

PREFACE

The Introduction discusses historiographical debates and the construction of racist perspectives on King Dingane by white settler historians and Afrikaner nationalists. This led to 16 December being declared a public holiday in South Africa. In South African historiography, perceptions of the second Zulu monarch as propagated by white South Africans have attained a certain fragile dominance. Jeff Guy opined that ‘Dingane kaSenzangakhona entered the (South African) history books as a treacherous barbarian’.¹ By turning our attention to the production of historical knowledge on King Dingane by whites in general, one reaches the conclusion that in officially commemorating ‘Dingaan’s Day’ one can deduce that there was an ardent belief among the Voortrekkers that God sanctioned, even supported, white supremacy and that he would not abandon the whites.

Chapter 2 analyses the production by Africans of the original archive on King Dingane, the second king of amaZulu. The first part of the archive comprises mainly izibongo and oral traditions largely found in the James Stuart Archives. I examine the role of izimbongi, Magolwane kaMkhathini Jiyane and Mshongweni and the central role they played in the 1820s in creating the king’s image and archive through izibongo. Many primary sources still exist, such as oral traditions and izibongo that express various African perspectives of King Dingane and impi yaseNcome. These are both negative and positive. These contrasting negative

and positive perceptions of the king also points to underlying political philosophy and survive because generally it is not easy to intervene and manipulate izibongo.

Chapter 3 looks at the contribution to King Dingane's oral traditions and archive by African public intellectuals like Tununu and Sivivi. In this chapter, I also analyse the first published collection on the oral traditions of King Dingane, published in 1858 by William Ngidi and the Rev. J.W. Colenso in the book *Izindatyana zabantu*. The most enduring image from the oral traditions articulated by public intellectuals is that of the king as weakling, easily influenced by the Regent Queen Mnkabayi—the kingmaker. These traditions also depict King Dingane as a mirror image of King Shaka and also focus on the endless succession battles within the Zulu royal house. This chapter also highlights the fact that there are a complex relationship and interplay between indigenous narratives and colonial ones and the processes of representation in which they engage. This includes the role of James Stuart and his African interlocutors.

Chapter 4 elaborates the point that by the 1920s and 1930s the archive on King Dingane was firmly established and consisted of documentary sources and archival material written by both Europeans and Africans. The established archive was reflected in isiZulu texts written by missionary educated Magema Fuze, John Dube and Rolfes Dhlomo. They were fiercely opposed to King Dingane. This archive also reflects how their negative perspectives were influenced by historical sources reflecting the 'pre-contact' or the pre-colonial history of southern Africa written by Europeans, which immortalised the pro-conquest prophecy attributed to the dying King Shaka. This chapter also highlights the fact that the anti-King Dingane images were ably challenged by Petros Lamula and Isaiah Shembe, whose perspectives adopted a nuanced, empowering image of King Dingane.

Chapter 5 discusses the construction of divergent positive perspectives of King Dingane outside the limits posed by the established archive. The African workers, led by Nkosi, achieve this feat through counter-commemorations of 'Dingane's Day' (16 December) in the late 1920s and early 1930s. There is also a focus on land issues, because a sizeable number of Africans, through their insistence on counter-commemorating 'Dingane's Day', perceived this as a day that ushered in the loss of African independence and land. This opposition led to the murder of Nkosi and other workers by the police when they were involved in a

protest march on 16 December 1930. The African National Congress's constantly changing view of King Dingane is also discussed.

Chapter 6 also focuses on positive perspectives of King Dingane constructed by African nationalist intellectuals such as Selope Thema, Herbert Dhlomo and Jordan Ngubane. Although Thema changes his view about the king later in his life, African nationalism is the common thread that stitches these images together. Their perspectives are largely influenced by and are in opposition to the Afrikaner nationalists' negative depictions of the king, particularly during the celebration and commemoration of 'Dingaan's Day'. These African nationalists also used newspapers such as *iLanga*, *Bantu World* and *Inkundla yaBantu* as vehicles for articulating their views. Herbert Dhlomo, a prolific scriptwriter, also staged a play based on King Dingane. It was performed by African students at the University of Natal's Black Section.

The main argument expressed in Chap. 7 is underpinned by a plethora of scholarly perspectives about King Dingane. These contending perspectives are articulated by African academics, namely Bhambatha W. Vilakazi; Sibusiso Nyembezi; Eliot Zondi; Mazisi Kunene; Themba Msimang; and Felix Okoye. This chapter also discusses the positive image of King Dingane as reflected in narrative poetry written in isiZulu. There were two reasons why African writers chose historical novels and narrative poetry as a vehicle for expressing their everyday experience. Firstly, history enjoyed a disciplinary pre-eminence in South Africa and some writers used historical novels and narrative poetry as a subversive weapon. Secondly, by using these literary forms, they were able to bypass the restrictions and censorship imposed by the then government.

Chapter 8, the final chapter, analyses the counter-commemoration of 'Dingaan's Day' by the ANC and PAC during the years of the armed struggle. The liberation movements, through their leadership, constructed political perspectives of the Zulu king. As an example, 'Dingaan's Day' or 'The Day of the Vow' assumed a new meaning because the ANC took a conscious decision to launch its military wing, uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK), on 16 December 1961. Subsequently, the liberation movement commemorated the day as 'Heroes Day'. This chapter also analyses the oppositional view adopted by the Inkatha Freedom Party, through its leader, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, who altered his views after the introduction of the new political dispensation in 1994.²

NOTES

1. J. Guy, 'Dingane kaSenzangakhona: The Historical Background and Secondary Sources', in *Introduction to Historical Studies*, University of Natal, Durban, 1995, 5.
2. Earlier versions of some chapters in this book have appeared in part in the following publications: "He Did What Any Other Person in his Position Would have Done to Fight the Forces of Invasion and Disruption": Africans, the Land and Contending Images of King Dingane ("the Patriot") in the Twentieth Century, 1916–1950', *South African Historical Journal*, 38, May 1998, 99–143; 'Johannes Nkosi and the Communist Party in South Africa: Images of 'Blood River' and King Dingane in the late 1920s–1930', *History and Theory*, Theme Issue 39, December 2000, 111–132; 'Zulu Nationalist Literary Representations of King Dingane', in *Zulu Identities: Being Zulu, Past and Present*, edited by B. Carton, J. Laband and J. Sithole (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008), 97–110; 'A Reassessment of Women's Power in the Zulu Kingdom', in *Zulu Identities: Being Zulu, Past and Present*, edited by B. Carton, J. Laband and J. Sithole (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008), 111–121.

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