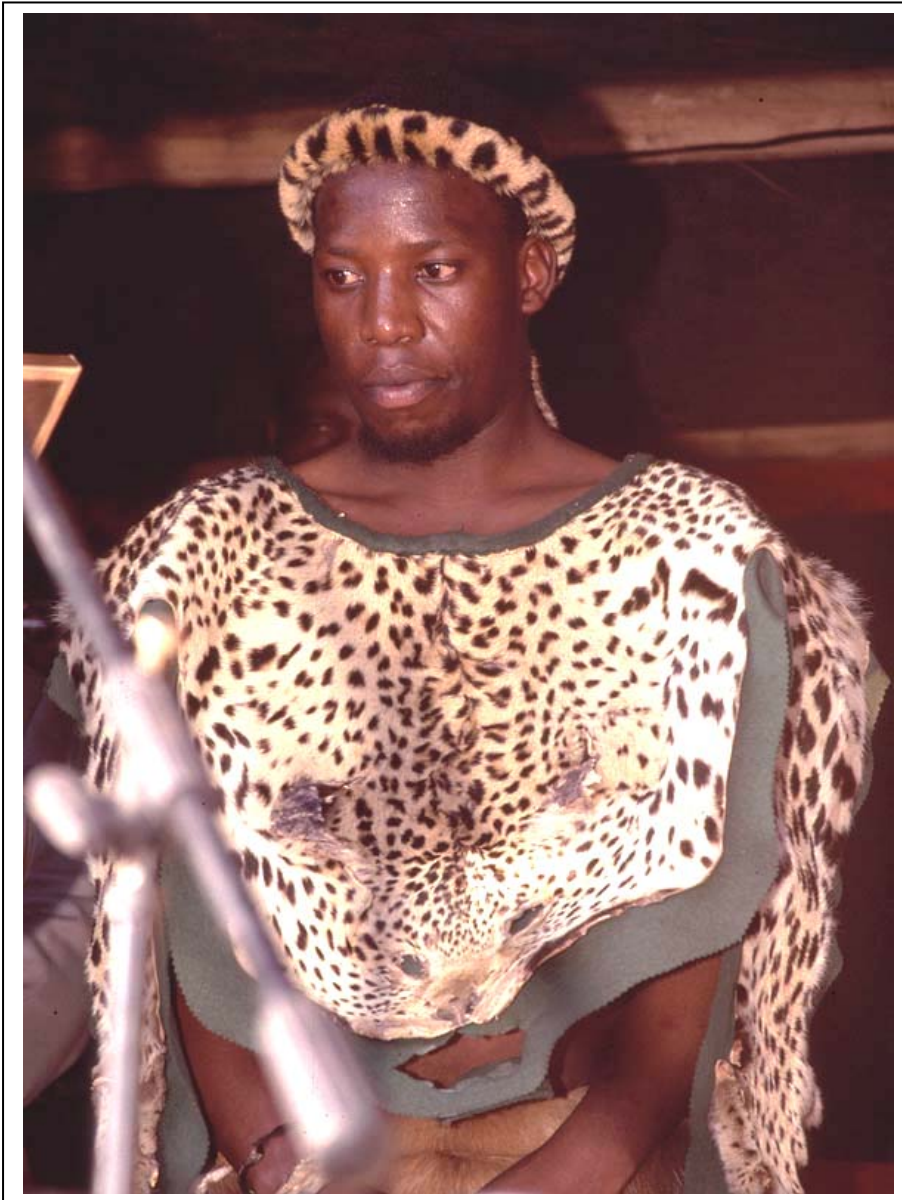


Photo: Wayne Matthews, March 2001.

Plate 8: Inkosi Tembe with King Goodwill Zwelethini

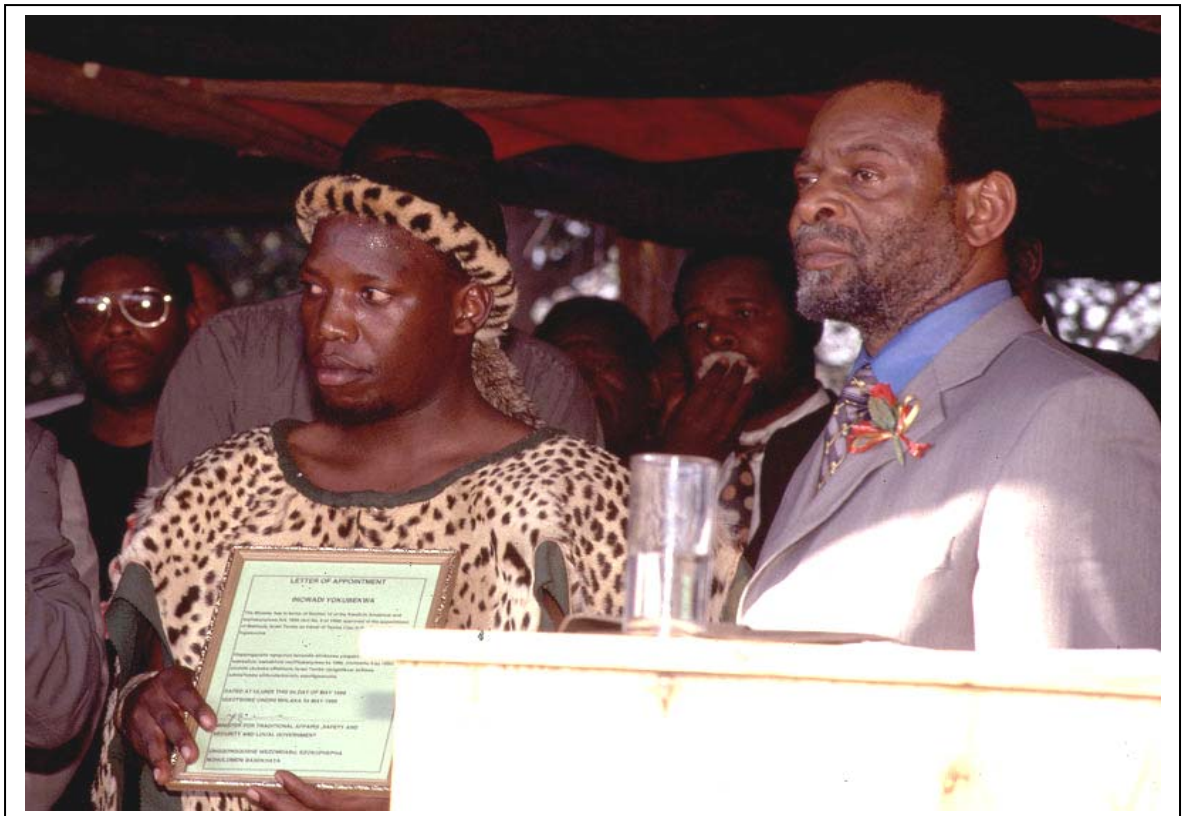


Photo: Wayne Matthews, March 2001

Plate 9: Member of Inkosi Tembe's *amabutho*



Photo: Wayne Matthews, March 2001



## **CHAPTER 3**

# **COLONIALISM AND THE FRAGMENTATION OF THE MABUDU CHIEFDOM**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

In 1875 a physical boundary was drawn along the 26° 30' S that divided Maputaland into a northern part under Portuguese control and a southern part under the control of Britain. Efforts by the Mabudu royal family to secure the incorporation of the entire area under one of the two colonial powers was in vain. The Mabudu chief stayed in the northern part of Maputaland until 1896 when, after a dispute with the Portuguese he was forced to settle in what came to be known as British AmaThongaland. From his royal kraal at Emifihlweni (the hidden place) the Mabudu chief was able to exert his power over the entire Maputaland until the late 1940s when his authority in the northern part of Maputaland started to dwindle. At present, although many people in northern Maputaland still acknowledge the Mabudu chief as their rightful ruler, his power is limited to the southern part of the once powerful and vast Mabudu chiefdom. This chapter examines the prelude to and consequences of the fragmentation of Maputaland.

### **2. THE PRELUDE TO COLONIALISM: EARLY CONTACT BETWEEN EUROPEANS AND THE MABUDU**

Of the African inhabitants of south-east Africa Ronga or Tsonga speaking peoples, who lived in the vicinity of Delagoa Bay, have had the longest history of contact with Europeans. The earliest Portuguese chronicles indicate that sailors from Portugal first explored Delagoa Bay at the beginning of

the sixteenth century.<sup>1</sup> According to Bryant<sup>2</sup> the Tembe (at that time still a united clan) first made contact with Europeans between 1502 and 1552.

In 1545 Delagoa Bay was explored by Lourenco Marques, a Portuguese merchant. Lourenco Marques discovered large quantities of gold for which he traded with the local inhabitants. His name was later given to the bay and town that developed at Delagoa Bay, which is today known as Maputo.<sup>3</sup>

As was discussed in the previous chapter, Portuguese ships from Sofala and Mozambique Island anchored at the river mouths around the bay to trade with the local inhabitants. Apart from elephant tusks, the local inhabitants of the area also exchanged hippo teeth and rhino horns mainly for cloth from India. The Portuguese traders did not try to develop trade in slaves at Delagoa Bay and no attempt was made to establish Portuguese sovereignty over the area. The Portuguese did, however, try to safeguard their knowledge of the indigenous people and the possibilities of trade in the area from British and Dutch merchants, especially after rumours spread that there were large quantities of gold in the area surrounding Delagoa Bay.<sup>4</sup>

By 1688 Portuguese, British and Dutch traders had all established trading stations at Delagoa Bay.<sup>5</sup> In 1721 the Dutch East India Company tried to build a fort at Delagoa Bay,<sup>6</sup> but were forced to abandon their plans because of the high incidence of malaria in the area. Thereafter, Portuguese and the Austrian Asiatic Company of Trieste of William Bolts tried to gain control of the trade at Delagoa Bay.<sup>7</sup> According to Bryant<sup>8</sup>, Bolts was successful in his dealings with the local population and because of his good relations with the local people and an increase in the ivory trade the price of ivory soared to

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<sup>1</sup> J.L.R. Torres, 'The AmaThonga people of Maputaland with special reference to the inhabitants of the Pongola floodplain area.' M.N. Bruton and K.H. Cooper (eds.), *Studies on the Ecology of Maputaland* (Cape Town, 1980) p. 460.

<sup>2</sup> A.T. Bryant, *A History of the Zulu and Neighbouring Tribes*, (Cape Town: 1964) p. 105.

<sup>3</sup> J.L.R. Torres, 'The AmaThonga people of Maputaland with special reference to the inhabitants of the Pongola floodplain area.' M.N. Bruton and K.H. Cooper (eds.), *Studies on the Ecology of Maputaland* (Cape Town, 1980) p. 461.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 461.

<sup>5</sup> A.T. Bryant, *A History of the Zulu and Neighbouring Tribes*, (Cape Town: 1964) p. 108.

<sup>6</sup> A. Smith, 'The trade of Delagoa Bay as a factor of Nguni politics 1750-1835.' L. Thompson (ed.), *African Societies in Southern Africa* (London, 1972), p. 173.

<sup>7</sup> A.T. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* (London, 1964) p. 289.

<sup>8</sup> A. Smith, 'The trade of Delagoa Bay as a factor of Nguni politics 1750-1835.' L. Thompson (ed.), *African Societies in Southern Africa* (London, 1972), p. 174.

double that of ivory traded at Mozambique Island. However, fever and Portuguese efforts to oust the Austrians from Delagoa Bay eventually led to the departure of the Austrians from Delagoa Bay.

The Portuguese tried thereafter, through dealings with the local population, to dominate the trade at Delagoa Bay. In 1796 they were temporarily forced to leave the area by French traders, but returned in 1799 and tried to obtain further land concessions from the local people living around Delagoa Bay.<sup>9</sup>

In 1822 Captain W. Owen of the British navy paid a visit to Maputaland and produced two volumes, entitled *Narrative of voyages to Africa*.<sup>10</sup> As was discussed in Chapter 1, Owen named the area south of what was then Delagoa Bay, bounded in the west by the Maputo River, 'Mapoota' Land.<sup>11</sup> The main purpose of Owen's visit to Maputaland was to negotiate land rights in the area for Britain. His first step was to consult the Portuguese at Delagoa Bay and request their protection against the indigenous people while the British expedition visited the area. The Portuguese responded that the indigenous people were not Portuguese subjects, and that Portugal could therefore not promise the British expedition any protection. Upon this Owen paid visits to the two strongest chiefs of the area, Mayeta (senior/ Matutwen-Tembe) and Makhasana (junior/ Mabudu-Tembe), to tempt them to put their respective lands under British protection. The two chiefs obliged, but soon after Owen had left, the Portuguese obtained written declarations from the same two chiefs that their people had always been subjects of the king of Portugal.<sup>12</sup>

In reality, these declarations of allegiance to the Portuguese crown did not carry much weight. Conflict between the Portuguese and the Tembe (both branches) continued for many years. The conflict regarding European ownership of Delagoa Bay was not settled until 1875, when other European countries finally recognised Portugal's territorial rights to this area.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> A.T. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* (London, 1964) p. 289.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 290.

<sup>11</sup> M.N. Bruton, M. Smith, and R.H. Taylor, 'A brief history of human involvement in Maputaland.' M.N. Bruton and K.H. Cooper (eds.), *Studies on the Ecology of Maputaland* (Cape Town, 1980), p. 438.

<sup>12</sup> A.T. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* (London, 1964) p. 290.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 300.

### 3. THE MACMAHON AWARD AND THE FRAGMENTATION OF THE MABUDU CHIEFDOM

As discussed in the previous section, the Portuguese and British had long disputed each other's rights to the territory south of Delagoa Bay. While Captain Owen could persuade chiefdoms (amongst them the Mabudu) living in the vicinity of Delagoa Bay to put their territories under British protection, the Portuguese obtained written declarations from the same chiefdoms that they were Portuguese subjects.

The conflict between Britain and Portugal came to a head in 1868 when President Pretorius, of the South African Republic issued a declaration extending the eastern boundary of the Republic to the sea. The British government immediately informed the Transvaal Republic that Britain claimed authority over the territories on the banks of the Pongola (Maputo) River, while Portugal in turn objected to the British claim.<sup>14</sup>

Portugal and Britain agreed in 1875 to put the matter in front of the French President, Marshal MacMahon for arbitration. MacMahon drew a straight line along the 26° 30' S that divided the Portuguese and British spheres of influence in south-east Africa (see Plate 5 and Plate 6).<sup>15</sup> Since he awarded the disputed area south of Delagoa Bay to Portugal, MacMahon's decision came to be known as the MacMahon Award.

The Mabudu were not consulted or informed about the fact that the largest part of their country had been awarded to Portugal. Bulpin<sup>16</sup> made the following statement about the MacMahon Award and the fact that the local people were not consulted in the decision making process:

'The effect of the MacMahon Award on the Tonga people themselves would have been comic if it wasn't pathetic. Far away in Paris a politician in striped pants sat down and drew a sharp line straight through their tribal possessions while they sat drinking lala wine, quarrelling over women and

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<sup>14</sup> W.S. Felgate, *The Tembe Thonga of Natal and Mozambique: An Ecological Approach* (Durban, 1982) p. 18.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, p. 18.

<sup>16</sup> T.V. Bulpin, *Natal and the Zulu Country* (Cape Town, 1969) p. 395.

scratching themselves in the sun. Nobody took the trouble to inform the Tongas of the profound change in their territorial possessions. Accordingly, when the Portuguese, after a few years of enertia, started demanding taxes on account of the Tongas now being their subjects, there was a certain amount of surprise.'

At first the boundary had little effect on the Mabudu and on the ability of the Mabudu chief to exercise power over the entire chiefdom. The difference between the British and Portuguese systems of colonial administration, however, would soon have a significant effect on the Mabudu.<sup>17</sup> While Britain implemented a system of indirect rule, allowing traditional leaders a degree of authority, Portugal followed a strict policy of centralisation and assimilation, forcing its colonial subjects to become Portuguese, both culturally and politically.<sup>18</sup>

#### **4. THE AFTERMATH OF THE MACMAHON AWARD: THE MABUDU CHIEF SETTLES IN BRITISH AMATHONGALAND**

In 1887 the regent queen of the Mabudu, Zambili, asked for British protection over the entire area under her control which she defined as stretching northwards from the Mkuze River to the Portuguese border and east of the Swazi border.<sup>19</sup> Zambili's deputation to Sir Arthur Havelock also complained about Portuguese encroachments. The deputation complained that the Portuguese demanded taxes and burnt down huts if people refused to pay. The deputation asked for a treaty with the British. Arguing that they had always been tributary to the Zulu, the Mabudu asked to be placed under British protection, since Zululand now belonged to the British. The deputation also requested a British resident and support for the twelve-year old Ngwanase as chief.<sup>20</sup>

A treaty was preliminary signed on 6 July 1887. The treaty acknowledged the request of the Mabudu to be British citizens without actually granting them that status. The treaty also stipulated that the Mabudu

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<sup>17</sup> W.S. Felgate, *The Tembe Thonga of Natal and Mozambique: An Ecological Approach* (Durban, 1982) p. 18.

<sup>18</sup> K. Smith & F.J. Nöthling, *North of the Limpopo. Africa Since 1800* (Pretoria, 1993), pp. 280-287; A. Seegers, *Rewolusionêre Tendense in Mosambiek*, M.A., University of Pretoria (Pretoria, 1977) pp. 59-66.

<sup>19</sup> British Blue Book C. 6200, p. 16.

<sup>20</sup> J.P. De Bruin, *Die Onvoltooide Sendingtaak in Maputaland* (Pretoria, 1987) p. 5.

were not allowed to sign treaties or engage in correspondence with any other European powers without British consent. In return Britain guaranteed 'peace and friendship.'<sup>21</sup>

A British deputation, under C.R. Saunders visited Maputaland and officially signed the treaty at Emifihleni, the royal homestead, in October 1887. The Saunders treaty stipulated that 'Thongaland' included the entire area north of the Mkhuze River, between the Lubombo Mountains and the Indian Ocean (see Map 3). The Transvaal Republic issued a complaint against the Saunders treaty on 30 January 1888. According to the Transvaal Republic the Mngomezulu and Nyawo who lived between the Pongola (Maputo) River and the Lubombo Mountains were independent of the Mabudu and had been paying taxes to the Transvaal Republic. The British responded that although the Mngomezulu and Nyawo were independent of the Mabudu, they were vassals of the Swazi and thus under British rule.<sup>22</sup>

In 1888 Britain shifted the boundaries of 'Thongaland'. In December of that year the British Government published an addition to their proclamation of 19 May 1887, making Zululand a British possession. The old proclamation had loosely defined the northern boundary of Zululand as Thongaland, while the Saunders treaty put the Mkhuze River as the southern boundary of the Thonga (Mabudu). The 1888 boundary marked Lake Sibayi, some distance north of the Mkhuze River as the northern boundary of Zululand (see Map 3).<sup>23</sup>

The Mabudu complained that the Mkhuze River had traditionally been the southern boundary of their chiefdom.<sup>24</sup> In April 1889 Queen Zambili sent a deputation to Pietermaritzburg to complain about the new boundary between Zululand and Thongaland. The deputation asked that the Mabudu be freed from their treaty with the British and complained about the way in which the Mabudu chiefdom had been cut in half. The request was rejected. A similar deputation was sent to the Portuguese Government. The deputation arrived in Lisbon in May 1889, but met a similar fate. In her appeal to the Portuguese the

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<sup>21</sup> T.V. Bulpin, *Natal and the Zulu Country* (Cape Town, 1969), p. 396.

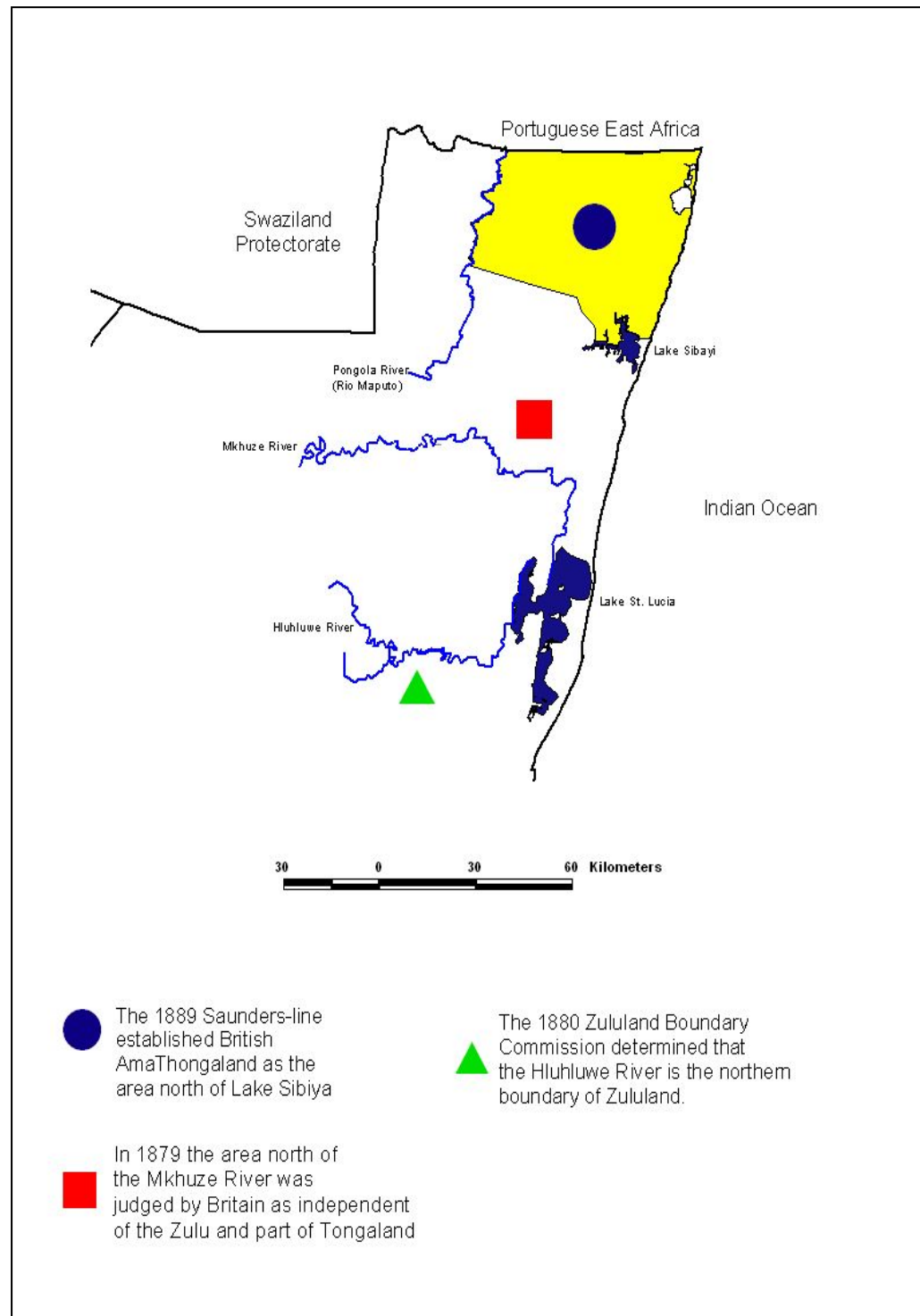
<sup>22</sup> J.P. De Bruin, *Die Onvoltooide Sendingtaak in Maputaland* (Pretoria, 1987) p. 5.

<sup>23</sup> T.V. Bulpin, *Natal and the Zulu Country* (Cape Town, 1969), p. 401.

<sup>24</sup> See A.T. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* (London, 1965) p. 290; D.W. Hedges, *Trade and Politics in Southern Mozambique and Zululand in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, PhD., London School of Oriental and African Studies (London, 1978) p. 135; M.N. Bruton & K.H. Cooper (eds.), *Studies on the Ecology of Maputaland*, (Cape Town, 1980), pp. xvi-xvii.

Queen asked that the Portuguese annex the entire chiefdom, rather than sharing it with Britain. The Portuguese answer was that the matter had already been resolved.

**Map 3: The shifting boundary of Southern Maputaland (1879-1890)**



Source: Map compiled by Jennifer Jones, Centre for Environmental Studies, University of Pretoria.

In order to settle the dispute about the boundaries of Thongaland Saunders was sent to Maputaland on the 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1889. He visited the smaller chiefdoms between Lake Sibayi and the Mkhuze River and set up beacons to delineate the boundaries. The Mabudu sent an official complaint, but were ignored. The Transvaal Republic was furthermore not willing to give up their demand on Thongaland. In May 1889 the Transvaal Republic said that they were willing to give up demands on Bechuanaland and Rhodesia in exchange for Swaziland and Thongaland. The British government denied this request and on 30 May 1895 Saunders formally annexed Thongaland as a British Protectorate. The Mabudu were 'friendly enough, although much grieved at the way in which their country had been divided between the Portuguese and the British. They wanted to know exactly where the boundaries lay and once more repeated that they would prefer their whole country to be annexed by a single power, rather than divided by an arbitrary line'.<sup>25</sup>

At this time the Mabudu chief, Ngwanase still lived in the Portuguese part of Maputaland. In 1895, after a conflict with the Portuguese he settled in British AmaThongaland. The conflict between Ngwanase and the Portuguese originated in 1894 during the Portuguese wars with the Shanganes. The war between the Shanganes and the Portuguese erupted after a succession dispute in the Gaza Kingdom. Two parties claimed rights of succession. The Portuguese supported one of the parties. His opponent, however, mustered international support and challenged the Portuguese.<sup>26</sup>

The Portuguese armed the Mabudu to aid them in the war with the Shanganes. However, soon after being armed, the Mabudu soldiers returned home from Lourenco Marques.<sup>27</sup> Albert Tembe remembers his grandfather telling him that the Portuguese had huge ships at Lourenco Marques from where they transported soldiers to Gaza. However, many Mabudu men feared that this was merely a ploy by the Portuguese to turn them into slaves and sent them away to work for the Portuguese.

The Portuguese were angry with the Mabudu men who returned home with their arms from Lourenco Marques. Apparently they looted stores and 'generally made mortal enemies of the Portuguese'. As soon as the Shanganes had been subdued the Portuguese sent an army to Emifihlweni to teach

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<sup>25</sup> T.V. Bulpin, *Natal and the Zulu Country* (Cape Town, 1969), p. 402.

<sup>26</sup> W.S. Felgate, *The Tembe Thonga of Natal and Mozambique: An Ecological Approach* (Durban, 1982) p. 19.

<sup>27</sup> T.V. Bulpin, *Natal and the Zulu Country* (Cape Town, 1969), p. 404.



Ngwanase a lesson.<sup>28</sup> Informants said that the soldiers sent to subdue Ngwanase were not Portuguese, but native people armed by the Portuguese.

According to oral tradition Ngwanase was saved by his chief healer, Manqakulani. Manqakulani was the only son of a Swazi man called Jabendaba. While he was still a young man his ancestors called Manqakulani to become a traditional healer or *inyanga*. He quickly became widely known as a very powerful *inyanga*. While still in Swaziland he married a young woman who was a relative of the Mabudu royal family. Shortly after their marriage, Manqakulani left Swaziland and settled near Delagoa Bay. It is not clear why he decided to settle amongst the relatives of his wife. One informant said that his ancestors told him that the people of Maputaland were very sick and needed his help. Being a powerful *inyanga* and being married to a member of the royal family he was called by Ngwanase to act as his personal *inyanga*.

When word spread that the Portuguese soldiers were advancing, Ngwanase summoned Manqakulani and promised him an area to rule over if Manqakulani helped him to escape the soldiers. Manqakulani made two things appear. First he made mist appear around the royal kraal. When the soldiers arrived at the royal kraal they thought it was still early and waited for the mist to clear before they attacked. This gave Ngwanase more time to plan his escape. The soldiers eventually realised that they had been fooled and charged the kraal. This time Manqakulani turned the sand surrounding the kraal into thorns. The soldiers, not wearing any shoes, were trapped in the middle of the thorns, disorganised by the mist Manqakulani had made. Ngwanase successfully escaped and settled near the place that he called Phelandaba (the matter is settled).

As reward for his services Ngwanase appointed Manqakulani as ward headman (*induna*) over a tribal ward and aptly called it KwaManqakulani (also known as eMpompomeni). It is not certain who the *induna* was before Manqakulani arrived. Ngwanase apparently visited the area and told all the people living there that Manqakulani would in future preside over them and represent Ngwanase in that ward. Ngwanase himself settled near Phelandaba and set up a new royal kraal, also called eMfihlweni or the

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<sup>28</sup> T.V. Bulpin, *Natal and the Zulu Country* (Cape Town, 1969), p. 404.

hidden place. The Portuguese set up a new puppet chief of their own, Mpobobo, and commenced the collection of taxes as a sign of their authority.<sup>29</sup>

Felgate recorded the history of Ngwanase's flight from chief Mzimba, the previous *inkosi* of the Mabudu. Mzimba recalled that Ngwanase fled the Portuguese area on advise of his mother, Zambili. Taking his mother and a number of attendants with him he hid in the Manguzi forests. From there he travelled to Eshowe where he was advised to go on to Pietermaritzburg. The British accepted his plea for protection because 'he had not fought with the Portuguese, thereby proving himself to be a peaceful man.'<sup>30</sup>

Bulpin<sup>31</sup> relates that Ngwanase was in correspondence with Saunders throughout this time and asked the British Government for protection while the Portuguese was looking for him. After Ngwanase had settled at Phelandaba the British magistrate at Ubombo, H.W. Stephens visited him to find out exactly what was happening. On 27 May 1896, after removing him shortly from Phelandaba, the British Government sent an escort from Zululand to accompany Ngwanase to Phelandaba. The escort under Sub-Inspector C.C. Foxon (called Umqondo - the wise one, by the local people) of the Zululand Police was to reside with Ngwanase and administer Thongaland as a Protectorate according to the rules of Zululand. Ngwanase also entered a treaty with the British stating that in return for British protection against aggression Ngwanase would not enter into any treaty with President Krueger of the Transvaal Republic who still longed for an access to the sea.<sup>32</sup>

Foxon and Ngwanase arrived at Phelandaba on 26 June 1896. Foxon immediately started the task of marking the boundaries between the British and Portuguese spheres of influence, with a string of beacons following the parallel of the confluence of the Pongola (Maputo) and Usuthu rivers.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> T.V. Bulpin, *Natal and the Zulu Country* (Cape Town, 1969), p. 405.

<sup>30</sup> W.S. Felgate, *The Tembe Thonga of Natal and Mozambique: An Ecological Approach* (Durban, 1982) p. 20.

<sup>31</sup> T.V. Bulpin, *Natal and the Zulu Country* (Cape Town, 1969), p. 405.

<sup>32</sup> W.S. Felgate, *The Tembe Thonga of Natal and Mozambique: An Ecological Approach* (Durban, 1982) p. 20.

<sup>33</sup> T.V. Bulpin, *Natal and the Zulu Country* (Cape Town, 1969), p. 405.

Although he set up his kraal at eMfihlweni, Ngwanase felt that it was not wise for his sons to stay with him. Like his ancestor, Mangobe, Ngwanase placed his sons in strategic positions throughout his chiefdom. He called his sons his 'eyes and ears'. The people living in the districts where Ngwanase's sons were appointed as headmen gave his sons 'portions of meat from the animals they slaughtered'. These people were not forced to do so, but did it, according to the late chief Mzimba, because 'their grandfathers had done so before them'. Many Mabudu people living in Mozambique followed Ngwanase and settled in British AmaThongaland, as the country was now officially known.<sup>34</sup>

British AmaThongaland was officially declared a British Protectorate on 29 June 1896.<sup>35</sup> Foxon became the British resident and established himself at Maphutha (Kosi Bay), near the Manguzi forest.<sup>36</sup> British AmaThongaland was bounded in the north by the southern boundary of the Portuguese territory, on the south by Zululand, in the west by the Lubombo Mountains and in the east by the Indian Ocean. On the 28<sup>th</sup> of December 1897 British AmaThongaland and Zululand were incorporated into Natal.<sup>37</sup>

Felgate<sup>38</sup> states that after Ngwanase had settled in British AmaThongaland in 1896, he was initially able to rule over the entire Mabudu chiefdom. He states that during 'the early years of the present century the control the Portuguese exercised over southern Mozambique was ineffectual.' Ngwanase and his successors still appointed headmen in southern Mozambique, collected taxes from the people and heard court cases arising out of disputes between people living in Mozambique. However, from the 1940s onwards, Felgate states, the 'border has become a reality for the Thonga (see Plate 5 and Plate 6).'

At the beginning of the twentieth century then the Mabudu chiefdom was a divided one. The Mabudu chiefs did, however, still exert authority over the entire area, although, as was said, their authority started to dwindle in the Portuguese part of the chiefdom. In the southern or British part of the

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<sup>34</sup> W.S. Felgate, *The Tembe Thonga of Natal and Mozambique: An Ecological Approach* (Durban, 1982) p. 21.

<sup>35</sup> J.P. De Bruin, *Die Onvoltooide Sendingtaak in Maputaland* (Pretoria, 1987) p. 5.

<sup>36</sup> T.V. Bulpin, *Natal and the Zulu Country* (Cape Town, 1969), p. 405; W.S. Felgate, *The Tembe Thonga of Natal and Mozambique: An Ecological Approach* (Durban, 1982) p. 20.  
W.S. Felgate, *The Tembe Thonga of Natal and Mozambique: An Ecological Approach* (Durban, 1982) p. 21.

<sup>38</sup> W.S. Felgate, *The Tembe Thonga of Natal and Mozambique: An Ecological Approach* (Durban, 1982) p. 21.

chiefdom the Mabudu chiefs enjoyed a great amount of authority. Not only did the government of South Africa acknowledge their rule, they also enjoyed freedom from the Zulu. However, in 1976 the government of South Africa decided that the people of northern KwaZulu are in fact Zulu and not Tsonga and therefore incorporated Maputaland into the KwaZulu Homeland. The prelude to and incorporation of the Mabudu chiefdom in KwaZulu forms the subject of the next chapter.



## CHAPTER 4

# DISPUTED ETNICITY AND THE EFFECT OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KWAZULU HOMELAND ON THE AUTHORITY OF THE MABUDU IN MAPUTALAND

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with ethnic identity. Through an analysis of the incorporation of southern Maputaland<sup>1</sup>, traditionally classified as a Tsonga area, into KwaZulu, the nation-state of the Zulu, it illustrates how ethnicity can, like history, be manipulated to suit situational needs. A brief examination of the 1982 Ingwavuma Land Deal, whereby the government of South Africa attempted to cede the Ingwavuma District to Swaziland, is included to substantiate the argument that ethnic identity is fluid and situational and can be manipulated to suit specific needs. The discussion includes a brief analysis of the structure of the KwaZulu government in order to illustrate how the incorporation of the Mabudu chiefdom in the KwaZulu Homeland affected the authority of the once powerful chiefdom.

Between 1902 and 1904 Maputaland (British AmaThongaland) was declared as trust land for the 'Mabuda-Tembe'. The middle part of the area or Makatini flats, however, from the MacMahon line to the Mkhuze River was declared as crown lands (see Map 3).<sup>2</sup> After 1910 the area was placed under the authority of the Union of South Africa and after 1961 the Republic of South Africa. The area was administered as the Ingwavuma District of Zululand, but with special status and a succession of Mabudu chiefs. In 1934 approximately 62 per cent of the inhabitants of Ingwavuma, comprising half of British AmaThongaland (the other half was administered as the Ubombo Magisterial District), were

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<sup>1</sup> That part of Maputaland south of the South African border, i.e. from the Lubombo Mountains in the east to the Indian Ocean, and from the Mozambique/South Africa border to Lake St. Lucia.

<sup>2</sup> J.J. Van Wyk, 'Ingwavuma – 'n Etno-historiese oorsig', *Journal of Racial Affairs*, 1983, Vol. 34 (2), p. 62.

under the administration of the Mabudu-Tembe. The rest of the inhabitants of the area were presumably of Zulu orientation.<sup>3</sup>

In 1976 the entire area of British AmaThongaland (encompassing the Ubombo and Ingwavuma districts) became part of the KwaZulu Homeland (see Map 4).<sup>4</sup> Webster<sup>5</sup> calls this period the 'apogee of Zulu influence in the area.' KwaZulu was granted self-governing status in 1977 and extended a decisive control over the southern part of the once powerful Mabudu chiefdom.

The control of the Zulu over Maputaland was tightened in 1982 when the government of South Africa put forward a plan to cede the northern part of KwaZulu (Maputaland) to Swaziland. This move 'unleashed a paroxysm of Zulu jingoism with mass, sometimes enforced, recruitment into Inkatha, the "national cultural liberation movement" which chief Buthelezi heads.'<sup>6</sup>

The attempt of the South African government to incorporate Maputaland into Swaziland re-opened the debate on the ethnic identity of the people of Maputaland. It begged anew the questions of whether the Mabudu were part of the Zulu nation or whether they were merely tributaries of the Zulu royal family. It was also asked whether the Mabudu were part of the Tsonga 'tribe' as Junod had said, or part of a Swazi ethnic group (if such a unit did exist) due to historical linkages between the Swazi and the Mabudu. In this chapter the ethnic politics of the people of Maputaland are examined as it played out in the 1970s and 1980s. The aim is not to be able to state, at the end of this discussion, that the people are indeed Tsonga or Swazi or Zulu, but to illustrate how the concept of ethnicity was used (and abused) in the struggle for control over Maputaland.

This chapter does not focus on the northern part of Maputaland, the area stretching northwards from the South African border to Maputo and from the Maputo River to the Indian Ocean. Suffice it to say that

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<sup>3</sup> D. Webster, 'Abafazi Bathonga Bafihlakala. Ethnicity and gender in a KwaZulu border community.' A.D. Spiegel & P.A. Mcallister, (eds.), *Tradition and Transition in Southern Africa: Festschrift for Phillip and Iona Mayer. African Studies Special Issue* 50 (1&2), (Johannesburg, 1991), p. 248.

<sup>4</sup> J.J. Van Wyk, 'Ingwavuma – 'n Etno-historiese oorsig', *Journal of Racial Affairs*, 1983, Vol. 34 (2), p. 62.

<sup>5</sup> D. Webster, 'Abafazi Bathonga Bafihlakala. Ethnicity and gender in a KwaZulu border community.' A.D. Spiegel & P.A. Mcallister, (eds.), *Tradition and Transition in Southern Africa: Festschrift for Phillip and Iona Mayer. African Studies Special Issue* 50 (1&2), (Johannesburg, 1991), p. 248.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p. 248.

up to the 1940s the Mabudu chiefs exercised authority over the area, as was stated in the previous chapter. With the increase of Portuguese control the authority of the Mabudu chiefs in that area started to dwindle. From the 1960s onwards a war of liberation, led by FRELIMO was fought against the Portuguese. The war was concentrated mainly in the northern provinces of Mozambique, with the southern part being relatively unaffected by warfare.<sup>7</sup> In 1975 Mozambique attained independence under the leadership of FRELIMO (*Frente da Libertacao de Mocambique*). The FRELIMO government, led by Samora Michel immediately started to implement Marxist-Leninist policies, creating, amongst other things, workers parties and communal farms.<sup>8</sup> The Party also instituted a system of governance that curtailed, almost completely, the authority of traditional leaders. For instance, *chefs do postos* were appointed over traditional administrative areas and Party Secretaries were appointed in all of the traditional wards. Where traditional authoritative structures existed, they were forced to govern with the aid and advise of the Party Secretaries.<sup>9</sup>

In the early 1980s a Civil War broke out in Mozambique between FRELIMO and Rhodesian backed RENAMO (*Resistencia Nacional Macambicana*). One of the reasons why RENAMO opposed the FRELIMO government was its disregard for traditional authority and its socialist ideology. The Civil War lasted until 1992. During the war millions of people were displaced. People who stayed in northern Maputaland sought refuge amongst family members in South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe.<sup>10</sup> The war dealt a devastating blow to the traditional authority structures that existed in the area. Today the Mabudu chief has very little 'real' authority in the area, although he has symbolic power, especially amongst older people who want him to return to Mozambique. The traditional structure, consisting of *izigodi* (wards) governed by *izinduna* (local chiefs) has been totally disrupted and would need to be almost reinvented if the Mabudu chief and his family are to exert authority in the northern part of the formerly united political community.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> P. Chabal, *A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa* (London, 2002), p. 189.

<sup>8</sup> A. Isaacman and B. Isaacman, *Mozambique. From Colonialism to Revolution, 1900-1982*, (Colorado, 1983), pp. 79-107

<sup>9</sup> A. Seegers, *Rewolusionere Têndense in Mosambiek*, MA, University of Pretoria (Pretoria, 1977) p. 65.

<sup>10</sup> J. McGregor, 'Violence and social change in a border economy: war in the Maputo hinterland, 1984-1992', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 1998, Vol. 24 (1), pp. 37-42.

<sup>11</sup> R.J. Kloppers, *The Utilisation of Natural Resources in the Matutuine District of Southern Mozambique: Implications for Transfrontier Conservation*, MA, University of Pretoria (Pretoria, 2001) pp. 86-88.

## 2. IMPOSED ETHNICITY: THE CREATION OF KWAZULU AND THE INCORPORATION OF MAPUTALAND.

The incorporation of the Mabudu chiefdom into the KwaZulu Homeland and later attempts at incorporating the Mabudu chiefdom into Swaziland, both based on arguments of ethnicity, did not only bring the ethnical paradigm into disrepute, but also illustrated how history was manipulated to justify the aims of the apartheid government. Although, especially in the history of South Africa, it is difficult to divorce a discussion on disputed ethnicity from a discussion on the manipulation of history, the discussion in this chapter focuses predominantly on the manipulation of ethnicity. The concluding chapter to this dissertation highlights explicitly how history was manipulated, not only by the South African government, but also by various other narrators of the history of the Mabudu.

During its time in government (1948-1994) the National Party decided unilaterally that the black population of South Africa consists of a group of 'nations' each of which is entitled to a separate nation state or homeland (see Map 4).<sup>12</sup> The government proclaimed that 'South Africa was not a multi-racial society, but consisted of many "nations" each of which should have the right to control its destiny and preserve its identity.'<sup>13</sup> The National Party's philosophy was based on the belief that 'racial, linguistic, and cultural differences should be fundamental organising principles in society.' Apartheid dictated that 'different types' of people should be kept apart. Accordingly, the population of South Africa was divided into ten black 'nations' and three 'non-black nations'. Each black nation was to have its own Bantustan, later to be called Homelands, with its own language and bureaucratic structure.<sup>14</sup>

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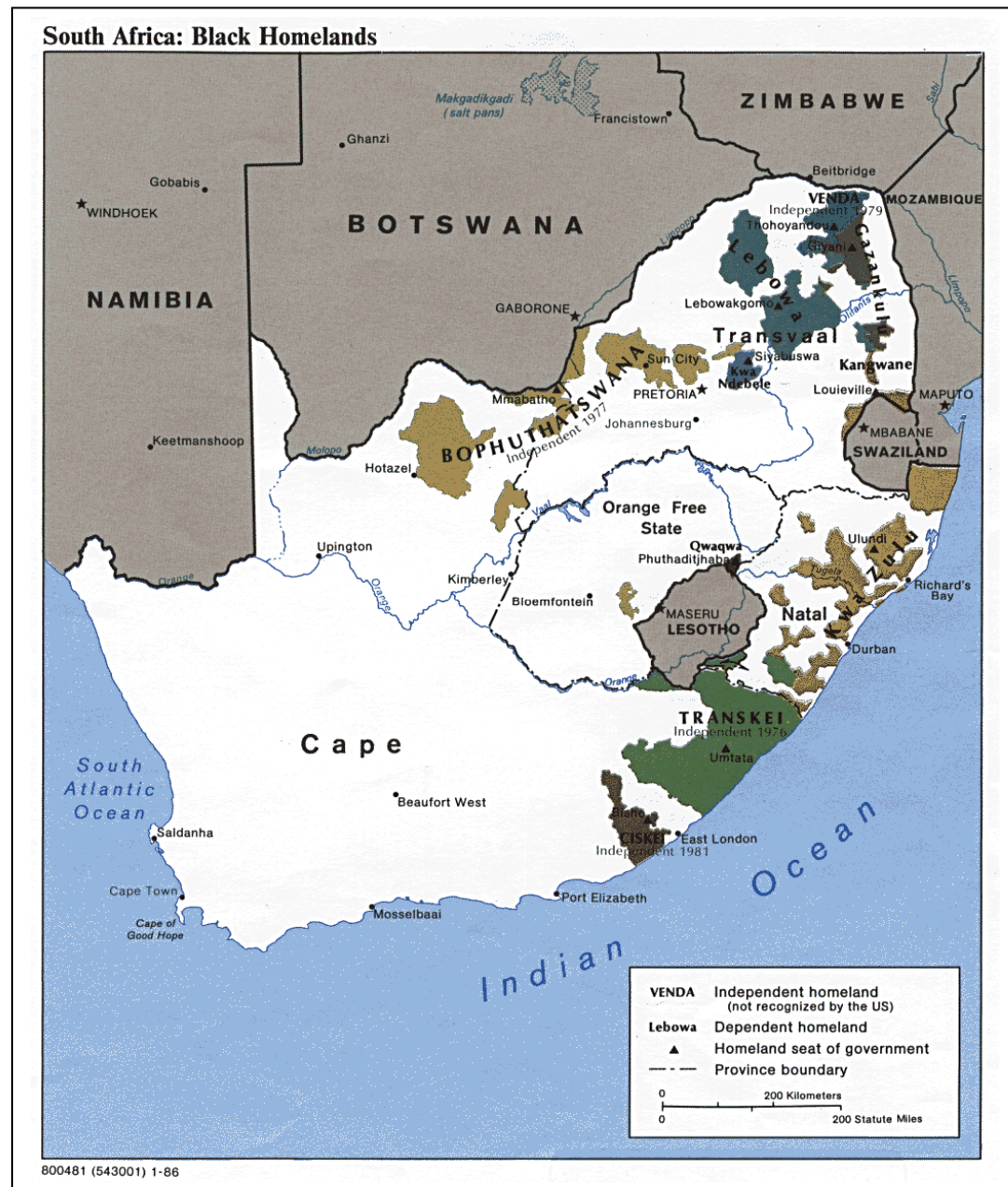
<sup>12</sup> J. Butler, R.I. Rotberg and J. Adams, *The Black Homelands of South Africa. The Political and Economic Development of Bophuthatswana and KwaZulu* (Berkeley, 1977) p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> M. Lipton, *Capitalism and Apartheid: South Africa, 1910-1986* (Aldershot, 1985) p. 30.

<sup>14</sup> S.N. Dlamini, 'The construction, meaning and negotiation of ethnic identities in KwaZulu-Natal.' A. Zegeye (ed.), *Social Identities in the New South Africa. After Apartheid – Volume One* (Cape Town, 2001), p. 198.



**Map 4: The homelands of South Africa**



Source: [www.govmaps.gov.za](http://www.govmaps.gov.za)

The National Party government passed the first laws with regards to the self-government for black people in South Africa in 1951. The Bantu Authorities Act (Act 68 of 1951) replaced the previous system of Councils with chiefdom (tribe), district and regional authorities.<sup>15</sup> Then Prime Minister Dr. H.F. Verwoerd explained it thus:

<sup>15</sup> W.B. Vosloo, D.A. Kotzé and W.J.O. Jeppe, *Local Government in South Africa* (Pretoria, 1974), p. 58.

‘We are thereby getting away from the idea that even in their own territories they (black people) can only act in an advisory capacity...We are developing in the direction of granting powers to the Bantu Authorities themselves’<sup>16</sup>

Under the Bantu Authorities Act a tribal authority was instituted for the Tembe ‘tribe’ on 18 April 1958. This was followed on 20 May 1960 with the establishment of the Ingwavuma District Authority comprised of the Tembe Tribal Authority and the Mathenjwa and Nyawo Tribal Authorities.<sup>17</sup> In 1959 the system of indirect representation of black people in the ‘white’ South African legislature was amended with the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act (Act 46 of 1959). This law represents what was Verwoerd’s master plan for the future division of white and black in South Africa.<sup>18</sup> Official recognition was given to eight ‘Bantu nations’ who would live in nine ‘nation-states’ (the Xhosa were granted two nation-states).<sup>19</sup>

In March 1970 John Vorster, Verwoerd’s successor, announced that any homeland was free to ask for complete independence from the Republic of South Africa.<sup>20</sup> Citizenship in the homelands was made possible through Law 26 of 1970. This law provided for dual citizenship for black people, i.e. they could be citizens of both South Africa and their new homeland. Citizenship to a homeland was based on place of birth, place of residence, language and kinship.<sup>21</sup>

After this law, the constitution of the homelands (Law 21 of 1971) (later Black Nation-States) became the basis for further constitutional development. The Transkei, who had already obtained self-government according to the Transkei Constitution (Law 48 of 1963), was exempted from these

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<sup>16</sup> C. Landman & D. Boshoff, *Differentiation and Self-determination in South Africa: 1902-1979* (Pretoria: Backgrounder Vol. 1 (12), Published by the South African Intelligence Services, Databank Division), p. 12.

<sup>17</sup> F.R. Tomlinson, J.C. Bekker, N.E. Wiehahan, C. Hanekom, J.J. Wessels, C.V. Bothma, J.F. Preller and K. Woerner, *Verslag van die Komitee van Deskundiges oor die Etniese en Historiese Verbinde van die Inwoners van Ingwavuma, Augustus 1982* (Unpublished report) p. 23.

<sup>18</sup> W.J. Breytenbach, *Bantoetuislande: Verkiesing en Politieke Partye* (Pretoria: Africa Institute, Nr. 23), p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> C. Landman & D. Boshoff, *Differentiation and Self-determination in South Africa: 1902-1979* (Pretoria: Backgrounder Vol. 1 (12), Published by the South African Intelligence Services, Databank Division), p. 8.

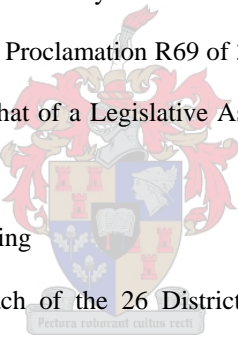
<sup>20</sup> B.J. Liebenberg, ‘The struggle against isolation’, B.J. Liebenberg and S.B. Spies (eds.), *South Africa in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Pretoria, 1993), p. 434.

<sup>21</sup> W.B. Vosloo, D.A. Kotzé and W.J.O. Jeppe, *Local Government in South Africa* (Pretoria, 1974), p. 59.

regulations.<sup>22</sup> Law 21 of 1971 stipulated that there would be two phases in the constitutional development of areas outside of the Transkei. The first phase provided for an executive council with an executive board member in charge of a legislative assembly under the guardianship of the government of the Republic of South Africa. In the second phase this governing body would be changed into a cabinet with a prime minister as the head of the legislative assembly of a self-governing state.<sup>23</sup>

The constitutional development of KwaZulu happened at a much slower pace than that of the Transkei and other black self-governing states. Self-government only took shape on 11 June 1970. Prince Clement Zulu was chosen as chairman (speaker of the house), with chief Charles Hlengwa as vice-chairman of the Zululand Regional Government.<sup>24</sup> Chief M. G. Buthelezi was appointed as chief executive board member.<sup>25</sup>

The Zululand Regional Government had authority over 203 tribal authorities, 3 community authorities on local level and 26 district authorities. Proclamation R69 of 30 March 1972 transformed the status of the Zululand Regional Government to that of a Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Assembly was comprised in the following manner:

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- A Representative of the Zulu King
  - Three representatives from each of the 26 District Authorities. (Each of the 26 District Authorities would appoint 3 chiefs from their respective districts with a total of 78 chiefs who would represent the districts in the Legislature.)
  - Three Chairmen (in the law described as chiefs) from the three community authorities that functioned simultaneously as district authorities.
  - 55 Elected members who would be elected by the inhabitants of Zululand in a free election.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> W.J. Breytenbach, *Bantoetuislande: Verkiesing en Politieke Partye* (Pretoria: Africa Institute, Nr. 23), p. 29.

<sup>23</sup> W.B. Vosloo, D.A. Kotzé and W.J.O. Jeppe, *Local Government in South Africa* (Pretoria, 1974), p. 60.

<sup>24</sup> B. Temkin, *Gatsha Buthelezi: Zulu Statesman* (Cape Town, 1976), pp. 75, 125.

<sup>25</sup> File 55/8/17/4. Vol. 1. Department of Cooperation and Development, F.4.

<sup>26</sup> W.J. Breytenbach, *Bantoetuislande: Verkiesing en Politieke Partye* (Pretoria: Africa Institute, Nr. 23, 1974), p. 96.

The Zululand Legislative Assembly changed the name of Zululand to KwaZulu, literally the 'home or place of the Zulu' on 1 April 1972, since Zululand only referred to areas north of the Tugela River, whilst the KwaZulu Legislature would have authority in areas south of the Tugela River as well.<sup>27</sup>

By 1974 KwaZulu was one of only three black 'nation-states' in South Africa who had not yet attained self-governing status according to Act 21 of 1971. Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the Chief Executive Board member did not, at the time, and on demand of the Buthelezi clan,<sup>28</sup> want to call a general election whereby the status of KwaZulu could be changed to that of a self-governing state.<sup>29</sup>

Buthelezi further said that it would not be favourable to use Pass Books as a controlling system for the election, since this would remind his people of the 'oppressor'. He suggested that KwaZulu citizenship certificates or voters' lists should rather be used. In 1973 it was known that only 150 000 KwaZulu citizenship certificates from 600 000 applications of the total estimated 'Zulu' population in South Africa of 4,5 million had been issued.<sup>30</sup> This would mean that if KwaZulu citizenship certificates were used as a control for the election, only 5% of people who should be eligible to vote, would be eligible to vote. According to Langer,<sup>31</sup> the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly applied for self-governing status from the South African government, but the government tried to delay the process. Breytenbach,<sup>32</sup> on the other hand, states that the South African government did not want to give KwaZulu self-governing status before elections were held in KwaZulu. However, on 28 January 1977 by Proclamation R11 of 28 January 1977 KwaZulu was given self-governing status, without an election being held.

In deciding what areas and people to include in KwaZulu the government followed its philosophy of apartheid, guided by the ethnic paradigm. However, it should be asked whether the government adhered to its philosophy of a separate state for every 'nation' in the creation of KwaZulu, especially with regards to the Mabudu. Surely, if the government viewed the Mabudu as a 'nation', it should also

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<sup>27</sup> D.A. Kotzé, *African Politics in South Africa: 1964 - 1974: Parties and Issues* (London, 1975), pp. 31-40.

<sup>28</sup> File 55/8/17/4. Vol. 1, Department of Cooperation and Development, F.16.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p. 31.

<sup>30</sup> Rand Daily Mail (Township), 28.11.1973.

<sup>31</sup> E.J. Langner, *The Founding and Development of Inkatha Yenkululeko Yesizwe*. MA University of South Africa (Pretoria, 1983) p. 162.

<sup>32</sup> W.J. Breytenbach, *Bantoetuislande: Verkiesing en Politieke Partye* (Pretoria: Africa Institute, Nr. 23, 1974), p. 97.

have been granted a homeland and the right to preserve its identity. Initially the Mabudu were indeed seen as a separate 'nation', or at least not as part of the Zulu 'nation'. Instead, as was discussed in Chapter 1, the Mabudu were initially classified as being part of the Tsonga 'tribe'. In 1976 the government suddenly accepted the Mabudu to be Zulu and included the Mabudu chiefdom into KwaZulu as one of the 203 tribal authorities.

In the preceding chapters it was illustrated that, from earliest times, the ethnic debate spins a thread through the entire history of the Mabudu. Early European travellers and cartographers referred to the people of the trans-Mkhuze River as *amaThongas*. As was discussed, this term was used by the Zulu and Shangaan to refer to the people living on the south-east coast of Africa north of the Zulu Empire. Although there are arguments that the term derives from the Zulu word *buronga* (dawn), there are also strong indications that the term was used negatively to refer to slaves or people of a lower status than the Zulu and Shangaans. Therefore, the local people themselves do not like to be called Tsonga or Ronga. Instead, as was discussed, people identified with a particular chief or chiefdom, as in the case of the people living in and around Delagoa Bay identifying with chief Mabudu and the Mabudu chiefdom.

It has been argued that there never was anything like a Tsonga 'nation' or Tsonga tribe. The argument goes that Swiss missionaries invented the Tsonga because they 'needed a common language linking their stations on the east coast with those operating amongst east coast refugee groups'. Furthermore, it is argued that the Portuguese officials welcomed this since they 'needed to divide the peoples of Mozambique into manageable pockets for administrative and political reasons'.<sup>33</sup> Webster, however, states that this particular argument overreaches itself, since on both accounts it is based on false assumptions. For instance, the people designated by the missionary, Junod, as Thonga were a much larger category than was useful for administrative and political reasons. Accordingly, Webster argues that despite arguments to the contrary, there is a large cultural area that may be classified as Thonga. Despite beliefs that Thonga is largely a linguistic feature, 'it also covers a wide range of cultural and

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<sup>33</sup> See, P. Harries, 'Missionaries, Marxists and magic: power and the politics of literacy in south-east Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 2001, Vol. 27 (3), pp. 405-420 and P. Harries, 'Exclusion, classification and internal colonialism: the emergence of ethnicity among the Tsonga-speakers of South Africa.' L. Vail (ed.). *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (London, 1989), pp. 82-111.



social structural forms'.<sup>34</sup> According to Webster<sup>35</sup> then, as was the case with Junod<sup>36</sup>, Bryant<sup>37</sup> and Felgate<sup>38</sup> before him, the Mabudu belongs to a Tsonga cultural grouping. Furthermore, the Mabudu are classified as being part of the Southern Thonga or Ronga grouping (see Map 2).

There are undoubtedly some features of the culture of the Mabudu that link them to the Tsonga. These traits are visible even today. Amongst other traits, Webster lists,

'a number of people (especially women) speak Thonga; place names, and names and names of natural phenomena...are Thonga; homestead structure is distinctive with most huts in line (not a circle) and facing east; the cattle byre is never in the homestead, but set outside its boundaries; fish forms an important part of the diet (see Plate 1 and Plate 4), and hunting and gathering are important food supplements (see Plate 2 and Plate 3); inter-cropping, swidden agricultural work and people tenaciously adhere to the tradition of planting three or four maize seeds in one hole.'<sup>39</sup>

Both Junod and Bryant also noted that the Mabudu have more in common, culturally with their neighbours to their north (i.e. those classified as Thonga) than their neighbours to their south (the Zulu and Swazi). These cultural traits do not mean that the people can be classified as Thonga; it merely reveals an interesting correlation between the Mabudu and the people living to their north. As Barth<sup>40</sup> has stated, when examining ethnicity, the critical focus of investigation should be 'the *ethnic boundary* that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses.' In other words, ethnicity cannot be equated with culture. Although the Mabudu share cultural traits or customs with other people classified as Tsonga, the answer to their ethnicity should not be sought in these cultural traits or cultural markers. Rather, it should be sought in the way the Mabudu define themselves and how other groups define

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<sup>34</sup> D. Webster, 'Abafazi Bathonga Bafihlakala. Ethnicity and gender in a KwaZulu border community.' A.D. Spiegel & P.A. Mcallister, (eds.), Tradition and Transition in Southern Africa: Festschrift for Phillip and Iona Mayer. *African Studies Special Issue* 50 (1&2), (Johannesburg, 1991), pp. 246-247.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, p. 247.

<sup>36</sup> H.A. Junod, *The life of a South African Tribe. Volume I: Social Life* (New York, 1962) p. 15.

<sup>37</sup> A.T. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* (London, 1929) pp. 286-293.

<sup>38</sup> W.S. Felgate, *The Tembe Thonga of Natal and Mozambique: An Ecological Approach* (Durban, 1982) p. 10.

<sup>39</sup> D. Webster, 'Abafazi Bathonga Bafihlakala. Ethnicity and gender in a KwaZulu border community.' A.D. Spiegel & P.A. Mcallister, (eds.), Tradition and Transition in Southern Africa: Festschrift for Phillip and Iona Mayer. *African Studies Special Issue* 50 (1&2), (Johannesburg, 1991), p. 250.

<sup>40</sup> F. Barth, 'Introduction', F. Barth (ed.). *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organisation of Cultural Difference*, p. 15.

them, or, in Barth's words, in the *ethnic boundary* they draw between themselves and the groups around them.

Analysing cultural markers to establish ethnicity can indeed be complicated and misleading. For instance, due to the fact that the people of Maputaland have taken over many cultural traits from the royal Zulu house, N.J. Van Warmeloo was sensitive to call them Thonga or Tsonga.<sup>41</sup> As was stated in previous chapters, local inhabitants of Maputaland had for some time before 1976 begun to take over traits more likely associated with their Zulu neighbours. As discussed in Chapter 2, this had to do with the status that Zulu lent to people. White employers in the mines on the Witwatersrand and on the farms in Natal had an image of Zulu men as strong, muscular and brave. These images were formed after the first interactions of white people with Zulu armies and based on the accounts of early explorers and white soldiers, both British and Boer, who had fought against this 'worthy' opponent. Many people who previously identified themselves as *abakwaMabudu* (Mabudu's people) now identified themselves as Zulu. This was seen in the population census of 1980 that classified the majority of people in the Ingwavuma District as Zulu.<sup>42</sup> It would therefore have been logical for the government of South Africa to incorporate Ingwavuma into KwaZulu in 1976 on the basis of the inhabitants of Ingwavuma and the inhabitants of the districts to the south belonging to the same 'nation'. Webster<sup>43</sup> states in this regard that this 'fact needs not confuse us, as the government's attempts at social engineering can change a person's ethnicity, race or nationality at the stroke of a pen. Thus the area that was until recently referred to as 'British AmaThongaland' became an integral part of KwaZulu.'

### 3. DISPUTED ETHNICITY: THE INGWAVUMA LAND DEAL

As was stated above, in 1982 the debate surrounding the ethnicity of the inhabitants of Ingwavuma reached a climax because of the South African government's plan to cede Ingwavuma to Swaziland. The Swazi government put forth a claim, based on historical evidence, that Ingwavuma should be given

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<sup>41</sup> P. Harries, 'History, ethnicity and the Ingwavuma land deal: the Zulu northern frontier in the nineteenth century', *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, 1983, Vol. VI, p.26.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, p.26.

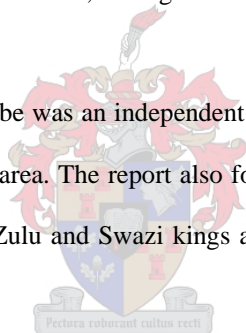
<sup>43</sup> D. Webster, 'Tembe-Thonga kinship: the marriage of Anthropology and History', *Cahiers d'etudes Africaines*, 1986, Vol. 104, p. 616.

to Swaziland. The South African government was willing to accept this claims permitted that Swaziland would also incorporate the homeland of Kangwane in South Africa bordering on Swaziland.<sup>44</sup>

The government of KwaZulu was, however, not willing to accept the loss of Ingwavuma. Arguing that the Zulu have controlled the area for over 100 years and that Dingane was buried there, Gatsha Buthelezi claimed Ingwavuma for Zululand.<sup>45</sup>

This led to a series of investigations into the ethnic affiliations of the people of Maputaland. A commission of experts was appointed by the Government to investigate the ethnic and historical affiliations of the inhabitants of Maputaland. The commission was chaired by Prof. F.R. Tomlinson and delivered a report entitled, *Verslag van die Komitee van Deskundiges oor die Etniese en Historiese Verbintenisse van die Inwoners van Ingwavuma*, in August 1982.

The report found that the Mabudu-Tembe was an independent ethnic group and that neither Swaziland nor KwaZulu had any demands on the area. The report also found that the chief of the Mabudu was a king in his own right on par with the Zulu and Swazi kings and not a mere *inkosi* or chief under the authority of a king.<sup>46</sup>



The report found that there were indeed historical links between the Swazi and the Mabudu. As was related in Chapter 3, Zambili, who acted as regent for Ngwanase at the time when the Mabudu chieftdom was colonised by Portugal and Britain, was a Swazi princess. It was also related in the present study that oral traditions have it that Thonga (an ancestor of Mabudu) and Swazi were twin brothers and that Swazi (Scar) was so named because his father marked him with a scar to tell his sons apart. It has furthermore been discussed that another relation has it that Swazi (or the Dlamini-Ngwane clan) moved from Maputaland to settle across the Lubombo Mountains in Swaziland and at the same

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<sup>44</sup> P. Harries, 'History, ethnicity and the Ingwavuma land deal: the Zulu northern frontier in the nineteenth century', *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, 1983, Vol. VI, p.1.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, p.1.

<sup>46</sup> F.R. Tomlinson, J.C. Bekker, N.E. Wiehahan, C. Hanekom, J.J. Wessels, C.V. Bothma, J.F. Preller and K. Woerner, *Verslag van die Komitee van Deskundiges oor die Etniese en Historiese Verbintenisse van die Inwoners van Ingwavuma*, Augustus 1982 (Unpublished report) p. 47.



time left his brother behind in Maputaland. Moreover, Bonner<sup>47</sup> has illustrated that the Ngwane once lived in the Delagoa Bay hinterland, but were 'squeezed from the area by Tembe desires to dominate trade at the Bay. However, despite the historical linkages between the Swazi and the Mabudu, the report found that the Swazi had no claim on the incorporation of Maputaland.<sup>48</sup>

As stated above, the report of the experts also found that the Zulu had no claim on Maputaland. The report relates that there existed a tributary relationship between the Mabudu and the Zulu, but states clearly that tribute 'impliseer nie totale onderdanigheid en inskakeling by die Zoeloeryk nie, en daarom is Tongaland nie in 1890 ingelyf soos aangrensende gebiede nie. *Tongaland was nooit deel van die ou Zoeloeryk nie* (own italics).'<sup>49</sup>

In 1983, the year after the report of the experts appeared, J.J. van Wyk, then an ethnologist at the University of Pretoria, contributed to the debate by publishing an article on the history and ethnicity of the inhabitants of Ingwavuma. Van Wyk<sup>50</sup> assumed that, despite the fact that the Mabudu chieftom was never part of the Zulu Empire, because the Mabudu paid tribute to the Zulu, the Mabudu would have accepted administrative incorporation into KwaZulu. He further argued that the historical links between the Swazi and the Mabudu were stronger than that between the Mabudu and the Zulu and that because this relationship was not forced on the Mabudu, as was the case with their relationship with the Zulu, the incorporation of Maputaland with Swaziland would be an acceptable outcome. It was thus clear that Van Wyk supported the governments plan to cede Ingwavuma to Swaziland.

Likewise, the Minister of Co-operation and Development believed that ceding Ingwavuma to Swaziland would 'bring people together who belong together.' Furthermore, government officials proclaimed that the population of the area is predominantly and historically Swazi.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> P. Bonner, Kings, *Commoners and Concessionaires. The Evolution and Dissolution of the Nineteenth-Century Swazi State* (Cambridge, 1982), p. 11.

<sup>48</sup> F.R. Tomlinson, J.C. Bekker, N.E. Wiehahan, C. Hanekom, J.J. Wessels, C.V. Bothma, J.F. Preller and K. Woerner, *Verslag van die Komitee van Deskundiges oor die Etniese en Historiese Verbintenisse van die Inwoners van Ingwavuma, Augustus 1982* (Unpublished report) p. 47.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, p. 47.

<sup>50</sup> J.J. Van Wyk, 'Ingwavuma – 'n Etno-historiese oorsig', *Journal of Racial Affairs*, 1983, Vol. 34 (2), p. 62.

<sup>51</sup> P. Harries, 'History, ethnicity and the Ingwavuma land deal: the Zulu northern frontier in the nineteenth century', *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, 1983, Vol. VI, p.1.

Patrick Harries also published his views on the ethnic affiliations of the people of Maputaland in 1983 in an article entitled, 'History, ethnicity and the Ingwavuma land deal: the Zulu northern frontier in the nineteenth century.' Harries showed the links between the Mabudu and both the Zulu and Swazi and put forth an argument against the use of a concept as fluid as ethnicity in determining the policy of a government.

Ingwavuma did not become part of Swaziland, but instead remained an integral part of KwaZulu until 1994 when KwaZulu integrated into the new South Africa. Chief Mzimba ruled over the Mabudu till his death in 1999. His son Israel Mabudhu Tembe, who is currently serving as chief of the Mabudu, succeeded him in March 2001 (see Plate 7).

#### **4. CONCLUSION: UNRESOLVED IDENTITY**

The question as to the 'true' ethnicity of the people of Maputaland is still unanswered. At his speech during the inauguration of Inkosi Mabudhu Israel Tembe, King Goodwill Zweletini of the Zulu made it clear that the Zulu view the people of Maputaland as their kinsmen and as under the authority of the Zulu Royal House. The issue is very sensitive and not many people are willing to give their opinion on the ethnic relations of the Mabudu, especially when it comes to their ties with the Zulu. It should also be questioned whether it could ever be asked what the ethnic identity of the people of Maputaland really is since, since ethnicity and identity is not primordial, but fluid and 'constructed from everyday, chancing and often contradictory practices.'<sup>52</sup> This was clearly illustrated by Webster in his study on ethnicity in the Kosi Bay area (Maputaland). Webster illustrates that people manipulate their opinions and statements on their own identity and ethnicity, as they need to.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> S.N. Dlamini, 'The construction, meaning and negotiation of ethnic identities in KwaZulu-Natal', A. Zegeye (ed.), *Social Identities in the New South Africa. After Apartheid – Volume One* (Cape Town, 2001) p. 219.

<sup>53</sup> D. Webster, 'Abafazi Bathonga Bafihlakala. Ethnicity and gender in a KwaZulu border community.' A.D. Spiegel & P.A. Mcallister, (eds.), *Tradition and Transition in Southern Africa: Festschrift for Phillip and Iona Mayer. African Studies Special Issue 50 (1&2)*, (Johannesburg, 1991), p. 250.

Discussing Zulu identity in KwaZulu-Natal, Dlamini<sup>54</sup> states that four criteria of identification are employed: birthplace, decent, language and history. If one were to use these criteria in analysing identity in Maputaland one would come to conflicting answers. If someone was born in Maputaland he can identify himself as being a Thonga, Mabudu or Zulu depending on his views of whether Maputaland is part of KwaZulu, 'AmaThongaland' or KwaMabudu (KwaTembe). Descent can be manipulated in a similar fashion. Webster<sup>55</sup> has even shown that people living in Maputaland who classify themselves as Zulu trace their descent to Thonga ancestors. For example, people whose ancestors were known by the Thonga surname, Tembe would sometimes change their surnames to Mtembu, a well-known Zulu surname.

Language serves to a certain degree as a marker of ethnicity in Maputaland. Women, especially older women speak Ronga, often deliberately, to illustrate their Thonga identity. According to Webster<sup>56</sup> Thonga or Mabudu women enjoy a larger amount of freedom than Zulu women and therefore adhere to their Thonga identity. It is thus possible, and a reality, that in a singular nuclear family a man identifying himself as Zulu is married to a wife calling herself Thonga and that they are parents to a 'Zulu' boy and a 'Thonga' daughter. As was discussed earlier men in Maputaland had started to speak Zulu very early on to enable them to trade with the people living south of Maputaland. With time Zulu became a status language and, as men moved into the South African capitalist labour market they found identifying themselves as Zulu beneficial.

Birthplace, decent and language are thus only limited markers of ethnicity in Maputaland. History, the final criteria of identification may shed some light on ethnicity, but history, like identity in general can be manipulated to suit specific ends, as will be illustrated in more detail in Chapter 5. Here only a few words will be said on history to complete Dlamini's discussion on the criteria for ethnic classification.

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<sup>54</sup> S.N. Dlamini, 'The construction, meaning and negotiation of ethnic identities in KwaZulu-Natal', A. Zegeye (ed.), *Social Identities in the New South Africa. After Apartheid – Volume One* (Cape Town, 2001) p. 198.

<sup>55</sup> D. Webster, 'Abafazi Bathonga Bafihlakala. Ethnicity and gender in a KwaZulu border community.' A.D. Spiegel & P.A. Mcallister, (eds.), *Tradition and Transition in Southern Africa: Festschrift for Phillip and Iona Mayer. African Studies Special Issue 50 (1&2)*, (Johannesburg, 1991), p. 250.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, p. 250.

This study has shown that the people who historically lived between Maputo Bay and the Mkhuze River and between the Pongola (Maputo) River and the Indian Ocean used to identify themselves with small chiefs based on real or created feelings of shared ancestry and thus kinship. In the latter half of the eighteenth century Mabudu of the Tembe clan forged together many of the chiefdoms in the area into the most powerful political entity in south-east Africa. The people, as was discussed, referred to themselves as *abakwaMabudu*. Thus, from a historical point of view the people are Mabudu. However, the *abakwaMabudu* also mingled and merged with Swazi, Gaza-Nguni (Shangaan) and Zulu people moving through their area. They took on many of the cultural traits and customs of the people they came into contact with and weaved these traits into their own culture. Many Zulu cultural traits were taken over, especially after 1976. The politics of the day also played a part with Inkatha no longer allowing people to call themselves Zulu based solely on residence in KwaZulu. Inkatha demanded people adhere to the customs of the Zulu Royal House and that people participate in Zulu cultural festivities like the Shaka Day and other celebrations of Zulu nationhood.<sup>57</sup> In this manner the people of Maputaland traded many of their own customs for new ones. However, some of the traditional customs were kept alive. Today the people, rather than having a Zulu or Thonga, Swazi, or even, in some cases, a European (English or Afrikaans speaking white South African) culture, exhibit a variety of customs and at the same time a variety of identities. It would thus be impossible to classify the people of Maputaland as being Zulu, Thonga, Mabudu, Swazi etc. Rather, they are a unique group with ethnic ties to all their neighbours.

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<sup>57</sup> C. Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty. The Powers of Shaka Zulu and the Limits of Historical Intervention* (Johannesburg, 1998) pp.1-3.


## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION:**

### **REPRESENTATIONS AND MANIPULATIONS OF THE HISTORY OF THE MABUDU**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explores the manner in which the history of the Mabudu was represented by various role players to attain specific political goals. In so doing it serves as an example of how history can be manipulated to serve the aims of the present. The focus of this chapter is especially on the period since 1970.



In 1976 the Mabudu chiefdom became part of the KwaZulu Homeland. Prior to this event it was argued that the Mabudu were historically independent of the Zulu. The incorporation of the Mabudu chiefdom in KwaZulu demanded a renewed interpretation of the history of the Mabudu. Arguments were made to show that the Mabudu were in fact tributaries of the Zulu, and, as was shown in the previous chapter, arguments were even made that the Mabudu were culturally and ethnically part of the Zulu ethnic or cultural group. In 1982 the government of South Africa tried to force a renewed interpretation of the history of the Mabudu. In trying to cede the Ingwavuma District to Swaziland, ethno-historical arguments were made that the Mabudu, and the other chiefdoms of Ingwavuma formed part of the larger Swazi nation. It was argued that the Ngwane-Dlamini and the Mabudu-Tembe were historically and ethnically related. These attempts did however fail. After 1994 KwaZulu disappeared as an 'independent' political unit when it became part of the South African Province of KwaZulu-Natal. However, KwaZulu still exists 'on the ground' especially in the rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal of which Maputaland forms part.

The matter of the historical allegiance of the Mabudu chiefs has not been settled. At the inauguration of *Inkosi* Mabudhu Israel Tembe in March 2001 King Goodwill Zwelitini reminded the crowd that the Mabudu are, despite claims to the contrary, part of the Zulu nation (see Plate 8). Among the dignitaries representing the Mabudu royal family there was much dismay and a lot of complaints afterwards on Zwelitini's speech. Mabudu loyalists were also angry that the people gathered for the festivities gave a greater ovation to Zwelitini than to *Inkosi* Mabudu and moreover that they used Zulu praise-names to address *Inkosi* Mabudu instead of the customary Thonga praise-names. Arguments are made by representatives of the Mabudu family that the history of the Mabudu illustrates that the people of Maputaland were always independent of the Zulu. Furthermore, there are rumours of covert meetings between the Mabudu chief and the Swazi king. After a formal meeting where the Swazi king invited *Inkosi* Mabudu there was much talk about the fact that *Inkosi* Mabudu was addressed as *ingwenyama* (king) and not as *inkosi* (chief) and that his place-card, indicating where he was to sit at the dinner, read King Mabudu Tembe and not *Inkosi* Mabudu Tembe.

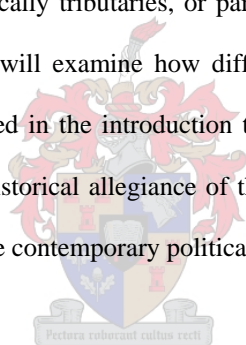
In the previous four chapters the history of the Mabudu was traced from the mid-1700s. It was shown how the clans living in the vicinity of Delagoa Bay were united into the strongest social and political unit in south-east Africa during the reign of Mabudhu (c. 1748-1798). In Chapter 2 the rise of the Ndwandwe, Mthetwa and later the Zulu were analysed. It was shown how the emergence of these states influenced the authority of the Mabudu in south-east Africa. These states did not only compete with the Mabudu for political and economic power in the area, but the wars they waged led to a series of refugee flights through Maputaland that contributed to the deterioration of the authority of the Mabudu.

Chapter 3 looked at the contact between the Mabudu and European forces that gradually became involved in the politics of south-eastern Africa. Although initial contact with Europeans enabled the Mabudu to establish a powerful state, it later led to the fragmentation of the Mabudu chiefdom and the placement of the Mabudu people under the authority of two different colonial powers. After a clash with the Portuguese the Mabudu chiefs sought asylum in British AmaThongaland. The Portuguese appointed a new chief on the Mozambican side of the former chiefdom. Although the people living in Southern Mozambique still acknowledged the authority of the true Mabudu chief, this event marked the

start of the gradual decline of the authority of the Mabudu ruling family in Southern Mozambique. This process was accelerated after Mozambique gained independence in 1975. The FRELIMO government launched a campaign to eliminate traditional authorities all over Mozambique. Furthermore, from the start of the 1980s the Civil War in Mozambique gained momentum and led to the internal and external displacement of millions of people. Civil War and displacement contributed further to the decline of the authority of the Mabudu in Southern Mozambique.

In Chapter 4 the incorporation of the Mabudu chiefdom in the KwaZulu Homeland was analysed. Emphasis was placed on the manner in which ethnicity can, like history, be manipulated to serve political goals, as the government of South Africa tried to do in 1982 with the Ingwavuma Land Deal.

A theme that runs throughout the history of the Mabudu is whether the Mabudu were an independent chiefdom or whether they were historically tributaries, or part of the Zulu or Swazi kingdoms. As a conclusion to this study, this chapter will examine how different people answered this question at different times. It is done, as was stated in the introduction to this dissertation, not in an attempt to provide the definitive answer on the historical allegiance of the Mabudu, but as an investigation into how history can be manipulated to serve contemporary political goals.



## **2. THE MABUDU KINGS AS ZULU CHIEFS: MAPUTALAND AND THE KWAZULU HOMELAND**

In 1819 the Zulu launched a successful attack on the Ndwandwe and so established themselves as the most powerful political entity in south-eastern Africa.<sup>1</sup> Trade with Delagoa Bay was one of the major rewards in the wars between the Zulu, Ndwandwe and Mathetwa as the trade goods; beads, brassware and later firearms, were important for the exercise of chiefly patronage and rewarding followers. This meant that the Mabudu, who at that time had dominated the trade between Delagoa Bay and the south,

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<sup>1</sup> J.Wright & C. Hamilton, 'Traditions and transformations. The Pongola-Mzimkhulu region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.' A. Duminy and B. Guest (eds.), *Natal and Zululand From Earliest Times to 1910. A New History* (Pietermaritzburg, 1989) p. 67.



became involved in the wars of the southern interior.<sup>2</sup> During the reign of Dingiswayo, the Mthethwa established an alliance with the Mabudu. The Mabudu remained free from attack as long as this alliance held. After the defeat of the Mthethwa, Zwide attacked the Mabudu and brought the trade under the control of the Ndwandwe. When Shaka defeated the Ndwandwe, he brought the Mabudu and with them the trade with Delagoa Bay under Zulu control. It was at this point that the Mabudu king, Makhasane started to pay tribute to the Zulu king.<sup>3</sup>

The establishment of Zulu control over the trade with Delagoa Bay and more especially the fact that Makhasane started to pay tribute to the Zulu king is held as proof that the Mabudu became part of the Zulu Empire. However, the counter argument leads that the Mabudu kings only paid tribute out of respect to the Zulu kings and to ensure good relations.<sup>4</sup> Tribute does not imply subservience according to this argument. It is also interesting to note that the Mabudu were granted what Smith<sup>5</sup> term 'virtual independence', being allowed to conduct their own affairs as long as it was not contrary to the wishes of the Zulu. British traders at Port Natal also became tributaries of the Zulu king.<sup>6</sup> This does not mean that they became Zulu or part of the Zulu nation, but merely that they respected the Zulu king's authority and wanted to establish good relations.

Although it is argued that the fact that the Mabudu paid tribute to the Zulu did not imply the acceptance of Zulu rule and the end of the independence of the Mabudu, it is interesting to note that the Mabudu take the fact that the Ngubane paid tribute to them as evidence that the Ngubane accepted the authority of the Mabudu. When the Mabudu moved southwards and established their authority over the 'original owners' of the Kosi Bay area, the Ngubane, they did not wage war. Instead, as was related in Chapter 2, the Ngubane slaughtered a cow and shared the meat with the Mabudu. The parts of the body of the cow they gave to the Mabudu signifies, according to Mabudu custom, subservience. The Ngubane still

<sup>2</sup> G.A. Dominy, 'The Ingwavuma dispute revisited: African trade route and European buffer zone', *Kleio*, 1986, Vol. XVIII., p. 80.

<sup>3</sup> A. Smith, 'The trade of Delagoa Bay as a factor in Nguni politics 1750-1835.' L. Thompson (ed.). *African Societies in Southern Africa* (London, 1972), pp. 185-186.

<sup>4</sup> C. Ballard, 'Trade, tribute and migrant labour: Zulu and colonial exploitation of the Delagoa Bay hinterland 1818 – 1879.' in J.B. Peires (ed.). *Before and after Shaka: papers in Nguni History* (Grahamstown, 1981), pp. 102-103.

<sup>5</sup> A. Smith, 'The trade of Delagoa Bay as a factor in Nguni politics 1750-1835.' L. Thompson (ed.). *African Societies in Southern Africa* (London, 1972), pp. 186.

<sup>6</sup> G.A. Dominy, 'The Ingwavuma dispute revisited: African trade route and European buffer zone', *Kleio*, 1986, Vol. XVIII, p. 81.

dispute their historical subservience to the Mabudu, using the same argument the Mabudu use to disclaim subservience to the Zulu.<sup>7</sup> The question begged is thus whether paying tribute means the acceptance of dominance or merely the institution of good relations. As was discussed in Chapter 2, the tributary relationship between the Mabudu and the Zulu lasted until the eventual destruction of the Zulu state by Britain.

It is important to note that when Britain annexed the Zulu territories after 1879 they did not incorporate Maputaland as part of Zululand. At that time the British regarded Maputaland, or British AmaThongaland, as an area independent of the Zulu nation, under the authority of the independent Mabudu chiefs. What the British did do, however, was to move the historical southern boundary of the Mabudu chiefdom northwards, thus arguing that the Zulu dominated the disputed southern areas of Maputaland.<sup>8</sup>

Initially, under the influence of John Dunn the northern boundary of Zululand was to be the Hluhluwe River (see Map 3). This accorded with the claims of the Mabudu that their area stretched south of the Mkuze River to Lake St. Lucia. The area south of the Mkuze River to the Hluhluwe River was at that time, however, under the control of Zibhebhu of the Mandlakazi. During the reign of Cetshwayo, Zibhebhu had forced many 'amathongas' to move north of the Mkuze River.<sup>9</sup> Under the 1879 settlement the area between the Mkuze and the Hluhluwe was to be given back to the Mabudu (see Map 3). The boundary between Zululand and 'Thongaland' was to be 'from the mouth of the "Umhlaluwe" eastward through the channel of "FALSE" BAY, and thence in a straight line to Cape Vidal.'<sup>10</sup> After the reinstatement of Cetshwayo in January 1883, the settlement of 1879 was scrapped and Zibhebhu was given the area between the Mkuze and Pongola Rivers as compensation for territory lost elsewhere. However, it was Zibhebhu's attempt to occupy this area that caused the Zulu Civil War. In the years following 1883 the official northern border of Zululand reverted to the Mkuze

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<sup>7</sup> W.S. Felgate, *The Tembe Thonga of Natal and Mozambique: An Ecological Approach* (Durban, 1982) p. 13.

<sup>8</sup> Governmental Notice, Zululand, nr. 8, Pietermaritzburg, 15 February 1890.

<sup>9</sup> P. Harries, 'History, ethnicity and the Ingwavuma land deal: the Zulu northern frontier in the nineteenth century', *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, 1983, Vol. VI, pp.22-23.

<sup>10</sup> Dispatch No. 49, of 16<sup>th</sup> February 1880, from General Sir G. Wolseley, G.C.M.G., K.C.B, enclosing Report of the Zululand Boundary Commission, with maps and beacons. Colonial Office, Downing Street, June 1880.

and sovereignty in the area fluctuated according to the ability and desire of either the Mandlakazi or Mabudu to exert their power over the chiefdoms here.<sup>11</sup>

In 1889, C.R. Saunders, the magistrate at Eshowe, was commanded to determine the northern boundary of Zululand. As discussed in Chapter 3, Saunders established that the chiefdoms of the transMkhuze were part of the Zulu nation. He determined that the chiefdoms of Fokoti, Umjindi, Ncamena and Sibonda had to become part of Zululand. Thus the northern boundary of Zululand was established north of the Mkhuze River. The southern boundary of the Mabudu was now established to be the northern banks of Lake Sibayi (see Map 3).<sup>12</sup> It is important to note that there was no doubt at this point that the chiefdom of Mabudu should not become part of Zululand. Although Saunders annexed chiefdoms over which the Mabudu claimed authority on the grounds that those chiefdoms were in fact tributaries of the Zulu, there was no talk of annexing the Mabudu chiefdom on these grounds. The British only incorporated the Mabudu chiefdom into the Zululand district of Ingwavuma on 27 December 1897.<sup>13</sup> From that time the area was part of Zululand although recognised as a 'trust area' for the Mabudu people, as is discussed below.

In 1875 the Mabudu chiefdom was divided between a British and a Portuguese sphere of influence. As was discussed in Chapter 3, the Mabudu were not consulted or informed of this move. The Portuguese moved swiftly to establish their authority in the area, but did not really affect the authority of the Mabudu chiefs until the 1940s. Britain did not move over to the annexation of their part of the former chiefdom until 30 May 1895 when AmaThongaland was proclaimed a British protectorate. As related above, two years later British AmaThongaland was incorporated into the Zululand district of Ingwavuma. The area went to the Union Government after 1910 and after 1960 to the Republic of South Africa. The Mabudu chiefdom was administered by the government as 'trust land' for the Mabudu 'tribe'. In this time there was no talk of the Mabudu area being a traditional Zulu area. In the

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<sup>11</sup> P. Harries, 'History, ethnicity and the Ingwavuma land deal: the Zulu northern frontier in the nineteenth century', *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, 1983, Vol. VI, pp.22-23.

<sup>12</sup> F.R. Tomlinson, J.C. Bekker, N.E. Wiehahan, C. Hanekom, J.J. Wessels, C.V. Bothma, J.F. Preller and K. Woerner, *Verslag van die Komitee van Deskundiges oor die Etniese en Historiese Verbintenisse van die Inwoners van Ingwavuma* (Unpublished report, 1982) p. 9.

<sup>13</sup> P. Harries, 'History, ethnicity and the Ingwavuma land deal: the Zulu northern frontier in the nineteenth century', *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, 1983, Vol. VI, p. 26.

records of the Native Administration the people of this area were classified as the Tembe-Thonga, a Thonga tribe.<sup>14</sup>

In Chapter 4 the process whereby the KwaZulu Homeland was established was examined. KwaZulu was supposed to be the 'nation-state' of the Zulu nation, in accordance with the government's policy of apartheid. In this way the government attempted to cement ethnic boundaries by transforming them to fixed territorial or state boundaries. As was discussed, the most northern part of the province of Natal proved to be a problem. The area was regarded as ethnically Thonga or Tsonga. However, the Tsonga Homeland, Gazankulu was established in the then Transvaal Province. The people of Northern Natal were divided from the people of Transvaal by Swaziland and Mozambique (see Map 4). There were thus administrative problems with linking the 'Tsonga' people of Natal and Transvaal in one 'nation-state'. Furthermore, as discussed above, the Zulus claimed Northern Natal as part of their historical territory. It therefore seemed natural that the area be incorporated into the KwaZulu Homeland.

### **3. A REINTERPRETATION OF THE HISTORY OF THE SWAZI AND THE MABUDU: THE INGWAVUMA LAND DEAL**

In 1982 the government of South Africa put forward a plan to cede the magisterial district of Ingwavuma in KwaZulu to Swaziland. As discussed in Chapter 4, the plan included the cession of KaNgwane, the Swazi Bantustan in the then Transvaal Province to Swaziland. In order to justify its actions the government set out to prove that the people of Ingwavuma were historically and ethnically related to the Swazis.

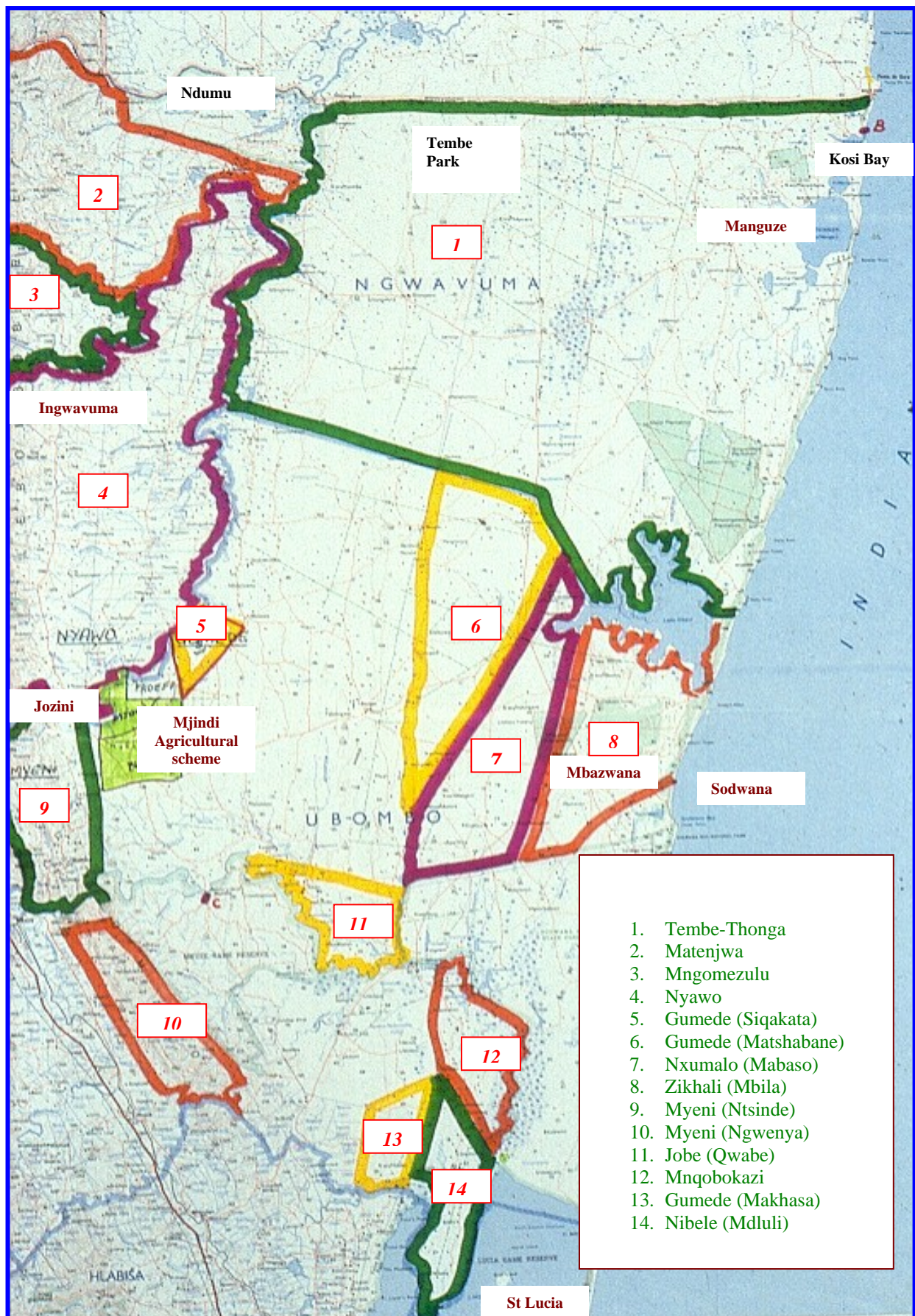
There are four chiefdoms or historically recognised 'tribes' in Ingwavuma. These are, the Nyawo, Mngomezulu, Mathenjwa and the Mabudu. The Nyawo, Mngomezulu and the Mathenjwa live west of the Pongolo River and the Mabudu east of the Pongolo River (see Map 5).

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<sup>14</sup> See J. Bradley, Maniskrip: Die Stamme van die Makatini-Vlakte, State Ethnologist Report, Ingwavuma Magistrate File, March 1974, and Secretary of Native Affairs, CNC 3223/1921, Folio 341, p. 21-1.



**Map 5: Traditional authorities of southern Maputaland**



King Sobhuza of Swaziland have long laid claim to the chiefdoms west of the Pongolo River. According to the Swazi King, these chiefs were subordinate to his ancestors until the area was unilaterally annexed by Britain in 1895 and incorporated into Zululand in 1897. However, the Chief Minister of KwaZulu, Gatsha Buthelezi, claimed on 28 May 1982 that, although these three chiefdoms have ethnic ties with the Swazis, they never had any political ties with the Swazis and were never subordinates of the Swazi King. Buthelezi claimed that the area was a Zulu area and that the inhabitants were part of the Zulu nation. As this study deals primarily with the history of the Mabudu, it will just be noted here that evidence presented showed that the Nyawo, Mngomezulu and Mathenjwa were historically subordinates of the Swazi and that the Nyawo and Mngomezulu were also subordinates of the Zulu Kings. It was found that while the Swazi case was based on ethnic and historical grounds, the KwaZulu case was founded on politico-geographic grounds that go back to the times of the Zulu Kings before 1879 and were strengthened by the institution of the Zulu Territorial Government in 1970.<sup>15</sup>

Concerning the area west of the Pongola River, Swaziland did not base its claim on historical evidence, but on a genealogical bond that exists between the Swazi and the Mabudu and a close political association that exists between the royal families through marital relations. That there exists a long history between the Swazi and the Mabudu is not disputed, as was related in Chapter 4. However, there is no concrete evidence of a genealogical bond between the Swazi and the Mabudu. The process whereby real or imagined relations to a common ancestor are held as bond between people is widespread in African history. A fitting example from fieldwork I conducted in the area is the manner in which people with the surname Tembe trace a historical bond with people of the same surname in contemporary Maputaland. All people with this surname claim a relation with the royal family of the Mabudu and the men refer to themselves as *abantwana yenkosi* (literally sons of the king) or princes. When greeting each other people who are named Tembe will hail, 'ndabezita!' which is the greeting for royalty. Furthermore, anybody who carries this surname can attend meetings of the royal council. Although not all these people are related to the royal family and thus to each other, their surnames are used as justification for their claim to royal ancestry. In this same manner the Swazi claim a common

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<sup>15</sup> F.R. Tomlinson, J.C. Bekker, N.E. Wiehahan, C. Hanekom, J.J. Wessels, C.V. Bothma, J.F. Preller and K. Woerner, *Verslag van die Komitee van Deskundiges oor die Etniese en Historiese Verbintenisse van die Inwoners van Ingwavuma* (Unpublished report, 1982) pp. 1-45.

ancestry with the Mabudu. Whether it is real or imagined could however not be established. That there is and was historically a strong linkage between the royal Swazi and Mabudu families is a fact. This was, as explained, cemented with the marriage of a Swazi princess, Zambili to Noziyingile. This link was, however, not found strong enough to cede Maputaland to Swaziland.

The result of the Ingwavuma Land Deal was the maintenance of the *status quo*. Ingwavuma was to stay a magisterial district of KwaZulu. This, informants relate, was the result of political-bullying by Buthelezi. Apparently Piet Koornhof visited the Mabudu chief, Mzimba in the early 1980s. Koornhof asked Mzimba on the nationality of him and his people. Mzimba said that his people were Thonga. Furthermore, he stated that if his people cannot have an independent state, they wished to be part of the Swazi state rather than the Zulu state since the Swazi state acknowledged the Mabudu as a kingdom in its own right. Koornhof made arrangements for Mzimba to visit President P.W. Botha in Pretoria. However, Buthelezi jumped in and had a secret meeting with Mzimba beforehand. The result was that when asked by President Botha what nationality his people were, Mzimba said that they were Zulu. Botha asked the question three times and on each occasion Mzimba answered that his people are Zulu. Informants were very tentative to reveal information on this event and representatives from the Mabudu royal council refused to talk about the event at all. Despite the alleged willingness of Mzimba to link his territory with Swaziland, many people in Maputaland were against this step. Opposition to joining Maputaland and Swaziland increased when Inkhata stepped up its efforts in the area after the South African government announced the Land Deal plans at Ulundi on 14 June 1982.<sup>16</sup>

#### **4. CONCLUDING REMARKS: THE MABUDU AFTER THE LAND DEAL**

The question on the constitutional status of the Mabudu was not settled with the failed Ingwavuma Land Deal of 1982. After 1994 the constitutional status of KwaZulu changed when it became part of the 'new' South Africa. This moved the Mabudu chiefdom out from under the direct control of the Zulu chieftancy. However, the Zulu King still claims the area and its people as part of the Zulu nation,

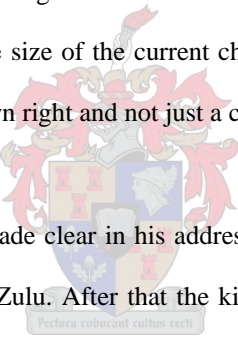
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<sup>16</sup> F.R. Tomlinson, J.C. Bekker, N.E. Wiehahan, C. Hanekom, J.J. Wessels, C.V. Bothma, J.F. Preller and K. Woerner, *Verslag van die Komitee van Deskundiges oor die Etniese en Historiese Verbintenisse van die Inwoners van Ingwavuma* (Unpublished report, 1982) p. 28.



and the Mabudu chief still consults the Zulu king on issues of state and streamlines his actions with the wishes of Nongoma.

This was evident at the inauguration of *inkosi* Israel Mabudu Tembe, the son of Mzimba Tembe in March 2002. Dignitaries to the event, which I attended, included the Minister of Traditional Affairs, Ben Ngubane, three of the Swazi princes and the Zulu king (see Plate 7 and Plate 8). A contingent from Mozambique, representative of traditional chiefs in the northern part of the historical Mabudu chiefdom cancelled their attendance at the last minute. Rumours spread that the reason why the Mozambican contingent did not attend was the fact that the Zulu king was present at the meeting. It is said that *Inkosi* Tembe feels that the time is not right to publicly announce his plans to reinstate traditional Mabudu *amakhosi* in Southern Mozambique. Representatives of the Mabudu royal council feel that the reinstatement of Mabudu authority in Southern Mozambique would allow the Mabudu to escape the shackles of Zulu rule. They argue that once the Mabudu chief rules over the historical territory, which is more than double the size of the current chiefdom, it would be impossible to deny that the Mabudu chief is a king in his own right and not just a chief of the Zulu king.



The Zulu king, Goodwill Zwelethini, made clear in his address to the congregation that the people of Maputaland are and have always been Zulu. After that the king told the people about the dangers of AIDS and the importance of tradition. Many representatives of the royal council were furious with the Zulu king's address and with the fact that *Inkosi* Tembe was forced to transfer cattle to the Zulu king on the day of the inauguration of the Mabudu 'king'. They felt that this act of the Zulu king, demanding cattle from a chief who is clearly much poorer than him, symbolises the oppression of the Mabudu at the hands of the Zulu. This oppression, they believe, would not have been possible had it not been for the colonial past and the fragmentation of the Mabudu chiefdom. As one informant related, no one doubted whether the Mabudu were independent of the Zulu before the white men came. Europeans divided the kingdom of the Mabudu and through this move degraded the Mabudu king to a Zulu chief.

This is a very simplistic answer to a complex matter. Certainly the fragmentation of the Mabudu chiefdom contributed to the degradation of the authority of the Mabudu king. However, it was events that occurred after that, and set in motion by the fragmentation of the chiefdom, that led to the decline

of the authority of the Mabudu chiefs. The reason why Britain formally annexed British AmaThongaland was continued Portuguese infringements in Southern Mozambique and the subsequent fear of Britain that Portugal would try to annex the British protectorate on request of the local inhabitants. AmaThongaland was not annexed by Britain as an independent area, but as part of Zululand. This created doubt about the historical status of the Mabudu chiefdom, was it a kingdom or just a chieftancy? As was discussed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, until the 1940s the Mabudu chiefs still exercised authority in Southern Mozambique. From then on their authority there started to decrease. The loss of territory, due to European colonial policies and the incorporation, by Britain of AmaThongaland into Zululand facilitated the manipulations of the history of the Mabudu from the 1970s. If the entire Mabudu chiefdom was annexed by either Britain or Portugal as a singular political unit as was done with Swaziland, Zululand and Bechuanaland, later manipulations of the history of the Mabudu would have been much more difficult. For instance, a large part of the Zulu argument is based on the fact that the Mabudu paid tribute to the Zulu. However, King Moshoshe is also known to have paid tribute to the Zulu to ensure friendly relations. Yet, there are no claims that the Basotho should be placed under Zulu rule. There is therefore truth in the argument that the history of south-east Africa in the colonial period facilitated later manipulations of the history of the people and the area.

This study has illustrated how easily history can be manipulated. Depending on the needs of the present, different aspects of history are highlighted, while other aspects are completely neglected. As was shown throughout, history cannot be equated with reality or with the truth of 'what really happened'; instead history is a specific version of reality. Representations of history change according to, and are determined by, the needs of those who relate them.

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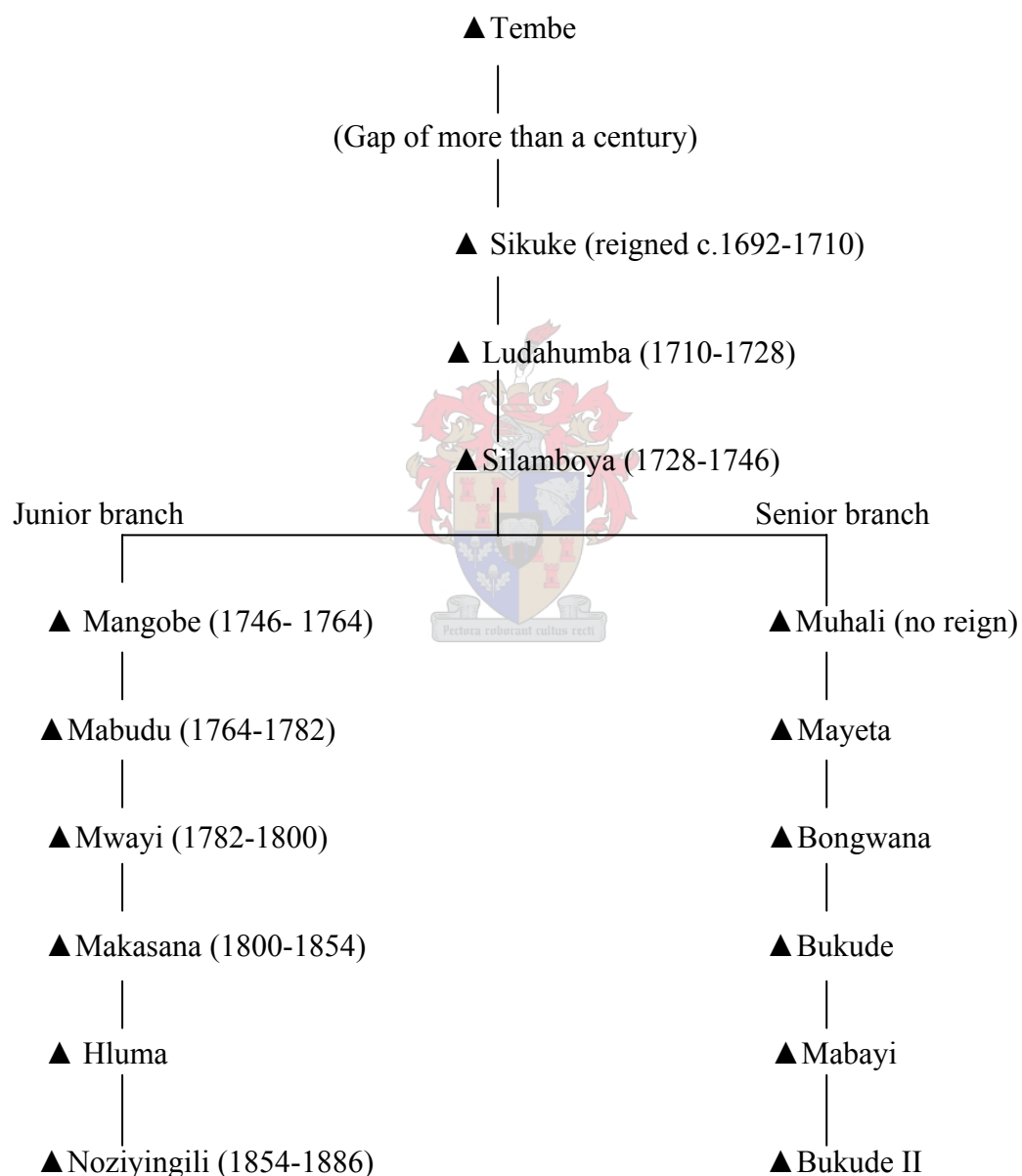
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## Appendix 1 : Genealogy of the ruling lineage of the Mabudu-Tembe

Key:   ▲ deceased man  
          ● deceased women  
          Δ man (still living)  
          ○ women (still living)



▲ Ngwanase (d.1928)

||

● Usomkhele (MaNyoka)

||

● Umbethe (MaNdonsi)

▲ Mhlupheki (reign 1928-1950)

||

● Mimfolozi Biyela — ● Diphi

||

● Mavundwa Msweli — ○ Sinabeti

||

● Mashapho Gumede

||

● Mkhosana Gumede — ○ Kweshula

||

● Mijosefa Msweli

||

○ Mimpantshi Gwala

||

● Madakwa Mabuyakhulu

||

○ Ukukubeka

||

○ Boshiwe

● Umimbude (MaDuze)

● Makasane

||

● Nomathiya

||

● Mbethe

||

▲ Mzimba (reign 1953- 1999)

||

● Sokufa — ○ Hlanjwane

||

— ○ Ndambi

||

▲ Siqundwayini

||

● Shati Nosayina — ○ Nqolobane

||

— ○ Thelana

— Δ Sizumane

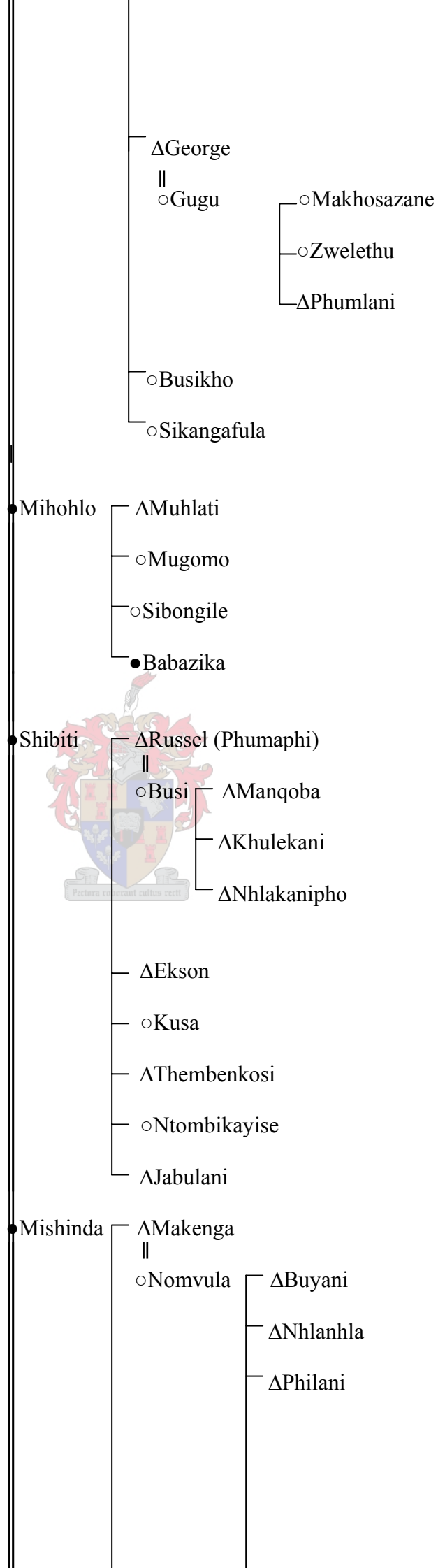
— ○ Sikhankula

||

● Mantombi — ○ Msaba

||







- Umashone  
||
- Umashinashina  
||
- Uwamabota  
||
- Umiphindaphinda  
||
- Umisaba  
||
- Umbashala  
||
- Umipoyi  
||
- Usibowe  
||
- Umikukute  
||
- Uhaba  
||
- Umagubudlela  
||
- Umajikajika  
||
- Mijantoni  
||
- Maphuthumane  
||
- Mimangela  
||
- Migwaqa  
||
- Mijengi  
||



- Sekolani

||

- Mahlangeni

||

- Mikhululi

||

- Mtubi

||

- Nonyakatho

||

- Mihungulani

||

- Mekulu

Notes:

The first seven wives of Ngwanase are related. Since Ngwanase married Umsomkhele first the other six wives (umbethe, umimbube, unontombane, umidumisa, umiduna and umshweshwe) were under her authority. Umsomkhele was the daughter of a chief of the Mkwana a senior clan. For this reason it was naturally accepted that she would be the mother of the *inkosi* to secede Ngwanase. According to custom the *inkosi* usually appoints the wife who will bear his successor. (This is also the custom amongst the Zulu where the king will only late in his life appoint his chief wife so as to prevent any would-be attempts at his own life.) In this instance Umsomkhele did not bear any sons, so it happened that her sister (second in line) umimbube received the honour of giving birth to the next *inkosi*. The person who seceded Ngwanase was Mhlupheki. Mhlupheki had no sons when he died. Therefore, Mzimba, the son of the third wife of Ngwanase (Umimbube) was appointed as *inkosi* when Mhlupheki died.