

Magolwane kaMkhathini Jiyane and Mshongweni: Izibongo and the Construction of King Dingane's Archive

In the *Cambridge History of South Africa, Volume 1*, the authors Carolyn Hamilton, Bernard Mbenga and Robert Ross discuss the almost complete absence of work focusing upon the intellectual history of South Africa in pre-colonial times. They lament the widespread discrimination and prejudice against oral texts within the academy notwithstanding the fact that oral history is by far the oldest form of historical practice on the African continent.¹ Moreover, one of the first historians to collect oral evidence from Africa was Herodotus, who gained knowledge of the continent from Greek colonies of modern Libya. The Carthaginians had oral accounts of epic voyages down the African coast and quite possibly even learnt of the circumnavigation of the continent. Hamilton, Mbenga and Ross find it ironic that the profound methodological breakthroughs which led to the recovery of oral traditions was accompanied by the denial of their status as viable historical sources and being important historical accounts and intellectual projects in their own right. They maintain that documentary sources have been privileged over oral sources on the pretext that they have survived unaltered for long periods of time, whereas oral texts are dismissed as sources fraught with subjectivity and bias because of their impermanence, fluidity and intangibility. The rejection of oral texts as historical sources is premised on the view that they require careful professional interpretation by academics and that these texts should be regarded as historiologies rather than historiographies.² This rejection is maintained notwithstanding the fact that documentary

sources begin their life as oral sources before they are compiled and written down.

The implication of this type of reasoning, as these *Cambridge History* authors explain, is the flawed suggestion that the production of history is the exclusive domain of professionally trained academic historians and the denial of the possibility that public intellectuals who operated during pre-colonial or pre-contact times were themselves busy producing histories or their epistemological equivalents. On these issues, Mazisi Kunene opined:

It is only recently that many [European] writers and critics have begun to describe oral literary expressions from Africa as literature. To these writers and critics, literature meant only that which was written ... for private reading or reading by a particular coterie of scholars and intellectuals. For a long period oral African literature was described by European missionaries and adventurers as no more than incomprehensible blubbing of the savage mind. It was dismissed as lacking structure and having none of the excellence that constitutes what by European subjective criteria, constituted literature ... By these criteria, like the rest of African culture, [oral African literature] was judged as befitting the scale of expression just slightly higher than the first cave dwellers. It affirmed in the minds of the colonisers, the cultural stunted-ness of the African.³

A detailed analysis of key oral texts such as izibongo produced by Magolwane kaMkhathini Jiyane and Mshongweni will address the challenges identified by Kunene, Hamilton, Mbenga and Ross and affirm the validity of such texts as viable historical sources. Izibongo zamakhosi, as composed by Magolwane and Mshongweni, are among the earliest forms of historical consciousness that make it possible for us to gain insight into the intellectual history of pre-colonial times. They provide us with ideas and archival material signifying perceptions and life histories of Zulu monarchs such as Dingane.⁴ Magolwane and Mshongweni, as public intellectuals, operated for about five decades as izimbongi to the first four Zulu kings, that is, from the early 1800s to the early 1870s. Evidence in this regard is provided by the James Stuart Archives (including the published versions), William Ngidi and academics such as Benedict Bhambatha, W. Vilakazi and Mazisi Kunene.

It must not be forgotten that Africans had no system of recording events on paper as they came to pass, so that the handing down of

history over generations had of necessity to be transmitted orally. To keep these events fresh in the minds of imbongi such as Magolwane and in the memories of the people attending such ceremonial occasions, one of the dominant cultural customs was ukubonga based on performance by imbongi. Kunene maintained that starting with the meritorious deeds of ancestors who had passed away, an imbongi would recite izibongo one after another until he ended with izibongo lauding the reigning sovereign. Therefore, as a record of the valiant deeds of great people, izibongo became a reservoir or archive of historical events in a given African society. They tell us how pre-colonial societies produced umlando something akin to the modern idea of history and about other forms of their historical consciousness.⁵

Mazisi Kunene noted that the Zulu heroic epic (izibongo) has gone through different stages of development and because of the close proximity of African literature to history; this literature (including izibongo) follows peaks and troughs according to the historical period. Accordingly, through izibongo, Ndaba (a seventeenth-century ruler of amaZulu) is depicted only as a hunter with a shield on his knees. Therefore, the period from the sixteenth century to about 1815 abounds with izibongo obsessed with physical appearance as an aesthetic quality. This era is also characterised by frequent reference to erotic metaphor. Kunene expresses the view that from this we can deduce that the community was less active in terms of expansion compared to its later epic exploits. The socio-economic and political upheavals caused by land hunger in the period from about 1795 to 1815 resulted in the creation, the dramatic rise of the Zulu empire.⁶ In establishing this empire, King Shaka stimulated the greatest period of Zulu traditional literature and Kunene emphasises the point that:

Magolwane, Shaka's court poet, revolutionized Zulu poetry and created not only a form that was the highest vehicle of [intellectual] thought and feeling, but also evolved such a dramatic style of language that legend has it he needed only to beat the ground with his staff to emphasise the meaning of his poem ... In his epic, (Magolwane) combined both analysis and synthesis so that his stanzas not only introduced and treated the subjects, but also contained philosophical conclusions and summaries.⁷

In his general discussion of izibongo, Sibusiso Nyembezi asserts that they are a feature of south-eastern isiNtu-speaking peoples. They are rich

historical texts about kings, their counsellors, state officials and all others who gained public recognition and distinction, for instance warriors who went into battle and through their valiant deeds, drew attention to themselves, won accolades or added to that they already possessed.⁸ Women of rare ability, like Queen Regent Mnkabayi and Ntombazi, similarly ignited the poetic spark in the Zulu and Ndwandwe bards, resulting in spirited recitals of their accomplishments. To elaborate this crucial point, I have discussed izibongo zika Mnkabayi for she was instrumental in influencing the trajectory of the Zulu royal house—including during King Dingane's reign.⁹

According to Vilakazi, Nyembezi, Kunene and later Hamilton, izibongo bore complex witness to the societies from which they emerged and exhibited a double ideological aspect. They were both a form of history in which the world view of the rulers was expressed and a vehicle for the expression of social disaffection. They were, at the same time, the chronicles of individual lives of monarchs as well as commoners, for izibongo were not confined to the deeds of chiefly society and monarchies.¹⁰ Thus, they were not confined to valiant deeds of great people, usually represented by men who belonged to the upper-class echelon; hence, my analysis of izibongo zika Mnkabayi in the Introduction of this book highlights the point that women were also subjects of ukubonga. Generally, according to Kunene, izibongo were composed and performed when women got married (perhaps that is why so much was made of their beauty to impress their future in-laws). It was also not uncommon in Zulu society to give izibongo to a new-born child. These formed part of what the amaZulu call ukuteketisa. Some people praised themselves regardless of class affiliation. A warrior might stand up and sing his own izibongo and be cheered and urged on by his listeners.¹¹

Nor were izibongo confined to people and the scions of aristocratic families. One of the primary interests of isiNtu speakers is cattle, which play a very important part in their ceremonies, although the impact of a European economy is gradually changing this. The high esteem for ritual animals brings them into the fabric of izibongo. Men are represented as animals and animals themselves are personified. When there is drought, cattle are slaughtered to propitiate the spirits, and cattle are used to pay lobola or 'bride wealth', which is an important factor in the legalisation of the union between a man and wife. Rams and dogs were also on occasion showered with izibongo by their owners.¹²

MAGOLWANE AND MSHONGWENI AS PUBLIC INTELLECTUALS DURING PRE-COLONIAL TIMES

Magolwane kaMkhathini and Mshongweni, who were influential izimbongi and public intellectuals practising their art during pre-colonial times, collected, composed and recited izibongo in spellbinding dramatic performances carried out in the presence of kings and commoners alike. They used history to actively involve themselves in the cultural dialogue of the time. Magolwane was King Shaka's stellar imbongi, and Mshongweni was King Dingane's impressive imbongi. In certain circumstances, Mshongweni shared his duties with Magolwane who continued to perform after the death of King Shaka. Both izimbongi became part of the community discourse; they were capable of creating complex cultural formulations and interpreting the history of the Zulu Kingdom through the lens of izibongo. They were also expected to articulate grievances of the king's subjects. Nomxamama kaSoshaya was also King Shaka's imbongi. Both Magolwane and Mshongweni performed their art during the reign of the three Zulu monarchs, Shaka, Dingane and Mpande. In an interview conducted by James Stuart, Mtshayankomo kaMagolwane said the following about his father:

[Magolwane] did not pause for rest before he had finished the praises of a particular king. When he had finished he would cry out, 'The elephant [king] has swallowed him. You are the silent one, great sky above! You are the silent one, great lion! You are the silent one, great leopard! You are the silent one, great elephant! ... He puts on a great deal of finery and is a great size when dressed up. He walks about as he *bongad*. The king is listening with his assembly the whole time, and every now and then whistles his approval, but says nothing ...'¹³

I define Magolwane and Mshongweni as public intellectuals because they engaged in an intellectual discourse by using izibongo as public history. Their public performance of izibongo in front of monarchs, officials, warriors and commoners gave expression to 'moments of intense or elaborate historiographical contestation, notably concentrated on [among other themes] succession disputes and political crises [in pre-colonial or pre-industrial societies]'.¹⁴ I will elaborate later on these historiographical contestations articulated by izimbongi on behalf of the people. Furthermore, izimbongi and narrators of oral traditions of the calibre of

Magolwane and Mshongweni merit the description of public intellectuals, a term which I shall use henceforth in its widest sense to include people who did not necessarily receive a formal education in mission schools or other existing formal educational establishments of the time, yet performed the social functions of intellectuals—a function that is communal, cultural, directive, organisational, educative and emancipatory. To refer to izimbongi as public intellectuals gives pre-eminence to their role in the production of historical knowledge in a ‘pre-literate’ society. As far as this study is concerned, the term is restricted to public intellectuals who seek actively to think about the meaning and significance of social, economic and public life, philosophy, religion, history, literature, politics and culture, among other pressing matters. They engage in public discourse about such ideas, including the problems facing them as people and responsible citizens of a given polity.

Most of the izibongo of the Zulu kings were recorded by James Stuart,¹⁵ particularly those of King Shaka and King Dingane, which were composed by Magolwane and Mshongweni.¹⁶ Tununu, interviewed by Stuart, confirmed this point by asserting that Magolwane was ‘*unina wezimbongi zonke*’, that is, ‘the mother of all izimbongi’, as ‘he would get up early, go into the kraal and start bongaing so as to vus’ inkosi (Dingane) esigodhlweni’.¹⁷ Mandhlakazi kaNgidi elaborated the following to Stuart: ‘Magolwane used to recite praises to such an extent that he would go on hands and knees, and lose his voice’.¹⁸ Also, Mandhlakazi observed:

I, Mandhlakazi, once asked a son of Magolwane how it was that the Zulu imbongi were able to remember the praises of kings to so extraordinary a degree, how it was that they managed to dispose themselves to receive and retain so much, what drugs they ate which opened up the chest or heart to the reception of so much? He said it was because they were always given tripe to eat. Moreover, they used to eat the drug umklele.¹⁹

It is then appropriate for us to discuss in detail the life history of Magolwane kaMkhathini Jiyane. This is done so that readers are able to understand the sociocultural spaces which defined his pre-colonial world. I also declare upfront that because of the lack of space, I cannot undertake a similar exercise concerning all other public intellectuals of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This section relies largely on Vilakazi’s and Kunene’s research. Vilakazi (and later, Kunene) described

Magolwane as the most renowned and greatest imbongi ever produced by the Zulu empire.²⁰

Bhambatha Benedict Wallet Vilakazi provides the following important sketch of Magolwane's life history. Magolwane was born during the late eighteenth century at kwaCeza in the upper regions of the Mbatha polity. His family originated from the Ntombela clan and this clan name disappeared through intermarriages between the Jiyane and the Ntombela. He was tall and well built, with strong calves, the epitome of a handsome and lovable man. He was also a brave warrior who was particularly impressive in his military regalia. Magolwane's strong clear voice and talent in ukubonga became apparent during the reign of King Shaka. He was a formidable warrior in a Zulu regiment and was not afraid of close combat on the battlefield. Magolwane would personify himself as one of the past Zulu monarchs engaged in a fierce one-on-one confrontation with an opposing warrior. Like a bellowing, raging bull, he would perform battle cries; 'Usefikil' uMthwaz' ongangezintaba' (uSenzangakhona the indomitable warrior has arrived on the battlefield); Usefikil' uNomashovushovu (uShaka the indestructible warrior has arrived); Usefikil' uMphankominamabele (uDingane the cunning warrior has arrived).²¹

According to Vilakazi, Mkhambisa-nyathi's (Magolwane's) expertise in ukubonga was at its peak during the reigns of Dingane and Mpande. He defined Magolwane as 'the father of all izimbongi' who was the first to propose that audiences should keep quiet, be observant of the performance and listen attentively when an imbongi was performing in front of kings and to proceed with the spirit of friendship. He was the favourite imbongi of both Dingane and Mpande. As a result, he was never allowed to take a break to visit his clan and extended family, because he was the imbongi who provided the king with the most heart-warming entertainment. Furthermore, he hid nothing and he was renowned for being frank; he was not afraid to criticise the king if he had displayed poor leadership qualities which negatively affected his subjects, been responsible for bloodletting or other bad deeds. He even castigated Dingane for being responsible for a dynastic succession dispute that bedevilled the Zulu royal house:

Lalela munt'omemezayo (King Dingane),

Umemeza-njuyalila,

Ulilel'izinkomo ngezakho yini?

KungezakwaBulawayo?

Furthermore, through izibongo, Magolwane did not hide from King Dingane the fact that the killing of the Boers was a harsh decision:

Yebuya weHwanqa laseMgungundlovu, yebuya

Wangenis' umkhonto kwelakwaZulu,

Wabulala amaBhunu na?

Wangenis'umkhonto esiswini!

Les'isibind' esingaka, lesi na?

Nor did Magolwane fear the wrath of King Mpande (the third Zulu king); he criticised the king roundly for his bad deeds by including the following lines in a performance of izibongo before the king's subjects: 'wen'usilwane esibek'abakayise bakhothame. Uze wabuz'uMpande kuMagolwane wathi wenzelani ukumbonga ngabakayise. Wathi uMagolwane, 'kanti khona manje awubabulalanga yini abakayihlo na?' This can be loosely translated as: 'Just like your siblings (Shaka and Dingane) you are also an animal who destroyed his siblings'. The aggrieved and sullen Mpande would ask Magolwane to censor himself and refrain from including his family as part of izibongo dedicated to him, the third king of amaZulu—and Magolwane would retort bravely: 'Is it not a fact that [in succession disputes] you murdered your siblings?'²² The contribution of izimbongi led to a situation whereby contending historiographical debates on dynastic succession battles within the royal house and the killing of the Voortrekkers permeate the archive of King Dingane. Kunene rationalised that Magolwane's greatness as a public intellectual lies in the way he revolutionised the whole Zulu poetic idiom, whose primary concerns before 1815 were the description of physical features—the beauty of the human body; the beauty of friendship; and indeed the beauty of life. Magolwane's great epic about the exploits of the Zulu empire introduced sociopolitical and historical analysis into izibongo while also delving deep into the character of each individual king of the amaZulu (Shaka, Dingane and Mpande). The changes implemented by

Magolwane, according to Kunene, elevated oral literature to dramatic intellectual heights that had never been achieved before.²³

Vilakazi was of the view that Magolwane was a great thinker and assertive public intellectual whose engaging performances and compositions were straight from his heart—he even composed izibongo of those unknown to him. Vilakazi asserts that we will never be able to trace or even estimate the total number of izibongo composed by Magolwane, but we do know that they included individuals such as Mageba, Jama, Mnkabayi, Mpande, Nzibe, Gugqu, Mbuyazi, Mshongweni, Mntantashiya, Mduba, Somklwana, Langazana, Bibi, Nandi, and Songiya. Magolwane, a highly creative imbongi, had his own unique opening line whenever he began ukubonga addressed to a particular king, prince, princess or regent queen such as Mnkabayi. He never stood still during public performances of izibongo. He had a magnetic aura and arresting stage presence in front of his audience as he pranced about, as if in a trance, from one place to another until he completed his carefully prepared performance.²⁴ Kunene noted that the symbols chosen by Magolwane while performing izibongo publicly were not only aimed at showing parallel qualities but also the fusion of related qualities. In his (izibongo) epics, he combined both analysis and synthesis so that his stanzas not only introduced and treated the subject, but also contained philosophical conclusions and summaries.²⁵

According to Kunene, izibongo and other oral texts focusing on the Zulu monarchs combined both philosophical and historical analysis. These texts also included synthesis of sociopolitical factors illustrating the process by which knowledge was produced in pre-colonial times. Kunene also regarded Magolwane as the national poet when the Zulu empire was at its peak. Moreover, Magolwane's compositions can best be understood with an appreciation of the historical context that nurtured his immense genius. Kunene paid homage to Magolwane and composed a poem entitled 'To Tu Fu, Beethoven, Va Dong, Magolwane and All the Great Poets of Humankind'.²⁶

Izibongo, as composed by Magolwane, deal with various themes including conflicts between individuals in the royal house and sociopolitical challenges bedevilling the Zulu empire. Kunene depicted these as being of national interest so that the historical characters in Magolwane's greatest epic poem became symbolic of great challenges which defined the character and destiny of the Zulu empire and its subjects.²⁷ In this sense, according to Kunene, izibongo offer two levels of meaning. The first level

is a historical analysis of events which impacted on the cultural, economic and sociopolitical spheres of life within the Zulu empire, each with its own aesthetic meaning. On the second level, the same historical events become symbolic of the human drama and everyday life during pre-colonial times. Through this symbolism imbongi such as Magolwane or Mshongweni consciously hinted at and suggested the interconnection between the descriptive and the philosophical.²⁸ This is apparent in the following izibongo for King Dingane: ‘uMgabadeli owagabadela inkundla yakwaBulawayo’ [the daring one who dared to enter the courtyard of Bulawayo]. This line describes a political and historical event—King Dingane’s usurpation of the crown from King Shaka. At the same time, the event draws attention to the succession problems that beset the Zulu royal house, including bloodletting and the killing of siblings.

The debates over dynastic succession and other political struggles within the royal house transcend description, for they fall within the ambit of political philosophy and tradition. Because izimbongi openly and fearlessly discussed these matters of vital importance for the future of the Zulu empire in public and without fear of recrimination, a continuous intellectual and philosophical discourse prevailed in the Zulu empire. The historiographical interpretations that arose in this manner will be discussed in various chapters of this book.

The portrayal of the king by izimbongi as ‘uMgabadeli, owagabadela inkundla yakwa Bulawayo’ is about historical interpretation. The perceived storming of kwaBulawayo, one of King Shaka’s royal residences, by King Dingane was interpreted as an attempt to halt the tyranny of King Shaka. This led to King Dingane being positively referred to in izibongo as ‘uMalamulela’, literally meaning a saviour of the oppressed people. But simultaneously Dingane was also negatively caricatured by izimbongi as ‘ithole elihamba likhahlel’ amany’ amathole ngezimpumulo’ [the calf that went and kicked other calves with nostrils with nostrils here symbolising the perpetrator’s high position within the royal house]. These contrasting negative and positive perceptions of the king also point to underlying political philosophy and survive because generally it is not easy to intervene and manipulate izibongo. On this important point, Hamilton contends that the crucial role of izibongo performed in most ‘rituals’ would have ensured that they were conserved in their original form as far as possible. The anachronisms and archaisms characteristic of izibongo survived even once their meaning became obscured, while their poetic form would also have facilitated their being

remembered over time. To support Hamilton's point, the following izibongo zika Dingane, composed by Mshongweni, conveys the view that izibongo will always remain true in the process survive manipulation and accretions:

Vezi kof' abantu, kusal'izibongo

Izona zosala zibadalula

Izona zosal'zibalil'emanxiweni.²⁹

Kunene described Mshongweni as a great nineteenth-century African poet and, as was the case with Magolwane, also composed a poem dedicated to the genius of Mshongweni. It is entitled 'Tribute to Mshongweni: A Great Nineteenth-Century African Poet'.³⁰ Mshongweni was the second-most illustrious and influential imbongi when the Zulu empire was in its prime. However, according to Kunene all that is known about Mshongweni is that he was King Dingane's court poet.³¹ Kunene believes that Mshongweni was also a great imbongi, as his eulogy for the king shows and also asserts that Mshongweni's main contribution to Zulu literature is the highly analytic style that permeates his eulogies. Like his contemporary Magolwane, he was a brave performance poet, criticising King Dingane for his misdeeds without worrying about falling into disfavour. As a public intellectual, he voiced his opinion in public without fear. Mshongweni's perceptions of the king had a great influence upon Kunene's perceptions of the second Zulu king, a point that will be analysed in Chap. 7 of this book. Mshongweni composed the following analytical line with reference to izibongo zika Dingane: 'uNomashikizela, uMashiyimpi yakhe' [uNomashikizela, the deserter of his own army], meaning that King Dingane cannot be compared to King Shaka, who fought his own battles. The king is in fact aptly defined in this izibongo as a coward who deserted his own army.³²

In his oral text, Mshongweni also portrayed King Dingane not just as a decorated butterfly ('uVemvane') like most pre-Shakan rulers, but as an aggressive monarch. Hence, Mshongweni as imbongi focuses on the king's treacherous nature: 'Isiziba esinzonzo sinzonzobe. Siminzisa umuntu ethi uyageza' [an illusionary pool that is both still and welcoming. It drowned someone intending to bathe], presumably an allusion to the riverside assassination of Prince Mhlangana, the king's sibling and rival to the Zulu throne. Regardless of these self-defeating and destructive

tendencies, Mshongweni depicted the 'uncompromising' King Dingane as 'ebengangabazingeli bakwaMavela, ebebezingela izimbongolwana' [he was like the hunters of Mavela's place, who hunted flying ants].

With the unannounced arrival of the Voortrekkers and white settlers, the king was justifiably uneasy and is described by Mshongweni as 'indlovu ekulala kuQwambayiya, ezinye ziyalala ziyathokoza' [an elephant whose sleep is fitful, while others sleep happily]. Nevertheless, Mshongweni argued that the king was not overawed by the foreign invaders. In Mshongweni's *izibongo*, it is apparent that characters such as King Dingane and other individuals have specific social, political and historical meanings. Having discovered that individuals assumed greater significance if their life history, representing a series of events, was analysed over a long period, Mshongweni gave added meaning to historical events by using characters with descriptive names. Unless one is acquainted with the history and events that have gone before, it is sometimes difficult to know whether a particular character is real or merely symbolic. This becomes apparent when one analyses the descriptive names of those captured after the military expedition to Mzilikazi's territory in the interior, and the people murdered together with Piet Retief at uMgungundlovu.³³ Describing a virgin captured during the expedition, Mshongweni emphasised, 'wadl'intombi ingakezwa mthondo kwa-Mashobane' [he conquered a virgin from kwaMashobane]; a drunkard/beer taster is 'wadl'uMhabula-ngwebu kwaMatshobana' [he conquered a drinker of beer foam from Mashobane's polity]; a Voortrekker with unusual teeth is 'wadl'uMaziny'ansasa' [he conquered the one with scattered teeth]; a Voortrekker with a moustache covering his mouth, Mshongweni creates the line 'wadl' uMlomogubu' [he conquered the one with a mouth which covered with moustache]; and the Voortrekker with a double-barrelled rifle is 'wadl' dubula ngesingamakhal'amabili' [he conquered a shooter (with) a double-barrelled rifle].

Kunene noted that Mshongweni identified 31 characters, including men, women and children, whom King Dingane reputedly captured and killed while his marauding impi was on a military expedition. Mshongweni also referred to the fact that Prince Dingane came back to 'murder' King Shaka while the Zulu army was away—attacking kwa-Soshangane polity, where some of the amabutho were killed by the poisonous *synadenium* tree, *umdlebe*, hence: 'ezinye ziyofa umdlebe' [others will die because of umdlebe] and 'inkomo eyabuya yodwa kwa-Soshangane' [a cow that came back alone from Soshangane land].³⁴

Mshongweni depicts Dingane as ‘umalunguza izindonga kande ukuwela’ [he who peeps over dry ravines before crossing], that is, not as brave as his brother, Shaka: according to Mshongweni, he carefully examined everything before he committed himself. Furthermore, the king was disliked by those who yearned for the old days of Shaka’s rule, ‘ungezwa bethi dlula Pheqe kaNdaba basoVemvaneni, emva kwakho bakugodlela amaklwa nezinqindi’³⁵ [You could hear them saying pass on, Pheqe son of Ndaba; they were at Vemvaneni, and they hid their assegais, stabbing spears and fists behind you].

It is imperative to emphasise that in terms of historiography, Magolwane and Mshongweni elaborated on and highlighted the following five main themes through izibongo as oral literature: King Dingane’s accession to the throne; the king’s character; the king’s battle campaigns against amaSwazi, Soshangane and Mzilikazi; the king’s turbulent relationship with his siblings and domestic enemies; and finally, the king’s relationship with white invaders, including the Voortrekkers. Then, as will be shown in Chap. 3, the oral traditions of the king were explored, analysed and elaborated upon within the confines or limits imposed by these themes during the early twentieth century. Soon, the images of King Dingane were produced within the limits set by this archive.

In analysing the orientation of Magolwane and Mshongweni, we become aware that Magolwane, the elder of the two, was more ambiguous and circumspect. He was mature and experienced, for he performed and perfected his art in the Zulu royal court during the reigns of Regent Mnkabayi, King Shaka, King Dingane and King Mpande. Magolwane was also a well-known and formidable warrior, steeped in the military traditions of amaZulu, and in a heroic manner would probably have given his life to honour and defend the Zulu empire. The young and radical Mshongweni, imbongi for Dingane, Mpande and Cetshwayo, invariably had a negative and critical view of what was happening within the Zulu state. He was not a warrior engaged in some of the tumultuous military conflicts. Accordingly, we can read this as evidence that the negative perspectives of King Dingane were not the sole preserve of or solely invented by European colonisers, Voortrekkers and other white imperialists. In some instances, historiographical intervention by Magolwane, Mshongweni and the later generation of izimbongi led to what Hamilton, Mbenga and Ross define as:

... the detailed reconstruction of the histories of key oral texts (izibongo) showing how historical accounts that played important roles in political

struggles were often contested and repeatedly reworked in light of historical argumentation from opposing parties that reflected the biases and backgrounds of both their composers and subsequent chroniclers; the intellectual currents of their times demonstrating significant debts to one another.³⁶

THE NEXT GENERATION TAKES OVER: THE CONSOLIDATION OF KING DINGANE'S ARCHIVE THROUGH IZIBONGO

The pertinent point raised above by the authors of the *Cambridge History of South Africa* (2010) is analysed in-depth in this section, making use of further versions of *Izibongo zikaDingane* and the oral traditions of the monarch that were recorded by James Stuart.³⁷ These were rendered by subsequent chroniclers such as Sivivi kaMaqungo wakwaMalunga,³⁸ Socwatsha kaPhaphu,³⁹ Lunguza kaMpukane waseba-Thenjini,⁴⁰ Nduna kaManqina, Ngidi kaMcikiziswa waseLangeni,⁴¹ Tununu kaNonjiya wakwaQwabe,⁴² Mtshayankomo kaMagolwane⁴³ and Ndhlovu kaTimuni,⁴⁴ among others. These sources are preserved as part of the James Stuart Archives located in the Killie Campbell Library at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban campus. Because these men were chroniclers who occupied the public space after Magolwane and Mshongweni had passed away, they played a crucial role in both preserving and constructing pre-colonial oral histories of King Dingane's reign by providing Stuart with *Izibongo zenkosi uDingane*. Their interpretation of izibongo is known to us today as a result of the commendable and invaluable efforts of Stuart. He collected their versions in isiZulu transcripts in about the turn of the twentieth century.⁴⁵ Tununu,⁴⁶ Sivivi⁴⁷ (inceku yasenhla) and Ngidi⁴⁸ (inceku yokuhamba ngasenhla) were young 'household' labourers/court attendants—izinceku—who personally served King Dingane. They observed and learned from renditions and public performances undertaken by Magolwane and Mshongweni and others. In short, they provide us with both eyewitness accounts of everyday life and izibongo zika Dingane, consolidating the king's archive of experiences in pre-colonial and colonial times.⁴⁹

King Dingane's archive is also constructed by these public intellectuals through the mix of narratives underpinning oral traditions and izibongo, resulting in a complex and multi-dimensional image of the king. These representations range from the highly positive to the extremely negative, which is in keeping with the original template conceptualised

by Magolwane and Mshongweni during pre-colonial times. Moreover, in both izibongo and oral traditions, King Dingane's archive has five main characteristics which define the limits of the production of knowledge about the monarch up until the 1920s. They are defined by dynastic succession disputes; they indicate that King Dingane's regime was far more liberal than King Shaka's; they are characterised by political dynamism; they indicate the consensual politics of the day; and finally, they depict a generally turbulent relationship with white settlers and other African monarchies.⁵⁰

A much earlier but shorter version of *Izibongo zikaDingane* was collected and published by William Ngidi and John Colenso in 1858, while, in the twentieth century, the elaborate and scholarly fieldwork of Vilakazi, Nyembezi and Kunene has recovered other variants to be discussed in further chapters of this book. Collectively, these texts constitute a written and documented version of a derivative template and historical archive that is attributed to Magolwane and Mshongweni by some of those interviewed by Vilakazi and Kunene. The names of interviewees and areas visited by these scholars while conducting field work to collect information on oral traditions for their publications are analysed in Chaps. 6 and 7. These scholars recorded the template because they presumed that people elsewhere on the African continent were creating oral representations of the past for themselves, and their communities from the time that the earliest recognisably human societies became established in Africa.⁵¹

There are no significant differences between izibongo zika Dingane chronicled by Lunguza kaMpukane, Tununu, Sivivi or Ngidi because it was not easy to tamper with izibongo because they actually change little over time.⁵² They all reflect positive as well as negative images of the king, as is evident from the first ten lines of Lunguza's version of *izibongo zikaDingane*. Lunguza's version is representative of the others.⁵³ The following is Lunguza's version of izibongo zikaDingane. Lunguza's version, like others, gives both the negative and positive attributes of the king, as the first ten lines suggest:

UMgabadeli, owagabadel' inkundla yakwaBulawayo ngezinyembezi

Ithol'elinsizwa, lakokaDonda

Elihamba likhahlele'amany'amathole ngezimpumulo;

Lakhahlel'uNzwakele kwaKhutshwayo.

UMalamulela

Owalamulel'izintombi namasoka

UGabadele, onjengebhubhesi.

Injonjololo eziziba zolwandle

Oze noMhabula kwaMzilakazi;

Oze nodwedwe lwezintombi, kwaMzilikazi

Owel'uBulinga, kwaMzilikazi;

Odabule uDedangendlale kwaMzilikazi

Oze noMhabulangwebu-isatshisa, kwaMzilikazi.

Weza noGolozana kwaMenaba

Weza noNozinhlwathi, inkosazana kaMzilikazi⁵⁴

It was possible to be both a chronicler of oral traditions and a performer of izibongo because, as Sivivi testifies, protocol demanded that when one visited the king, one would not 'hamb' etulile [keep quiet] but would bonga inkosi. Sivivi went on to explain:

I therefore, when accompanied by Prince Mpande [to meet King Dingane] had to do the bongaing ... I had to do this even though I came on a secret errand and when one left the king one would go off bongaing him.⁵⁵

Lunguza kaMpukane and Ndhlovu kaTimuni, as an example, both qualify for definition as public intellectuals. Lunguza's reconstruction of the architecture of Mgungundhlovu and of everyday life in the kingdom's main palace is elaborate and educative (he seems to have had a photographic memory). He contributes to our cultural and intellectual heritage in so far as the history of architecture and art is concerned.⁵⁶ The restored palace is now designated as a protected heritage site and is a tourist attraction in KwaZulu-Natal.

Lunguza is also an example of a grass roots or public intellectual who was not an active constructor of historical knowledge. He merely gave information in response to the questions posed by Stuart. If he did not know the answer, he said so. Lunguza was in his eighties at the time, and Stuart was very appreciative of his feedback, noting that ‘Lunguza seemed to me careful and accurate in everything he told me. The amount of detail he knows was surprising when compared with other available information’.⁵⁷

Ndhlovu kaThimuni could also see the bigger picture concerning the sociopolitical landscape. He analysed the political and economic problems brought about by the deviousness of colonisation, land dispossession and the subjugation of indigenous Africans by whites. According to him, ‘whites entered the country very quietly and unostentatiously; now, however, having got a firm foothold, they are immovable (*qiy-eme*)’.⁵⁸ According to Stuart, ‘Thimuni considered Sir T. Shepstone had on the whole deceived African people, for he told them it would come right and the time would come when they would laugh’.⁵⁹ Ndhlovu kaThimuni believed that the advent of a new kingdom of African nationalism, including the immeasurable power of literacy, understanding the past (including laws and customs), education and unity, was an important tool in the fight against colonisation. He inveighed:

What is necessary is to teach the boys wisdom (*ukuqonda*) and cause the land to *tomba*, that is, arrive at years of discretion. We have to *qoqa*’d *ukulahleka*, i.e. sought out all those things which disintegrate, and made them the instrument for governing by colonisers ... to gather everyone in one place, i.e. under the former laws and customs, and enforce education, compel everyone to learn to read and write. If this were done the land would mature; it would be in a position to work out its own salvation. By creating a national native parliament there would be no chance of natives (Africans) becoming hostile from a consciousness of their strength ...⁶⁰

From *izibongo* chronicled by public intellectuals such as Sivivi and Ndhlovu kaThimuni, we gain the impression that King Dingane’s image was riddled with ambiguity. On the positive side, his reign, unlike that of King Shaka, was benign. He did not deal harshly with his people. He was introverted and amicable, as indicated by the *izibongo* ‘uSingqungu ka kulumu, ka na mlomo; AnjengaShaka, Yen’ owaqeda umuzi ngokunkenkeza’⁶¹ [uSingqungu the introvert, different from the extrovert King Shaka, who destroyed households by being talkative]. At the same time,

he was unpredictable, particularly when he believed his authority was being undermined and taken for granted. This brought to the surface his volatile, ferocious temper, which was compared to that of a raging bull (*isilo*) and reflected in the *izibongo*, ‘*iSilwan’esibang’ izililo*’ [animal that caused lamentations] and ‘*uVezi ngimfunyene bemzila, ngafika ngamudla, kanti ngizifake isilo emlonyeni*’ [Vezi, I came upon him being shunned by them, I came and partook of him, but I was stuffing my stomach with a raging bull].

Tununu’s versions of *izibongo* are characterised by his ambiguous perceptions of the king. As an example, he referred to the king in positive, glowing terms as, ‘*uMpankom’ inamabele*’ [provider of cows with full udders] and ‘*Ngokuba nhliziyonhl’ emadodeni*’ [because he has good heart among men]. But he also believed that the king symbolised death, comparing him to a huge burial site—an expansive grave, a space that was needed to bury those he killed or murdered, hence the description, ‘*uMancwaba, ongalizwe lamaphethelo*’ [graveyard, without boundary].⁶²

According to the views expressed by *izimbongi*, the liberal, compassionate, open-minded and positive nature of King Dingane’s regime stems from his decision to permit courtship and freedom of choice in terms of marriage.⁶³ This allowed young women and men, including *amabutho*, to set up households together when they reached the appropriate age. Accordingly, King Dingane is portrayed in his *izibongo* as ‘*Owalamulela abafazi namadoda: walamulela izintombi namasoka*’⁶⁴ [saviour of wives and husbands, marriageable women and womanisers] and also as ‘*Vezi, uMalamulela, uSomnandi*’ [Vezi, the saviour, the sweet/kind one].⁶⁵ Here, ‘*uMalamulela*’ refers to ‘our saviour’ from the ‘tyranny’ of King Shaka, who used the *amabutho* system to ‘control’ and ‘manipulate’ his subjects.

To reinforce the image of a judicious, caring leader who empathised with and acknowledged the need of his subjects to establish households and sustain a ‘normal’ family life, he is acknowledged as ‘*Vezi, unoNyanda*’.⁶⁶ The term ‘*unoNyanda*’ is linked to procreation, women’s ability to reproduce, fertility and capacity to conceive. As Hamilton and Wright relate:

The *amabutho* system gave the Zulu state the means to divert the labour power of young men from their father’s homestead and turn it to use for state purposes, and socialises young men to identify with the Zulu king

as their ritual leader and source of welfare. At the same time the king assumed authority to decide when young men could set up households of their own ... Forms of state control over young women were as necessary as those over young men for the continued dominance of the Zulu ruling line.⁶⁷

This is one of the major reasons why King Dingane was referred to by his subjects as *Vezi*, *uMalamulela*—the saviour. *Izibongo* provided evidence illustrating his good heart, generosity and liberality with cattle and food supplies, in particular meat, to his needy subjects. This led to the coining of *izibongo*, ‘*uMphankominamabele, ngob’ uVezi ungipha izinkomo zifaka zonkana*’⁶⁸ [provider of cows with full udders, because *Vezi* gave me cows that yield (calves) abundantly], ‘*umoyam-nandi ngokunuka inyama*’⁶⁹ [the sweet/kind one who smells of meat]. To some of his smitten subjects, the king was ‘*uSimakade samakhosi, uSomnandi wami, woza ngangumlomo, ngingaze ngisale ngibenomngandeni*’⁷⁰ [the long-living one of the kings; my sweet one, come let me kiss your mouth, I might have to get jealous]. King Dingane is further depicted as a kind- and big-hearted man: ‘*Ogez’ izandla zazomel’ ebandla, Ngokuba nenhliziyo’ enhl’ madodeni*’⁷¹ [Who washes his hands, rushes to council meeting and his (hands) dry while in council because he has a good heart among men].

An important aspect of the existing political order was its dynamism. The state of affairs within the Zulu royal house was forever changing, as had been the case since *Malandela*’s times, as the following *izibongo* suggests: ‘*inhlabathi yoNdi noKhahlamba, Ngific[a] abakwaMalandela beyihlela. Nami ngafika ngahlala phansi ngayihlela*’⁷² [soil of *uLundi* and *Khahlamba* mountains, I found the children of *Malandela* levelling it. I too sat down and levelled it]. In this regard, and according to *izibongo*, King Dingane took appropriate initiatives in formulating new diplomatic policies, political strategies and tactics concerning matters of state. These had to keep the Zulu state intact and safe from the threat posed by enemies within and outside, as the levelling metaphor undertaken by the house of *Malandela* suggests.

The encroaching white settlers from the Cape Colony required King Dingane to take immediate action, because they were a recognisable threat to the independence of the Zulu empire. He did this by adopting new political strategies and tactics. Hence, he was depicted as, ‘*inhlabathi yoNdi no Khahlamba*’, majestic mountains which represented

the landscape. As a monarch, he was expected to protect himself, the land (including izintaba zoKhahlamba—referred to as the Drakensberg Mountains by the white settlers), his people, their customs, traditions, social systems and values from the unscrupulous white settlers. Like his forefathers and siblings from the house of Malandela, he either had to fight or lose his kingdom. King Dingane was conscious of the fact that both the Voortrekkers and the white traders represented forces of change.

Whenever he had the opportunity, he, as ‘inhlabathi yoNdi noKhahlamba’, had to strategise, ‘ahlale phansi ahlele’, and act as suggested by izibongo, as a vigilant statesman, ‘uMalunguz’ indonga kad’ukuwela’.⁷³ He kept asking the white settlers awkward questions about their country of origin, technology (guns, literacy and wagons), their political systems, customs and religion. Like all those from the house of Malandela, he had to show leadership qualities, conceptualise the danger that was facing him and act accordingly, for he possessed strong political acumen.

In most izibongo, the king’s excesses and unpredictable character were questioned. This was according to the template conceptualised by Magolwane and Mshongweni. Some of his subjects within the Zulu Kingdom queried his feeble behaviour, his pettiness and his jealousy, as, for example, when Dingane killed a warrior for showing impressive dancing skills. The warrior was one of the greatest performers of the time and was praised by an audience which, together with Dingane, had witnessed his creative skills and prowess at uMgungundlovu. Izibongo also depict King Dingane as an unpredictable character likened to Phunga waseBulawini, a famous diviner, and Vuma, a traditional healer, who were not consistent in the advice they gave to the Zulu royal court.

uVemvane olunamabal’ azibhadu

Ngibe ngiyaluthinta lwahaqabala

LunjengoPhunga, waseBulawini

LujengoVuma kubangoma⁷⁴

In izibongo, King Dingane is also accused of being a treacherous, unpredictable, insecure and cruel sorcerer who was out to destroy his people

and blood relatives, as ‘uMthakathi osibindi esimyama nabakwayise’⁷⁵ [the sorcerer whose liver is black even among his father’s children]. It is also worth noting that here the imagery of the colour black has negative, repugnant connotations but is not used as part of the racist discourse. This was also the case with animalistic imagery. Like the colour black as a metaphor, this imagery was used with both negative and positive connotations. For example, in most of the izibongo, the king was described in positive animalistic terms as iSilo or iNdlovu or iNgonyama (this is still the case).

These are potent images, symbolising power and strength as opposed to weakness. However, the king is also portrayed in negative animalistic terms as a snake, venomous and dangerous, ‘iMamb’ eyath’ iphansi yay-iphazulu’ [a mamba who, when down, will quickly recover and be on the attack] and ‘iNyok’ eqoph’ umqala yashiy’ isibili’ [a snake who pecks at the neck only once]. Izibongo also record his role in the killing of blood relatives, the majority of whom were his brothers.⁷⁶ For example, it is claimed that King Dingane played a key role in the deaths of his siblings, including King Shaka and Prince Mhlangana. He is further portrayed as a sly schemer and likened to a poisonous and dangerous snake, as is evident in the following praise names: ‘uManyelela njengeVuzamanzi’ [stealthy mover like a water snake]. He was an introvert, quiet, withdrawn. People were warned of ‘still water running deep’ (isiziba esinzonzobe ...). He was also depicted as dangerous and capable of destructive mood swings:

Isiziba esinzonzobe

Siminzis’ umuntu ethi uyageza

Waze washona ngesicoco

uMkhwamude wangisik’ isilevu

Ngob’ uCoco ngimbonile

Obephuma lapha kwaSodlabela

uNgama yena owasemaPhiseni angavuma

This refers to the death and ambush of one of his brothers, Prince Mhlangana, who was wearing isicoco, a head ring normally worn by kings, princes and senior married men. It is suggested that Prince Mhlangana was drowned on King Dingane's orders while he was bathing in a stream and that Coco and Ngema were eyewitnesses. They happened to witness this incident quite by chance when Coco was on his way from kwaSodlabela. Both eyewitnesses were threatened with violent death if ever they 'spilled the beans'. Their throats would be slit with uMkhwamude, a long-bladed knife used to cut whiskers. As a result, they were forced into silence. These in-depth details of the death of Prince Mhlangana lead one to question why izimbongi only accord the death of King Shaka a line or two in almost all izibongo. One would expect them to be far more detailed because of King Shaka's stature, and crucially, because his death was a controversial event that continues to divide people even today. I will address this issue in the next chapter.

Izibongo are also indications of the public explanations of King Dingane's actions towards whites and of the rationale for his extermination of Retief and his party. There are five different explanations from izibongo and oral traditions for this event. I will also discuss the controversy in my next chapter. Hoye ka Soxalase's version has two stanzas on the issue, located at the beginning and end of his *Izibongo zikaDingane*. These stanzas are a succinct commentary on the killing of Piet Retief and also paint a picture of a leader who did not passively endure the threat posed by white settlers. They read as follows:

Ihwanqa eladla amanye amahwanqa

Ngoba ladla aseMgungundlovu

Ngoba ladla oka Piti

Amahwanqa akhawula ukuganga ...

Izibuko likaMenzi

Elimadwala abutshелеlezi

Kutshелеla uPiti nendodana

Wamudla uPiti kumaBhunu

Wamudla uMlom-gubu, kumaBhunu

Wadla uMazinyo ansasa, kumaBhunu

Wadla uJanesikaniso, kumaBhunu⁷⁷

The presence of the Voortrekkers and the threat they posed had a significant influence on King Dingane's attitude towards whites in general. There are few variations between the versions of these izibongo. The king was likened to:

Indiha lebebayo, enjengesibhaha,

Sona simababa (kum) aMahashanga

uMuthi wesilalo ingcaba madolo

Esigcab' uMadlanga, eKuvukeni

Esigcab' uManqondo, wakwaShiyabanye⁷⁸

Isibhaha here refers to a potent, very bitter herbal plant used for medicinal purposes, and aMahashanga refers to white settlers. To be precise, amaZulu used this word to describe the 'novel' or unusual sound made by the settlers' trousers as the settlers walked. This potent medicine, isibhaha, was used as an analgesic for stomach and head ailments. It worked like a 'slow poison', causing people to feel somnolent to the point of helplessness. Symbolically, the bitterness can be interpreted as representing a bitter person, seething with anger and who has a volatile temper. Accordingly, the king's response to the white settlers was likened to a flash of lightning and thus the izibongo, 'uJonono, ongantonga yezulu' [uJonono who was like lightning]. He could erupt like a potent volcano when he felt his reign was being threatened or undermined. In this respect, he could be deemed to be venomous and dangerous.⁷⁹

As explained above, King Dingane, because of his elevated social and political position, demanded respect from any person who paid tribute to him—including the foreigners who resided in his kingdom. He expected everybody to follow protocol and respect the laws, customs and traditions of his sovereign state.⁸⁰

The African public intellectuals also provided evidence of King Dingane was easily manipulated by his political advisors. Izibongo refer to him as 'uSilwan' vukela abantu ekweneni' [the animal that ambushed people in the wild]. This criticism implied that King Dingane was not an outstanding ruler like King Shaka but was indecisive and lacking in character. It was claimed that his political advisors and emissaries, Ndlela and Dambuza, controlled him. Consequently, various izimbongi derided him in public and called him 'iMbuzi kaDambuza benoNdlela, abayibambe ngendlebe yabekezela'⁸¹ [goat of Dambuza and Ndlela, they held (him) by the ear and it (he) remained patient]. It is possible that these izibongo were voiced during King Dingane's reign because freedom of expression and criticism in satirical orations, izibongo and ribaldry was encouraged.

However, it can also be argued that izibongo referring to Dambuza and Ndlela were positive in as far as they highlighted the inclusive nature of the Zulu state. Accordingly, the Zulu kingdom was characterised by specific African traditions of governance and rights whereby decisions were made by consensus. The king and his council of elders, Dambuza, Ndlela and Queen Regent Mnkabayi, had jurisdiction over all matters within the Zulu territory. This being so, it is important for us to discuss the authority and influence of powerful royal women such as Queen Regent Mnkabayi because she features repeatedly in most historical novels about the king published during the twentieth century.

To conclude, this chapter postulates that by conducting a systematic analysis of oral traditions and izibongo constructed by public intellectuals such as Magolwane and Mshongweni, we are laying a framework for understanding the intellectual history of South Africa as a specific form of knowledge produced in pre-colonial times. The determining factors of this intellectual history include the integration of oral traditions and izibongo with cultural, social, historical, philosophical and political traditions. Mazisi Kunene alluded to the fact that because pre-colonial African literature was communal, much of the oral literature conceptualised and produced at the time appealed to members of the community/audiences through performance, festivals, drama, feasts, national gatherings and numerous other important gatherings graced by the performance of public intellectuals such as Magolwane and Mshongweni. Because of the orality of the literature, it appealed primarily to the society as a whole rather than to the individual imagination. This oral literature, expressed through izibongo, promoted a vibrant culture of criticism and the multifaceted

images and contending viewpoints about King Dingane were expressed in both symbolic and concrete forms.⁸²

In such a highly stratified society, by performing izibongo in front of different classes, the Zulu polity developed a sophisticated vehicle of knowledge transfer through the inculcation of educational, cultural, philosophical, social and political values. These constructive endeavours came to full life in vibrant social events which were of significant meaning to the society at large. Moreover, izibongo, as constructed by Magolwane and Mshongweni, were not gender specific because they included izibongo about powerful women such as Mnkabayi, Bibi and Nandi. This also concurs with Jordan Ngubane's point that during pre-colonial times '*umlando* [history] was a vehicle for developing the collective wisdom or strength of the family, the clan or nation'. The next chapter will elaborate on these issues during the twentieth century, including contending perspectives.

NOTES

1. C. Hamilton, B.K. Mbenga and R. Ross eds., *The Cambridge History of South Africa, Volume 1, From Early Times to 1885* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 3–23. See also J. Vansina, *Oral Traditions as History* (London: East African Educational Publishers, 1992).
2. Hamilton et al. eds., *The Cambridge History of South Africa, Volume 1*, 4–6; C. Hamilton, "Living by Fluidity": Oral Histories, Material Custodies and the Politics of Archiving", in C. Hamilton, V. Harris, J. Taylor, M. Pickover, G. Reid and R. Saleh eds., *Refiguring the Archive* (Cape Town: David Philip, 202), 226–272.
3. M. Kunene, 'The Relevance of African Oral Literature to Written Literature', Unpublished paper presented at the 18th annual meeting of the African Studies Association, 1975.
4. University of KwaZulu-Natal, (hereafter UKZN) James Stuart Archive (hereafter JSA), Killie Campbell Manuscripts (hereafter KCM) 23478, File 28 for the James Stuart collection of *izibongo zika Dingane*. This file is a 20-page compilation of different izibongo from various izimbongi. I have used this version for my work because it includes izibongo by Tununu, Ngidi, Sivivi and Lunguza, among others. See also C.S.L. Nyembezi, *The Historical Background and Izibongo zamakhosi* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter & Shooter, 1958), Chap. 5; D.K. Rycroft and A.B. Ngcobo eds., *The Praises of Dingana: Izibongo zikaDingana* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press and Durban: Killie Campbell

- Africana Library, 1988); T. Cope ed., *Izibongo: Zulu Praise Poems* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968).
5. M. Kunene, *Zulu Poems* (New York: Africana Publishing Corporation, 1970); and Hamilton et al. eds., 'Introduction', *The Cambridge History of South Africa, Volume 1*, 8.
 6. Kunene, *Zulu Poems*, 14.
 7. Ibid., 13. See also Kunene, 'Portrait of Magolwane, the Great Zulu Poet' *Cultural Events in Africa*, 32, 1976.
 8. On the pre-colonial history of izibongo and a discussion of their merits and drawbacks, see B.W. Vilakazi, 'The Oral and Written Literature in Nguni', Unpublished PhD thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1945; S. Nyembezi, 'The Historical Background to the Izibongo of the Zulu Military Age', *African Studies*, December 1948, 110–125, 157–174; M. Kunene, 'An Analytical Survey of Zulu Poetry both Traditional and Modern', MA dissertation, Natal University, 1957; Kunene, 'Portrait of Magolwane, the Great Zulu Poet', 1–14.
 9. The role of royal women in African polities in southern Africa is now beginning to attract serious scholarly attention. See for example M. Genge, 'Power and Gender in Southern African History: Power Relations in the Era of Queen Labotsibeni Gwamile Mdluli of Swaziland, ca. 1875–1921', PhD thesis, Michigan State University, 1999. The frequency with which Regent Mnkabayi appears in the pages of this book suggests that she merits a study of her own. See S.M. Ndlovu, 'A Reassessment of Women's Power in the Zulu Kingdom', in B. Carton, J. Laband and J. Sithole eds., *Zulu Identities: Being Zulu, Past and Present* (Pietermaritzburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008), Chap. 10. There are two versions of the spelling of the queen regent's name: Mnkabayi and Mnkabayi. I use the latter, older version, which is found in the archival documents I used. Izibongo zika Ntombazi, unlike those of Mnkabayi, are not readily available, a subject I analyse in my ongoing research about power and authority of women in pre-colonial times.
 10. C. Hamilton, 'Ideology, Oral Traditions and the Struggle for Power in the Early Zulu Kingdom'; Nyembezi, 'The Historical Background to the Izibongo of the Zulu Military Age'; Vilakazi, 'The Oral and Written Literature in Nguni'; Kunene, 'An Analytical Survey of Zulu Poetry both Traditional and Modern'.
 11. See Kunene, 'Portrait of Magolwane, the Great Zulu Poet'; Kunene, 'An Analytical Survey of Zulu Poetry both Traditional and Modern'; Nyembezi, 'The Historical Background to the Izibongo of the Zulu Military Age'; and Vilakazi, 'The Oral and Written Literature in Nguni'.
 12. Kunene, 'Portrait of Magolwane, the Great Zulu Poet'; Nyembezi, 'The Historical Background to the Izibongo of the Zulu Military Age', 111;

- Vilakazi, 'The Oral and Written Literature in Nguni'; Kunene, 'An Analytical Survey of Zulu Poetry both Traditional and Modern'.
13. C. de B. Webb and J. Wright eds., *The James Stuart Archive of Recorded Oral Evidence Relating to the History of the Zulu and Neighbouring Peoples* (hereafter *JSA*), *Volume 4* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1986), Testimony by Mtshayankomo, 107.
 14. Hamilton et al. eds., *The Cambridge History of South Africa, Volume 1*, 6; C. Hamilton, 'Ideology, Oral Traditions and the Struggle for Power in the Early Zulu Kingdom', 67–74.
 15. These are available in the James Stuart Archives housed in the Killie Campbell Africana Library under the title of J. Stuart, *Book of Eulogies*. Stuart's collated version of izibongo zika Dingane, is in KCM 23486, File 29a. Sivivi's version was recorded by Stuart in 1907 (*Book of Eulogies*, File 75, Volume 1); Tununu's version was recorded in 1903; Ngidi's version was recorded in 1904; and Lunguza's version was recorded in 1909. All these are to be found in *Book of Eulogies*, File 75, Volume 1. See also Rycroft and Ngcobo eds., *The Praises of Dingana*, 51.
 16. M. Kunene, 'Magolwane, the Greatest Zulu Poet', *Afro-Asian Writings*, 1, 4, 1970. This paragraph is largely based on this article and Kunene's 'An Analytical Survey of Zulu Poetry both Traditional and Modern'. On oral traditions about Magolwane, see his son, Mshayankomo's, testimony in Webb and Wright eds., *JSA, Volume 4*, 106–107.
 17. UKZN, *JSA*, KCM 24259, Testimony of Tununu.
 18. C. de B. Webb and J. Wright eds., *The James Stuart Archive of Recorded Oral Evidence Relating to the History of the Zulu and Neighbouring Peoples, Volume 2* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1976), Testimony of Mandhlakazi, 177.
 19. *Ibid.*, 176–177.
 20. Vilakazi, 'The Oral and Written Literature in Nguni'.
 21. *Ibid.*
 22. Vilakazi, 'The Oral and Written Literature in Nguni'.
 23. Kunene, 'Magolwane, the Greatest Zulu Poet'; and Kunene, 'An Analytical Survey of Zulu Poetry both Traditional and Modern'.
 24. *Ibid.*
 25. Kunene, *Zulu Poetry*, 14.
 26. M. Kunene, *The Ancestors and the Sacred Mountain* (London: Heinemann, 1982), 65.
 27. This also includes the conflict between the amaZulu and the Voortrekkers.
 28. Kunene, 'Magolwane, the Greatest Zulu Poet'.
 29. Hamilton, 'Ideology, Oral Traditions', 72. See also Kunene, 'An Analytical Survey of Zulu Poetry both Traditional and Modern'; Vilakazi, 'The Oral and Written Literature in Nguni'.

30. Kunene, *The Ancestors and the Sacred Mountain*, 26.
31. Kunene, 'An Analytical Survey of Zulu Poetry both Traditional and Modern', 129–133.
32. Ibid., 130–131.
33. Kunene, 'An Analytical Survey of Zulu Poetry both Traditional and Modern'.
34. Ibid., 31.
35. Ibid.
36. Hamilton et al. eds., *The Cambridge History of South Africa, Volume 1*, 6.
37. See C. de B. Webb and J. Wright eds., *JSA, Volumes 1–4*. See also the testimonies provided by Ngidi, Nduna and Sivivi (Volume 5) and Socwatsha and Tununu (Volume 6). When the research for this book was undertaken, Volume 6 had not yet been published, but John Wright kindly gave me access to his manuscripts. (*JSA, Volume 6*, has since appeared in 2014.) Most Zulu public intellectuals had their own versions of *Izibongo zika Dingane*, which Stuart combined into a single document, see UKZN, JSA, KCM 23486, File 29a. Most izibongo were subsequently published in Rycroft and Ngcobo eds., *The Praises of Dingana*.
38. UKZN, JSA, KCM 24319, File 62, Testimony of Sivivi, 1907.
39. UKZN, JSA, KCM 24220, File 58, Testimony of Socwatsha, 1910.
40. C. de B. Webb and J. Wright eds., *The James Stuart Archive of Recorded Oral Evidence Relating to the History of the Zulu and Neighbouring Peoples, Volume 1*, testimony of Lunguza, 297–353; he was interviewed in 1909.
41. UKZN, JSA, KCM 24317, Testimony of Ngidi; he was interviewed in 1904.
42. UKZN, JSA, KCM 24258, Testimony of Tununu; he was interviewed in 1903.
43. Webb and Wright eds., *JSA, Volume 4*, Testimony of Mtshayankomo, 107; he was interviewed in 1922.
44. Webb and Wright eds., *JSA, Volume 4*, Testimony of Ndhlovu, 117; he was interviewed in 1902.
45. See Nyembezi, 'The Historical Background to the Izibongo of the Zulu Military Age'.
46. UKZN, JSA, KCM 24258.
47. UKZN, JSA, KCM 24319; and KCM 24403.
48. UKZN, JSA, KCM 24317, File 62; he was interviewed in 1904. See also KCM 24403, Ngidi kaMagambukazi version of *izibongo zikaDingane*.
49. UKZN, JSA, KCM 23485; and KCM 23486. The files of the historical narratives by public intellectuals were accompanied by their own versions of *izibongo zikaDingane*, some of which are published in Rycroft and Ngcobo, *The Praises of Dingana*. See JSA, KCM 24403, for versions

- of Lunguza, Nduna kaManqina, Tununu, Sivivi, Ngidi, Mtshapi, Mbovu kaMtshumayeli, among others.
50. These oral traditions will be analysed in the next chapter.
 51. C. Hamilton and J. Wright, 'Making Precolonial Histories in South Africa', Unpublished paper, nd; Hofmeyr, *We Spend Our Years as a Tale that is Told*; E. Tonkin, *Narrating our Pasts: The Social Construction of Oral History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
 52. See Hamilton, 'Ideology, Oral Traditions', 72; L. White, 'Power and Praise Poem', paper presented at the Conference on Literature and Society in Southern Africa, University of York, 1981; L. Vail, *Power and the Praise Poem: southern African voices in history* (Charlottesville, University press of Virginia, 1991).
 53. UKZN, JSA, KCM 24403.
 54. JSA, KCM 24403. See also S. Nyembezi, *Izibongo Zamakhosi*, 45–52.
 55. UKZN, JSA, KCM 24319, Testimony of Sivivi.
 56. Webb and Wright eds., *JSA, Volume 1*, Testimony of Lunguza kaMpukane on the reign of King Dingane, 297–353.
 57. *Ibid.*, 345.
 58. Webb and Wright eds., *JSA, Volume 4*, Testimony of Ndhlovu, 209.
 59. *Ibid.*, 201. On Theophilus Shepstone, see C. Hamilton, *Authoring Shaka* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).
 60. Webb and Wright eds., *JSA, Volume 4*, 208–209.
 61. UKZN, JSA, KCM 24403, Tununu's version of izibongo; JSA, KCM 24319, Sivivi's version; and KCM 53177, Hoye's version of *izibongo*.
 62. UKZN, JSA, KCM 24403, Tununu's version of izibongo.
 63. To infer the ambiguous nature of the king's image, Jantshi talks about King Dingane ordering the arbitrary deaths of individuals.
 64. UKZN, JSA, KCM 24403.
 65. *Ibid.* See also Webb and Wright eds., *JSA, Volume 1*, Lunguza ka Mpukane's testimony, 323.
 66. UKZN, JSA, KCM 53177, Hoye kaSoxalase's version of *izibongo zikaDingane*.
 67. C. Hamilton and J. Wright, 'Traditions and Transformations: The Phongolo–Mzimkhulu Region in the late 18th and Early 19th Centuries', in A. Duminy and W.R. Guest eds., *Natal and Zululand: From the Earliest Times to 1910* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1989), 69.
 68. Rycroft and Ngcobo eds., *The Praises of Dingana*, Tununu version of izibongo zikaDingane, 233.
 69. Rycroft and Ngcobo eds., *The Praises of Dingana*, Tshingane kaMpande version of izibongo zikaDingane, 235.

70. Rycroft and Ngcobo eds., *The Praises of Dingane*, Sivivi version of izibongo zikaDingane, 230.
71. Rycroft and Ngcobo eds., *The Praises of Dingana*, Nduna and Tununu versions of izibongo zikaDingane, 223, 233.
72. KCM 24199–24211, Hoyo kaSoxalase version of izibongo zikaDingane. On the same theme on King Shaka, see J. Guy, 'Shaka kaSenzangakhona: A Reassessment', *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, 16, 1996, 1–30.
73. Rycroft and Ngcobo eds., *The Praises of Dingana*, Ngidi and Tununu version of izibongo zikaDingane, 226, 233.
74. See Sivivi version, in Rycroft and Ngcobo eds., *The Praises of Dingana*, 230.
75. See Ngidi's version, in Rycroft and Ngcobo eds., *The Praises of Dingana*, 226. All these perspectives permeate izibongo zikaDingane.
76. Ibid.
77. UKZN, JSA, KCM 24199-24211.
78. Rycroft and Ngcobo eds., *The Praises of Dingana*, Mgidlane kaMpande version, 217.
79. This image permeates all his izibongo.
80. See testimonies of Lunguza kaMpukane, Sivivi and Ngidi kaMcikiziswa.
81. This standard version appears in almost all versions of the izibongo, including those presented by his izinceku.
82. M. Kunene, 'The Relevance of Oral Literature to Written Literature'; B.W. Vilakazi, 'The Oral and Written Literature in Nguni'; Hofmeyr, 'We Spend Our Years as a Tale that is Told'.

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