Shaka’s Military Expeditions: Survival and Mortality from Shaka’s Impis

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Extreme destruction, and images of rampant violence and countless deaths of warriors and civilians, have come to be associated with Shaka’s deployment of izimpi or “impis” in his military campaigns to extend and consolidate the rule of the AmaZulu chiefdom across most of modern KwaZulu-Natal between 1817 and 1828. But just how destructive were Shaka’s military expeditions? Contrary to common assumptions, when Shaka deployed his troops on a campaign they did not always engage in battle when they arrived at the scene of their intended attack, for chiefs and chiefdoms sometimes submitted immediately without resistance, and sometimes took flight before the arrival of Shaka’s troops. Even when a battle did ensue, the levels of mortality from battle were rarely high, and battles were usually fought away from civilian populations, so that only rarely were there civilian deaths of women and children resulting from Shaka’s military campaigns. Verifiable instances in which there were high numbers of casualties and deaths, and in which women and children were also victims, left a record of brutality and atrocities associated with Shaka’s troops. Surprisingly, however, the records of these battles indicate that it was Shaka’s troops themselves that often suffered the highest numbers of deaths on campaign and in battle, rather than their intended targets. But the question remains as to just how much depopulation actually resulted from Shaka’s campaigns, and how many chiefdoms and people survived through strategies of submission or flight.¹

Following the death of his father Senzangakona in 1816, Shaka had the heir killed and usurped the AmaZulu chieftaincy. At this time the AmaZulu chiefdom was only one of many in the region, and numbered no more than four thousand people, including a few minor chiefdoms that had already come under Senzangakona’s rule, so that the numbers of adult men enrolled into AmaZulu military ranks numbered only in the hundreds. As Shaka used these available troops to intimidate neighboring small chiefdoms into submitting to his rule,
he gained control over the ranks of their men of military age, and his regiments grew rapidly in size and numbers. Within ten years the numbers of warriors under Shaka's command had grown a hundred fold, from about five hundred men to over fifty thousand soldiers mustered in some seventeen to twenty regiments of about three thousand men each. The broader political dispensation changed dramatically over the course of Shaka's rule, before his assassination in September 1828. In the era of his father's rule the AmaZulu chief owed allegiance to and was a subordinate tributary chief to the AmaMthethwa chief Dingiswayo, who had used military force as well as persuasion to consolidate many smaller chiefdoms in the area. Other large chiefdoms of about the same size as the AmaMthethwa chiefdom, judging from their numbers of large villages and regiments, were those of the AmaNdwandwe, the AmaHlubi, the AmaQwabe, the AmaNyuswa, and south of the Thukela River, the AmaThuli and AmaCele. A chiefdom was defined in terms of its chief or inqosi, and was a sociopolitical unit falling under the leadership and authority of the head of the ruling line of descent for that chiefdom, whose adherents or subjects included members of numerous lines of descent, i.e. clans or lineages, in addition to his own. The smallest chiefdoms were not much larger than the members of known related members of an extended family, or lineage, and might number fewer than a hundred people, while the largest, including the populations of their smaller subordinate tributary chiefdoms, numbered ten thousand or more. Shaka's consolidation of rule over a wide territory meant that at the time of his death in 1828 the subjects of the AmaZulu chieftaincy or kingdom included the people of virtually all of the pre-existing chiefdoms, large and small, with a population that must have numbered well over two hundred thousand people including adult men in regimental barracks scattered across KwaZulu-Natal.

Tracing the chronology of all of Shaka’s known military expeditions, this article examines evidence of the impis of Shaka’s troops during his rule from 1817 to 1828 in order to assess more closely levels of mortality from battles in which they engaged, in order to provide a corrective to misleading and false assumptions about the degree of destruction wreaked by Shaka’s military expeditions, and to reconsider the extent of depopulation experienced in the region of KwaZulu-Natal. A consideration of the outcomes of Shaka’s military expeditions, whether or not they resulted in battle, and the numbers of slain, indicates there was only limited depopulation in the region of KwaZulu-Natal as a result of military action, and to a large extent only temporary depopulation occurred as a result of flight from battle and temporary population displacement. This chapter explores levels of fighting associated with the impis and mortality from each battle, and the outcome of each battle demographically and politically. Such in turn allows for an informed examination of the extent and role of violence perpetrated by Shaka’s impis in causing demographic changes and shaping the sociopolitical dispensation in southeastern Africa in the era of Shaka’s reign.2

For over a century historians accepted the attribution of a chain of regional wars and migrations to destruction wrought by Shaka’s troops, and used the term “mfecane” to refer
to this presumed process. Thus an estimate that more than a million people had died as a result of Shaka’s wars and their effects in the early nineteenth century was not challenged until 1957, although a more accurate depiction of events had begun to emerge with the publication by W.M MacMillan of *Bantu, Boer, and Briton* in 1929.³ Accepting that the early decades of the nineteenth century were a period of demographic, social, and political turmoil, recent scholars have sought alternative causes for those changes.⁴ In a speculative theory, Julian Cobbing argued that slave-raiding and slave-trading by European missionaries and British colonial officials operating across the northern and eastern Cape Colony frontiers and from the area of Delagoa Bay had initiated this period of turmoil and sociopolitical change. His argument was weakened by a lack of substantiating evidence, and in the end his assumptions were shown to be false, as neither slave-raiders nor slave-traders operated out of Delagoa Bay during the period in question, from the 1790s through the early 1820s. (Only an insignificant number of slaves were exported beginning in 1825, long after the processes of sociopolitical consolidation, including that of the AmaZulu kingdom under Shaka’s rule, had begun.)⁵

Furthermore, the evidence exonerates both missionaries and British colonial officials from any involvement in slave-raiding across Cape Colony borders, although the agents of Dutch-speaking settlers, notably renegade mixed-race Griqua and Kora groups of raiders, did engage in taking human captives from across the northern frontier for trade and sale within the colony.⁶ Instead, significant in explaining high rates of mortality was the presence of famine, caused by frequent and prolonged droughts across the entire region between 1800 and the mid–1820s, demographic dislocations, raiding, and deliberate crop destruction.⁷ With few well-known notable exceptions among the engagements which will be reviewed below, mortality rates from battles in this period were generally far too low to account for any substantial depopulation.⁸ This article supports John Wright’s conclusion that the region south of the Thukela, later colonial Natal, was only indirectly controlled by Shaka through subordinate allied chiefs, and that it experienced a period of political amalgamation characterized by the incorporation of small chiefdoms that ceased to exist as independent polities, rather than by extensive devastation and depopulation. Wright has not given sufficient attention to the raiding and battles in the region, some of which were carried out by Shaka’s orders, but he is correct that “at no stage, as far as the evidence goes, did Zulu armies make the murderous sweeps through the Natal area which conventionally they are supposed to have done.”⁹

The reconstruction of the history of the peoples of the region of modern KwaZulu-Natal during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century rests of necessity on African oral sources, because the earliest written sources are only available from European traders who did not arrive for the exploration and settlement of Port Natal, later called Durban, until 1824. Colin Webb and John Wright have meticulously translated the oral testimony provided to James Stuart by over a hundred and fifty AmaZulu men, and a few women,
from the late 1890s through the early 1920s. The transcripts made by James Stuart are self-evidently careful and usually were written down verbatim or in spontaneous translation by Stuart who was himself fluent in the isiZulu language. The willingness of so many elderly AmaZulu to confide their historical traditions to James Stuart, a South African-born colonial magistrate, and his generous hospitality to them that was virtually unheard of for a white South African in that era, speak to the mutual respect that governed the process of recording this testimony. As Carolyn Hamilton has made clear, Stuart was not representative of a settler mentality, but rather was driven by a genuine desire to advance the interests of the AmaZulu people among whom he worked. The texts themselves reflect the care he took to record accurately what he was told, since they contained many references which he did not understand but nevertheless wrote down as told. Collectively they include contradictory accounts, indicating there had been no process involving pressure towards conformity in the telling or recording of these oral histories and traditions for any reasons. This variety in perspective is reflected, for example, in Hamilton’s study of the diverse portrayals of Shaka, which also demonstrates that controversial information was retained even in the changing political dispensations of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Besides reflecting a diversity of information and attitudes, however, the interviews also include accounts that were retained and transmitted independently from each other and therefore provide independent corroboration and confirmation of similar information retained in common. Jeff Peires’ *The House of Phalo* remains a model of how the history of this period can be reconstructed using oral and written sources of African and European origin.

The European sources, even when their biases and political or trade agendas are obvious and distort their interpretations of events, when they can be independently corroborated, including by African oral sources, retain importance as documentary evidence of events as they occurred. Most important for the issues addressed in this article are the writings of Henry Francis Fynn, who was among a handful of white traders who opened a trading post at Durban, then called Port Natal, in 1824, and had frequent dealings with Shaka at his capital as well as with the AmaMpondoland Chief Faku among whom he conducted his ivory trade. The reliability of Fynn’s writings varies but he was among the first to record oral traditions told to him narrating events prior to his arrival that he had no reason to distort, and he was an eyewitness to many events for which there is corroborating independent oral evidence. Also important, in spite of obvious distortions in its analysis, is an account by Theophilus Shepstone, an early colonial administrator, a summation based on his own interviews of several dozen elderly AmaZulu men.

**Shaka’s Military Campaigns**

When Shaka usurped the chieftaincy after his father Senzangakhona’s death he remained a subordinate chief to Dingiswayo as his father had been. Within his first year of rule Shaka joined Dingiswayo in mounting an attack against Matiwayne that set the AmaNgwane into
flight from the Newcastle district where they had only been settled for a few years. Shaka also mounted attacks on his own during this time. An important informant of Stuart's asserted that in the early years of Shaka's rule while Dingiswayo was still alive and Shaka's AmaZulu were subject to AmaMthethwa rule, "[t]he Dube chief, Nzwakeli ka Kutshwayo, had been defeated by Tshaka and had paid tribute, also Nqoboka of the Sokulu, [the AmaCele chief] Magaye, and Zihilationlo ka Gwabe of the Embo." Shaka retained the allegiance of the small chiefdoms that had already become subject to AmaZulu rule, such as the AmaMpongo. Then Shaka sent the AbaTembu under Chief Ngoza a formal warning, which suggests he expected to fight a formal battle between military regiments, and the AbaTembu were routed in the attack after which they emigrated southwards. Passages from the interviews by James Stuart indicate the ambiguous nature of the evidence about the actual fighting in military conflicts and resulting mortality as remembered and related to later
generations. Although Lugubu first told Stuart that in the fight against the AmaZulu all of the AbaTembu women and children were killed, he subsequently described the fate of the women who escaped, thereby contradicting his own testimony about mortality in this battle elsewhere in his interview. One interviewee provided evidence of a fight in which his father had fought against the branch of the AbaTembu who had been living on the lower reaches of the Mzinyathi when attacked by Shaka’s troops at the Emzonganyati (up the Mgeni River).\textsuperscript{21} He said,

The battle at the Emzonganyati. When the Zulus were in the water the abaTembu hurled a shower of assegais at them. The Zulus merely held up their shields, made their way across, and routed the enemy. My father was the first to stab there.\textsuperscript{22}

Different branches of a chiefdom sometimes chose different responses to Shaka’s demand for allegiance and tribute. Some AmaMbata threw in their lot and migrated with Ngoza but others stayed and khonz’\textsuperscript{d}, i.e. gave their allegiance to Shaka, and their traditions relate that they were then forbidden by Shaka to use their own praise-greeting or isithakazelo by which they were known, “Ndabezita!,” who took it for the AmaZulu and himself.\textsuperscript{23} Chief Ngoza led his AbaTembu followers “into the Mpondo country” where they were decisively defeated by the AmaMpondo of Chief Faku and Ngoza was killed in battle. After their chief’s death many of Ngoza’s AbaTembu followers returned to khonz’ Shaka, i.e. they formally submitted to his rule.\textsuperscript{24} Shaka accepted their submission and allowed them to resettle “among the Mandhlakazi.”\textsuperscript{25}

The divergent fates of various branches of the chiefs identified (among themselves) as AbaTembu because of common origins and retained sociopolitical links indicates the difficulty in interpreting evidence that seems suggestive that many people were killed or died in warfare, when it may refer only to a small number of people or even an individual chief, rather than all of his adherents who may have survived by giving their allegiance to another chief such as Shaka. Thus one of Stuart’s informants stated flatly but mistakenly that “there are no more Tembus left; they were killed by the Zulus in Tshaka’s day.”\textsuperscript{26} His testimony referred specifically only to chief Mangete and some of his followers who had gone into hiding in the bushes; they were slowly killed off by bandits who roved the area, killed people and took the food from their cultivated gardens. However this interviewee also testified that some of chief Mangete’s adherents had “run off to Pondoland” and only those who remained behind in the Natal region with Mangete were killed off over time.

Shaka sent regiments against Macingwane’s AmaCunu at the same time as the expedition against Ngoza because these chiefs were planning coordinated resistance against Shaka, and because they had attacked the AmaCube and had killed their chief Mvakela, an ally and subordinate of Shaka’s.\textsuperscript{27} Shaka’s troops defeated Macingwane’s soldiers in a forest fight where they are reported to have killed women and children before they seized the cattle. Macingwane himself escaped and fled south to the AmaMpondo in the wake of Ngoza’s AbaTembu migration. His fate remained unknown, but many AmaCunu returned under
Mfosi to tender allegiance to Shaka. Over time they re-established themselves as a subordinate chieftdom under the heir Pakade, a contemporary of Shaka’s, who had taken temporary refuge with the Embo (AbaMbo or Mkhize) chief Zihlandlo.28 After these larger, more powerful chiefs had emigrated with their followers Shaka proceeded to attack or threaten into submission the smaller chieftdoms in the area of the White and Black Mfolozi rivers nearby the KwaZulu ancestral home, including the AmaMpanza, AmaButhelezi of Pungatshe (who according to some sources did not fight or put up any resistance), the AmaPisi, and others.29 At this time Shaka also sent his troops twice to attack his cousin Makedama, now chief of the AmaLanga at eLangeni, but the AmaZulu troops were forced to retreat without any cattle. A third time Shaka coordinated an attack with the AbaQwabe and the AmaNyuswa, and Makedama held out in a fortress and then returned to his land. Just after, however, he left with his followers to khonza the AmaNdwandwe chief Zwide, only to return not long after with his followers to submit to Shaka and re-settle in their original home next to the ancestral home of the AmaZulu.30 Evidence from the oral traditions thus appear to disagree with Fynn’s statement that the people of “the Langeni tribe,” Shaka’s mother’s chieftdom, “freely submitted in the expectation of receiving favourable treatment,” but this is explained by the deep divisions within the AmaLangeni, some having remained with Shaka throughout the duration of his years with Dingiswayo among the AmaMthethwa, because they had originally left eLangeni to contest the rule of Makedama who had usurped the chieftaincy violently (and who became the target of Shaka’s attacks).31

The subordination of the AbaQwabe chieftdom under Pakatwayo became Shaka’s next goal, and according to most oral traditions he achieved their involuntary conquest with virtually no fighting.32 Taken by surprise, the AbaQwabe were unarmored when they were surrounded by Shaka’s warriors and did not attempt any further resistance after their chief Pakatwayo was immediately captured. Most traditions agree that Pakatwayo was not killed by Shaka or any of his men but only died the next day “of fear” while he was in the custody of Shaka’s warriors in his own village.33 Some AbaQwabe khonza’d Shaka, but others khonza’d his superior Dingiswayo, dating these events to prior to Dingiswayo’s own death in about 1818. Some AbaQwabe also reportedly khonza’d Zwide and the AmaNdwandwe, of whom some then returned to khonza Shaka shortly thereafter.34

During the early period of AmaZulu expansion while still under Dingiswayo’s authority, Dingiswayo reportedly sent Shaka to settle with force a conflict between Sirayo and Mgabi ka Mapoloba, brothers, and allowed Shaka to attack the AmaNyuswa (abakwaNyusa).35 After defeating the AbaQwabe and incorporating many of them, Shaka attacked chiefs Mahlungwana (of the AmaBele, i.e. AmaNtuli), Mazilikazi (of the AmaKhumalo), Dube (of the AmaQadi), Pungatshe (of the Buthelezi), and Donda (of the AmaKhumalo).36 Fynn wrote that after defeating Mahlungwana, “many of the [AmaBele] tribe gave their allegiance.”37 This sequence of Shaka’s attacks was related with certainty by Stuart’s in-
formant Jantshi ka Nongila in 1903, who said that after achieving the submission of the AmaBele under chief Mahlungwana, Shaka next attacked the AmaKhumalo chief Mzilikazi ka Matshobana. Following this he launched a military campaign against Chief Dube and the AmaQadi (a branch of the AmaNgcobo) and, significantly, “[h]ere too there had been no quarrel. He defeated Dube. This tribe did not flee but paid taxes and Tshaka seized a number of their cattle.” The depiction is important in recording an impi that yielded political results and the seizure of cattle as booty. The story relates what was evidently an accepted practice of the subordination of one chief and chiefdom by another, resulting in a tributary, or tax-paying, relationship. Jantshi reports that Tshaka “now engaged Pungatshe of the Butelezi and defeated him” without further detail, and then defeated Donda, like Mzilikazi the chief of one of possibly three AmaKhumalo chiefdoms, and confiscated his cattle (“Tshaka defeated him [Donda] and ate up his cattle”), but there is no mention of violent fighting or killing.38

In 1817 or 1818, the AmaMthethwa chief Dingiswayo was captured and killed by Chief Zwede of the AmaNdwandwe, and Shaka, incensed at the killing of Dingiswayo, sent his troops to attack Zwede. In this “great battle,” however, the AmaZulu did not defeat the AmaNdwandwe. Far from having played any part in Dingiswayo’s downfall, Shaka is portrayed by AmaZulu narrators as having sought revenge against Zwede on behalf of Dingiswayo, and he planned a night attack towards that end. Rather than face Zwede’s troops in battle, Shaka’s troops followed his orders and attacked by surprise at night, using a password to avoid killing each other by mistake as Zwede’s troops awoke and fought. The AmaZulu retreated into a forest the next day, only to return for a second night attack, in which they “once more stabbed Zwede’s people a good deal” but were in the end unable to defeat them. It appears that Shaka did not accompany the troops, as they did not report to him until after they once again retreated.39

Shaka’s troops then forced the submission of the remnant AmaMthethwa who after their chief Dingiswayo’s death were unable to put up any resistance to their incorporation in a subordinate status by the AmaZulu. Although Fynn reported that upon incorporating the AmaMthethwa many were killed, it appears rather that the chiefdom was dispersed and many of those who khonsa’d Shaka reoccupied their old village sites, and others are said to have emigrated under one of Dingiswayo’s sons and given their allegiance to the AmaNdwandwe chief Soshangane.40 In the initial process of dispersing and consolidating the AmaMthethwa, who had previously given refuge to himself and villages of his maternal relatives, Shaka does not appear to have killed any AmaMthethwa, contrary to Fynn’s assertion. Oral traditions agree, however, that in response to a deliberate provocation Shaka later killed the AmaMthethwa chieftaincy’s heir Mondisa and others of his followers.41 Some prominent AmaMthethwa left when they began to realize their safety was insecure under Shaka. According to one narrative of events,
Nxaba ka Mbekane ka Msane of, I think, the Mtevwa people, ran off, like Matiwana, Mzilikazi, Sotshangana, and Somveli [father of Sitimela, says Ndukwana] ka Dingiswayo. Nxaba was driven out by Tshaka. Somveli also left. This arose when they were in the cattle enclosure at Bulawayo; they were jesting with one another.42

Thus the exodus of some chiefs with their followers occurred without any further violence or mortality, for after meeting with Shaka, Somveli “returned home, only to arm and leave for the north on the ground that he and Tshaka had quarreled,” although “[a]s a matter of fact Tshaka had not driven him away...”43

After Shaka’s first attack against Zwide immediately following the death of Dingiswayo, Shaka next attacked Mapoloba ka Mbele, chief of the AmaNyuswa (whom he had previously attacked) and “defeated him and seized his cattle.”44 The AmaNyuswa, a branch of the AmaNgcobo, formerly a strong chieftdom during the reign of Senzangakhona, became subjects of Shaka. Shaka fought against and killed Chief Kondhlo ka Magalela of the AmaNtshali (not to be confused with Chief Kondhlo of the AmaQwabe). His followers fled and then returned to attack Shaka under direction of Kondhlo’s son Nkubu, but suffered defeat in battle. When Shaka attacked the AmaCele under their chief (“king”) Mande ka Dibandhlela, and Zihlandhlo ka Gcwabe, the Embo chief, he “did not kill but merely caught them.” Thus referring to the chiefs of larger chieftdoms as “kings,” Stuart’s informant Jantshi continued, “[a]part from the above battles and conquests, Tshaka attacked many other so-called kings that I cannot now call to mind.”45 Having said that he mentioned a few other conquered chiefs: Duzi, chief of the Makanya, who was not killed by Shaka but was promoted and made an induna (officer); Mbenya, also not put to death; and Kutshwayo, chief of the Dube, also not killed. Emphasizing that these conquered chiefs were not put to death, Jantshi explained significantly, “[a]s a matter of fact, Tshaka did not put to death the kings or kinglets he defeated if, when he proceeded against them, they ran away and did not show fight. He made them isinduna. Kutshwayo, chief of the Dube, is another of those conquered by Tshaka. This man, like many others, was attacked merely to make him pay tribute, i.e. reduce him to become a subject and then instate him as an induna.”46 Jantshi added that Soshangana was also attacked by Shaka, and “[t]he only king who was not attacked by Tshaka was Mtshwetshwe [Moshoeshoe] of Basutoland. He, hearing Tshaka was so powerful, payed [sic] tribute with elephant tusks and acknowledged allegiance.”47

In 1821 the AmaHlubi chieftdom, after been attacked by the AmaNgwane of Matiwane, broke up and many migrated west across the Drakensberg mountains under several separate chiefs, to be followed soon after by the AmaNgwane. The fragmenting of the formerly dominant AmaHlubi chieftdom into smaller chieftdoms under several of chiefs signaled the process that was referred to colloquially as izwekufia, literally the “death of nations.” 48 Many prominent AmaHlubi including members of the royal family khonza’d Shaka, submitting to his rule and giving him their allegiance, and he formed them into the Iziyendane regiment stationed at the village of his mother Nandi not far from the AmaZulu capital at Bulawayo.49
After the defeat and death of Pakatwayo, Shaka sent troops south of the Thukela to attack the Abaqwabe living south of the river, and the AmaCele chief Magaye there voluntarily became a tributary subordinate ally to Shaka by giving him his allegiance and offering no resistance to the AmaZulu extension of authority into the region of modern Natal. Following Dingiwayo’s death and the incorporation of the AmaMthethwa, Shaka sent his cousin Makedama to attack the AmaThuli chiefdom of Ntaba ka Nyebu and other chiefdoms in the Natal region including the AmaCele of Mande ka Dibandhlela. Under Shaka’s orders Makedama’s troops, aided by the AmaCele chief Magaye who had remained loyal to Shaka, attacked the AmaThuli, other AmaCele, and various other chiefdoms. In various attacks, the chiefs of the region of Natal were defeated quickly, and in cases where they did not khouza Shaka, they were put to death.

Before Tshaka fought with the Ndwendwe he entered Natal and attacked Mande ka Dibandhlela of the Cele people and Duze ka Mnengwa of the Makanya people, killing each the same night. He at the same time killed Sokoti ka Mdindi of the Amanganga people, Nduna ka Mbedu ka Gwayi ka Nyapase of the emaSomeni people, Mtukulu ka Dibandhlela of the Mapumulo people, and Nzala ka Mangqatshe of the emaNdhllovini people who built at EsiDumbini, at the Ivtwaneni stream which enters the Nsuze which enters the Mvoti.

After these disruptive raids Shaka sent a large contingent of the Iziyendane (AmaHlubi) regiment accompanied by some AmaMthethwa regiments to settle in the region of modern Natal and from their new villages they attacked and raided even further to the south. The AmaHlubi Iziyendane regiment played a destructive role in the region.

After this Tshaka collected together forces of these various tribes and attacked further south in Natal with them. But he first of all made a colony of Natal by sending the Iziyendane, as well as some Mtetwa people, to live in the neighbourhood of the Mvoti. The Iziyendane were of the amaHlubi tribe. The Hlubis had previously run away from Matiwana (Zwide) [sic] and konza'd the Zulus. The Zulus did not fight with the Hlubis.

This use of the term “colony” in this oral tradition with reference to Shaka’s establishment of subordinate allies in Natal was explicit and was meant to indicate a resettlement that displaced the existing population, who remained subject to predatory raids if they stayed in the area. As a result, most took flight to resettle among the AmaMpondo. Because the troops of the Iziyendane, AmaMthethwa, AmaNganga, and AmaPumalo were deployed by Shaka to attack and subordinate the small chiefdoms of modern Natal they were perceived to be AmaZulu by the victims of their raids in the south, in spite of the distinct identities they retained as military units. Maziyana explained the perspective of the people of these displaced chiefdoms, a perspective that they conveyed to the AmaMpondo in turn:

The Iziyendane, Mtetwa, amaNganga, amaPumulo etc. were those who attacked the tribes south. They adopted a Zulu chant, and if any stranger should hear them chanting thus he would dash off and jump into a swamp or other hiding place.
These men therefore were transformed into Zulus and were regarded as such by the tribes south. When Tshaka came back from eNskeni he, on hearing from Magaye that the Iziyendane retained possession of the cattle they had seized from the Natal tribes, attacked the Iziyendane themselves and caused them to flee away south to the Nguni country. Others went off to the Sutu country, to Basutos.

It was the Iziyendane and the others mentioned that attacked along the Natal coast as far as the Mzimkulw—on Tshaka’s behalf—and scattered all the tribes. They are the ones who, without special instructions, caused people to flee in the way referred to by Fynn, who in July 1824 found only a few kraals of Tulis on the Bluff.56

This passage indicates that the warriors of the AmaHlubi, AmaMthethwa, AmaNganga, AmaPumalo, and others had been allowed not only to live but also to continue serving as soldiers following their submission and offer of allegiance to Shaka. However, Shaka did not intend to allow the independence of the subordinate regiments he had sent into Natal to grow, even though he let them build villages there with the implication that their relocation was permanent. On the contrary, he expected that they signify their continued submission to him by sending him all of the booty in cattle they accumulated in any raids, which they did not do. The presumptive behavior of the Iziyendane, AmaMthethwa, and others who had resettled in Natal was to keep the cattle they seized there, provoking a military campaign against them by Shaka.

Shaka therefore depended on the AmaCele chief Magaye’s loyalty, and permitted him the latitude to enroll his own military regiments and conduct raids for cattle in Natal, as a tributary subordinate chief to the AmaZulu. Shaka initially provided Magaye with cattle to raise a new regiment, although he took one of Magaye’s best regiments from him and made them into one of his own regiments. The evidence about the activities of the AmaCele under Chief Magaye provide insight not only with regard to Tshaka’s modus operandi with regard to subordinate chiefs who khonsa’d him, but also as evidence that some “impi” were merely cattle raids and did not result in death or destruction of villages:

The Rodi [AmaCele] regiment was formed with cattle from Tshaka. Tshaka said to Magaye, ‘I shall give you an impi so that you can make war.’ When Tshaka began to destroy the country he went as far as the Mkomenzi. He then went home, and it was then that he, Tshaka, spoke of giving Magaye an impi so that he could make war. Tshaka gave him an impi and he, Magaye, attacked across the Mkomenzi [Inkomati River]. Magaye then ‘ate up’ [confiscated] the cattle of the country of Ngoyi ka Nomakwelo of the amaMbilili tribe. When Magaye returned with the captured cattle, then the uRodi kraal [village] formed and became his regiment.57

Following his successful raiding in the Natal region, Makedama was also killed by an impi sent by Shaka on a weak pretext because he had been so successful as to have become a threat. Some traditions relate that he had taken decisions that were the prerogative of Shaka and therefore implied a renunciation of his subordinate status.58 These raids and population dislocations account for the relative depopulation of the area and the extreme poverty and
fear of the residual population encountered by Fynn in when he first traveled through the area between Port Natal and Faku’s territory in 1824.

Shaka fought more than one battle against Chief Zwede and the AmaNdwandwe after Dingiswayo’s death. After being unable to defeat the AmaNdwandwe after Dingiswayo’s death in about 1818, Shaka soon found it necessary to withdraw all of his AmaZulu troops southwards to avoid an attack by an overwhelming AmaNdwandwe force, and AmaZulu towns were destroyed and burned by the invaders. Shaka carefully prepared for their next inevitable military encounter, however. He developed and employed a new strategy that involved luring Zwede’s troops, the next time they came, deeper into AmaZulu territory to exhaust and starve them and thereby weaken them before he launched a counterattack at a place of his own choosing. This plan succeeded in the second invasion and attack by the AmaNdwandwe in 1821, and the AmaZulu troops routed those of Zwede and drove them all the way home.⁵⁹

The oral traditions indicate widely divergent fates for the AmaNdwandwe who were counter-attacked and chased into their own territory by Shaka’s troops in 1821.

The Ndwandwe appeared on the Nkandhla heights, following in the track of Tshaka’s impi. When he got to Nomveve, Tshaka hid his impi. In the afternoon the armies made contact through their spies. He unleashed his warriors. At dawn the next day he set them on with the Siklebe regiment in front. He was sitting close by, looking on. He was looking on at his warriors stabbing the men. He said, ‘Stop throwing your assegais [spears]. Stab them at close quarters. Use only one assegai.’ His impi defeated them and drove them up into the hills at the Mhlatuze. That was the day when his army finally defeated them.⁶⁰

Following the battle, “Tshaka defeated Zwede, followed him up and seized all his corn. Zwede was completely routed. Large numbers of Zulus poured into Zwede’s dominions and took all they could find.”⁶¹ The fate of Zwede’s soldiers depended on whether they fought or surrendered their arms to the AmaZulu warriors:

They said, ‘Lay down your shield’ to each man. Those who refused to throw down their shields were stabbed. Those who obeyed were collected into Tshaka’s army; those who resisted were killed.⁶²

Shaka’s impi proceeded to Zwede’s place, and Zwede escaped, but the women, thinking it was their own troops, came out with food: “They were stabbed; they were killed; the food was thrown down. The army went on and surrounded Zwede’s umuzi [homestead], but he had escaped. They impaled the children on posts; they stabbed the women; they stabbed everything at his home.”⁶³ It is significant that this is the only oral tradition that asserts that any of Shaka’s warriors impaled civilians on any occasion. With reference to this AmaZulu attack and defeat of Zwede, the source sounds credible, but the impaling of children and killing of women on this occasion may have been the fate only of Zwede’s own family members as the reference is to the attack on his capital, and it is known that many AmaNdwandwe women survived this military defeat. However, at Zwede’s village, “Coma,
i.e. *huxeka*, spike on posts. Only bigger children were impaled, not infants. The mothers of the latter were killed and the infant left alive at their side, i.e. laid down alive beside her.” Stuart’s informant Nduna explained, “Tshaka insisted on women being killed, as an army would again rise in that country. Women that bear warriors must exist in Zululand only.”

After the 1821 battle and rout the majority of the AmaNdwandwe, including women and children as well as warriors, took flight and migrated as a chiefdom that now fragmented under several senior chiefs, some of whom migrated into southern Mozambique. Zwide appears to have remained with Soshangane while his senior son Sikhunyana led his own portion of the chiefdom into the Transvaal territory and resettled near where Mzilikazi’s AmaKhumalo or AmaNdebele chiefdom also relocated. The AmaZulu troops did not pursue these migrant AmaNdwandwe chiefs and their followers very far, but chose instead to round up all of their cattle that in flight they were forced to leave behind. From his numerous informants, Shepstone also learned of these events from interviews he conducted in the 1840s, and he concluded from what he was told that although “Chaka promptly followed upon his advantage and compelled him [Zwide] and a portion of his people to fly his country; the great majority of Zwide’s people then submitted to Chaka and became Zulu subjects, and the last serious check upon Chaka’s victorious career was then removed.” This is an important account in that it states that Shaka did not kill all or even most of Zwide’s AmaNdwandwe followers, nor did they all flee, but some, perhaps even “the great majority” of Zwide’s AmaNdwandwe, *khonza*’d Shaka after he defeated them and their chief fled. Zwide himself lived for three more years before he finally died of illness.

After Zwide’s defeat, the later famous AmaKhumalo chief Mzilikazi came into conflict with Shaka, to whom he had previously tendered his submission and allegiance. As his tributary Mzilikazi had been ordered by Shaka to attack chief Maconi of the AmaNtshe, put him to death, and seize his cattle. After fulfilling these orders Mzilikazi declined to give up the booty in cattle to Shaka, however. Instead, apparently after a battle with Shaka’s troops, in which many of Mzilikazi’s followers were said to have been killed and many cattle lost, Mzilikazi withdrew with his followers to avoid Shaka’s *impi* who were sure to pursue them. Mzilikazi led his AmaKhumalo followers north to reestablish a “migrant kingdom” or chiefdom in the Transvaal region, beyond Shaka’s easy reach. Mzilikazi’s new AmaNdebele kingdom was subsequently attacked twice in major AmaZulu military campaigns sent to the Transvaal during Dingane’s reign.

Chiefdoms in the region of modern KwaZulu north of the Thukela river sometimes fought among themselves without Shaka’s involvement, but subsequently themselves drew an attack from Shaka. Chief Mnquni of the AmaNgidi people signaled his disavowal of Shaka’s authority by refusing to attend a ceremonial dance with his unarmed warriors. Soon afterwards Mnquni and the AmaNgidi were attacked by two other small chiefs, Bovungana ka Mvela of the AmaNgcabe and Kabezile ka Mavovo of the Abasembo (Embo). Mnquni’s warriors caught both chiefs and killed the latter, thereby defeating their attackers. However,
their very success demonstrated that they were strong enough to pose a real threat to Shaka whom Chief Mnguni had already provoked symbolically, and Shaka sent his army to attack the AmaNgidi. A direct descendant of the original ancestor named Ngidi had been told that on Shaka’s orders when Mnguni’s son was killed in battle his head was cut off and sent to Shaka, and he reported that Mnguni’s regiments fought two fierce battles. The first lasted four days as Mnguni’s warriors struggled to divert Shaka’s troops and provide time for the villagers, including the women and children, to retreat to safety with their cattle. The Nsuze and Mhlatuze Rivers, site of the first battle, and Hlobane mountain, site of the second, were said to have become red with blood from the fighting, but none of Mnguni’s warriors ran from battle, and they secured the future of their chiefdom which migrated as far as the Orange River to resettle safely there and did not have to fight against Shaka’s warriors again.\footnote{71}

The AmaMbonvu fought against AmaZulu troops at oPisweni mountain where they were defeated in a surprise night attack against their mountain stronghold, and their cattle and women were said to have been captured.\footnote{72} Using ladders to scale the cliffs that protected the villagers and cattle, Shaka’s warriors are said to have released the cattle through the gate, while the men who were taken by surprise “tumbled over the cliffs” so that “there was no actual fighting.”\footnote{73} The AmaBomvu, most of whom survived although their chief was killed, remained in their own territory but under AmaZulu rule.

Shaka’s attention was drawn to the southwest as he acquired more knowledge about Faku’s AmaMpondolo chiefdom, and the chiefdoms of the AmaXhosa beyond him. Thus those chiefdoms that had fled to resettle in the modern region of Natal and further southwest in the territory of the AmaMpondo of Chief Faku soon found they were not safe from Shaka’s army. Shaka had begun to fear the strength of the AmaXhosa chief Hintsa.\footnote{74} Chief Madikane had led his AmaBaca followers in a migration as a chiefdom from Emkambatini (Table Mountain) near modern Pietermaritzburg to resettle in AmaMpondo territory. This provided Shaka with a pretext to send a military campaign there, Shaka’s 1824 amabece impi that was putatively sent to “fetch” Madikane, i.e. enforce his submission and seize his cattle as tribute.\footnote{75} Shaka instead used this first military campaign against the AmaMpondo to seize their cattle and spread word that as tributaries to him they would not be attacked, and conflicting oral traditions seem to agree that Shaka’s ultimate goal for this campaign was to gather information about the AmaXhosa chiefs residing beyond Faku’s territory. Taken together the evidence suggests that Shaka’s regiments passed unchallenged until, pursuing Madikane’s AmaBaca, they found themselves deep in AmaMpondo territory and bordering that of the AmaXhosa chief Hintsa, where these AmaZulu regiments were attacked and lost three units (amabandhla) and faced starvation. The defeated but surviving AmaZulu regiments had to rely on eating amabece melons for food to survive, from which the campaign came to be called the amabece campaign. Nevertheless Shaka’s impi returned home with
AmaMpondo cattle they had seized as their booty, and with the information they had gathered en route.76

Evidence from the oral traditions regarding the level of fighting that occurred during the amabece campaign is contradictory. The sources agree that the AmaZulu engaged in fighting and suffered heavy losses before successfully seizing and carrying off many AmaMpondo cattle, but there is some confusion about whether they had first reached the territory of Hinta. One source referred to the amabece campaign as a campaign against “abeNguni” rather than AmaMpondo, and another said, “the amabece impi went forth first. It attacked [AmaXhosa chief] Hinsa. The amabece [melons] were eaten when there was no other food to eat. They were eaten uncooked, in Pondoland and beyond. My father went with both these impi.”77 Another source agreed that Hinta had been the target of the impi, and explained, “Tshaka first sent an impi to Hinsa, as it was said he had an ibuto so large that it would take all day rising. This regiment was known as the Inkonyane of Hinsa.” However, “Tshaka’s forces went, failed to find Hinsa, and came on European houses. Mdhlaka turned back as there were no instructions to attack Europeans, and in turning, discovered some of Faku’s cattle, which the Zulus seized.”78 Another of Stuart’s interviewees explained that the troops had traveled an inland route in trying to find Madikane and the AmaBaca, but upon failing to find them turned into AmaMpondo territory. As they were raiding some of Faku’s herds, “the Pondos came to the attack,” and

On the ‘amabece’ campaign the Zulu were cut up by the Mpondo, for three Zulu units (amabandiba) were finished off. But the Zulu got the better of them and succeeded in seizing some of their cattle, but not many. Tshaka did not accompany this impi. This force got to the end of their cattle (meat supply) and suffered from hunger. They were obliged to eat melons (amabece) and wild plants.79

After the amabece campaign of early 1824, Shaka sent a campaign against Zwide’s residual AmaNdwandwe chiefdom in mid–1824, and in this campaign several villages were said to have been “destroyed” although the fate of the villagers is unknown and commonly they would have fled.80 Zwide died in late 1824 or early 1825 and word was received by Shaka that Sikhunyana, his son, had become chief of that branch of the now divided AmaNdwandwe who had nevertheless recovered much of their strength since their defeat by Shaka in 1821.81

In May 1826, having heard that Sikhunyana and his AmaNdwandwe followers were north of the Phongolo River with plans to attack the AmaZulu, Shaka mounted a preemptive military campaign and moved to launch a surprise attack against them.82 Shaka compelled several of the European traders, including Fynn, to accompany this impi, so that more than one eyewitness account from a European has survived. Fynn wrote that the AmaZulu military regiments were accompanied by thousands of boys, aged six to twelve years old, and girls, who served as carriers for all of the supplies and food needed by the warriors, so that he estimated the expedition numbered a total of fifty thousand people proceeding
northwards for several days and camping out at night.\textsuperscript{83} When they finally encountered the AmaNd wandwe north of the Phongolo River a major battle was engaged involving tens of thousands of warriors arranged in formal regiments on both sides. As Shaka, Fynn and others observed from mountain overlooks, the AmaNd wandwe women, children and cattle were encircled and surrounded by warriors on another mountain. Fynn estimated the total AmaNd wandwe population there at forty thousand or more; their warriors were not able to withstand the AmaZulu regiments in the hand-to-hand fighting that ensued.\textsuperscript{84} An estimated sixty thousand cattle were captured, and Fynn wrote that the women and children were all put to death.\textsuperscript{85} The AmaZulu had struck preemptively in a surprise move against the AmaNd wandwe, accounting for the vulnerability of AmaNd wandwe women and children who would have been safely secured away from the battle had Sikhunyana’s warriors succeeded in mounting their planned attack in AmaZulu territory several day’s journey to the south.

Shaka had come to eliminate this threat and he is said to have issued an order to “kill off any soul, woman, and child” because “he wanted nothing of Sikhunyana’s to survive.”\textsuperscript{86} Sikhunyana, however, escaped, and the evidence about the fate of his followers is ambiguous. Since it was reported that cattle, but not women and children, were seized by the AmaZulu troops, Fynn and other European witnesses (none of whom participated) may have mistakenly assumed that all of the women and children were killed. European witnesses said that the AmaNd wandwe women stepped forward to fill the ranks of the men and fight, thus providing an explanation for why women were killed in the battle. These witnesses also reported a total AmaNd wandwe mortality of three thousand men and women killed (combined, including warriors).\textsuperscript{87} A staggering number relative to other battles, this was nevertheless far short of the total population of forty thousand estimated by Fynn, and it appears the vast majority of these AmaNd wandwe did manage to escape death as the AmaZulu turned their attention instead to gathering the herds of cattle as darkness fell. That most AmaNd wandwe survived this terrible battle is self-evident in that after Sikhunyana’s death several other of Zwide’s sons and their followers returned to give their allegiance to Shaka, and after they came to khonza the younger men were enrolled in the AmaZulu regiments both during Shaka’s reign and during the rule of Dingane and then Mpande.\textsuperscript{88}

After this 1826 victory Shaka sent troops against two chiefs who had been tributary to the AmaNd wandwe. Mlotshwa held out briefly and then surrendered and gave his allegiance to Shaka, but Chief Beje’s people resisted, and when Shaka was forced to send another impi against them he compelled several Europeans to join the regiments.\textsuperscript{89} Three Europeans and a small party of their Khoi servants, thus coerced by Shaka to fight for him, met up with the AmaZulu regiments that had been stationed surrounding the AmaBje for months without attacking them. An attempt to raid the AmaBje cattle provoked a confrontation, but the AmaBele chief was immediately killed, and the AmaBje surrendered without further fighting, so there were only a few casualties and apparently only two dead (one being the chief.)\textsuperscript{90}
Violence in the region persisted because the powerful Embo (Mkhize) chief Zihlandlo, having assisted Shaka in the major 1826 battle against the AmaNdwandwe, retained his relative independence and subsequently raided some additional twenty small chiefdoms, seizing their cattle and sometimes killing their chiefs. Finally Shaka’s AmaZulu regiments attacked Zihlandlo, although a putative subordinate ally, and drove him off to the south of modern Natal.91

Next, Shaka’s half-brother (and successor) Dingane led an AmaZulu military expedition in 1827 into Lesotho and the Caledon River area, perhaps without authorization from Shaka. Dingane’s expedition fought a major battle against the AmaNgwane at Ladybrand, as independent oral traditions from the AmaZulu, AmaNgwane, and BaSotho confirm. The AmaZulu oral traditions say little about this battle, probably because it was not authorized by Shaka, that is, ceremonies seeking ancestral approval and assistance were not held by Shaka. But the campaign is remembered by name as the eyobushinga impi and identified as that which went to raid the AmaNgwane; the officers who commanded the troops were remembered by name as well, with reference to the regiment under their command.92 The BaSotho oral traditions remember these events also with reference to the names of those known to have been killed, including the prominent wives of several chiefs. Their traditions agree with those of the AmaZulu that Dingane was among those who led the impi and suggest that it had been initiated in response to a message sent to Shaka by the rising chief of the emerging BaSotho kingdom, Moshoeshoe.93

Shaka’s regiments appear to have crossed the Drakensberg at the end of 1826, and engaged in one of their first attacks at Clocolan in February 1827.94 The primary goal appears to have been to raid for cattle, but in at least one battle civilians were said to have been put to death in an attack against a village. Some oral traditions claimed that an AmaZulu regiment crossed to south of the Orange River before turning back to continue their attack and raid against Matiwane’s AmaNgwane.95 The locations and participants in the ensuing fights along the Caledon River valley were remembered by the AmaNgwane, who watched their cattle being swept away by the AmaZulu regiments.96 Perhaps because one of the oral traditions originated from an eyewitness participant, an UmNgwane warrior, a major battle near Ladybrand involving several regiments from both sides facing off against each other is among the best documented of the conflicts that were fought in this AmaZulu military campaign. The same eyewitness also reported that Dingane was wounded in battle, stabbed in the chest with an assegai (spear) which might account for the suppression of later AmaZulu accounts of these events.97 He also provided evidence of the high mortality suffered in the Ladybrand battle, for “[m]any warriors of both sides fell on that day, and, for years afterwards, the Basuto used to pick up fragments of weapons among little piles of human bones.”98 This was one of only two fights in the region of Lesotho during the 1820s said to have resulted in mortality figures that were counted in “the hundreds,” other battles usually reported to have resulted in the death of no more than one or two dozen, and sometimes
less. The BaSotho and AmaNgwane witnessed the AmaZulu warriors driving off the cattle by the thousands, and although one AmaZulu source maintained that all of the cattle died of disease, Isaacs witnessed the return of the troops with cattle as booty from the impi.\textsuperscript{100}

Upon the death of his mother Nandi in 1827, Shaka moved his capital to Dukuza south of the Thukela River, closer to the European traders at Port Natal and nearer to the territory even further southeast about which he harbored expansionist ambitions.\textsuperscript{101} Nandi’s protective Iziyendane (AmaHlubi) regiments took her death as a threat to themselves and scattered out of Shaka’s control. In 1828 Shaka sent an embassy of several important men with their wives via boat to Port Elizabeth, but they were prevented from going on to Cape Town, or to England, their intended destination. While this mission was away Shaka launched his second major military campaign against the AmaMpondo, scheduled to mark the anniversary of Nandi’s death the year before.\textsuperscript{102} Shaka accompanied his troops but bivouacked at Fynn’s trading post, marking Fynn to his AmaMpondo trading partners as an enemy even though Shaka had commandeered Fynn’s settlement by compulsion.\textsuperscript{103}

Shaka’s army, in two divisions, each subdivided under several commanders, was ordered to go beyond the AmaMpondo to Hintsa’s territory across the Umtata River, but to go no further, nor to attack any Europeans they might encounter.\textsuperscript{104} They destroyed food crops and took captive AmaMpondo women who were sent back to Shaka, but Shaka (on Fynn’s advice) decided to release these and he accepted the submission of several of Faku’s subordinate chiefs who thereby became tributary to Shaka.\textsuperscript{105} Faku sent messages of thanks and gifts of cattle after the women were returned, but not a formal submission, leaving Shaka still angry with him.

The sources all agree that Shaka accompanied and commanded this major campaign in person, but there was no fighting because Faku put up no resistance;

In the Hlambom campaign, Tshaka commanded in person. He crossed the Mzimkulu and took up a position there whilst the impi went on ahead under the command of Mdhlaka. Faku directed his men not to attack but to allow the Zulus to seize cattle. The force accordingly proceeded far away south as far as Esikaleni se Nyoka in the country of the Bomvana people. On their way thither the Pondos made no attack at all on them; they did not molest in any way. Tshaka himself stayed in Mbulazi’s [Mbuyazi, i.e. Fynn] kraal a short distance across the Mzimkulu. The impi seized cattle and returned with them. The Pondos kept out of sight. Faku went off to the Drakensberg. His own cattle were not seized. He took off [withdrew with] his father Ngqungqusho’s cattle too. The cattle taken were those of his people, light-brown ones (esimdubu). Tshaka remained with the Nobamba regiment at the Mzimkulu.\textsuperscript{106}

It appears that although he had rescued his royal herds from Shaka’s raiding warriors, Faku may have been ready to khonza Shaka and become a tributary subordinate chief. Several oral traditions relate that it was Faku’s representatives who had come with gifts to Shaka at the moment of Shaka’s assassination not long after:
The Pondos were defeated and their cattle seized. On the way back Tshaka directed his forces to go off to Balule. Faku followed him up to pay tribute to him, and was in the act of doing so when he [Tshaka] was assassinated. 

By the time of this second military campaign against the AmaMpondo, called the uHlamba campaign, Shaka’s brothers had begun devising an assassination plot against him, and Shaka appears to have become aware of it as he was returning home with his troops. Before reaching Dukuza Shaka therefore ordered the entire army to proceed without resting on a military campaign north against Chief Soshoangane’s AmaNdwandwe at the Balule (Olifant’s) River northwest of Maputo (Delagoa) Bay. This military campaign against Soshoangane at the Balule River was called the Kukulela ngqoiimpi.

On their return [from the AmaMpondo campaign] the kukulele ngqoiimpi went forth to the north, Tshaka returning home with the cattle seized. The forces were not allowed to go home.

Shaka was said to be crazy to send off his forces without rest, but one informant explained that “Tshaka sent forth this impi to the north because there had been no actual fighting with the Pondos, only a seizure of their cattle.” Shaka’s half-brothers accompanied his military commanders with these troops while Shaka remained behind at the capital Dukuza, where he suddenly realized he had been left personally undefended. Shaka immediately called back the young baggage carriers from the campaign and enrolled them into a new regiment, the iziNyosi or “Bees,” to provide for his own defense. Both Fynn’s account and oral traditions relate that Shaka had some of the warriors’ wives killed, perhaps (though this seems unlikely) several hundred, while their husbands were away, on the pretext that the women had engaged in witchcraft; some traditions relate that this act precipitated his assassination. Shaka’s half-brothers Mpande and Nziibe remained with the regiments throughout the campaign, but his half-brothers Dingane and Mhlangana and several other relatives returned before the impi had even passed through AmaSwazi territory on its way north, in order to carry out their assassination plot against Shaka.

One of Stuart’s informants, whose father had been in the AmaMpondo campaign and then “died in the Balule campaign,” explained that unbeknownst to Shaka, “Hlangabeza ka Mabedhla of the amaNtshali tribe had deserted and gone northward after Sotshangana, with people and cattle” so that “[t]he object [for the amaZulu impi] was to ‘bring back’ Sotshangana, though the more immediate object was to overtake Hlangabeza.” With details that can only have come from participants, he continued,

The Zulus accordingly pursued Hlangabeza, and eventually found out where he had temporarily erected his kraals. He built alongside a forest. Mdlhaka’s impi divided into two after being prepared for action at night-time. One division advanced on the far side of the forest, whilst the main body came on before daybreak to make a frontal attack. The forces closed in simultaneously, followed by their mabhangers. Every member of the amaNtshali tribe was put to death, and cattle seized. Hlangabeza himself escaped and got to a pond where he tried to conceal himself
by getting into the water up to his neck. He was, however, observed by the mat-
bearers, who thereupon attacked and put him to death. Prior to this attack, the
princes had returned to Tshaka at Stanger, their object being to kill him.\textsuperscript{118}

Portuguese sources confirm that the AmaZulu forces also engaged in battle with
Soshangane’s regiments, as originally planned, and another of Stuart’s informants related
that after an indecisive battle with Soshangane’s forces who, forewarned, mounted a pre-
emptive night attack, Shaka’s regiments headed home. Many of the AmaZulu soldiers sick-
ened and died of malaria on the return route, and of those who recovered it took two to
three months for the sickest to return home.\textsuperscript{119}

From the combined mortality caused by war and disease, thousands of warriors were
thought to have never returned from the Balule campaign. Fearing the loyalty of the returning
troops and their commanders to Shaka, who had indeed been assassinated while they
were away, Dingane enrolled a new regiment of the younger men and older men, named
the uHlomendhlini, before the regiments that had gone on the Balule campaign returned.
Shaka’s decision to send an \textit{impi} against Soshangane proved fateful:

An \textit{impi} was sent to Balule, to Sotshangan. Tshaka’s order was that every soul
should go—‘\textit{kukulela ngqo},’ i.e. take every one, even \textit{ungqo}, a man who never
\textit{konzas} or attends hunting parties or assists in building king’s kraals etc., one who is
never seen at the king’s kraal. It was in this expedition that Maruji’s father Sonyanga
was killed. Tshaka was at Dukuza when this \textit{impi} went, and it was during its absence
that Tshaka was assassinated by Mbopa, acting in concert with Mhlangana, Tshaka’s
brother, who really instigated the murder. It seems Tshaka went into the cattle kraal
to see his cattle. Whilst there, Mbopa began driving about and beating the cattle.
Tshaka said, ‘Why are you beating the cattle?’ and as he turned his back to Mbopa,
Mbopa threw an assegai [spear] at him which struck him. He pulled the assegai out
as he ran out of the kraal, but at the gate of the kraal another man lay in wait. This
man snatched the assegai Tshaka carried and stabbed him dead on the spot. The
\textit{impi} from Balule returned to find him dead.\textsuperscript{120}

In addition to Shaka’s \textit{impis}, considerable population dislocations were caused by
chiefs and chiefdoms hailing from the KwaZulu region who were subsequently perceived
by others as AmaZulu when they passed through or entered Natal and the Transkei, or
crossed the Drakensberg into the Caledon River valley and TransOrangia region. The flight
southwards from the area of the Thukela and Umzinyati (Buffalo) rivers of the AmaCunu,
AbaTembu and AmaNgwane chiefdoms after Shaka’s installation as AmaZulu chief caused
three periods of population disruptions and associated violence in the region of modern
Natal.\textsuperscript{121} The status of the Embo chief Zihlandlo and his brother Sambela as tributary and
putatively subordinate chiefs to Shaka lends ambiguity to their perceived identity in the
1820s when, although sending tribute regularly to Shaka, they persisted in carrying out raid-
ing and the killing of other chiefs with relative independence and impunity under Shaka’s
rule, but not at Shaka’s command.\textsuperscript{122} The Embo remained powerful and relatively inde-
pendent, in spite of their proffers of allegiance to Shaka, as long as they retained their own
regiments and herds of raided cattle. The reports about the attacks made by Embo troops under Zihlandlo and his brother Sambela reflect an endemic level of insecurity and disorder. Zihlandlo attacked at least seventeen smaller chiefs, killed eleven of them, and confiscated their cattle. Zihlandlo’s brother Sambela became a famous fighter as a subordinate chief to Zihlandlo and made at least fourteen attacks against neighboring chiefs, killing at least twelve chiefs and capturing their cattle, before Shaka finally attacked and defeated them and drove Zihlandlo into flight to the south.

The Wages of War: Mortality and the “Death of Nations”

The use of terms like the “death of nations” reflected the seriousness of the political reconfiguration resulting from the expansion of AmaZulu authority over regional chiefdoms, and came to be confused with a presumption regarding the death of people and high mortality from battles. Warfare was more brutal, and demographic disruptions caused widespread misery and civilian mortality from famine and disease, but the numbers of warriors killed in battles and the numbers of civilians killed in military campaigns during the era of Shaka’s rule has been grossly exaggerated in the historiography. The eyewitness testimony and second-hand oral traditions told to James Stuart came from men, and a few women, whose social and political networks had been incorporated into the AmaZulu kingdom during the course of the nineteenth century, but many were descendants of people who had been victimized by AmaZulu troops in the process of incorporation. As a result there is considerable variation as well as independent confirmation with regard to testimony about violence and atrocities that accompanied warfare, or occurred as random, terrorizing acts initiated by Shaka or other chiefs. The stories of deaths of civilians as “collateral” victims during military campaigns, and of both warriors and civilians as the result of ordered executions, as corroborated by independent European and African sources, are credible as general reports if not always in their details. The sources agree that warfare had become more violent, and when formal battles were fought hundreds rather than, as previously, only a handful of warriors might be killed in the fighting before it ended with surrender or a rout. However, levels of mortality tended to be exaggerated. Some famous campaigns did not result in major battles, involving opposing regiments of warriors on the battlefield, such as the second AmaMpondo campaign, because invading AmaZulu forces did not meet with significant resistance and raided cattle rather than engaging in formal battles. Some military campaigns resulted in negligible levels of casualties on both sides.

Understanding the processes involved in sociopolitical consolidation and levels of mortality associated with Shaka’s impis is critical for determining population numbers and the demographic distribution of chiefdoms across the region as European settlement was expanding in the 1820s and after. The failure to recognize the survival and dispersal and, sometimes, reconstitution of chiefdoms and their populations following a rout or pre-
emptive migration of entire villages led to gross distortions in the historiography regarding depopulation. Thus as Saunders points out, a statement attributed to a missionary "that 'twenty-eight distinct tribes' had disappeared in this time of upheaval, 'leaving not so much as a trace of their former existence'," was published in 1843 and again in 1894 although it was demonstrably false since "the list of these twenty-eight 'tribes' in Chase's 1843 book included the names of many Tswana chiefdoms which continued to exist after the Mfecane."  

Wright has made the same case that in spite of the reconfiguration of chiefdoms in the region of Natal, most people were absorbed into new polities when their own chiefdoms were dispersed or incorporated wholesale, and of those who emigrated, many returned.  

Among other inflated claims unsupported by any other evidence, Fynn wrote that Matiwane "destroyed 65 tribes of considerable magnitude, besides numerous small ones, whose names were not generally known." Fynn conceded, however, that Matiwane "spared none but those who were willing to join him and by his liberal and fatherly conduct had increased his people to a considerable number."

Much of the hyperbolic and unsubstantiated allegations that have persisted suggesting high levels of brutality and mortality in battles originated in Fynn's "Diary," published in 1950, that has remained one of the most widely available accounts of the period. For example Fynn wrote that after Shaka had succeeded in building the strength of his military in terms of numbers of troops, "[h]e now started a desolating and destructive war on all around, and directed that no quarter was to be given. He ravaged and depopulated the country to a distance of 300 miles to the westward, 200 miles to the northward and 500 miles to the southward. In this vast area only two tribes, the Ngwane under Matiwane, and the Nhlungwini under Madikane escaped his destructive powers, and that only by their becoming roving marauders." Fynn wrote that in order to travel quickly some people were "induced" to "destroy their children when born," but this is not corroborated by any other sources. He moreover conceded that the mortality resulting from the demographic locations caused by migrant chiefdoms in Natal and into the Transkei region was minimal. Rather, "these chiefs who attacked several of the large tribes west of the Umzimkhulu, being more desirous for cattle than for the destruction of people, [therefore] that so many of those tribes escaped who passed forward to the frontiers and now form the principal part of those tribes by whom they are held in much subjection and are termed 'Fingoes,' a name of degradation."

Similarly Shepstone acknowledged that of the people living in the Thukela River valley, "several of them were allowed by Chaka to occupy their lands as tributaries, on their promptly tendering their submission to him; others were attacked and driven further South." However, "one the Amakabela, although repeatedly attacked, and reduced to live upon roots and wild animals, perseveringly clung to the ancient homes," so that some survived there to the time of his writing in 1864.  

When Shepstone listed what he referred to as ninety-four "tribes" that had occupied the region "now called Natal," he included many
small chiefdoms that would have amounted to no more than a dozen families living in three or four related homesteads; there were only a handful of chiefdoms that had managed to accumulate adherents that could be counted in the hundreds or thousands of people.\textsuperscript{132} At the time he was writing in 1864, he could identify the descendants of forty-three of these “tribes” still living in Natal, but he was also able to locate many of these small chiefdoms who were still identifiable living where they had relocated in the region of Transkei.\textsuperscript{133} Shepstone also noted that the disappearance of identifiable sociopolitical units could be explained by the dispersal of these communities, rather than their complete destruction, only the chiefs’ families having been killed.\textsuperscript{134} According to one African source, when Shaka first went to the region of Natal himself “he found that the whole of Natal had been denuded of its former population.”\textsuperscript{135} Shaka was told by the AmaCele chief that his regiments had been responsible for raids and their destructive effects in the area, but nevertheless the subjects of the AmaCele and AmaThuli were still there, as were regiments that had been stationed there by Shaka.

The histories of the migrant chiefdoms of the AmaNdebele (AmaKhumalo) and the AmaNgwane also demonstrate the survival of people on a large scale even after demographic displacement. The extent to which the dislocation of a chiefdom from one location to another resulted in raids, battles, and the deaths of warriors or civilians must be considered individually with regard to each instance of conflict, and depopulation cannot be assumed. There were other significant factors affecting mortality levels among the population of KwaZulu-Natal and the wider region of southeastern Africa, including the Transkei, Caledon River valley and Lesotho, Orange Free State, and Transvaal areas, in the 1820s and 1830s. There were widespread reports of famine, and these were related to droughts affecting the entire area in the early 1820s, as well as the destruction of standing crops by military regiments moving en masse to capture cattle and, where necessary, suppress resistance from the victims of their raids. Many soldiers who went into the malaria-ridden region of southern Mozambique succumbed to that disease and did not return home from battle. Shaka carried out executions and even massacres of villagers who were his own subjects as individual and collective punishments, behavior so repugnant even to the people closest to him that his mother is said to have reprimanded him for killing his own people. The numbers of people under Shaka’s rule who were killed by his order in executions and massacres appear to have amounted to as many or more as the deaths inflicted and incurred in military expeditions and battles, and the decision of his half-brothers to assassinate Shaka was attributed in oral sources to his atrocities against his own subjects.

Trying to estimate the numbers of dead in battles fought by Shaka’s \textit{impis} seems callous and inevitably underestimates the human toll as families lost loved ones, and the lost social and economic contributions of each individual who died senselessly can never be known. The numbers of people killed in Shaka’s military expeditions may also have been exceeded by the numbers who died from residual causes such as starvation caused by crop destruction.
and the loss of cattle. But many military campaigns sent to enforce the submission of smaller chiefs as tributaries to Shaka’s rule did not result in any fighting at all when allegiance was promptly forthcoming. Even when these early battles were fought, most resulted in dozens rather than hundreds or thousands killed, and even some major campaigns such as the second campaign against the AmaMpondo did not result in any fighting. From the evidence there appear to have been only a handful of battles in which hundreds of warriors died, and mortality figures in the range of several thousand killed in battles fought by AmaZulu troops during Shaka’s reign are only reported for two battles, the first (amabece) campaign against the AmaMpondo in 1824 in which the majority of casualties appear to have been AmaZulu warriors, and the 1826 battle in which the AmaNdwandle then under Zwide’s son Sikhunyana were finally defeated north of the Phongolo River. About eight thousand warriors, mostly AmaZulu, were also said to have died in the Balule campaign, although it is impossible to distinguish therein between losses in battle and losses from disease. Mortality counted in the hundreds in a single battle were still considered staggering, as occurred in three battles fought by the AmaNgwane west of the Drakensberg against the AmaHlubi, the AmaZulu, and the BaSotho; losses counted in the thousands in a single battle were unexpected and unacceptable even during Shaka’s rule. The violence inflicted by Shaka’s warriors and by other predatory chiefs, including Makedama, Zihlandlo, and Sambela were targeted towards chiefs and sometimes their immediate families, rather than entire populations.

In sum the number of people including Shaka’s warriors who were killed in battles involving impis sent by Shaka, or commanded by these subordinate chiefs, certainly amounted to ten thousand dead, and the true figure was probably twice that number. These figures do not take into account mortality arising from other battles and fights across the wider region involving other chiefs and chiefdoms, nor the associated death from famines known to have occurred west of the Drakensberg during the droughts of the 1820s. As terrible and dramatic as these figures are, they are far lower than the one to two million deaths attributed to Shaka’s rule that were estimated in the early historiography.

The widespread use of force and the threat of force to reconfigure the political and social organization of southern Africa in the era of Shaka’s reign underscores the false and artificial presumptions of modern claims of “ethnicity” associated with supposed “primordial” cultural identities. This history decisively undermines the legitimacy of any contemporary political, social, or economic claims on the basis of putative but false “primordial” socio-cultural origins. Processes of cultural assimilation followed upon the turmoil and sociopolitical reconfiguration of the 1820s and 1830s, disguising the cultural, political, and social (and biological) heterogeneity of modern political identities that only emerged later in the nineteenth century. Cultural “identities” or modern “ethnicities” currently masquerade, in the words of the Comaroffs, as “the manifest product of biology, genetics, human essence,” with damaging political and economic consequences. Hence the historical decon-
struction of the processes of sociopolitical incorporation and amalgamation are more salient than ever to modern politics and economic dispensations.\textsuperscript{137}

The supposed “primordial” origins of modern ethnic identities such as the modern Zulu “identity” are contrived from false claims that threaten renewed conflicts. Associated economic and financial claims to benefits are based on a false representation of past political and cultural history. The wages of war in battle and beyond as experienced by the people of southern Africa in the 1820s and 1830s were high, and by the time Protestant missionaries became active in the region in the 1820s and 1830s, populations across the region knew they were recovering from a long period of chronic violence that had sometimes uprooted entire chiefdoms and brought death from violence and famine. Wherever they found themselves settled, communities regrouped and replanted and rebuilt, and through their oral traditions they remembered their relatives and their ancestors who had not lived to see the reconfigured chiefdoms and kingdoms of the 1820s and 1830s that created a new legacy for subsequent generations.

Notes

1. This article is part of a larger project on the pre-colonial history of southeastern Africa encompassing modern KwaZulu-Natal, Lesotho, Swaziland, and southern Mozambique with reference to adjacent areas and developments from 1400 to 1830. Research for this project was supported by grants from a Senior Scholar Fulbright Research Fellowship and the Social Science Research Council, and a Michigan State University All-University Research Grant. I am grateful for the (non-financial) support and encouragement I received for this work from the Departments of History at the University of Durban-Westville, the National University of Lesotho, the University of Swaziland, and the Universidade Eduardo Mondlane during the tenure of my research grants, December 1993–November 1994. I am especially grateful to the staff at the Killie Campbell Library where most of the research for this article was conducted.

2. In English historical renditions, the term impi has been used to refer to regiments, units, or to the military campaigns on which they were sent.


4. Saunders, “Pre-Cobbing Mfecane Historiography.”


8. For example, the AmaNgwane chiefdom under Matiwe was displaced several times, from northern KwaZulu to the Caledon River valley, and again to the Transkei, each time re-establishing itself and exerting dominance over neighboring displaced peoples who were raided, incorporated, or, as in the case of the new BaSotho kingdom under Moshoeshoe, paid tribute. However there were significantly lower levels of mortality in battles than have been commonly assumed, and the total numbers of persons killed in battles in which the AmaNgwane ever engaged were counted in the hundreds rather than the thousands. Elizabeth A. Eldredge, “Migration, Conflict, and Leadership in Early Nineteenth-Century South Africa: The Case of Matiwe,” in Robert W. Harms et al., eds., Paths toward the Past: African Historical Essays in Honor of Jan Vansina (Atlanta: African Studies Association, 1994), 39–75.

9. John Wright, “Political Transformations in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu Region in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries,” in Hamilton, ed., 163–81. However, this article is seriously flawed by his acceptance of erroneous assumptions and assertions including Cobbing’s flawed speculations.


13. This body of oral testimony meets all the criteria for validity and legitimacy as an historical source, comprising over a hundred and fifty individual sources each subject to individual scrutiny for reliability. The difficulty of identifying reliability in individual sources is reflected in the work of Dan Wylie, who entails serious errors in his account, and remarks that “the past is ultimately a construction of language; it’s something imagined.” Dan Wylie, Myth of Iron: Shaka in History (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2006), 4; and Jeff Peires, The House of Phalo: A History of the AmaXhosa in the Days of their Independence (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1984).


16. Ndlovu ka Timuni in JSA v.4, 229; Madikane ka Mlomowetole in JSA v.2, 48; Ngidi ka Mckaziswa in JSA v.5, 42, 59, 66, 79; Fynn, Diary, 14. During the time he served as a warrior for Dingiswayo the AmaMthethwa fought the ABAQwabe, AmaNyuswa, AmaNdandwe, AbaTembo of chief Mlunjiwa, the AmaDube under Nzwakele ka Kutshwayo, the AmaMbata, the AmaNshali, and the AmaNkumalo under chief Malusi. Ndlovu, 204–5; Jantsi ka Nongila in JSA v.1, 180; Ngidi, 94; Madikane, 61; Mayinga ka Mbekuzana in JSA v.2, 247.

17. Shepstone, par. 14. The AmaNgwane of Matiwe were distinct from the AmaNgwane or AmaSwazi under Sobhuza.

18. Ngidi, 64. The Embo chiefly line of descent is related to the Embo or Ambo discussed by Etherington for earlier centuries, but other parts of his hypothesis, based on the repetition of chiefs’ names in genealogies, are inconclusive or contradicted by the evidence of Stuart’s informants; see Norman Etherington, The Great Treks: The Transformation of Southern Africa, 1815 to 1854 (London: Pearson Education, 2001), 23–24, 34, 43 n119, 81, 84.


20. Lugubu ka Mangaliso in JSA v.1, 282; Mkehlengana ka Zulu in JSA v.3, 211, 216.
21. Mkhelengana, 211. That his father Zulu ka Nogandaba was the most renowned of Shaka's warriors lends strong credibility to the factual basis of his testimony, heard directly from his famous father, notwithstanding the predictable AmaZulu perspective.

22. Mkhelengana, 216.

23. Lugubu, 287, 292; Webb and Wright v.1, p.246 n.60.


25. Lugubu, 287.


27. Macingwane, leading his people south, attacked chieftainess Macibiise and was repulsed, before he killed and seized the livestock of one of her officers, an induna. Macingwane then defeated the AmaNtsho and seized their lands for the resettlement of his own followers. Magidigidi ka Nobebe in JSA v.2, 85–87, 90; Mkando ka Dhlova in JSA v.3, 150; Lugubu, 282; Mqaikana ka Yenge in JSA v.4, 23; Madikane, 60; Shepstone, pars. 14–19.

28. Baleni, 18; Mqaikana, 24; Lugubu, 288; Lunguzu ka Mpukane in JSA v.1, 307–8; Magidigidi 85, 89.

29. Ngidi, 54; Baleka ka Mpitikazi in JSA v.1, 5; Lugubu, 283. Additional chieftains defeated and incorporated at this time were the AmaNtsho (emaNtshaleni), AmaCube (emaCubeni), AmaNkumalo of chief Malusi, and amaLange section of the AmaNgcobo. For chronology see also Melapi ka Magaye, v. 3, 81; Magudwini cited in interview of Madikane ka Mlolosetole, 60–61.


31. Fynn, Diary, 17.

32. Ngidi, 54; Melapi, 78.


34. Ngidi, 54; Mmeme, 242; Mbovu ka ka Mtshayeli in JSA v.3, 36; Fynn, Diary, 16–17.

35. Maziyana in interview of Melapi, 81.


37. Fynn, 17.

38. Jantshi, 183. Donda was the same chief against whom the AmaZulu had fought a battle prior to Shaka's return in which Shaka's brother Sigujana had been mortally injured.

39. Ndhlouvou, 229–30, 232. None of the traditions support Fynn's allegation that Shaka had deliberately allowed Dingiswayo's troops to be defeated by Zwide. For more about Dingiswayo's death at the hands of Zwide see Jantshi, 183; Shepstone, par. 13; Mandhlakazi, 186; Makuza ka Mkomoyi in JSA v.2, 170; Fynn, 11, 15.

40. Fynn, 15; Ndkwana ka Mbengwana in JSA v.4, 277; Nhlekele ka Makana in JSA v.5, 127.

41. Nhlekele ka Makana in JSA v.5, 127; Ngidi, 43; Ndkwana, 326.

42. Ngidi, 70.

43. Ngidi, 70.

44. Jantshi, 186. Stuart's notes of Jantshi's interview, with Ndkwana also present at this point, indicate that all three men were trying to establish with accuracy a chronology of political consolidation under Shaka. This is evident in Ndkwana's interventions and contributions, which were accepted by Jantshi.

45. Jantshi, 186.


48. Maziyana, 281. The term is translated by James Stuart as the “scattering of peoples” because it referred not to the literal death of people but to the end of the existence of the sociopolitical units in which they lived.

49. Mabonsa, 14, 20, 26. The fate of the AmaNgwane and the AmaHlubi who migrated west into the Caledon River region is summarized below. The arrival of the AmaHlubi and AmaNgwane in the Caledon River valley in 1821, as remembered by the people they disrupted and then told to French missionaries upon their arrival in Lesotho in 1838, dates the dispersal of the AmaHlubi chieftain to late 1820 or early 1821.

50. Melapi, 78, 92; Madikane, 53; Maquza ka Gawushane in JSA v.2, 236–37; Dinya, 115, 117.

51. Melapi said, “Tshaka began on [AmaCele chief] Mande when he devastated the whole of Natal. That is where his operations began, and these included Nzala ka Mangqwashi and Duze ka Mnengwa—also, says Maziyana, Sokoti ka Mdingi ka Magojolo of the Nganga people, also Nkuna ka Mbedu, chief of the amaNsomi.” Melapi, 81.

52. Maziyana, 296.

53. Ngidi, 63.

54. Mziyana, 295–96.


56. Ibid, 296.

57. Melapi ka Magaye, 92.

58. Ngidi, 63. There is some discrepancy in Ngidi’s accounts.

59. Ngidi, 68, 72–73, 79; Mangati ka Godida in JSA v.2, 209; Baleni, 16–17; Shepstone, pars. 14–19; Magludwini in interview of Madikane, 61; Madikane, 52–53; Mmeli, 270–71; Dinya ka Zokozwayo in JSA v.1, 102–3; Lugubu, 284–85; Nduna ka Manqina in JSA v.5, 1–4.

60. Baleni, 17. See also Ngidi, 72.

61. Ngidi, 72–73.


63. Nduna, 3.

64. Nduna, 4. The word com is from ukushoma, to impale, and buxeka refers to “firmly driven into,” e.g., as a stake or spear.

65. Ibid.

66. Shepstone, par. 17.

67. Nduna, 4; Ngidi, 79. We know that these events took place in the first half of 1821 because on 11 July 1821 the Portuguese governor at Maputo (Delagoa) Bay first reported the attacks and depredations of the surviving immigrants AmaNdwande chieftains following the defeat of Zwide and the AmaNdwande by the AmaZulu. From Portuguese sources the havoc caused by these so-called “Fatwa” can be traced, including their threats against the fort and negotiations with the governor there. Caetano da Costa Matozo, letter of 11 de Julho de 1821, in M. Sequeira, “Cartas dos Governadores de Lourenço Marques Desde À Restauração do Presidio na Catembe (1799) à Implantação do Liberalismo na Colonia (1834),” Lourenço Marques, 1927, typescript.


69. Ndikwana, 278–79; Madikane, 60; Mabonsa ka Sidhlayi in JSA v.2, 25; Socwatsha, unpub., 24; Jantshi, 183; For an overview of the history of Mzilikazi (Moseleketse) and his kingdom, that came to be known as the AmaNdbele (Matabele), see Omer-Cooper, The Zulu Aftermath, 129–55. For an authoritative account of the same see R.K. Rasmussen, Migrant Kingdom: Mzilikazi’s Ndbele in South Africa (London, 1978).

70. Mandhlakazi, 176; Fynn, Diary, 20–21; Omer-Cooper, 138, 142.

71. Mesach Ngidi in JSA v.5, 117.

73. Mgidihlana, 107.
74. Mbovu ka Mthumayeli in JSA v.3, 43.
75. Maziyana, 272. Shaka's attention to the southwest is also said to have been aroused by a provocative
message sent to him by Chief Nguboyencuga of the AbaTembu claiming he had superior forces,
before then fleeing further west into the domains of the AmaXhosa chiefdoms on the eastern Cape
Colony frontier.
76. Nduna, 4; Lugubu, 282, 287; Makewu, 163; Mkehlingana, 217; Maziyana, 272–73; Mcotoyi ka
Mnini in JSA v.3, 55; Mbovu, 43; Fynn, Diary, 62. It was evidently these returning regiments,
estimated at 20,000 men or more, who were encountered and observed by Fynn on 11 March
1824, a day after his trading party first landed at Port Natal (Durban) to open up a trade in ivory.
77. Mkehlingana, 217.
78. Mcotoyi ka Mnini in JSA v. 3, 66. He provided this information elsewhere in his interview, when
he named Shaka's commanders on this expedition; 55.
79. Maziyana, 272–73. He also named the military commanders on this campaign.
80. Fynn, Diary, 91.
81. Fynn, Diary, 118. See also Ngidi, 70, 79.
82. Maziyana, 269; Ngidi, 70, 79; Fynn, Diary, 122; Charles Rawden Maclean, The Natal Papers of
John Ross: Loss of the Brig Mary at Natal with Early Recollections of that Settlement and Among the
Caffres, edited by Stephen Gray (Durban: Killie Campbell Africana Library and Pietermaritzburg:
University of Natal Press, 1992), 49, 63, 67; none of the Europeans actually participated in any
fighting, however.
83. Fynn, Diary, 123.
86. Mbokodo ka Sikulekile in JSA v.3, 11–12.
87. Maclean (John Ross), 67–69, citing the contemporaneous eyewitness reports of his European
associates to him.
88. Ndukwana in interview of Jantsihi, 186. Ndukwana said Zwide's sons Somapunga, Nqabeni,
Momo, and others returned to give their allegiance to Shaka, and that Nqabeni and Momo were
enrolled in the iziNyosi regiment enrolled during the Balule campaign, and later fight honorably
in AmaZulu campaigns under Dingane and Mpande. This decisive battle in which the AmaZulu
defeated the AmaNdwandwe can be dated with some precision because just as they were returning
from this battle against Sikhunyana "a vessel that had arrived on 6th October, 1826, from Algoa
Bay, proved to be the schooner Anne, with Mr. King and Mrs. Farewell on board." Fynn, Diary,
129.
89. Fynn, Diary, 127–30, and Nathaniel Isaacs, cited by Stuart and Malcolm, ibid.
90. The trader Nathaniel Isaacs was among the injured. The European and African sources are in
agreement with regard to this account and that there were few deaths. Nathaniel Isaacs, Travels and
Adventures in Eastern Africa, edited with footnotes and a biographical sketch by Louis Herman
(Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1936), v.1, 163, 170–71; Baleni ka Silwana, 18; Mkehlingana
ka Zulu, 215; Ndukwana, 289, 17.
91. Mbokodo, 12.
92. Mabonsa, 14; Ngidi, 54. After the AmaNgwane defeat of the AmaHlubi west of the Drakensberg
in 1824/5, "Matiwane was presently attacked by the Zulus, just as if they had come to interfere in
the fighting going on. Matiwane was then chased by the Zulus via Basutoland; he was caused to
cross the Isangqu [Orange River], but the Zulus did not cross." Mbokodo, 17. Also Fynn, Diary,
318.
We can assume the final battle and defeat of the AmaHlubi was in late 1824 or early 1825 because it
was said to have occurred at the same time that Mosheshoe migrated with his people from Butha-
Buthe to Thaba Bosiu known to have occurred then. Ellenberger's work reflects a meticulous record

95. Ellenberger, 177–78.
96. Moloja, “The story of the ‘Fetsani hordic,'” *Cape Quarterly Review*, 1 (1882), 267–75. This story is retold almost verbatim by Ellenberger.
97. Ellenberger, 178.
98. Ibid, 178.
100. Moloja, “Story”; Msebenzi in N.J. Van Warmelo, *History of Matiwane and the Amangwane Tribe as Told by Msebenzi to his kinsman Albert Ellongwane*, Union of South Africa Department of Native Affairs Ethnological Publications Vol VII (Pretoria, 1938), 29; Isaacs, v.1, 180; some of Isaacs’ information about where they had been was incorrect.
101. Ngidi, 35; Fynn, *Diary*, 131, 137–38. There is strong evidence that Shaka inflicted a fatal wound onto Nandi and then left to go hunting as she lay dying. Fynn, *Diary*, 131–37; Ngidi, 35, 39, 72; Mbovu, 44; Lunguza, 311; Melapi, 86; Ndukwana, 291; Maquza ka Gwawushe in JSA v.2, 232; Mabonsa, 14, 21; Madhlebe, 45; Magidi, 81; Mangayi in interview of Baleni, 30.
102. Mkandla ka Dhlowa in JSA v.3, 145; Mkehlenega, 217.
103. In fact Fynn had long since been alarmed by Shaka’s southern expansionist intentions and was defensive of both the Cape Colonists and those Africans with whom he lived and worked, many of whom were his own direct family members through marriage. Fynn, *Diary*, 143.
104. Fynn, *Diary*, 144; Mnemri, 268; Maziyana, 274; see also Ngidi, 55–56.
106. Maziyana, 274.
107. Mcotoxic ka Mnini in JSA v.3, 66.
109. Mcotoxic, 66; Jantsi, 187; Melapi, 83; Fynn, *Diary*, 149 and 153; Makewu, 163; Dinya, 95; Madikane, 61; James Stuart file 17 KCM 23465.
110. Mkehlenega, 217. He said that his famous father, Zulu, “also started forth on the *Kukulela ngogo* impi to the uBalule but was injured unexpectedly in the foot (right foot). This was reported to Tshaka, so he told him to come back, which he did,” Makewu, 163. Because on this occasion the mobilization of all invalids and indigent men (e.g., even the *ungogo* — see third following quote in main text) was deemed an extraordinary act of total mobilization, the term “*khukhelenelangogo*” later came to refer to wholesale mobilization, and by extension implied total destruction and devastation.
111. Mcotoxic, 55.
112. Mkehlenega, 217; he named the *izinduna* in charge of both AmaZulu *impi* to the south, referring to the first as against the abeNguni and the second against the AmaMpondo. Melapi said, "Tshaka gave orders to the Pondo *impi* south of the Mzimkulu and directed it to go to the north when he was there [with the *impi* in the south]. When he was assassinated he was said to have bunguileka'd, i.e., gone mad by giving such an order." Melapi, 83.
113. Maziyana, 297, named all of the AmaZulu military commanders who went on “this campaign to Balule." Madikane ka Mlomowetole (1903, 1905) in JSA v.2, 61, provided details of the routes taken by the troops on this campaign.
115. Fynn, *Diary*, 155–56; Maziyana in interview of Melapi, 84; Melapi, 85; Maziyana, 294.
116. Dinya, 95; Ngidi, 75; Mayinga ka Mbekuzana in JSA v.2, 249–50; Jantsi, 187, 194; Maziyana, 295; James Stuart interview notes, JS file 58 (AA) NB 23KCM24220, p. 21. Mayinga provided details about individual warriors who went on the Balule campaign.
117. Dinya, 95.
118. Ibid.
120. Makewu, 163.
121. Mqaikana ka Yenge in JSA v.4, 22; Fynn, 17; Shepstone, paragraphs 14–19; Lugubu, 284, 286, 287; Maziyana ka Mahlabeni in JSA v.2, 277.
122. Mbokodo ka Sikulekile in JSA v.3, 6, 8, 13, 19.
123. Mbokodo, 12.
125. For example, Mbovu, 43; Ngidi, 60.
127. Wright, “Political Transformations.”
128. Fynn, *Diary*, 318. Although the designation of a chieftain as “of considerable magnitude” is ambiguous, it is self-evident that there were not “65 tribes of considerable magnitude” in the southeastern Africa in the early nineteenth century, much less in the more limited regions traversed by Matiwane’s AmaNgwane.
129. Fynn *Diary*, 18.
130. The chiefs, referred to by name, were Madikane, Ndinga, Nxumalo, and Ngoza. Fynn *Diary*, 18.
131. Shepstone, par. 18.
132. Shepstone, par. 47.
133. Shepstone wrote, “That several of those aboriginal Tribes who migrated to the South, such as the very considerable ones of the Amabele, the Amazizi and others, are at present among the people called Fingoys, in the Frontier Districts of the Cape Colony; and that three, the Amavundhle, the Abashwau and the Amabaca, occupy the territory called ‘No Man’s Land,’ to the south of Natal, while a section of the Amabele are in Natal; a fourth, the Amaxesibe, now live on the border of ‘No Man’s Land.’” Shepstone, par. 49.
134. He wrote “[t]hat thirty nine of the aboriginal Tribes were so completely dispersed and their reigning families annihilated, that they no longer exist as separate Tribes, but some of the individuals belonging to them congregated and formed others [other “Tribes”],—not under hereditary Chiefs,—such as the Amaduma, and those enumerated under Table II Class No.2 in his lists; and that others have become incorporated with these aboriginal communities.” Shepstone, par. 50.
136. For an excellent study of BaTswana chieftaindoms in turmoil in the 1820s and 1830s, and the turbulence created by Mzilikazi’s AmaNdebele on the western highveld, see Margaret Kinsman, “Hungry Wolves: The Impact of Violence on Rolong Life, 1823–1836,” in Hamilton, ed., 363–93.
137. John L. and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnicity, Inc.* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 1, demonstrates the modern metamorphosis of putative ethnic claims into claims of cultural ownership and consequent preemptory commercial claims in contemporary South Africa, with haunting and disturbing echoes of apartheid-era claims to resources based on supposed primordial and therefore uncontestable (although false) cultural or biological birthrights.