

UKUBONGA NEZIBONGO: ZULU PRAISING AND PRAISES

Elizabeth Anne Wynne Gunner

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ABSTRACT

The thesis is based largely on Zulu praise poetry collected in South Africa in 1975-6. It emphasises the widespread nature of the art of praising in Zulu society: it is both a specialist and a non-specialist activity and poetry is composed and performed by both men and women. The thesis also attempts to analyse the function of the poetry in a contemporary social and political context; it stresses its political, religious and aesthetic aspects and its importance as an expression of individual identity in an often hostile and negative environment. The work attempts to consider praise poetry as a "performance art" rather than a one-dimensional verbal art but also explores the form and content of the poetry. It attempts to see how composers, both specialists and non-specialists, apply the techniques which govern the genre.

The memorial aspect of Zulu praising has been stressed by commentators but there has been a paucity of recently recorded material. This study, based largely on contemporary recordings which include observed performances and interview, shows that while the long royal izibongo performed today are remarkably similar to those recorded sixty or more years earlier, individual bards have their own style of performance and their versions are far from identical. Contemporary compositions by bards and non-specialists further emphasise the creative aspect of the tradition which is one that combines memory and creativity. Whereas Albert Lord's influential "singer" theory stressed that true oral poetry could only be poetry that was composed during performance, this material shows that there are other blends of memorising and composing which are possible. At the same time the thesis acknowledges the vital role played by Lord in stressing the contribution of individual artists in an oral tradition. Finally, the thesis touches on the relationship between praise poetry and contemporary printed (but in some cases performed) poetry in South Africa.

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APPENDIX OF IZIBONGO AND IZIGIYO

Subsidiary items included with Volume Two: Copies of the following:

1. "Forgotten Men: Zulu Bards and Praising at the Time of the Zulu Kings", African Languages/Langues Africaines 2 (1976), pp.71-90.
2. "Songs of Innocence and Experience: Women as Composers and Performers of Izibongo, Zulu Praise Poetry", Research in African Literatures Vol.10, No.2, (1979), pp.239-267.
3. "New Wine in Old Bottles: Imagery in the Izibongo of the Zulu Zionist Prophet, Isaiah Shembe", Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford Vol.X111, (1982), pp.99-108.

PREFACE

Because this thesis is built largely on oral material recorded in KwaZulu my greatest debt is to the many Zulu men, women and children who answered my numerous questions, treated me with patience, good humour and courtesy and were generous and hospitable almost to a fault. I would particularly like to record my thanks to Alec Dindi and his family, of Ngoye, and to MaMhlalise Mkhwanazi and her household, also of Ngoye. At the homestead of the former I drank a fair amount of tasty and nourishing Zulu beer and I also gained valuable information about, and many insights into, the place of izibongo in the life of the community. MaMhlalise was a generous and diligent teacher and a kind friend. Chief Lindelihle Mzimela and the late Chief Muntu-ongenkudla Mkhwanazi gave me permission to move around freely in their territories and I am grateful to them. Sister Edwina Mncube and Sister Johanna Ntuli O.S.B. of Ebuhleni, Ngoye, allowed me to spend time with junior classes asking about izibongo and gave me a great deal of practical assistance. I would also like to thank Professor A.C.Nkabinde and Professor S.D.Ncongwane of the University of Zululand, Ngoye, who found time to help me with knotty linguistic and literary problems connected with my fieldwork. Professor F.K.Pieters, also of the University of Zululand, was extremely helpful to my husband and myself in our initial search for accommodation and thanks to him, our stay in Mtunzini was far more comfortable than it would otherwise have been. My thanks also to Reverend Peter Harker who was both hospitable, and helpful in giving me useful contacts for fieldwork. I was very fortunate in being able to turn to Professor Trevor Cope at the University of Natal, Durban for much wise and

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0. Overview

This thesis is a study of Zulu praising and praises, ukubonga nezibongo, as a contemporary poetic tradition. It aims to discuss the social act and literary art of Zulu praising and praises and to demonstrate the nature of a broad-based poetic tradition that combines continuity and innovation, stability and change. This chapter will firstly outline the thrust and contribution of earlier work on Zulu izibongo; secondly it will state the scope of the present work and thirdly it will describe where fieldwork was carried out and the methods I used in recording, transcribing and translating izibongo.

1.1. Earlier Work on Zulu Izibongo

Of the Europeans who first encountered the Zulu in the early nineteenth century, it is the Frenchman Arbousset (1842) who is the most emphatic about the importance of izibongo to the Zulu. He mentions their use at the court of Dingana in 1835; his transcriptions and translations, although hard to follow, give some idea of the splendour of the metaphors, the grandiloquent, hyperbolic nature of the praise names, bound together through the dominant theme of Zulu glory acquired by conquest (1).

Captain Allen Gardiner made several visits to King Dingana in his efforts to set up a permanent Christian mission among the Zulu. Gardiner's account of his sojourn at Dingane's court, first at Gungundlovu and then at Congella includes only a passing mention of the language and the performance of praises (1836:91). He was careful,

however, to note the distinctive dress of the izimbongi, the bards, and at one point he mentions that the skin of a leopard which has just been killed is reserved for one of the "imbongas", to be used in his distinctive dress (Gardiner, 1836:124-5). Also he took a great interest in the dancing of Dingana himself, and of the great companies of men and sometimes women who took part in the dancing. He describes the dramatic yet harmonious dances which mimicked warfare and comments on the way in which the women were by no means "idle spectators":

They [the women] do not indeed move from their position, but, bending their bodies forward to the clap of their hands, stamping with both feet together, and raising their voices to the highest pitch, they fill in their parts, and follow out the chorus with such a degree of continued exertion, as would cause an European female to go upon crutches for the remainder of her life.
(Gardiner, Narrative of a Journey to the Zoolu Country in South Africa, 1836, (repr.1966), p.58.

Gardiner seems to have been a careful and observant recorder, yet it must be remembered that these early European writers, who include Fynn and Isaacs (2), wrote as outsiders and their observations and judgements (which they gave freely) need to be treated with great caution. One thing which they all note with varying degrees of interest and admiration is the emphasis on song and dance among the Zulu and their newly conquered peoples. For instance Isaacs remarks that in his youth Shaka was esteemed as "a songster and a punster" and mentions at another point in his narrative that the regiments sang songs for the King particularly at the harvest season (3) and Captain Gardiner has descriptions of great dances at Gungundlovu and at the military establishment, Mbelebele (4).

Later writers on the Zulu, such as Bryant (1929), Samuelson (1929) and Grant (1929), are far more detailed in their accounts of izibongo. Samuelson not only sets out the royal izibongo in Zulu and

English but includes as well the words of a number of royal anthems (amahubo). By doing so, he is - albeit indirectly - pointing to the links in performance situations and in symbolic and ritual contexts between izibongo and other forms of song and chant. Grant's (1929) article on Zulu royal izibongo, which included those of the Mandlakazi leader, Zibhebhu, was an important contribution to Southern African oral poetry; he interviewed and recorded two elderly bards, izimbongi, in Nongoma in Northern Zululand and his texts provide an interesting example of individual versions by bards. These show the stamp of individual selection and ability as well as the reproduction of known and familiar praises for a particular leader. Grant also described the gestures of the bards, their distinctive dress and their rhythmic mode of utterance. He was thus suggesting a mode of analysis for the izibongo themselves which embraced more than the words alone. He also, however, set a high standard for discussion of the izibongo themselves and took great care in seeking out the background to allusive references in the izibongo. Bryant's vast, seminal work, Olden Times in Zululand and Natal (1929) contains the izibongo of Shaka and Senzangakhona in "paragraph" rather than line form and the izibongo of the Zulu forebears, Ndaba and Jama besides those of other chiefs. Bryant, however, as I have pointed out elsewhere (Gunner, 1976), is less than enthusiastic concerning izibongo. He begrudges the term "verse", let alone "poetry", for izibongo but notes that it is something "the Zulus are very fond of" (Bryant, 1929:39). Although fascinated and intrigued by the izimbongi, the bards, he is also bewildered by them. Neither they nor their utterances appear to fit into any recognisable category of poetry or poetic activity. He writes in a later work with a kind of admiration, that, "They [the izimbongi] had the gift of 'speech' in a most extraordinary degree; and extraordinary memories too" (Bryant,

1949:486).

James Stuart's work as a collector of oral testimony and izibongo from Zulu informants covered more than thirty years (1888-1922). The publication of The James Stuart Archive, edited by Colin Webb and John Wright (Volumes 1-3 have so far been published), has made accessible to readers the testimonies of his numerous informants and their accounts of life in pre-colonial and colonial Natal and Zululand. Yet most of the izibongo which Stuart took down by hand from izimbongi have not been published, the excellent collection finally edited by Trevor Cope (1968) being the exception. Stuart in some cases sought out men knowledgeable in the affairs of their clan or chiefdom, or who had a deep knowledge of Zulu affairs, and he sought out izimbongi of various chiefdoms and of the Zulu kings. He often arranged for izimbongi to travel from outlying parts of Zululand and Natal to his home in Pietermaritzburg by train, and he must have spent a small fortune on payments to informants and on their train fares. The following entries give some idea of how he obtained his material. He had noted izibongo and information from an imbongi, Mangathi kaGodide of the Ntuli clan and continues:

I asked him [Mangathi] to get Mantshonga and Mazimu, living near Empandleni, to come down to me at once. I promise to pay. Both are said to be exceptionally good izimbongi of Biyela affairs. (Webb and Wright, James Stuart Archive, Vol.2, 1978, p.210)

Under the name Maziwane in the Webb and Wright volumes, and dated 1.5.1905, he has noted : "Paid 30/= to include fare home, viz. 2s 2d" (Webb and Wright, 1978:302). An entry for 27.4.1905 reads:

Socwatsha leaves early. Goes to Zibhebhu's during next morn on own affairs. To get selected two good men on Zulu tribal affairs and bring by train. Will refund fares. Bring an extra boy. Will give S. £2 on his delivering them here. (Webb and Wright, 1978:299)

Although the majority of izibongo taken down by Stuart and meticulously copied into his three "Books of Eulogies" remain unpublished, he did include a number of royal izibongo in his school textbooks, and also izibongo of other eminent Zulus such as Mnyamana Buthelezi, Cetshwayo's chief minister, and Masiphula of the Ndwandwe clan, Mpande's chief minister (5). One of these readers for schools, uKulumetule (1925; and see Gunner, 1976), also contains a wonderfully vivid account of bards and praising during the latter days of the Zulu Kingdom and attempts to set out the importance of izibongo in Zulu society. Stuart's Zulu readers were used in Zulu schools until the 1930s, when they were withdrawn because of changes in the official Zulu orthography (Rycroft, 1974:61). These textbooks were probably of great influence in shaping the consciousness of a specifically "Zulu" past among the young black school-goers of Natal who would never have lived under the jurisdiction of the Zulu kings. The image of the past provided by the textbooks may have provided a sort of bridge between the narrow, ethnic patriotism of the days of the Zulu kingdom and the emergent and more broadly based Zulu national consciousness. The izibongo, with their emphatic confidence, their sense of restless, dynamic movement and their stress on heroic achievement must for some Zulu have provided a means of coming to terms with their past, a past which may have appeared to some Natal Christian "kholwa" as (happily) distant and "savage". In this respect, Magera Fuze's account of the Zulu people under their kings, Abantu Abamnyama lapa bavela ngakona, (written in 1902 but only published in 1922), must also have been influential in creating a positive image of the Zulu past among Natal Zulu speakers (6). The direct influence of the Stuart readers is evident in the fact that in the widely read novels on the Zulu kings (written in Zulu) by R.R.R.Dhlomo (7), the izibongo appear to be

absolutely identical to those in the Stuart texts. Also, when I asked the royal imbongi, John Dlamini, whom he had heard praising the Kings, he mentioned R.R.R.Dhlomo, alluding - I presume - to the izibongo in Dhlomo's novels (8). C.L.S.Nyembezi's Izibongo Zamakhosi, first published in 1958 also leans heavily on the Stuart texts for the royal Zulu praises (although not for the royal Swazi izibongo which are also included). Nyembezi did, though, spend some time in Zululand interviewing people and collecting material for his Izibongo Zamakhosi and for his essay, "The Historical Background to the Izibongo of the Zulu Military Age" (1948). He seems to have spent most of 1946 chiefly in the Nongoma, Mahlabathini and Nquthu districts of Zululand. Although, as he mentions in his preface, he was greatly assisted by knowledgeable Zulus, including the Regent, Mshiyeni kaDinuzulu, he did also encounter the normal setbacks of fieldwork. He recounts that when he set out by bicycle to visit the son of Chakijana, the man who had been one of the key figures in the Bhambatha rebellion of 1906, the former's wife turned Nyembezi back, convinced that he was "a spy" (1958:viii). Nyembezi's versions of the Zulu royal izibongo do show evidence of his having consulted (one presumes, as he does not say so) izimbongi during fieldwork; he seems to have sandwiched these "new" praises inbetween the ones from the Stuart readers. For instance, in Cetshwayo's izibongo Nyembezi's version has twenty-five lines which are not in the Stuart readers, neither are they in Cope's (1968) version of Cetshwayo's praises which are also from Stuart manuscripts.

In the case of Stuart, Dhlomo and Nyembezi, the primary intention appears to have been to present texts of the izibongo of each king and, in the case of Stuart and Nyembezi to explain the historical background, something which Nyembezi does admirably both in his book

of the royal praises (1958) and in his earlier article on the historical background to the royal praises of the "Zulu military age" (1948). Nyembezi is not concerned with the contributions of various bards, nor is he interested in the shifting, unique quality of the individual performance. This way of regarding the izibongo may have been influenced by Stuart's methods of presentation. Indeed, as David Rycroft has remarked:

Stuart's versions of the royal izibongo have become very widely known among Zulu speakers over the past half-century. To some extent there has been a tendency to regard them as immutable, representing the only "correct" or standard forms of the royal izibongo. A vague notion that they became crystallized into this "ideal" form seems to have seldom been questioned, even by literary scholars.
(Rycroft, "Zulu Izibongo: A Survey of Documentary Sources", African Language Studies XV, 1974, p.65)

B.W.Vilakazi's doctoral thesis, The Oral and Written Literature in Nguni (1945), differs from the work of the above three in some ways, but because it was never widely read it has had less general influence on attitudes to izibongo. Vilakazi, as Rycroft (1974) has pointed out, included in his thesis a great many izibongo of both royal and non-royal persons. He insisted on the basic, important and neglected point that izibongo had a very broad base in Zulu society and were by no means the preserve of kings, chiefs and aristocracy (1945:96). Vilakazi also addressed himself to the difficult question of prosody in izibongo and acknowledged the force of Lestrade's seminal articles on form in Southern African praise poetry (1935; 1937). In these Lestrade maintained the importance of parallelism and "linking" as key structural features in praise poetry in Sotho, Tswana and Zulu. H.I.E.Dhlomo, brother of the novelist and short story writer R.R.R.Dhlomo, wrote with great admiration and great eloquence on Zulu

izibongo and in the same article, entitled (significantly) "Zulu Folk Poetry" (my emphasis) (1948) he outlined other genres of Zulu poetry. Dhlomo, however, was essentially an urban man - he was born in Edendale, the Zulu freehold area outside Pietermaritzburg purchased by several prosperous Natal Zulu families well before the Land Act of 1913 (see Couzens, 1980 and Marks, 1982); that is perhaps why, when writing about izibongo he sets them and their value to the individual very much in the past, in a way that Vilakazi does not (9). Dhlomo, however, was alive to the myth-making power of the Zulu kings and he attempted to exploit this rich vein in his three plays entitled, collectively, "The Black Bulls" which dealt with Shaka, Dingane and Cetshwayo. As Tim Couzens points out, "In writing the three plays... Dhlomo, like [Sol] Plaatje [in his novel Mhudi], was aiming at the cultural regeneration of his people through the creation of a national (partly tragic) epic" (Couzens, 1980:414). One way of creating a tragic-heroic image of the Zulu past was to present the past through drama, as Dhlomo did in the above plays (10). Dhlomo, however, seemed unaware of the continuing, and contemporary, power of the orally performed royal Zulu izibongo to create a heroic image of the past. But there is an important theme running through his critical articles: again and again he emphasises that Zulu culture could reach a high level of aesthetic excellence. He was making the important point that a comparatively simple material culture does not mean the existence of a low level of aesthetic culture in that particular society; this is a point made again by P.D.Beuchat (1963) in a paper which criticises black South Africans for undervaluing their own art forms. It is made as well by Moyo (1978) in his study of Ngoni poetry. Ruth Finnegan has warned against the evolutionist approach which links material and poetic development:

The prejudice which connects poor material conditions with lack of artistic achievement dies hard. But it must be clear to a dispassionate enquirer that in the light of the evidence now available from all over the world, any generalised attempt to postulate a direct correlation of economic with poetic development would be simple-minded.
(Finnegan, Oral Poetry, p.266-267)

Yet such an attitude - which H.I.E.Dhlomo did so much to counteract - has played a part in critical approaches to South African oral art. The general reluctance of black writers and critics to admire or take cognisance of oral poetry is mentioned by Stephen Grey:

And for the black critic and writer within South Africa the legacy of oral culture is often taken as a reminder of the "primitive" past which he or she is trying to escape.
(Grey, Southern African Literature: An Introduction, 1979, p.161)

There is evidence though (for instance, Mzamane, 1981), that the evolutionist attitude criticised by Grey is now less prevalent and may, in any case, have been more representative of parts of South Africa such as the Witwatersrand rather than Natal or the Xhosa-speaking Cape (Jordan: 1973).

The publication in 1968 of Izibongo: Zulu Praise-poems edited by Trevor Cope was an important achievement. Cope was working with material collected by James Stuart from his numerous informants, and translated by Daniel Malcolm; there was, now, at last, a substantial body of the Zulu izibongo assembled by Stuart available in dual texts and therefore accessible to a wider audience than hitherto. Cope's Izibongo includes a selection of the praise poems of the Zulu royal line, of chiefs, of outstanding warriors, royal women and two white men. He is careful to set the poetry in a social and political context. He also provides an account of the poetic and linguistic features of izibongo, and he sees the izibongo as poetic statements rather than

items of historical evidence. Here too, though, the earlier trend to regard the Stuart versions as somehow immutable is still evident. As Rycroft has remarked (1974:64), the royal izibongo in this edition appear to be collations, by Stuart, from numerous sources. Also, even in his (unpublished) collations Stuart did note from which imbongi a particular praise came, and this fact is not evident at all in the 1968 edition. Because they are collations, the reader loses sight of the possibility of differing versions influenced by such factors as the ability and personal preferences of the individual imbongi, the particular pressures of each performance and the nature of the audience. These are all factors that influence a particular version of izibongo even in an artistic tradition such as Zulu ukubonga (praising) where there is a strong memorial emphasis. On the subject of composition, Cope tends to the view of communal rather than individual composition (1968:24;27) and in this way does less than justice to the poetic tradition of izibongo. Nevertheless he stresses that praising is a performed art, even though the texts themselves (perforce) give no sign of such factors as changes in volume and intonation by an imbongi, audience reaction such as cheers, laughter, responses and so on.

The importance of recognising that the aesthetics of izibongo must encompass more than the analysis of words on a printed page was first spelt out by Rycroft in his (1960) article on intonation patterns in recitations of royal izibongo. Rycroft was working from gramophone recordings, not from recordings of performances at particular events. But this does not detract from his findings, namely that the imbongi, when reciting, handles intonation in a distinctive way, suppressing sometimes for long stretches, the downdrift natural to ordinary speech and then concluding a section with a clear final

cadence. In a later article (1980) Rycroft tackles the difficult and as yet unresolved question of metre in Zulu izibongo and in Southern African praise poetry in general (12). Here too, his position takes account of the performed dimension of the poetry and he is critical of any approach to oral poetry which ignores the fact that it is a performed art. Some commentators, however, are doubtful of the validity of searching for paralinguistic features. Thus Nkabinde (1976) regards syntactic patterns and other features of linguistic style as the most important aesthetic element in izibongo. While he maintains that Zulu praise poetry is a living art form, he is reluctant to regard performance as anything other than peripheral to the poetry. Msimang, (1980) on the other hand, explores a rather different and so far largely neglected aspect of izibongo and that is the question of composition in the royal izibongo. He, unlike Cope, touches on the use of formulas as useful tools to the composer, and concludes that the bards who composed for the Kings were careful only to apply formulas that suited the personality of the individual concerned (13).

Jeff Opland's rich, productive and catalytic work on Xhosa praising and praises began in the early 1970s and has found its latest expression in the newly published Xhosa Oral Poetry (1984) (14). Using a comparative approach, he applied to Xhosa izibongo the theories on oral poetry and on composition put forward by Milman Parry (1930; 1932) and Albert Lord (1960). After intensive fieldwork Opland demonstrated that Xhosa izibongo, like Yugoslav epic, was (in the hands of the bards, the iimbongi) poetry that was composed in performance, poetry that used established formulas and to some extent Lord's "themes", but nevertheless was unique on each occasion of performance. The central position of the iimbongi was firmly established and the possible validity of any theory of vaguely

communal composition clearly discounted. Opland also pointed to the interesting contrast that existed between Zulu and Xhosa izibongo as regards composition in performance in the Xhosa instance and apparent memorisation by Zulu bards. Because of the lack of contemporary records for Zulu izibongo Opland may have overestimated the degree of memorisation at work in Zulu izibongo. Nevertheless he has shown that there is a significant difference in the expression of the two forms of izibongo, the Xhosa on the one hand, and the Zulu on the other. Through working with living iimbongi and with contemporary izibongo, Opland has demonstrated the resilience, as well as the sensitivity to changing social and political conditions, of Xhosa izibongo. He has extricated the Xhosa tradition of praising from any tendency to view it as existing in a timeless unchanging "tribal" past - or present. In this respect, Mafeje's earlier articles (1963; 1967) on the role of the imbongi in contemporary Xhosa society had forcefully made a similar point.

The relation between poetry and society is an important aspect of any oral poetry and in izibongo, which is in some ways very much political as well as religious poetry, this cannot be ignored. Landeg White's interesting essay, "Power and the Praise-poem" (1982) explores the relations between praise poems and political power and he discusses Zulu izibongo among other rather loosely defined "praise poems". However he tends to underestimate the way in which some oral poetry shows the ability to exist sometimes through very different social and political conditions, a point which Ruth Finnegan convincingly argues in Oral Poetry (1977:260). Like Mazisi Kunene (1962), White underestimates the way in which the internal rules of a poetic genre generate its form and content just as much as any tendency for it to reflect, or provide a comment upon, the society in which it exists.

Besides the tendency, which I have already mentioned, to regard the izibongo in the Zulu praising tradition as somehow fixed and immutable, there has also been a marked tendency to concentrate on the izibongo of royalty and of chiefs. Writers on Swazi tibongo (praises) such as Cook (1931) and Schoeman (1932) have likewise concentrated on the exalted and richly metaphoric praises of royalty; commentators on other Southern African praise poetry, Schapera (1965), D.P.Kunene (1971) and Damane and Sanders (1974) have similarly concentrated on the praise poetry celebrating, describing and eulogising those in authority in their own communities. One of the findings of my own fieldwork was that the izibongo of ordinary individuals are of importance in the genre as a whole and this clearly had to be taken into account in my study of Zulu praising and praises. Indeed, this factor, which may be more evident at the present time because of the waning of chiefly authority, is a key feature in my analysis of praising and praises.

1.2. The Scope of the Present Work

This work attempts to present and analyse Zulu izibongo in a contemporary context. It emphasises, firstly, the key role of izibongo in presenting and expressing identity. The public role of the royal izibongo at the present time demonstrates how praising and praises may be adapted to become part of a new political and nationalistic tradition, one which relates to, yet differs from, past practice and past notions of "nationhood" (15). The royal praises help to promote a vision of the past which creates a unifying consciousness for contemporary Zulu speakers; the confidence of these izibongo, their heroic vision provides an inspiration for contemporary listeners. In addition, at a personal level, individual izibongo represent identity

in a vivid and immediate way. I have explored this to some extent in my article on Zulu women as composers and performers of izibongo. (Gunner, 1979), but here I explore the role of izibongo as expressions of and givers of identity, with reference to men and to children as well. At present, particularly (but by no means only) in rural communities, izibongo identify individuals, they provide a means for a statement of "self", they are a celebration of and recognition of identity in a way that is quite at variance with the impersonal bureaucracy and the enforced anonymity of the wider society in which many Zulu speakers exist. They are also poetic statements from within the culture, asserting the vitality of a poetic tradition in changed social and political conditions.

This study emphatically presents izibongo as a genre of oral poetry which is composed by non-specialists as well as by izimbongi, (the bards or specialist poets). Moreover, praises, izibongo, are as much an expression of the identity of ordinary individuals as they are poems of praise to leaders and those in authority. The popular basis of izibongo, the use of praising by ordinary people, was one of the most striking - and unexpected - features that emerged from my field-work; as I have already said, it is an aspect of praising that has been neglected in most commentaries (with the exception of Vilakazi (1945)) and this study attempts to redress the balance in this respect.

The unity of the genre, the fact that izibongo are the praises of kings and chiefs and of ordinary people, is evident in its formal features and to a large extent in its content; this study explores both form and content and, while maintaining the essential unity of the genre, attempts to show the distinctions that exist in some instances between the izibongo of royalty and of ordinary people as

regards form and content.

With the exception of work by David Rycroft, the approach to Zulu izibongo has been somewhat text-bound (an inevitable legacy of Stuart's contribution, perhaps). This study aims to describe Zulu izibongo as a performed art, hence the emphasis in the title to "praising and praises", "ukubonga nezibongo". There are two distinct "modes" of performance in praising, one used by bards and the other by non-specialists; both are described here, and features such as performer and audience interaction, and the shifting pressures of particular performances are also discussed. By including a discussion of modes of performance and particularly of the non-specialist mode of performance, it is possible also to see izibongo alongside and interacting with genres such as amahubo (clan or national anthems), amahubo empi (war anthems) and izaga (war chants) (15). Setting izibongo in this wider context is far more than an extended exercise in literary analysis; it enables the reader to understand more clearly the underlying symbolism of izibongo, the deep relation of Zulu izibongo to the military ethos of the Zulu kingdom of the nineteenth century and the continuing significance of this link.

The emphasis in this study on the unity of the genre, and the existence of ukubonga (praising) among non-specialists as well as bards, leads to a consideration of how individuals acquire the skills of composing and performing izibongo; this is an aspect of izibongo which has received little attention. Both Kwabena Nketia (1955) and Albert Lord (1960) have, in their respective studies of the Akan dirge and Yugoslav epic poetry, shown the importance of studying "the singer" as well as "the song". Lord's extremely important work, The Singer of Tales (1960), includes a discussion of how the apprentice guslar acquires his skills. He shows that this is closely related to

the way in which as a fully fledged performer, the guslar creates new formulas, works with the "themes" in a particular epic and learns to work within the particular metric confines of the epic line. Zulu performers of izibongo may not compose anew in each performance in the way that the Yugoslav guslar does. Yet it is clear that early exposure to the stylistic techniques, the formulas and the dominant themes of izibongo are an essential part of achieving adult facility in praising. This study, therefore, examines how individuals acquire the skill of praising and explores the role of the individual composer, both specialist and non-specialist. Even in a genre such as Zulu izibongo with its strongly memorial cast, individual composing plays an important part. In the hands of non-specialists it is constantly occurring, and even the izibongo of past figures may (within limits) be recast to suit the particular inclinations and skill of whoever is reciting them. This study emphasises the contribution of individuals as composers and performers and thus attempts to move away from the static, text-bound view of izibongo.

Finally, throughout this discussion of Zulu praising and praises, which is based in the main on material which I recorded in South Africa from September 1975 - September 1976, I attempt to present izibongo as a living art form. Moreover, in spite of Lord's gloomy strictures on the impossibility of an oral poetry co-existing with the written form (1960:129) there is evidence of a fairly happy co-existence of oral and written forms of izibongo. Although I concentrate largely on oral, performed izibongo, I point also to the existence of written izibongo and I see oral and written izibongo as part of a single continuum. There are in some cases overlaps between the two: written izibongo may be recited in public by the composer (Mathabela and Cope, 1976), or written izibongo may be recited by

someone other than the composer and so on. Lastly, there is evidence of the influence of the form and spirit of izibongo on the work of contemporary black poets who write not in Zulu but - primarily - in English and I touch briefly on this as well.

1.3. Fieldwork and Methodology

Although most of my fieldwork was carried out in the Ngoye district of KwaZulu, I did not begin immediately on my arrival in South Africa in September 1975. This was partly because I was not sure how to begin; I wanted to spend some time studying James Stuart's collection of izibongo at the Killie Campbell Library and I had also to improve my spoken Zulu. After a few weeks in Durban, having availed myself of much invaluable advice from Professor Cope, I left the beguiling peace of the Killie Campbell Library and moved to Mtunzini, a small village near the KwaZulu district of Ngoye. At first I spent very little time in Ngoye and instead went to Hlabisa in the north of KwaZulu where I visited far-flung clinics with Sister Dietie van Spaun and Sister Marlene Koch. During these visits I would spend the whole day listening to the conversations of (mainly) women and children who attended the clinics; sometimes I would attempt to join in the conversation and ask questions. In this way I learnt something of the skills of interviewing; I was also able to improve my ability to speak Zulu and, perhaps most important, I began to feel less of a stranger and to understand something of the carefully observed social and conversational skills that operate among many Zulu speakers.

In mid-December I began to work in Ngoye although I continued throughout my stay to visit Hlabisa and to record material there. Ngoye is in the main in Reserve 9 and the district locally known as "oNgoye" is dominated by the round-topped Ngoye hills, a small part of

which are still covered by the Ngoye forest which is now a nature reserve. The giant tropical trees of this forest with their lianas, hordes of chattering monkeys and shy buck are a reminder that much of this region was once thickly forested and teeming with game. To the north of the Ngoye hills is the broad Mhlatuze valley, to the south are the plains of the Mlalazi river. The young English traveller and would-be entrepreneur, Nathaniel Isaacs, who often passed through the area on visits to Shaka and later to Dingane, writes glowingly of the "extensive forests" at the mouth of the Mlalazi river (and a small nature reserve near the river mouth retains the earlier widespread forest vegetation). Isaacs mentions visiting the Dube chief Nzwakele (see Appendix p. 95) south of the Mhlatuze river in order to buy ivory and it seems that there were once many elephants in this part. Later in his journal Isaacs describes in idyllic terms the country beyond the Mlalazi river:

After passing the river Umlalazi... we travelled two days over a very fertile district... Travelling on the summit of a continuity of high lands or ridges, adorned with highly cultivated spots, and interspersed with truly attracting hamlets or native kraals, we knew not which most to admire, the ocean on one side, all calm and serene; or the rich and verdant savannahs on the other, bestrewed with numerous herds, all indicating a richness of soil, pleasing to the traveller, and gratifying to him as being the works of a beneficent Creator.

(Nathaniel Isaacs, Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa, 1936, p.187)

Part of the area described above was among the 2,613,000 acres of Zululand which was compulsorily set aside for purchase by Natal farmers in 1902 (Binns, 1968:172), and such parts are now owned by white farmers and are largely under sugar cultivation. Part, of the area, however, is still under Zulu occupation. The Zulu-occupied area is not as overcrowded as some parts of KwaZulu and is in normal seasons blessed with an ample annual rainfall. Some sugar cane is grown under

licence in the Zulu area and there are also small eucalyptus plantations. Maize is grown, largely for home consumption. People also have vegetable and fruit gardens and some lentils are grown for sale. Compared to other parts of KwaZulu (Hlabisa for instance) quite a large number of men are at home, some working on small holdings, some employed by the KwaZulu Government on road maintenance and other public works; some also commute daily to the large nearby town of Empangeni; others work away from home in Durban but return more regularly than those who live in remote districts of KwaZulu. Many families seemed to have or to have had in the past breadwinners employed by the South African Railways in Durban. Women in the district did a lot of agricultural work and many kept vegetable gardens, a popular area for this being the fertile valley of the Mhlatuze near Chief Lindelihle Mzimela's homestead. The more I worked in Ngoye, the clearer it became that it was by no means a homogeneous area. There was, for instance, quite a difference between the people who lived south of the Mlalazi, in the flat area known as Obanjeni in the territory of Chief Alpheus Zulu and those who lived in the hilly area on the other side of the Mlalazi in Chief Lindelihle's territory. The people from the former area tended to be less traditional than and rather scornful of those "beyond the Mlalazi". In another case, there was a long-standing feud between the men of two adjoining wards, and a number of the men's izibongo which I recorded at a particular wedding referred to this. Although some people were earning regular or seasonal wages and some were employed by the University of Zululand as watchmen, gardeners and so on, many in the district were very poor and I was constantly being asked if I could find people work.

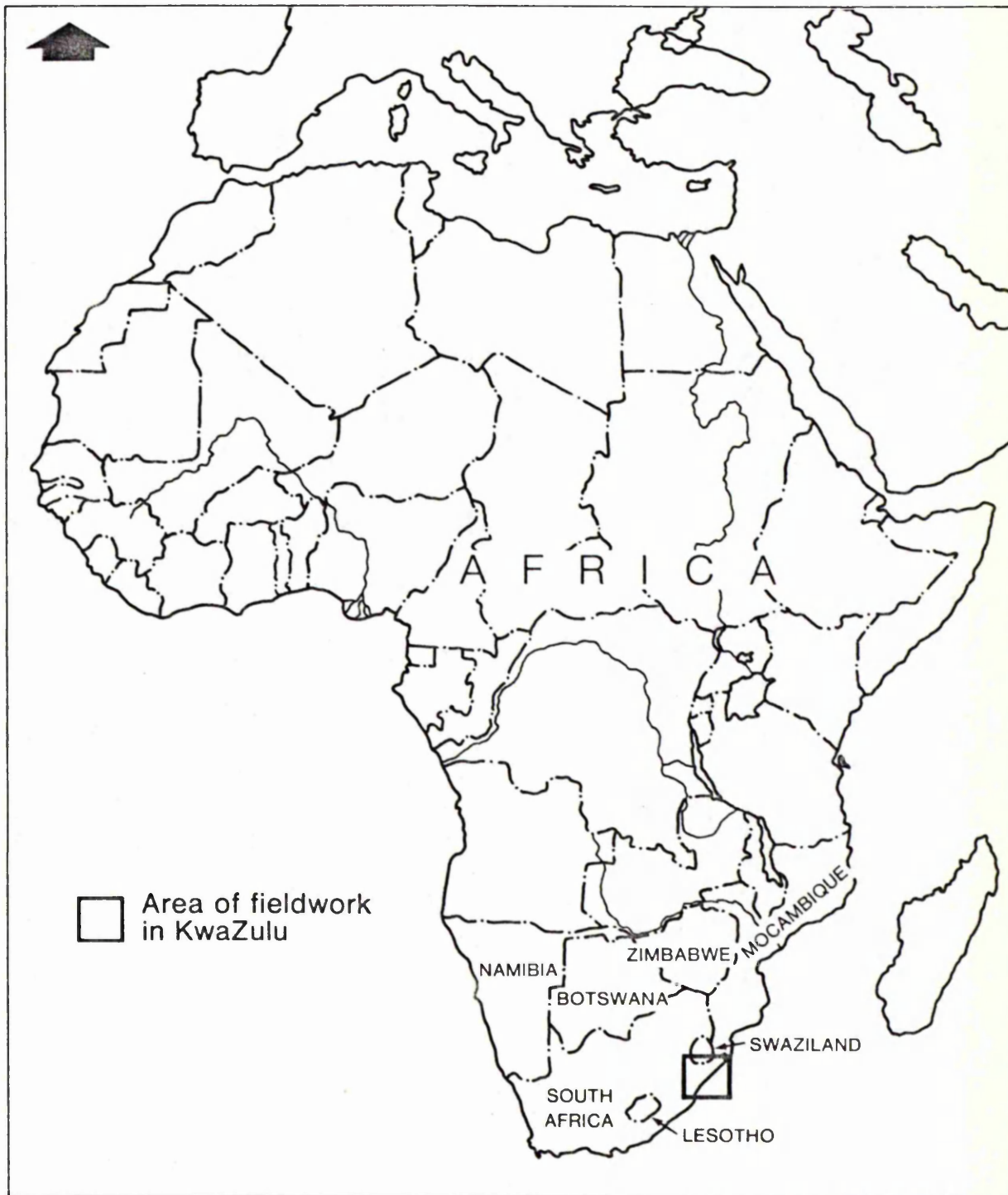
I found that by working in Ngoye (and sometimes moving out to adjoining or nearby areas) that I was able to build up a network of

local contacts. In this way I was able to attend a number of weddings, engagement and puberty ceremonies in the district and I was able to observe and record "ukubonga nezibongo", praising and praises. Although I recorded actual performances, I tried also to record performers individually before or after the public performance, because the noise during performance often meant that the actual words of an individual's izibongo or of a set of lineage izibongo were not audible. I would not, in the normal course of things, transcribe izibongo immediately after recording. Instead I would usually arrange a time to return to check the transcription of one or a number of izibongo, and to follow up any queries and difficult words. In other cases I would transcribe with Mashekelela Dindi, Stefan Mnguni or Norbert Mbonambi (all of whom were local people familiar with izibongo, although Mashekelela was the most knowledgeable by far) and then check the transcription with the original reciters if necessary. With izibongo recited by bards I tried as far as possible to check transcriptions with the imbongi and to obtain explanations of the background information as far as possible. In the case of the izibongo of Isaiah Shembe I made several return visits to Azariah Mthiyane, near Richards Bay to check various items. I left South Africa before I was able to arrive at final transcriptions and translations of all the izibongo I wished to refer to. M.B.Yengwa, who now lives in London, was of great assistance to me in working through a number of izibongo which I had not transcribed or translated. He also provided the invaluable recording of izibongo which were performed at the funeral of Chief Albert Luthuli (see Appendix, A 3).

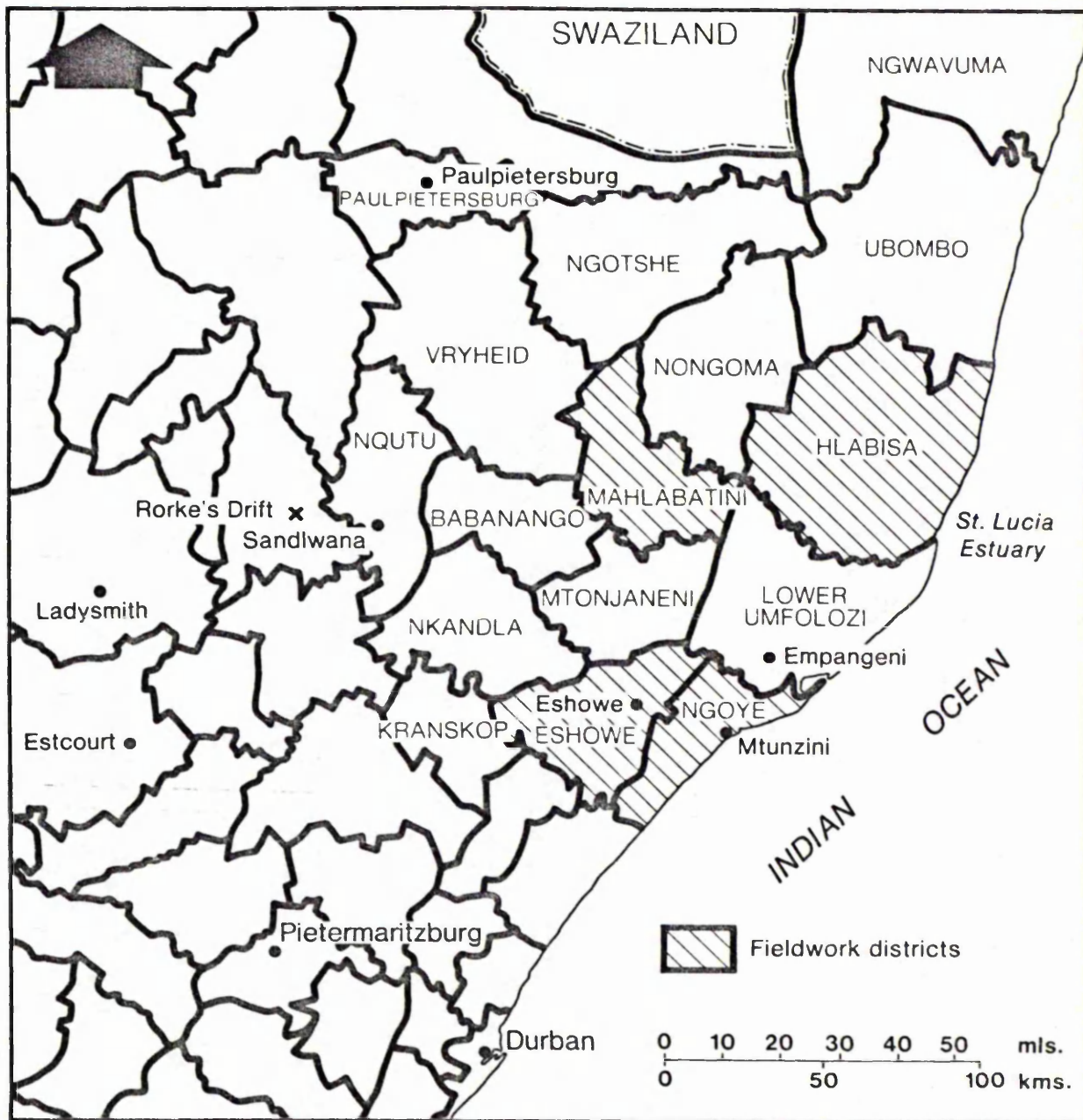
As to the method of transcribing izibongo, it took me some time to work out what seemed the best method. At first the "line" divisions I made were arbitrary and I tended to be guided by the look of the

verse. I then moved to using breathgroups and syntactic divisions as guides to line divisions. In transcribing, finally, I moved towards a method that, as Tedlock (1977) has advocated took account of audience reaction (where this was a feature of the recording). Also, still bearing in mind Tedlock's insistence that the text should reflect changes in the volume of the performer's voice and other features of vocal style, I have (where appropriate) incorporated signs or bracketed comments which indicate raised or lowered volume, exaggerated syllable lengthening and final cadences.

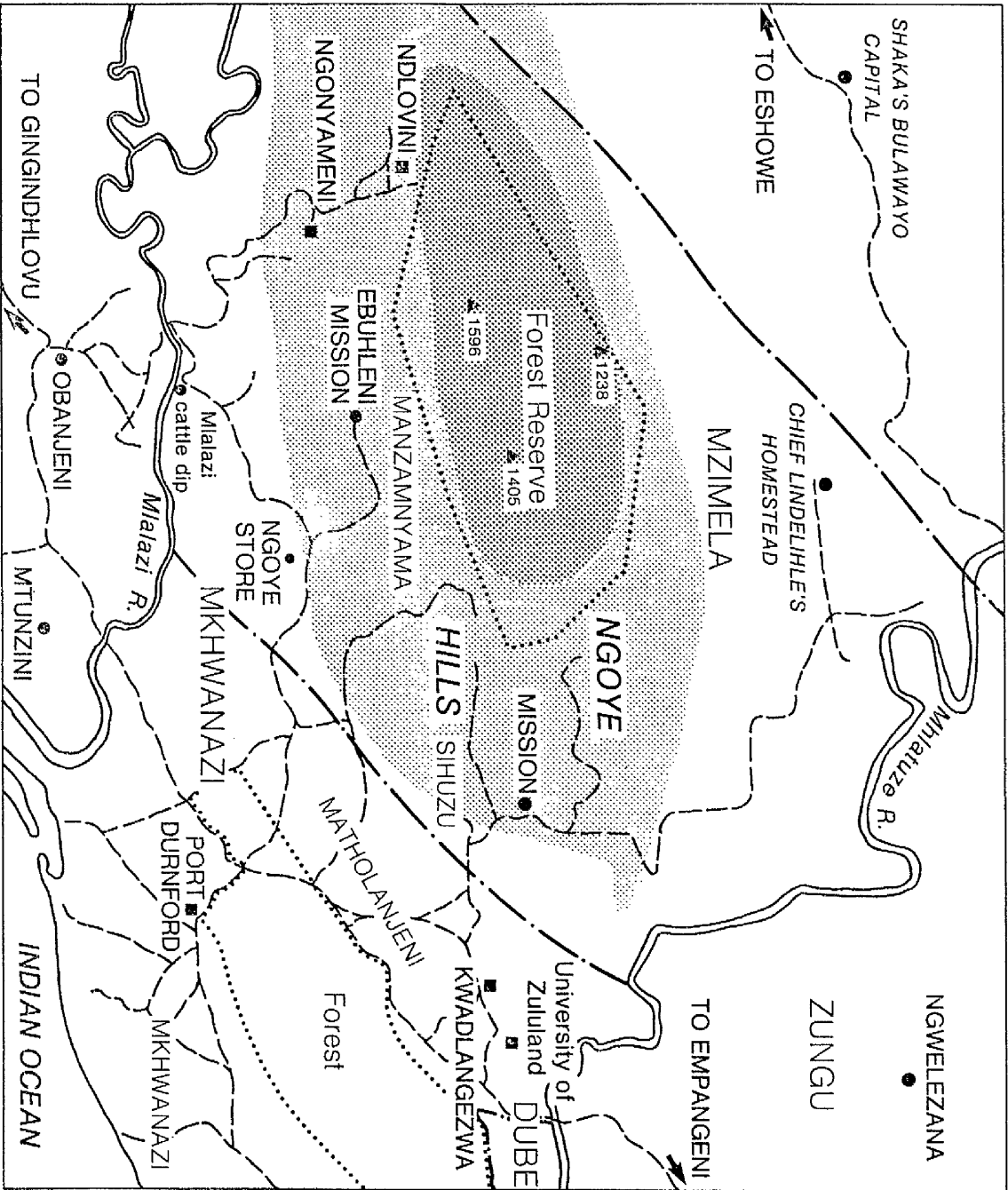
In translating the izibongo I tried where possible to check allusions and untranslatable or half-heard words either with the original reciters, with someone who knew them or with an individual well-versed in praising. My translations tended at first to be poetic in a rather contrived way but I moved after a fairly short time to a simpler style, as close as possible to the Zulu, yet one that attempted to retain the supple, poetic texture of the original utterance. The izibongo in the Appendix are a representative selection from a wider catalogue (numbered A 1-155) and this in turn was selected from a collection of about five hundred izibongo. Izibongo quoted in the text use the "A" number from my catalogue or are noted as "uncatalogued". As I attempt to demonstrate the unity of the genre, the izibongo included are in some instances recorded from bards and in others from non-specialists; they include the izibongo of chiefs and royalty and those of ordinary people. All the material which I recorded during fieldwork is housed in the National Sound Archive of the British Library, Exhibition Road, London.



MAP 1. LOCATION MAP



MAP 2. FIELDWORK DISTRICTS



MAP 3 DETAILED MAP OF MAIN AREA OF FIELDWORK

A Note on terms and orthography

Ukubonga - "to praise", or "praising", refers to the act of praising. Izibongo is a generic term for praise poetry. It is plural in number and can refer a) to praise poems collectively, b) to the praise poem of an individual, or c) to the various units of praise or praise names, that make up an individual's praise poem. I shall use "izibongo" in all three senses and trust that the context will make the precise reference clear. I shall use the terms "praises" and "praise poem" interchangeably to cover b) above. The orthography I use follows the standard Zulu orthography used in the English and Zulu Dictionary compiled by C.M.Doke, D.Mck.Malcolm and J.M.A.Sikakana (1958). I have also made great use of the Zulu English Dictionary compiled by Doke and Vilakazi (2nd ed. 1972). I have followed the convention of omitting the initial vowels of Zulu names (hence, in the English text: "Shaka" not "uShaka" and (with a few exceptions such as Empangeni, Ekuphakameni), of omitting the initial vowel in locative place names. For Zulu grammar and syntax I have in the main followed Doke's Textbook of Zulu Grammar (1942) and have also consulted A Handbook of the Zulu Language (Louw, Ziervogel and Ngidi, 1967), Cope's A Comprehensive Course in the Zulu Language (1982) and Say it in Zulu (Rycroft and Ngcobo, 1981).

Notes

1

For a description of the documentation of Zulu izibongo by nineteenth century Europeans, see David Rycroft, "Zulu Izibongo: A Survey of Documentary Sources", African Language Studies XV, (1974), pp.55-59. Rycroft refers to and quotes from Arbousset's transcription on pp.56-57.

2

See, J. Stuart and D. Malcolm eds., The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn, (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1950). The original of Fynn's diary was buried with him by his retainers and what passes as his diary was written up by his brother, some years later, with an eye for sensational detail. See also, Nathaniel Isaacs, Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa, ed. Louis Herman, (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society Publications Nos.16 and 17, 1936).

3

Isaacs, Travels, Vol.1, pp.264; 280.

4

Gardiner, Narrative of a Journey, pp.57-8; 70-1.

5

The textbooks which contain a rich variety of detailed accounts of Zulu history, customs, folktales and izibongo were published 1923-6. In some cases Stuart states the sources for the account of a particular incident, for example, "The Day Somsewu [Sir Theophilus Shepstone] fetched the children of Monase from Cetshwayo", uKulumetule, (1925), p.7, is from Lutuloni son of Zulu of the Lamule clan. In many cases, though, probably because he was collating from many informants, and because he thought it not suitable in a school reader, Stuart does not give his source.

6

Magema Fuze's Abantu Abamnyama Lapa bavela ngakona, (Pietermaritzburg: City Printing Works, 1922), was actually written in 1902. It is now available in an English translation, The Black People and Whence They Came, ed. A.T.Cope, trans. H.Lugg (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press and Durban: Killie Campbell Africana Library, 1979). The book contains several interesting references to izibongo and a reference to an imbongi of Shaka, Mxamama, who urged the assassins of Shaka to kill him too, which they eventually did (1979, pp.71-2).

7

R.R.R.Dhlomo's novels on the Zulu kings are, uDingane (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1936); uShaka (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1937); uMpande (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1938); uCetshwayo (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1952) and uDinuzulu (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1968).

8

Interview, Nongoma, 16th October, 1975.

9

These are listed in Rycroft, "Documentary Sources", p.63, note 18.

10

Bowra points to the myth-making quality of one of these plays, Dingane, which was produced in Durban by the Medical Students' Drama section in 1954. See M.Bowra, "The Meaning of a Heroic Age", Thirty-seventh Earle Grey Memorial Lecture, King's College, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, delivered 9th May 1957 and published as a monograph. Couzens refers to the Bowra monograph in, "'The New African': Herbert Dhlomo and Black South African Writing in English 1857-1956". Ph.D. thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1980, p.632.

11

James Stuart mss of royal izibongo, K.C.A.L., copy shown to me by David Rycroft at S.O.A.S.

12

David Rycroft's extensive work on Zulu song, dance and instrumental music as well as his study of izibongo has meant that he has seen continuities and connections in Zulu art forms where others have not.

Hence his emphasis on izibongo as a performed art, although a form of speech not song; also it is important to remember that sung, as much as spoken, verbal art is "poetry"; the term "poetry" I take quite definitely to cover spoken and sung verbal art. Rycroft's articles on Zulu music and song include, "Stylistic Evidence in Nguni Song", in K.P.Waschmann ed., Essays on Music and History in Africa (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966); "A Royal Account of Music in Zulu Life with Translation, Annotation and Musical Transcription", Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies XXXVIII, Part 2, (1975), pp.351-402; "The Zulu Bow Songs of Princess Magogo", African Music V, 4, (1975/6), pp.41-97. As regards izibongo, Rycroft has written "Melodic Features in Zulu Eulogistic Recitation", African Language Studies 1, (1960), pp.60-78; "The Question of Metre in Southern African Praise Poetry", in J.P.Wentzel ed., The Third African Languages Congress of UNISA, (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1980), pp.289-307; D.Rycroft and A.B.Ngcobo, Say It In Zulu (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 2nd ed. 1981), also contains many transcripts of izibongo from the James Stuart readers and has examples of amahubo and izaga.

13

C.F.Swanepoel has recently demonstrated how formulas are applied and re-applied with a combination of elasticity and stability in Sotho lithoko. See, C.Swanepoel, Sotho Dithoko tsa Marena: Perspectives on Composition and Genre (Pretoria: By the Author, 84 Nyala Road, Monument Park, 1983); formulas in Xhosa izibongo are mentioned by A.T. Wainwright, "The Praises of Xhosa Mine-workers" (M.A. thesis, University of South Africa, 1979) and by Opland, see note 13; although Cope does not discuss formulas in relation to izibongo (1968), he does in discussing Zulu folktales refer in passing to "structural formulas" and "phrase formulas" in Zulu praise poetry. See, T.Cope, "Zulu Folktales as Literary Art", in J.Argyle and E.Preston-Whyte eds., Social System and Tradition in Southern Africa (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp.197-8.

14

Jeff Opland, Xhosa Oral Poetry: Aspects of a Black South African Tradition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1984. Opland's articles on Xhosa izibongo are, "Scop and Imbongi - Anglo-Saxon and Bantu Oral Poets", English Studies in Africa 14 (1971), pp.161-178; "Praise Poems as Historical Sources", in C.Sanders and R.Derricourt eds., Beyond the Cape Frontiers (London: Longman, 1974), pp.1-37; "Imbongi nezibongo: The Xhosa Tribal Poet and the Contemporary Poetic Tradition", Publication of the Modern Languages Association 90 (1975), pp.185-208; "Two Unpublished Poems by S.E.K.Mqhayi", Research in African Literatures Vol.2, 3, (1980), pp.27-53; "Southeastern Bantu Eulogy and Early Indo-European Poetry", Research in African Literatures Vol.2, 3, (1980), pp.295-307.

15

See Eric Hobsbawm's interesting essay, "Inventing Traditions" in E.Hobsbawm and T.Ranger eds., The Invention of Tradition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp.1-14. Hobsbawm makes a distinction between the adaptation of traditional practice and the "invention of tradition"; a contemporary adaptation of traditional practice as regards izibongo is discussed in E.Gunner, "New Wine in Old Bottles: Imagery in the Izibongo of Isaiah Shembe", Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford X111, 1, (1982), pp.99-108.

CHAPTER 2

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ZULU PRAISING AND PRAISES

2.0. Introduction

Praising takes place in a number of different ways and in many different situations in Zulu society. Besides its political, religious and aesthetic significance, it is often of great psychological importance to the individual and it plays a vital role in social relations. Perhaps most important of all is the sense of identity which praising and praises provide. This is of particular value in a wider society which imposes on individuals the bureaucratic and anonymous identity of the passbook, at the same time giving only grudging credence to the achievement of the Zulu past or the aspirations of the present. This chapter will firstly explore the political and religious aspects of praising and praise poetry, in particular izibongo. I will discuss each aspect separately although in practice it is often difficult to differentiate the two. Much of the commentary on the praises of the Zulu kings stresses, either directly or by implication, the relation of praises to political power (1). This is important, but if viewed in isolation gives a distorted picture of the role of praise poetry in the society as a whole. Besides its public, political role, it is necessary also to recognise praising as a means of mystic communion with the ancestors, the guardians of the well-being of the living. While the "shades" of the kings were (and perhaps still are) thought to brood over the nation, the shades

of the lineages of chiefs and kinship groups perform a similar function at another level. The aesthetic significance of **izibongo** and their role as entertainment are also aspects of the art form which this chapter will touch upon. This is followed by an outline of the significance of **izibongo** for the individual and here the emphasis falls primarily on the more personal, autobiographic (and biographic) praises of ordinary people. The chapter concludes with a brief description of praising in new contexts thus underlining aspects of continuity and innovation in the genre. In general the chapter sets out to demonstrate that there is in the tradition as a whole clear evidence of both continuity and innovation. While in some ways Zulu **izibongo** are backward-looking, drawing strength from the heroic exploits and the myth-making power of a past age, they also demonstrate a capacity to reflect contemporary experience, to inspire and be of use to present generations. The chapter divisions are as follows:

- 2.1. The political significance of **izibongo**
- 2.2. The religious significance of **izibongo**
- 2.3. The significance of **izibongo** for the individual
- 2.4. The aesthetic significance of **izibongo**
- 2.5. **Izibongo** in new situations

2.1. The Political Significance of Izibongo

The way in which praise poetry is (or has been) used in some African societies to validate status and political authority has often been pointed out (2). What has not been so frequently mentioned is the possibility that some praise poetry can continue to function in quite widely differing political circumstances and this seems to be the case with Zulu **izibongo**. In the case of the Zulu kings, from the time of

the creation of the Zulu state by Shaka between 1818 and 1828, the declamation of Shaka's own izibongo and those of his newly "royal" lineage played a central part in the maintenance of central political power. As Gluckman puts it,

What tradition and history was common to all the Zulu had to be told in the names of the Zulu Kings and it was largely their common sentiment about the King and his predecessors which united all Zulu as members of the nation.
(Gluckman, "The Kingdom of the Zulu of South Africa", 1940, p.30)

It is Gluckman, again, who defines the power, symbolic and real, which the King wielded:

The social cohesion of the Zulu state therefore centred, in all particulars, on the King. His rule was sanctioned by the force behind him but he was supposed to use it to defend the national interests...The unity of the system was derived from more than force. As the symbol of national unity and health, the King was magically treated in the first fruits ceremonies, that the nation might prosper and conquer its enemies, home and foreign.

He stood as final judge, who was bound, by the advice of his council and established custom, to defend legal rules which helped control Zulu social and ecological relations. For Zulu moral values stood the King, not only the symbol of social cohesion, but also its artificer.
(Gluckman, "Analysis of a Social Situation in Modern Zululand", 1940, p.154)

In the Zulu court, then, the image-making function of the royal izimbongi, the bards, must have been of great importance. Furthermore, the eulogies themselves, performed on an enormous variety of occasions, must have lived in the consciousness of his subjects as the very embodiment of the King himself. But even far from the centre of Shaka's power at the royal court of Dukuza (present-day Stanger), the mere recitation of the royal praises was, it seems, enough to conjure his might and send packing the emissaries of his enemies. The bard

Msebenzi, narrator of the history and izibongo of the amaNgwane under Matiwane and his successors relates how the Ngwane emissaries turned back from visiting Mshweshwe, the Basotho leader, at Thaba-bosiu:

And whilst they were still cooking the meat [given by Mshweshwe] they filled their hemp pipes and praised their chief...the Ngwane ambassadors...began to recite:

Our royal bird with the red wings
with the red beak and the red eyes...

Shaka's ambassadors heard this and said, "Ha! That is the Ngwane lot. Fill the hemp pipe boy," and they said his praises:

Shaka who Shaka's (unknown) himself*
The precipice of stones at Nkandla
To shelter the elephants when the rain threatens
The Feather-devour-all at Nkandla
which gobbled up all the amaPhela regiment of Zwide son
of Langa.

This counter-recitation on the part of Shaka's emissaries was apparently a great blow; Msebenzi's narrative continues:

Matiwane's messengers returned to him and said, "We bring you back no word about the matter you sent us on, but only bad news. When we filled our hemp-pipe and praised you, we heard Shaka's praises being recited on the other side of the fence..."

(van Warmelo, History of Matiwane and the Amangwane Tribe, 1938, p.38)

* Cope translates this praise as "He who beats but is not beaten", Izibongo, pp.88-9, 1.6.

Whether or not this episode took place quite as Msebenzi relates it we do not know (3) but we can assume it is a faithful representation of the way in which a ruler's izibongo expressed both the presence of the man and his political might. Shaka's praises carried the most weight because he was politically more powerful but the authority and presence of each leader was expressed in the same way, through the formalised and richly metaphoric language of izibongo.

If *izibongo* were used to represent a leader - and his authority - in far-flung parts, they were used far more so in a ruler's home territory. Certainly the evidence of the *imbongi* Hoyo, given to Stuart in 1921, indicates how widely the royal praises were used at the royal court in the time of Mpande. The extent of their use would undoubtedly be patterned on habits instigated by Shaka, who would in turn have expanded on the use of eulogy common to the Nguni "nations" (*izizwe*) he welded together to form the Zulu state. Hoyo's account shifts between recalling what he must have been told by his father, the bard Soxalase, and drawing on his own experience as bard to the young Solomon and to his father Dinuzulu kaCetshwayo. The dignity and ceremony of the occasion of praising is stressed; it is clear that no one may make the smallest casual sound without incurring censure. What is also clear is the way the whole Zulu line is praised, giving the illusion of grandeur and stability stretching back through generations. What also emerges is that it was possible to enhance, indeed create status for a member of the lineage (Mpande's younger brother, Nzibe) who had previously had no special mention. Praising was clearly an indispensable way of celebrating the status and the right to rule not merely of the present ruler but of the whole line (4). Lastly, what emerges from the following passage is the key role of the bards in articulating and publicising the praises of the Kings and their line. Hoyo is obviously aware of the importance of his role and refers to other bards such as Mnyamana and Hemulana:

When *bongaing* for the king takes place, say after some work for the King has been done - viz. cutting trees and branches, building cattle kraals or huts - and after the king has given cattle to kill, the king comes into the assembly, with the princes and the big, elderly *izinduna* [councillors] also seated. When the *imbongi* is about to begin, all the company except the king and princes and *izinduna* rise and remain standing each holding a stick in his hand. The stick is held upwards. They stand on being

ordered to do so by an induna, who may say, "Rise, and let the king's food be praised!"

In Solomon's presence, now I, as imbongi, begin with him. On finishing his eulogies, I go straight to those of Nzibe kaSenzangakhona, for his praises are regarded as the proper introduction to those of the other kings. Nzibe was a royal warrior and a leader in battle... Mnkabayi, being a woman comes right at the end. If I knew Nandi's eulogies, she would come in at the end too. This was the procedure followed by Mnyamana and Hemulana kaMbangazeli kaSonqunta... He was a great imbongi and often took Mnyamana's place (5) when bongaing had to be done in the assembly.

Not a word is uttered by any of the assembly when I am bongaing. Were anyone to say a word or cough etc., he would be turned out, perhaps beaten, and sent away, as well as rebuked. Nor is any response of any kind, by whistling or otherwise, made during the recitations of the eulogies. It may be done at the end, however...

Hoye continues with details of the memorial aspects of praising and the necessary interaction of poet and audience. He also shows how the order of praising the royal ancestors varied according to the occasion:

The sticks stand on the ground whilst held, or are held upwards. When I have reached the end of all the eulogies, I will give the salutation, "Bayede!" [Hail King!]. The whole company then raise their sticks up in the air, whilst the izinduna and princes stand up too, and all exclaim "Bayede!" together. Then, if I find it necessary or proper, I call out, "Bayede!" a second time, and again all do likewise... Mpande gave instructions that when the imbongi was beginning the praises of the Zulu kings he should open with those of Nzibe, and then go on to those of the kings. He did this because Nzibe was of his house. He raised his status to that of a great chief. When a person had finished the praises of Nzibe he would go on to praise Tshaka, Ndaba, Jama, Senzangakhona until they were finished. While bongaing was taking place, people would be eating.

When one began with the praises of Senzangakhona, one would do so when the impi [army] was being sent out to war. When the impi was being prepared for war, when it was going out to attack, one began with Senzangakhona, Jama, Ndaba, Punga and Mageba...one would then go on to Nzibe; then would follow Tshaka, Dingana, Mpande, Cetshwayo, Dinuzulu, and then one would go onto Mnkabayi. (Webb and Wright, The James Stuart Archive Vol. 1, 1976, pp.168-9)

On Hoye's evidence, the royal praises were, it seems, extensively used to keep before the nation the image of the kings and the powerful notion of a single, unified identity. The necessity of maintaining, in

Gluckman's words, "a common sentiment about the king", is not to be underestimated. As Shula Marks has pointed out, there were always potentially disruptive forces at hand:

There were both centripetal and centrifugal forces in Nguni political life. At the centre was the king - or in pre-Shakan times - the chief. Through him his followers were given a sense of identity and unity vis-a-vis the outside world. At the same time the balance was delicate. Older kinship loyalties remained potent and could dominate political life if for some reason the king were removed or had a weak personality.
(Marks, Reluctant Rebellion, 1970, p.33) (6)

The royal praises, then, were part of the rich symbolism of unity and nationhood which the Zulu kings exploited. The royal praises represented not only the king, but the nation. They were a vehicle for expressing and reiterating deep feelings of loyalty and solidarity towards the king and the nation. At the time when the bard Hoyo gave his testimony to Stuart (having been sent especially for this purpose from Nongoma to Pietermaritzburg by Solomon) there was officially no Zulu king, not even a "Paramount Chief", as Solomon was only officially recognised as Chief of the uSuthu, and there was no Zulu kingdom. Zululand had been annexed by Natal in 1888, large coastal areas had since the early nineteenth hundreds been given over to European farms and all Zulu men had to pay tax. Hoyo's evidence gives no hint of these changes but presents, rather, a picture of untroubled continuity. It is doubtless true that bards are, in one sense, very unreliable sources of evidence because they have strong vested interests. Yet there are other sources that suggest both the tenacity with which the Zulus clung to the notion of kingship and the presence of Zulu nationalism. The izibongo of the Zulu kings have remained closely linked with both kingship and nationalism, as the following

instances illustrate.

In 1925 the Prince of Wales visited South Africa. In the Transkei, S.E.K.Mqhayi, the Xhosa bard and author recited for the Prince *izibongo* of welcome heavily laced with criticism and especially composed for the occasion (Jordan, 1973:27). In Zululand, however, when the Prince went to Eshowe to meet the young Solomon, the occasion seems to have been used by the Zulu to express loyalty not to the Prince but to Solomon. Moreover the *izibongo* recited were (we are told) those of the Zulu royal line and the *imbongi* appears to have been Hoye. The young William Plomer noted the comparative lack of enthusiasm for the Prince in his account of the scene:

The chief event was a gathering of the Zulu clans for a war dance en masse, a fine barbaric spectacle which at times got a little out of hand...the assembled natives largely failed either to perceive or to show interest in their sovereign's [i.e. George V's] heir and their attention was diverted by the presence of a descendant of their own former rulers.
(Plomer, Double Lives, 1943, p.151)

A second account of the historic meeting at Eshowe comes from Hoye's son, the *imbongi* Mgezeni Ndlela. Its focus is not primarily on the performance of the royal praises but on the friendly tussle for the services of his father as bard. He had recently gone as *imbongi* to Mathole, Chief of the Buthelezi, Solomon's brother-in-law and close adviser, but Solomon asked to have him back. What is of interest is the young King's confession of his need for the *imbongi* and his view of the bard as chronicler of the present and custodian of the past. He sees Hoye as a representative of his forefathers and a protective figure. Mgezeni described the exchange in the following words:

Mathole gave him a calf with a white patch and a front kilt

of twisted calf skin; he also gave him a bunch of vulture feathers set in strips and he gave him a shield marked with black and grey which I have inherited - this size [he gestures] and very beautiful. It was given by Mathole for praising him; he praised him and [then] went to the meeting between King Solomon and the Prince. The year they shook hands at Eshowe, it was. Actually, Solomon took him over again; for both those leaders there was no other *imbongi* besides Father.

And Solomon said, "It is you, it is you Hoyo. I am going with you. I will die with you, you will be there when I die. Because you were chosen by my father [Dinuzulu]. If you stay at home who is there for me to go with? [But] if you remain it would be like my forefathers remaining, even if I am killed by the Whites - they could kill me in any godforesaken place they liked, and it wouldn't matter if you were there. Because my forefathers are not with me, I shall take you".

And Zimbu (Mathole) replied, "I am going to have him".

They got on very well those two, there was no bad feeling between them. So it was in order when Mathole said, "Ah, you of the Lion, you have stolen a treasure of ours, and who will I have to go with me?" (7)

The Zulus' attachment to their king in this period and his considerable influence, although (or, she suggests, because) he was without any official power, is also noted by Marks (1978:178-188). Indeed, the period of the 1920s and 1930s saw the emergence, Marks argues, of a new kind of Zulu nationalism; it was not the narrow ethnic nationalism of the old Zulu kingdom but was instead highly influenced by European notions of nationalism with their concomitant ideals of democratic freedom (8). However, even in the context of this changing form of Zulu nationalism, the dynamic of Zulu royalty as a unifying and inspirational force remained; it tantalised various power groups who sought, variously, to obliterate it, to neutralise it, or to utilise its vitality (9). Gluckman, basing his observations on the Zululand and Natal of the late 1930s, remarks on the growing strength of Zulu nationalism after a period of weakness. He too comments on the discrepancy at that time between the king's legal position and his "present power" and considers the power to be partly due to the fact that he symbolises the great tradition of the Zulu kings (10). A

further comment on the continued strength of the idea of kingship among the Zulu comes from Sundkler (1961:102) who has demonstrated how many of the Zulu independent churches have modelled themselves on the Zulu kingship pattern. Perhaps the best known of such churches is the Nazareth Church and the izibongo of their founder Isaiah Shembe are indeed in many ways "royal" (see A 2 and Gunner, 1982). Sundkler's account of an event that took place in the 1950s underlines the continuing significance of kingship to the Zulu and the link between this and Zulu nationalism in a period when they had no vestige of real political power. In 1954, on September 26th (the day on which in 1828 Shaka had been assassinated by his brothers Dingana and Mbopha) a Shaka memorial service was held at Stanger, site of the old KwaDukuza court of Shaka. Sundkler describes this gathering as "one of the great occasions of Zulu nationalism in the fifties" (1965:278). The Zulu weekly, Ilanga laseNatal, The Sun of Natal, (edited at that time by the brothers H.I.E. and R.R.R.Dhlomo) reported the events of the memorial service in great detail. The Saturday October 9th edition of Ilanga carries a picture of the marble monument built on the spot said by tradition to be his grave. It reports the great crowds of ordinary people as well as dignitaries of the Zulu royal house and other chiefs who gathered for the celebration. It mentions the singing of ceremonial songs (amahubo) and the number of people who donned traditional Zulu dress for the occasion ("bevu nule ngemvunulo yesiZulu"). Editions of the previous two weeks carried an essay in the English section by H.I.E.Dhlomo (it was to be his last major article) on "Shaka: His Character, Philosophy, Achievements" (Couzens, 1980:632). Also, the Saturday September 25th edition, as if to acknowledge the central place of the izibongo in this public, nationalistic commemoration of

King Shaka, devoted a double page to his izibongo. The well-known, apostrophic praise names, set often in metaphors suggesting energy and ferocity recall stirring events from Shaka's wars of conquest which created the Zulu state. The izibongo conclude with one of the best known metaphoric praise names of Shaka and one which recalls his Mpondo campaign of 1828; as part of this praise, the names of venerable ancestors of the royal house are invoked, pointing to the ancestral shades who guard Shaka even as he guards the present generation (11):

Inyathi ejame ngomkhonto phezu koMzimvubu
 Aze amaMpondo ayesaba ukuyehlela.
 Ningamhlabi ngoba niyobe nihlaba uPhunga noMageba.
 BAYETHE! BAYETHE! UYIZULU!

Buffalo that leans frowning on a spear above the Mzimvubu
 Until the Pondos were afraid to come down.
 Don't stab him because you would be stabbing Phunga and
 Mageba.

HAIL O KING! HAIL O KING! HE IS ZULU!

In the edition of Ilanga of September 25th, 1954, these elevated Shakan izibongo appear sandwiched between commercial advertisements for such varied items as Brooklax, Vaseline, Aspro, bones, pieces of material and furniture on hire purchase over twenty-four months. This was not, however, their only appearance over this period of deep fervour and emotion when the Zulu were publicly commemorating their founder, Shaka, and celebrating their own continued existence albeit in the oppressive conditions of White domination. The izibongo of

Shaka and his forefathers and the kings after him were also performed as a central part of the main ceremony. The *imbongi* on this occasion was Princess Magogo, daughter of Dinuzulu and full sister of Solomon. According to her son, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi (12), her performance was extremely well received and one of the royal princes sent her a cow as a token of his appreciation.

By the time the royal praises, that is the *izibongo* of Senzangakhona, Shaka, Dingana, Mpande, Cetshwayo, Dinuzulu, Solomon and Bhhekuzulu are performed on a grand public occasion such as the one in 1954, it should be clear that their position vis-a-vis the wielding of political power has changed. They no longer provide a focal point for legitimising status, authority and royal glory in a centralised state because such a state no longer exists. Rather, through the power of their elevated, familiar, praise names and narrative passages which present the Zulu past in heroic terms, they provide a focus for Zulu pride and nationalism under bleak political conditions.

The central importance of the myth and the memory of Shaka to the Zulu was again made clear when one of the first decisions of the KwaZulu Government was the institution of Shaka's Day, September 26th as a public holiday in KwaZulu. One of the key features of Shaka's Day is the performance of royal *izibongo* in six centres in KwaZulu. Shaka's *izibongo* are performed together with other royal eulogies. In the S.A.B.C. recording of the present royal bard performing in September 1975 at Nongoma, Dlamini praised (in this order) Cetshwayo, Shaka, Bhhekuzulu and Zwelithini. Nor is the performance of the royal praises confined to centres in KwaZulu (13). In 1974, on Shaka's Day, King Goodwill Zwelithini shared a platform at Orlando Stadium, Soweto, with Chief Gatsha Buthelezi. There were both speeches and praising. In

his speech Chief Buthelezi appealed to the large crowd for a unity embracing not merely a single ethnic group but all "oppressed Black people":

Africans had to unite to survive the "onslaughts of racist White domination", Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, the head of the KwaZulu Government told thousands of Africans in Soweto yesterday...Standing on the same platform in the Orlando Stadium as the King of the Zulus, Paramount Chief Goodwill Zwelithini, Chief Buthelezi said African history was so inter-related that they were one people...Honouring King Shaka did not imply that Zulus were abandoning the cause of Black unity.

He pointed out that Black people were not discriminated against as Zulus, Xhosas, Shangaans and so forth, but as Africans.

(Rand Daily Mail, 30th September, 1974)

In reporting the speech with its clear appeal to a broadly based Black nationalism, the journalist covering the event does not mention another feature of the meeting: the presence and performance of two bards, one the royal bard, the other that of Chief Buthelezi. Both *izimbongi* performed and were, according to Chief Buthelezi (14), well received. Mgezeni Ndlela, the Chief's *imbongi* was given such applause that he gave a repeat performance, declaiming for a second time the *izibongo* of the Buthelezi lineage.

The performance of the royal *izibongo* and those of the Buthelezi lineage on an occasion with such an emphasis on both Zulu and supra-Zulu nationalism to a multi-lingual Black audience (see A 7 1.10) demonstrates again how political an art form *izibongo* can be. In such a situation the Zulu King Shaka is presented as a symbol not only of Zulu power and achievement but also of African greatness. The heroic Black past is presented through both the poetry and the declamatory skill of the bard as something inspiring, uplifting and, for the duration of the praising, tangible and close. Moreover the continuity

in style between Shaka's (and the other kings') praises and those of the young King gives tangible reality to the claim that he is Shaka's descendant. Through the various royal *izibongo* therefore, the glory of Shaka, Shaka's line and "the Black Nation" is indeed present among the people.

With such instances as the above to hand, it would be a mistake to regard the use of *izibongo* in contemporary politics as somehow anachronistic. Nor can the use of royal *izibongo* and the *izibongo* of leaders such as Chief Buthelezi be seen as resulting solely from the ideological emphasis given by successive South African governments to separate development and ethnicity. Praising has continued through a range of political conditions experienced by the Zulu. In one sense, the royal *izibongo* in particular, but also those of chiefly houses of particularly influential figures such as Chief Buthelezi, create an illusion of heroism, grandeur and achievement which clouds and distracts from present realities. In another sense the praises - both royal and chiefly - are powerful inspirations for the present; they provide a much needed sense of continuity and present an image of achievement and strength with which people can identify. Also contemporary *izibongo* of leaders (for example, A 1 - A 7) may exploit the affective power of established praise names and offer (in some cases) pungent comment on contemporary affairs. Indeed contemporary leaders' *izibongo* differ somewhat from the older royal *izibongo* in that criticism is very rarely directed at the leader, only outwards, at forces which are considered to be against him (see Chapter 7). In general, the ability of Zulu *izibongo* to be both of the past and in the present intensifies their political role, reflecting past achievements and present aspirations. The role of *izibongo* may have shifted

but they are still relevant; whereas the royal praises could in the heyday of Zulu power be seen as a means by which a monarch through his bards reinforced his (and the nation's) identity before his people, they operate in the present circumstances more as a means of maintaining and continually recreating a national identity in the face of strong external pressures viewed in the main as hostile to Zulu - and to Black - aspirations.

2.2. The Religious Significance of Izibongo

Praising is in many ways closely associated with the ancestors, or the "shades" as Berglund (1976) calls them, and in many performance contexts there is an intricate association of praise and prayer. While *izibongo* are in one sense regarded as memorials, in another way the very act of calling out the praises of an ancestor is considered tantamount to calling on him, speaking to him; it is therefore a solemn and sacred action not to be undertaken lightly.

As A. Vilakazi (1965) and Berglund (1976) have pointed out, Zulu belief does not cut the dead off from the living. The Zulu shades are, (like the ancestors in other African societies) "the living dead" (Mbiti, 1969:25ff). Berglund elaborates on this in a specifically Zulu context:

Zulu society is a community of the survivors and the shades. There is no existence of the survivors separated from that of the shades, nor a realm of the shades separate from the living. The two are closely and very intimately tied together in kinship bonds which make the individuals and shades of a lineage interdependent on each other.
(Berglund, Zulu Thought-patterns and Symbolism, 1976, p.197)

In the days of the Zulu Kingdom, the king was both secular and

religious head and the occasions when the **izibongo** of the royal ancestors were recited were in some cases addresses of a religious nature. As Gluckman points out, the royal ancestors were supposed to care for the whole of Zululand and in the interests of the nation the king had to appeal to them in drought, war and at the planting and first fruits seasons (1940a:30). In other words, they were addressed, in the main through their praises, at times of insecurity, loss and change (Cope, 1968:33). Such occasions as the recitation of the royal **izibongo** in front of the regiments before war, at the annual first fruits ceremony and at the burial of a king (Samuelson, 1929:291) must be seen therefore as a form of prayer to the royal shades, invoking their support and blessings on their descendants and on the nation as a whole. Although in the days of the Zulu Kingdom it was the royal **izibongo** which had in effect to guard and care for the nation, at the level of the individual it was the shades of the lineage segment (**umndeni**) who were turned to for guidance. Here too, **izibongo** played a central role. Praising the lineage ancestors (**ukubonga/ukuthetha amadlozi**) was an integral part of any solemn, ritual occasion when the ancestors were addressed (Stuart, 1925:100-101).

Although the numerous ceremonies (such as the **umkhosi**, the first fruits ceremony) have to a large extent fallen away, it is probably true to say that many Zulu, both non-Christian and Christian regard the spirits of the kings, and particularly Shaka, as in some way guarding and guiding the nation. The extract below from a poem in the Zulu paper **Ilanga** of Saturday February 13th 1954 expresses very explicitly the idea of Shaka as a powerful guardian spirit, founding ancestor of the Zulu nation. In a direct address to Shaka it reproduces the kind of formal, dignified language used in reporting to and seeking the help of the ancestors. It also echoes Christian liturgical

language. (From the poem "Kwa-Dukuza Ngo-1828-1953", Ilanga laseNatal,
13.2.1954, by M.N.S.Khonza, (the English translation is mine)):

14 Namhla siyakudumisa, namhla siyakukhonza
Thongo lendlu eMnyama,

Sicela ubhekise ubuso bakho kithina

Zintandane zeAfrika

Lokhu kungumhlabele wethu

Lokhu kungumthandazo wethu

20 Lokhu kungukukhala kwethu

Lokhu kuyizifisa kwethu

Shwele mbumbi weSizwe

Sesibuzwile ubunzima

Sibheke sizwele, sihawukele.

14 Today we honour you, today we hail you,
Spirit of the Black house,

We beg that you give your blessings to us,

The Orphans of Africa

This is our sacrifice

This is our prayer

20 This is our cry

This is our longing

Pardon moulder of the Nation

We have experienced hardship

Watch over us, hear us, have pity on us.

The way in which izibongo (of the deceased) sometimes operate as both prayer and praise was evident on a number of occasions during fieldwork. Mgezeni Ndlela, imbongi of Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, remarked that the monthly meeting of Buthelezi tribal councillors (izinduna) was always opened by a recital of Buthelezi lineage izibongo that was for those present, a form of prayer as well as eulogy. At the Mahlabathini celebration held to honour Chief Buthelezi for having received an honorary doctorate from the University of Zululand (see Chapter 4), the programme opened with the imbongi (Mgezeni) leading dignitaries in and praising the Buthelezi lineage from the platform (see Plate 1). This was followed by a prayer from Canon Biyela of the Church of the Province. The opening izibongo in this instance as well appear to have been more than memorials and eulogy for the Buthelezi ruling house and the present Chief. Mgezeni prefaced each lineage izibongo with the vocative "You" (Wena). For example:

Wena kaSakha-muzi ngamkhonto
kaMlambo kaNyathi. (Ngqengelele Buthelezi, A 8)
You Builder of (your) homestead with a spear
of The River, of The Buffalo.

And:

Wena kaMathuph' amnyama ngokuzosela. (Mkhandumba Buthelezi, A 12)
You of the Black Thumbs from roasting for yourself.

Mgezeni was thus using the same form of direct address that would be used when the izibongo were recited at a sacrifice to the shades or

as part of the ritual address to the shades at a wedding ceremony. They were, therefore, on this occasion both a form of heraldic celebration of the lineage and a form of prayer.

On another occasion, the extent to which *izibongo* are regarded as a means of communication with the ancestors was demonstrated by the *imbongi*, Khonjwangekhanda Mdletshe of Hlabisa. I visited him at his home on the summit of iNhlwathi mountain and before he recited the *izibongo* of the Mdletshe chiefly lineage he insisted on addressing the ancestors (he used the verb "thandazela", "pray to") in order to explain to them what he was about to do. He strode to and fro as he spoke, and gave the impression that, for him, the Mdletshe ancestors were in some way present. He constantly used the second person plural pronoun "Nina" or "Nani" ("And you") and more than once in the course of praising reciting *izibongo* he broke off to address the shades. At one point he called out, "And so it is, you spirits of the departed here at home" ("Kunjalo-ke nani amakhosana laph' ekhaya"). And later, as if uncertain whether or not the ancestors were really in approval of his reciting the praises for me to record (the strong wind at the time added, he told me, to his uncertainty), he continued:

So it is, spirits, you hear me, I am calling you. I have called you [by reciting your *izibongo*] in that perhaps they [the White people] will help us on another occasion, perhaps they will forsake us, I don't know, because they are people who write and perhaps we too will grow through our history becoming known throughout the land...(15)

Khonjwangekhanda mentioned that he had praised the previous day at the courthouse, before the young chief (Thandinkosi Mdletshe) heard the cases for the session. On such an occasion the emphasis would no doubt have been more on the heraldic aspect of praising and on the "dignity"

("isizotha") which his praising conferred on the Chief and his lineage. At the imbongi's home, however, it was the presence of the shades themselves which was foremost in his mind and the act of praising was a markedly solemn and religious occasion.

There are some public occasions where praising both enhances the prestige of the lineage (if it is done well) and has also a specific religious function. At weddings which are conducted according to Zulu custom (the latter was often referred to as "isiZulu"), and known in Ngoye as "izindwendwe", the izibongo of both the bride's and the bridegroom's lineages ought to be performed. On one level this is a part of the good showing, the honour of both lineages in the marriage, but it is also considered necessary for the harmony of the marriage and for procreation. It is believed that only if the ancestors bless the marriage will it be fruitful, and therefore the lineage ancestors must be addressed and praised. The imbongi Masoswidi Mkhwanazi stressed the importance of the bride's ancestors being informed, first of all at her own home of the impending marriage:

It is they who will look after our child for us, because whatever happens [to her] those who are below are aware of it. Therefore when a child is about to leave home, the shades are told about it, first of all in her own home, in the cattle kraal. (16)

Part of the "informing" of the ancestors involves the recitation of the izibongo of lineage ancestors, and the officiator and reciter of the praises is either an invited imbongi or a senior member of the lineage who acts as imbongi for the occasion. Having informed the ancestors at the family homestead, it is also important to "bring together" the shades of both lineages ("ukuhlanganisa amadlozi"), to praise the ancestors and to ask for offspring at the public wedding ceremony

itself. Here the setting for the address to the shades is a very public one and the bard (or less frequently the two bards) pace around the arena and praise and address the ancestors. As part of this address to the shades of the bride's lineage, a prayer for offspring is always included. The words are fairly fixed and are set in the following dignified form: "Sicel' ibomvu umntwana wethu ukuthi ma belale bebabili bavuke sebebathathu". / "We beg for the "red", that our child may have offspring, that they may sleep and be two and arise and be three".

In practice, at several weddings I attended, the *izibongo* of the bridegroom's lineage were not performed (for reasons of time) but those of the bride's lineage always were and it is obviously considered of prime importance that the ancestors of the bride are informed and so give their blessing to the union, and to the "loss" of one of their line.

In praising in the arena, the link between the ancestors most distant in time and the present generation is overtly made through the order in which *izibongo* are usually recited. As Masoswidi Mkhwanazi expressed it:

When I know that I am going to praise [in the arena] I think and think about the praises. I will begin with the grandfathers and go on to the fathers; I praise and praise the fathers and then I praise my own brothers and then I come to the father of the bride and I end with him. (17)

The praising on such an occasion is an important means of communication with the ancestors and in some cases the ancestors praised are four or more generations distant from the present. In general, the greater the status of the lineage the deeper the lineage tends to be. Vilakazi notes that many Christians too feel the

necessity for a marriage to be made secure through the involvement of the ancestors as well as the living members of the lineage. He lays stress on the need felt for reciting the bridegroom's ancestors' izibongo:

In a Christian Zulu marriage, men, in particular, wish to insist on their patrikin being drawn into the marriage contract...the securities both social and spiritual which the kinship structure provides, are very highly valued...a man still wishes to get as much help as possible from his kinsmen by way of lobolo [cattle or cash for the bridewealth], and even if Christian, he may still wish to be reported to the ancestral spirits, to have the family or lineage izibongo recited at the wedding feast...
(A.Vilakazi, Zulu Transformations, 1965, p.61)

It is in the homestead and in affairs affecting the umndeni (lineage segment, see Preston-Whyte and Sibisi, 1975:293) that are not public that the relation between izibongo, the ancestors and the living is most evident. Here it is non-Christians who address the ancestors, although Zionist Churches such as Isaiah Shembe's Nazarites proclaim the possibility of reconciling belief in the ancestors with belief in a Christian God. The imbongi Khonjwangekhanda Mdletshe, a devout Nazarite explained their position as follows: "(Shembe said), 'Pray all of you to your own kin, praise your own kin...pray to the Almighty after that but begin with your own kin'". / "(UShembe wathi), 'Thandazani nabakini nibabonga nabakini...ebesenithandaza-ke kuNkulunkulu, niqale kodwa nabakini'". Certainly those who follow Zulu religious belief regard it as important that the shades of the lineage segment are reported to, appeased and appealed to. A state of harmony must exist between the living and "those who are below" ("abaphansi"). After an individual's death the izibongo remain (18), to be used on private ritual occasions (and also on more public occasions such as

weddings and on other public occasions if his lineage is important). If this is remembered the oft-quoted statement in Dingana's izibongo take on an added resonance:

Kuyofa abantu kusale izibongo

Yizona ezosala zibalilela emanxiweni.

People will die and their praises remain

It is these that will be left to mourn for them in their deserted homes.

(Cope, Izibongo, p.67)

A man's praises "remain" because they are often used and they "mourn" for him in the deserted homesteads because they are not only his memorials but also a means of communicating with him. There is, amongst those who follow Zulu religion, the belief that the izibongo of lineage shades are to be revered and are never to be taken lightly and bandied about; they are, in a sense, sacred. The imbongi Azariah Mthiyane, for instance, was willing to recite and check with me the izibongo of the founder of the Nazareth Church, Isaiah Shembe (see A 2). He also recited the izibongo of the Mbonambi and Mthiyane chiefs but when I asked him to recite the izibongo of his own lineage he was (like Khonjwangekhanda) very conscious of the presence of the ancestors and was most reluctant. This was because, "The shades would prick up their ears and wonder what was wanted of them."/ "Azobek' i'ndlebe athi abizwa ngani amadlozi." A further instance of the way in which the izibongo of a deceased person are reverentially identified with his shade came when I played back to the Dindi family (19) a recording containing izibongo of a Dindi ancestor and other deceased members of nearby families. The recording was received with dismay and consternation. It was felt very strongly that it was disrespectful both to the deceased and to their survivors for their izibongo to be heard in

their home districts for no proper reason and without any family consultation.

Berglund (1976:358 and see Samuelson, 1929:290) mentions that "very poetic and extremely beautiful Zulu is often heard at the invocation of the shades" and he refers also (1976:347) to the calling out of the *izibongo* of the shades before the sacrificial beast is stabbed. The number of *izibongo* recited, together with the invocation varies according to the status of the family, the proficiency of the *imbongi* and other variable factors such as why the shades are being called upon. Whereas chiefly lineages (and some others) will be able to call on the services of their bard, others will use a member of the lineage who serves as *imbongi* and he may or may not be very competent. The address to the shades usually takes place in the cattle kraal although it may also be indoors or in the yard and the ritual beast is killed as the speaker concludes his address (20). For the lineage of ordinary people it is usually the *izibongo* of one or more paternal grandfather and his /their sons which are recited; in special cases, for instance that of the formidable and widely known diviner, MaShezi, women's *izibongo* are included and the "mothers" of the line are often included generally in the invocation even if their praises are not recited. The following account of a ritual sacrifice and address which had taken place the day before my visit illustrates how the *izibongo* form an integral part of the ceremony even if, as here, only the *izibongo* of one ancestor is recited. The members of the *umndeni* who were present consisted of the grandfather, his sons and his grandsons. The ceremony was conducted by the grandfather, who acted as *imbongi* as well; it was at the homestead of his son who owned the ritual beast and who had taken leave from his place of work at

Hammarsdale in Natal some 200 kilometres away. Mr Dube senior recounted what he had said on the previous day and the dependence of the lineage on the shades and the reverence for them is clear from his words:

They [the shades] are given the beast by my son. Then I said, "Father, Nzwakele,* here is your grandson, he is giving you your food and asking for good fortune from you. Until now he has been fortunate and so have we too who are at home.

Father, Squirrel how do you do that?

Tail of the white hyena,

Penis which works and rests,

I say Father, gather together all your kin, let them approach and be close at hand. Here is your food given by your son, your grandson. May you not say, tomorrow, that you were given nothing, that there is nothing. He begs, as he returns to his work, he pleads for good fortune. Gather together all your kin, Mbokod' ebomvu**, [the izibongo are repeated]. I say that it is you alone Father whom I know. I do not know any of your brothers. It is you who must tell them; all of them must gather together and eat this food. Here is your gift, and our mothers and our grandmothers, and your mothers and all the children of our kin. You must gather them all together Father, it is you who know them." (The ritual beast stands while this is said.) When the beast bellows, it is killed. And then I say again, "Here is your beast, Fathers. The beast that is for you all; may you be here, and all of you present. Let there be no-one who says he did not hear". And as it bellows it is brought to the ground.

* "Nzwakele" is a clan praise name (isithakazelo) for the Dube clan.

** "Imbokodwebomvu" was the name of a regiment of Dinuzulu, members of whom were born c.1865 (Krige, 1950:407). The speaker here addresses his grandfather by the name of his regiment.

While instances such as the above make clear the religious aspect of izibongo, it is this religious, non-Christian dimension of praising which deeply divides Christians and non-Christians. As was clear in the case of Khonjwangekhanda's earlier comment, some Zionist church members try to reconcile praising and prayer to the ancestors and orthodox Christian doctrine; the ancestors become intermediaries not ultimate arbiters. Also some Christians try to reconcile the two seemingly quite diametrically opposed beliefs in more personal ways.

Eleanor Preston-Whyte was told by a woman who was a Catholic, "I speak to the ancestors silently, in my head" (21). Possibly the use and associations of *izibongo* will in the future become increasingly secularised and this will affect the performance context and possibly other aspects of the genre. In 1975-6 though, there was evidence that many held to their belief in the power of the ancestors and in *izibongo* as a means of communication with them. Nor was the division between Christians and those who held to traditional Zulu religion always along clear-cut lines. Obed Mnguni (see A 108), a member of the Nazareth Church, had taught at Bhekuzulu College for Chiefs' sons at Nongoma and was a store owner in Ngoye; Israel Zulu, a driver for Greens Store, Ngoye, included the *izibongo* of King Mpande in his addresses to the ancestors because he was descended from the *iSigqoza* section of the royal lineage. In general, though, education tends to undermine traditional religious beliefs. As A. Vilakazi has pointed out, education and Christianity have often been presented to the Zulus as indissolubly connected and in the early days of missionary teaching, "The religion in which the child was nurtured, ancestor worship, was not only discredited but ridiculed, and the child was told that the only faith was that of the Christian missionaries" (1965:129). The following extract (in my translation) from the pages of a primary school Zulu reader given to me in Hlabisa illustrate that the debate over traditional religion as opposed to Christianity is sometimes still introduced at a very early stage. "Lesson 35" of the text includes a discussion between two children where the topic of religious belief is raised: [A little girl has gone to school for the first time.]

An argument broke out among the children. One said, "Let us turn

to the ancestors for our prayers. Another said, "No; let us turn to the Lord. He can help us in body and soul."

The first one said: "No. The Lord is far away, he has no power to hear us. The ancestors are not far away, they are here in the world. They can hear us well."

The second said, "Even though the Lord is far away, in heaven, he is in the world as well." (22)

The religious aspect of praising and of *izibongo* may well in the future decrease in significance. The heraldic and political aspects may increase in importance together with, possibly, a greater emphasis on *izibongo* as entertainment. At present, though, it would be a mistake to underestimate the religious dimension of praising and praises and its influence in shaping the genre as it exists now.

2.3. The Significance of Izibongo for the Individual

The eulogies of the Zulu kings may still serve as symbols of a national even supra-national identity based on the notion of a shared past and a common destiny. The *izibongo* of past and present members of chiefly houses may also on a more modest scale still serve as focal points for the affirmation of group identity (A.Vilakazi, 1965:84). The *izibongo* of individuals who have no special claim to status or authority have their own significance and this too is vitally connected with identity, but identity at a personal and communal level.

For those who have no bards to sing their praises in their lifetime the business of composition and of performance is carried on by the bearers of *izibongo* themselves, by their family and their companions, in particular their peer group and this is true for women as well as men. As I have pointed out (2.2.), after a man's death his *izibongo* may be part of the solemn ritual of addressing the shades.

Yet in his life they are the vehicle by which he himself records his own experience and states his own poetic identity. Others too, comment upon him in terms that may be either complimentary, neutral or distinctly unflattering. An ordinary individual's praises are therefore both autobiographic and biographic. He composes praises for himself but is helpless to prevent others from doing the same for him and commenting upon features that catch their attention and excite their admiration, amusement or distaste.

Praises therefore record and identify; they provide a means of recognition of a person's unique individuality, an individuality which is in a sense celebrated whenever a person announces his own praises, when praises are called out as greetings or when a man dances or performs "ukugiya" (23) and is praised by others as he does so. Like Yoruba *oriki* (Gbadamosi and Beier, 1959:12) Zulu *izibongo* are accumulated in the course of a man's life. In the militaristic era of the Zulu kingdom *izibongo* were closely connected with an individual's achievement in battle, and with honour won through bravery (see Chapter 7). H.I.E.Dhlomo (thinking here only of men's *izibongo*) has described the links between action, honour and *izibongo* in that period. He emphasises too, the immense psychological and emotional value *izibongo* had for the individual, the bearer of the praises. Moreover he places the praises primarily in the context of the martial "giya" dance:

The praise poems were used as an urge to courage and endurance. No one wanted to fall short of his 'praises'...You could dance to the amount and the quality of your praise poems only - and no more. The more you achieved in battle or in the tribal councils, the more and better 'praises' you received. They meant support to you by the others - their evidence and report...They were used to delight and excite, to appeal to and appease, to honour and humour a person.
(H.I.E.Dhlomo, "Zulu Folk Poetry", Native Teachers' Journal, 1948, p.48)

James Stuart in his earlier Zulu school text, uKulumetule (1925), also describes the way in which praises were both an incentive to courage and a statement of support for the individual: "To praise (a man) is to help (him) across the fords (i.e. to help him in difficult situations)."/"Ukubonga ukuweza ngamazibuko" (1925:95) Further in the chapter he remarks: "To praise is to support, to make crossing possible; also it strengthens a man's resolve; it quickens him, it gives him heart, it makes him bold."/"Ukubonga-ke lokhu ukusekela, ukuwelekelela; futhi kuqungis' umuntu isibindi; kuyamvusa, kumnik' inhliziyo; kumkhaliphise." (1925:100) Stuart thus stresses the links between *izibongo* and bravery; again, in the same chapter in uKulumetule, he reports that only the brave could "*giya*" on their return from battle. Yet evidence from the *izibongo* of the nineteenth century (and from Stuart's own notes (24)) suggests that even in the martial ethos of the Zulu kingdom men's *izibongo* contained a wide range of comments on appearance, behaviour and personality. For instance, the praises of Zombode Buthelezi, son of Mnyamana, contain the following enigmatic lines which hint at marital troubles:

INkuhlu 'mabilwana Throttler (?)

Soke sikushaya isithembu. Your many wives will strike you one day.

Also, some lines in the praises of this period which are discreetly dismissed by the bard on enquiry as "vulgar" ("*inhlamba*") are clearly to do with sexual matters and not warfare. Others contain comments on physical appearance, personal idiosyncrasies and cryptic social commentary. In other words, *izibongo* even in those martial times defined an individual in terms of many aspects of his life, and in this way sought to capture his unique individuality. The way in which praises still record one's deeds, express the individual's own experience, and

cover both pleasant and unpleasant matters, was stressed to me by informants during fieldwork. What was also striking was the pride people displayed in being "known" by their praises. It seemed that being known in this way provided a sort of recognition and support that was important to an individual's sense of well-being and his self-image. A newcomer to Ngoye, from Hammarsdale, implied this in his emphasis that his praises were known there (even if they were not yet widely known in Ngoye). To my question of who had composed his praises he replied: "Father composed them when I was in Hammarsdale. They are known there, the Chief knows them, and many people besides know them." / "Waziqamb' uBaba ngangiseHammarsdale. Ziyaziwa khona, uMnumzane uyazazi, futhi abaningi bayazazi" (25). Indeed, so strong is the association of a man's *izibongo* with his personality and identity, that their use is not confined to the primary performing situation of dance, song and praises which makes up "ukugiya". When men meet to talk and drink they may refer to each other by their *izibongo* and a newcomer may tell his companions "who" he is - and thereby give them an inkling of his past life and his personality - by saying his *izibongo* for their benefit. The pleasure an individual may experience at being greeted with his *izibongo* may even result in his presenting those who greet him with a small gift. MaCele, a member of the Dindi umndeni ((19) and see A 142) recalled that whenever X who worked on the railway in Durban, returned home to Ngoye, he would, if he was praised as he entered a hut, present his friends with small amounts of money to show his appreciation. His *izibongo* usually began with the precisely observed but unflattering praise,

UMabathabatha , i'nyawo zenkawu!

Clumsy-waddler, feet of a duck!

and his pleasure clearly came not from the complimentary nature of his *izibongo* but from the way in which they marked him out and demonstrated both recognition and a kind of communal support.

Women's *izibongo* are never performed at large public gatherings in the flamboyant and martial atmosphere of "ukugiya" as are men's, but rather in smaller social gatherings at a homestead, indoors after the main dances on a large occasion such as a wedding and also sometimes in the fields during harvesting. Although usually only women are present on the social occasions when individual performers dance and have their *izibongo* called out (see Gunner, 1979) women too are often known by at least a part of their *izibongo* to a fairly wide circle of friends and acquaintances of both sexes. For women too, praises are regarded as an important statement of identity. In addition, their use by others implies recognition and support and is in a way a statement of community solidarity.

There is another aspect of *izibongo* which is important for the individual and for social relations. By including in one's own praises (or even in praises for another person) comments about other individuals or about aspects of society which one finds hurtful or hard to accept, one is "turning experiences which are painful, shameful or otherwise undesirable into a subject of art which enhances one's inner pride and recognition by society" (Deng, 1973:79). To articulate such strong emotions in *izibongo* is not only to publicise them but also to formalise them and therefore in a way control the anger, pain and so on that one may feel. In some situations this is also a method of trying to remove the cause of the pain (26) In this way the *izibongo* of ordinary people exert a form of social control not on a large political scale but on inter-personal relations. Moreover, as Deng points out in connection with Dinka songs, the unpleasant

aspects of modern life can be mentioned in praises. Deng's description is in many ways applicable to izibongo:

Once a person has been exposed more intensely to foreign life, the impact on him becomes explicit in songs. Prisoners who have been sent to town and experienced modern instruments of power, men who have migrated to town for labour, or others in similar circumstances find it not only natural but also desirable to reflect their new circumstances in song.
(Deng, The Dinka and their Songs, 1973, p.81)

The condensed, cryptic style of izibongo usually prevents extensive comment but individuals do express dissatisfaction with such matters as wages, conditions of work and bad employers in their izibongo. Lines such as the following, from the izibongo of a young Ngoye man, comment in a brief but forceful way on poor pay and perhaps on a particular bad employer, or on white people's attitudes in a more general sense:

Uyababa umlungu, iyababa imbabazane.

Imali iyavusa esithupeni, ehovisi ayikho. (A 107)

Bitter is the white man, bitter the stinging nettle,

The money drips out in the furrow, in the office there's none.

For the ordinary individual, therefore, one's own praises are in one's lifetime a form of self-expression and self-identification. At the same time, because of the convention that others too may compose and say praises for you, the individual must accept the image of himself or herself provided by others. Indeed, as we have seen, being "known" by one's izibongo is of great psychological importance to the individual. Criticism and praise are subsumed within the wider process of identification. The latter point is true for the man of status as

well as for ordinary people. Although criticism of leaders may not now be very common, the convention that anyone may call out your praises and coin praises is still recognised and provides a possible means for registering criticism or disapproval of a leader.

It needs to be remembered that izibongo, which serve as a means of eulogy and identification in life become after death an individual's memorials (at least in the case of men). What Innes has said of Mandinka praise names is relevant to Zulu izibongo:

A praise name may be said in very general terms both to praise and identify. This latter function is important; his praise name uniquely identifies a man in terms of his descent and his personal achievements, thus setting him off from all other men. Not only does his praise name uniquely identify a man during his lifetime, it also helps to perpetuate his memory after he is dead. Without a praise name a man would very quickly become one of the great mass of undifferentiated dead, but his praise name keeps alive memory of him as an individual.
(Innes, Kaabu and Fuladu, 1976, pp.22-3)

In the case of Zulu izibongo, as I have shown (2.2.), the praises are more than memorials. They become, after death, a means of singling out an ancestral shade for reverent address. Praises which during a man's life could be received with respect but also with hilarity and which may have commented on the man in cutting terms are after death absorbed into a wider religious and celebratory framework. This accounts for the intense seriousness with which, during performances of izibongo of the ancestral shades, every part of the izibongo is pronounced and received:

"Ebesengimbonga omunye-ke ubaba,
UMkhovu ubashile, umkhovu onesilevu.
UMcumbazi wenkehli."

"And then I praised another father,
 Midget of a goblin, goblin with a beard.
 Prodder of the young girl."

(A 69 Adelina Dube, imbongi at the Ntshidi wedding of Chief Lindelihle Mzimela and Mamphibiso Dube).

2.4. The Aesthetic Significance of Izibongo

The continued hold of the royal izibongo in particular on people's emotions is partly due to the power of the elevated language of eulogy, its use of metaphoric, often allusive praise names, its recognisable formal characteristics and the dramatic style of delivery favoured by the best known bards. Not only are the royal praises powerful in their hold on people's emotions, they are obviously a source of aesthetic pleasure and enjoyment. Praising by accomplished bards is therefore a form of entertainment. This accounts for the remark about the present royal bard which I heard more than once during fieldwork, "You should have heard Dlamini praise at!" Such a remark clearly relates not primarily to the functional aspect of the performance but enjoyment of, and even awe at, his performance.

It may be tempting to those who view literature as closely tied to social forms to see the use of royal and chiefly praises at the present time as nothing but evidence of the last gasp of an inert and outdated tradition. To do so would be to underestimate the expressive power of the genre itself which is to a certain extent independent of social change. Part of this independence comes from the continued appeal of the established and known praise names in the royal izibongo. The widely-known praise names and the elevated and, in some cases, formulaic poetic utterances contain an inbuilt resistance to easy change. Moreover, as I have suggested in the first section of

this chapter, the royal praises can serve different purposes in different eras. Two accounts of the use of Cetshwayo's *izibongo* show the way in which they could rouse men to immediate action. A line of Cetshwayo's praises, called out as the ranks were wavering is reported to have turned imminent defeat for the Zulus into victory at Sandlwana in 1879. Lugg, whose two elderly informants had fought at Sandlwana, has this to say:

...the commander of the Khandampemvu regiment, Mkhosana Ntshangase, detecting what was happening rallied his men by shouting and quoting a phrase from the King's praises, "Uhlamvana bhula mlilo kashongo njalo". "The little branch that extinguished the flames (at Ndongakusuka) did not order you to do this". And with that all rose, advanced shouting their war cries, and overwhelmed the camp.
(H.C.Lugg, A Natal Family Looks Back, 1970, p.24)

Also, Fuze reports how, in 1858, the hostility of Prince Cetshwayo and his followers to Theophilus Shepstone's negotiations reached a dangerous climax with the singing of the regiment's war song and the unscheduled recitation of the King's praises. He paints a dramatic picture of poetry - and action, and of bloodshed narrowly averted:

Now just listen! The Zulus arrived, the mighty warriors of the maMbhoza regiment, dressed in full regalia, together with the Prince who was wearing a feather head-dress [ubuthekwane] similar to the one he wore at the battle of Ndongakusuka. And the maMbhoza fellows performed their dance...As the maMbhoza began to reach the climax and to shout, "Iya! Ehe! Cover them with dust! Insignificant little fools! Subdue the enemy", the Zulus began to approach Somtseu and his retainers...Now Mpande's praises were heard. "Gxoboshe [the pulveriser], he who was late to cross of the house of Shaka, the swallow that gets lost in the sky, the tall column of smoke that appeared with a feather head-dress between the English and the Boers". Mpande shouted to stop it. "Hau! Hau! What's this, Ndlamvuza [Cetshwayo]! What are you doing?"...And then the maMbhoza stopped and stood completely silent.

(Fuze, ed. Cope and trans. Lugg, The Black People and Whence They Came, 1979, p.103)

These examples underline in an obvious and dramatic way the inspirational nature of the royal praises. Indeed they suggest the functional aspect of *izibongo* giving weight to the point of view expressed by Bowra as to the functional nature of African poetry:

African poets seem unwilling or unable to construct songs of heroic action which are enjoyable for their own sake and not some kind of summons to action or an instrument of personal praise. (Bowra, Heroic Poetry, 1952, p.12)

The "same" royal praises, however, inspire and move modern audiences not causing direct action but arousing complicated emotions of pride and joy (as no doubt they also did for audiences in earlier years).

The popularity and the esteem in which the royal *imbongi* John Dlamini was held in 1975-6 points to another important point regarding the aesthetic significance of praises. Audiences value a high standard of performance in the recitation of the older royal praises. In addition they value creativity and original composition. Lines from the *izibongo* composed by Dlamini for the present king were repeated with obvious enjoyment and people would also refer verbatim to what they considered to be interesting praises from the *izibongo* of his father, the late Cyprian Bhekuzulu kaSolomon. The reference to "pass and passport", highlighting the intensely disliked pass system, is a popular line in the present King's praises and a line in his father's *izibongo* which recalled his arrest by mistake by a "sergeant" in Empangeni was quoted to me a number of times. They seemed most appreciative of a praise if it was able to capture and recreate a known and in some way striking event in a concise and memorable manner. In other words, there was clear evidence of enjoyment both of the long established praises of the earlier kings, which emphasised the memorial

aspect of Zulu praising and of praises which were of far more recent composition which underlined in a more obvious way the creative and contemporary aspect of the tradition.

The interest in and enjoyment of new and apt praises for (most recently) the present king highlights the link between praising by bards and praising by non-specialist composers and performers. In the praises of ordinary people, praise names (and often their expansions) which are new and considered very fitting are greatly appreciated. Indeed the incentive to coin and compose new praises for oneself and others must come largely from a desire to cause amusement and enjoyment when the new compositions are first heard. In some cases of course, a praise may be apt and be new to a particular person rather than be completely original and this too may be highly appreciated.

The emphasis on art as play is most striking in the main performance situations of both men's and women's praising. For men this is the "ukugiya" performance to which I have already referred (and which I describe in Chapter 4). Enjoyment, both of the solo performer's "dance", songs and chants, and enjoyment of the words with which he is praised are marked features of the audience's reaction on such an occasion. In encouraging men to "giya" or women to dance so that they may be praised, onlookers and would-be-praisers alike often call out words such as, "Dlala bani kabani!" / "Play/Dance so-and-so son of so-and-so!" In this way they show their anticipation of the individual's performance and their desire to be actively involved through praising the dancer. Enjoyment of new compositions, relish of old and memorable ones and enjoyment of praising in performance (both as participants and onlookers) are therefore clear features of the non-specialist tradition of praising.

The wide use of the stylistic features of the genre by composers

of varying skills emphasises the continuum within which bards and non-specialists operate even if the performance "modes" for bard and non-specialist are very different (see Chapter 4). Non-specialists are themselves actively involved in using izibongo and therefore have themselves a heightened and sharpened awareness of the business of composing. Indeed in some ways the impetus for fresh material and innovations comes not from the bards but from non-specialists (see Chapter 8). The wide span of active involvement in praising also intensifies aesthetic appreciation of the great, expansive eulogies of (mainly) royalty, and individuals recognise in them brief flashes of praises which they themselves have composed or heard in other contexts. In this way, the unity of the genre is preserved and the royal praises can be seen to exist not in splendid and fixed isolation but to exist as part of a much wider and constantly leavened artistic tradition; one moreover, which is clearly in some measure enjoyable "for its own sake".

2.5. Izibongo in New Situations

The opening section of this chapter (2.1.) has outlined various changes both in the role and use of (mainly) royal praises in contemporary Zulu society. What I wish to outline here is the wider degree to which praising (by both bards and non-specialists) has embraced new situations and the extent to which people have adapted izibongo to fit their contemporary needs (27). Not only are the royal and some chiefly izibongo performed by bards in very modern venues, izibongo are used by urban dance teams and by some Zulu popular singers; they appear in the Zulu language press, they are performed at schools and other institutions, during netball and football matches and at work.

In 1975-6 the venues of the King's bard included praising before the start of the Zulu musical, uDelisiwe, on the first night of its Durban run, the commemoration service for the nineteenth century entrepreneur and adventurer, John Dunn at Moyeni (near Ngoye), and the opening of a new agricultural centre at Nseleni. These were in addition to his performing at the installation of new chiefs, at the Shaka's Day Celebrations and at the opening sessions of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly. Chief Buthelezi's bard, Mgezeni Ndlela, has also performed in a variety of situations. I have already mentioned his appearance at the Orlando Stadium in Soweto on Shaka's Day (2.1.). In 1973 he accompanied Chief Buthelezi on a tour of towns in the Orange Free State and Transvaal when township audiences of various language and racial groups listened not only to the Chief's political speeches but to the bard as he recited the praises of the Buthelezi lineage. Mgezeni Ndlela's account of his own role in this tour shows firstly that he was able to praise in his accustomed way, and secondly that he seemed to take without any sense of strain these venues of crowded township halls and unfamiliar audiences. The heraldic and implicitly political role of the bard in a very contemporary situation is clear from the following extract, also clear is the way in which the bard is aware of his audience and of his patron's needs and intentions (28):

I had to go to all the places he went to. I praised him, I announced him to the nation, as befitted his greatness. I went in front; we would enter halls as big as from where you are now to that homestead over there which you passed on the way here. The halls were jam-packed full! I announced The Child [a praise name for members of the Zulu royal family], I announced him, there was total silence, total, utter silence! And all varieties of nations were delighted...I praised the Buthelezi "nation" [i.e. the chiefly lineage], I praised the whole lot - the lot, finishing before I had in fact come to the end, because I simply stopped. I would never want to hold up his work - the Chief was going to all those places because he had business to do! It was fitting that I held forth and held forth and then I knew that that was the time

to stop; I had to give him his chance too. I had my chance too so that I knew, "Ha! Father [Chief Buthelezi] has given me a lot of rope today but no, I must stop now!" I would see that there was no more work for me that day.

Although urban living in many ways militates against non-specialist use of izibongo (see Chapter 3), praises of ordinary people are performed in a number of venues. Besides the iNgoma dance teams which compete regularly in Durban (29) there is dancing in company compounds at week-ends where izibongo can be called out as one performs. The use of guitar, song and izibongo in urban situations has been mentioned by Rycroft (1974:66); the only instance where I heard a man play the guitar, sing and praise himself was in a rural environment in Ceza and this underlines the possibility of change and innovation in rural as well as urban performing situations. This particular form of izibongo with guitar and song is also made use of by the popular singer Phuzushukela and his group. His live performances take place in township halls and sometimes at venues such as missions deep in rural areas. His performances, records and radio recordings seem to gain added popularity from the fact that he uses song and his own izibongo. Among his fans in 1975-6 was the imbongi, Masoswidi Mkhwanazi, (see Chapter 3) who once interrupted an interview because Phuzushukela came on the air and he wanted to catch what he said in his izibongo!

For some men the attachment to their izibongo is so strong that a township environment is no hindrance to their continued use. For them no room or township backyard is too small for "ukugiya" and if necessary for saying their own izibongo. Moreover, such izibongo might well contain explicit and witty comment on social conditions as does the example below. Here the bearer of the izibongo refers to the

bureaucratic removal of people from one township to a new one and the role of the Native Affairs Administrator in this. The **izibongo** are those of a man who lived for many years in the township of Mkhumbane and then in KwaMashu outside Durban before returning to Ndundulu near rural Melmoth: (30)

- 1 ISinikiniki kwazidwedwe
 ISinakanaka kwangamabhuku
 Ebhalwa uBokweni esusa abantu eMkhumbane beyaKwaMashu
 INkomo kaMacingwane* esengwa liviyo sebeyisengile
- 5 INkomo kayidlelani nezakwaNgcobo ngoba iyesaba ukuzaca
 UNondela umzimba awunike abezizwe
 Huluhulu wehla kanjani kuNdundulu? (uncatalogued)

- 1 The Raggedness of skirts
 The Naggeyness of all the letters
 Written by Bourquin as he cleared people out of Mkhumbane and
 they went to KwaMashu
 Macingwane's* Beast milked by a band of men, yes they milked it
- 5 Beast that won't eat with the Ngcobo cattle because it fears
 losing weight
 He is Happy to offer his body against foreign nations
 The Powerful Man - how he rushed down at Ndundulu!

* Macingwane is the clan praise name (isithakazelo) for the clan name (isibongo) Cunu.

Izibongo are so valued as a means of self-expression and as a means of registering esteem for others, that beside their use in live performance they also frequently appear in the Durban edited Ilanga

laseNatal. The men praised are often popular sporting figures such as football stars or boxers and one such *izibongo* which appeared in the paper in 1976 was written shortly after the sudden and violent death of the manager of a well-known football team (31). Here the **izibongo** served both as panegyric and as elegy. They expressed regret at the dead man's passing but attempted also to be "a fairly faithful and inspired record of career and character" and "an ornament to his life" (H.I.E.Dhlomo, 1948:48).

The combination of lament and praise features also in *izibongo* for a deceased radio announcer which appeared in Ilanga in January 1976. Under the heading "We will remember you, Shade-for-the-young-girls-and-maidens", the following note to the editor appears: "Mr. Editor, Alas, I cannot forget the pain which I first felt in 1975 at the loss of our beloved announcer Laymon "Skheshekhesheshe" Dubuzana. Well, Mr. Editor, here is a poem in remembrance of him - we weep for him." Although the writer does not use the term "*izibongo*", the verses that follow could be termed *izibongo* because of their content and because of the use of repetition as a structural frame for the verse. The writer praises the dead announcer for the great distances he travelled, the extent of his fame: "Even the Swazis weep for you, "Shade", our brave one!" ("NamaSwazi akhala ngawe 'Mthunzi' oliqhawe lakithi!"); he mentions his eloquence: he was "the *imbongi* of the Zulus everywhere" ("uyimbongi kaZulu wonkana). He suggests that his death was a sacrifice of atonement from which new life will come and finally he pledges remembrance:

1 Igazi lakho alibe umthombo wesizwe esimpisholo,
Konke kube isizalo sobudoda kithi Zulu.
Namathongo akini lapho ukhona sinawe,

Asikukhohliwe indodana emnyama yesizwe,
 5 Sithi sonke lala uphumule 'qhawe lethu.

1 May your blood be an inspiration for the black nation
 May we, the Zulu people be a nation of true manhood,
 We, like your ancestral shades, will stay with you.
 We have not forgotten you, son of the black nation,
 5 All of us say Sleep, Rest, our brave one. (32)

A poem in remembrance of the veteran Zulu politician A.W.G.Champion appears alongside letters of mourning at his passing in Ilanga on October 22nd 1975. Although its subject matter is carefully sequential, and its style more narrative than is generally the case with orally composed izibongo, its panegyric tone marks it as izibongo. The writer compares Champion, to whom he refers by his praise name, "UMahlath' amnyama nezimpande zawo" ("Forest-Black-even-to-its-roots"), with other famous Zulus. The month of his death, September, was the month in which the famous Shaka died in 1828; the late King Bhhekuzulu died in September 1968 and the grandson of the Mandlakazi leader Zibhebhu, Chief Phumanyova, died in September 1975. The writer also includes as part of a line the well-known words from Dingana's izibongo which define the commemorative nature of praise poems and in so doing makes it clear that these too are meant as izibongo for A.W.G.Champion: "Wo-o-o! e-e-e-!! Kof' abantu kosa! izibongo" ("Wo-o-o! e-e-e!! People will die but their praises remain").

Izibongo which appear in Ilanga vary in their closeness to the form of orally composed izibongo. They tend also to emphasise the commemorative and memorial aspect of the genre. Sometimes, however,

they focus on the impulse to praise a person or an object as he or it is, in the present, and the memorial aspect is absent. One writer felt moved to write izibongo for the newspaper itself. The izibongo of "The Sun" (Izibongo "ZeLanga") appeared in the issue of August 23-25, 1976. The writer of the izibongo puts to novel use the familiar izibongo images of war and generosity such as a hill, a spear and a river; his confident handling of popular izibongo phrases and his easy use of varieties of parallelism gives this poem a marked aural quality in contrast with the laboured literary analogy worked around "September" in the izibongo to A.W.G.Champion. The writer, who is from Umlazi near Durban, begins:

Mhleli - Ngicela ukuba ungikhiphele nazi izibongo engibonga nazo iphepha lakithi lodumo ILANGA.

- 1 Ntaba yezinkunzi ezimayava,
 Ntaba igiya amaqhawe,
 Qovuqovu elidla abant' balo,
 Mkhonto oconsa igazi,
- 5 Ngokugwaza amabuka,
 Mkhonto ongakhethi mhlambi.

- Mfula omkhulu ophuzwa
 Yiziwula nezihlakaniphi,
 Mfula ogeze izintombi zagana,
- 10 Mfula ogeze izinsizwa zaganwa,
 Mfula ongangcoli owehlula amanuku,
 Wahlokoma kamnandi
 Wangikhumbuza izinsizwa
 esezaba mathambo amhlophe kwamhlaba.

15 Wangivusela amaqhawe ngilivaka,
 Wangiveza ubuze bengqondo,
 Wathi mangimpompoloze
 Ngingenakuduma njengezulu
 lona lifaka ingebhe emadodeni.

20 Ngenzenjani?
 Azongihleka amaqili,
 Azovala amadlebe amagwala.
 Azisekho izinsizwa, sekwasala iziphuzi.
 Seziyosale zibaloyisa.

Mr Editor - please print these izibongo with which I praise our famous
 paper ILANGA:

1 Hill of the sharp-horned bulls,
 Hill on which the heroes "giya",
 Confusion which destroys (even) its own people
 Spear which drips with blood

5 After stabbing traitors
 Spear which doesn't swerve from any herd

Great River from which drink
 The silly and the intelligent
 River which washes girls about to marry

10 River which washes youths as they marry
 River which has no dirt, which overcomes the unclean,

It flowed forth with sweetness
 It reminded me of youths

Whose bones now whiten the earth.

15 It opened my eyes to heroes while I was a coward

It showed me the way of understanding,

It said I should speak out

I who was unable to thunder like the sky,

the one which makes men giddy.

20 What can I do?

The crafty will laugh at me.

Cowards will turn a deaf ear.

The youths (of the past) are no longer here, drunkards remain.

They will remain to poison the past.

Although the terms of praise are general - the praises in the first stanza could equally well apply to a person - the writer does convey his admiration for the newspaper as a source of information, courageous opinion, popular appeal and, most important, inspiration. For him it provides a link with the great deeds of past Zulus, heroes with whom the drunkards of the fallen present cannot compare!

If a senior member of the staff of a rural mission hospital is leaving, the farewell ceremony may well include the performance of **izibongo** composed especially for the occasion. In Ceza mission hospital for instance, the **izibongo** for such occasions are always composed and performed by Mr. Ntuli, who combines the tasks of stoker and hospital **imbongi**. When in 1976 the matron of Hlabisa hospital retired, gratitude, respect and sharp-eyed observation of her character and mannerisms were demonstrated through a performance of **izibongo** listed in the programme as "Miss K.Rodenstam's eulogy". A

feature of this particular performance was that not only were the matron's characteristics defined verbally, they were also enacted by the performer as she recited; for example:

UMBhekaphansi onjengesambane,
 UMavukeduze ngingamlindele njengobhejane,
 Downward glancer like the antbear,
 Riser-up right next to me when I'm not expecting it, like the
 rhinoceros. (33)

Lines such as the above, although not flattering, had comic and dramatic possibilities which the composer/performer made good use of, and so apt and well-performed were the *izibongo* considered to be that an encore was called for, and given.

Schools sometimes integrate praising into their speech-day programmes (see Mathabela and Cope, 1976 and Chapter 3) and I was told that pupils sometimes compose *izibongo* for teachers who are leaving (see 3.1.2). A rather different use which pupils make of *izibongo* is the way they call them out to encourage and cheer on the players during a football or netball match. These "*izibongo zebhola*" are more than usually cryptic and may also contain words in English or obvious loan words. Although spectators may call out players' *izibongo* at any time in the match, they are particularly likely to do so at moments of great tension such as when the striker in the netball team is trying to score a goal. The words which are called out are not usually eulogistic but contain a comment or description of some kind, and although they are not in any obvious way inspirational, this clearly is their intention.

Izibongo may be used during work but it seems they are not used

very widely in this way. The two instances cited illustrate though, that men can adapt the performance of *izibongo* to fit the constraints of a work situation. This is done when the work involves risk, skill and action. In both instances *izibongo* were used as encouragement and praise in the heat of action. Both instances involved heavy physical work; in the first, two young men were loading sand into a revolving cement machine and as one hurled in his bucket of sand so the other praised him. In the second, men were involved in the difficult and dangerous work of loading iron railway tracks onto lorries or railway trucks; a chant (*isaga*) would be used to co-ordinate the work but it was up to the man at the end of the line, or at "the horn" ("*ophondweni*") as it is called, to lift the iron track clear and into the waiting vehicle or rail truck. If he did this successfully and well his co-workers would call out his *izibongo* in recognition of a task well done.

The above examples should illustrate that the notion of a fixed, frozen society and a rigid use of praising within such a society cannot be applied to praising and praises in contemporary Zulu society. Continuity and innovation are both evident in many ways in the instances mentioned. The strength of the genre is that it shows the capacity to retain its essential character of eulogy and identification and at the same time it is both innovative and adaptive in form and usage.

Conclusion

What is demonstrated in a wider sense in the various aspects of praising and praises which I have outlined in this chapter is what Ruth Finnegan calls,

The strikingly free-floating nature of literature, the way the same 'poem' or the same genre can play very different roles in different circumstances, and can be changed or developed or held static according to the manifold intentions of the people concerned at any one time.
(Finnegan, Oral Poetry, 1977, p.260).

What also emerges from the above is that some parts of the many-stranded tradition of praising are more amenable to change and innovation than others. Even the religious aspect - perhaps the most resistant to change - can, as we have seen, be absorbed into the worship of an Independent Church such as Shembe's Nazareth Church, and can also perhaps subtly inform contemporary political aspects of praising with a spiritual dimension inherited from past usage (34). The use of *izibongo* by individuals is perhaps the most dynamic aspect of the tradition at present, but it could not retain its vitality alone, unsupported by the presence of the grander and more inspirational forms of the royal (and some chiefly) eulogies.

Two further points need to be made, although they are discussed in more detail later (see Chapter 8). The complex of current usage of praising in urban and rural situations gives little support to the views of scholars such as Walter Ong, with his dubious dualism of the oral and literate mind (1983:39-42 and *passim*). It is difficult also to find verification for Lord's rigid distinction between the composition of oral and written verse (1968:129).

The following chapter turns to the question of how the skills of composing are acquired by both bards and non-specialists in what is still largely an oral art form.

Notes

1

See for instance, Cope, Izibongo; J.K.Ngubane, "Shaka's Social, Political and Military Ideas", in D.Burness, ed., Shaka King of the Zulus in African Literature (Washington D.C.:Three Continents Press, 1976), pp.127-164; C.L.S.Nyembezi, "The Historical Background to the Izibongo of the Zulu Military Age", African Studies VII, (1948), pp.110-125 and 157-174 and Nyembezi, Izibongo Zamakhosi, (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1958); M.Z.Malaba, "Shaka as a Literary Theme: Zulu views of a Zulu Monarch", M.A. dissertation, University of York, 1982; Landeg White, "Power and the Praise Poem", Journal of Southern African Studies Vol.9, No.1, (Oct.1982), pp.8-32.

2

See R.Finnegan, Oral Literature in Africa (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), Chapter 6; A.Coupez and T.Kamanzi, Litterature de Cour au Rwanda (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), Chapters 4-6.

3

For an account of Matiwane's travels during the turbulent period of the Mfecane see J.D.Omer-Cooper, The Zulu Aftermath: A Nineteenth Century Revolution in Bantu Africa (London: Longman, 1966), Chapter 6; for a contemporary poem on Matiwane see M.Matshoba, Call Me Not A Man and other stories, (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1979), pp.148-150.

4

J.Goody, The Myth of the Bagre (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972); J.Vansina, Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology trans. H.M.Wright (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965) and L.White op.cit. have all pointed out how genealogies and praise poems can be used to justify and reinforce rulers' claims to legitimacy.

5

For a mention of Mnyamana as a bard see E.Gunner, "Forgotten Men: Zulu Bards and Praising at the Time of the Zulu Kings", African Languages/Langues Africaines 2, (1976), pp.84-5.

6

Gluckman makes a similar point in "An Analysis of a Social Situation in Modern Zululand", Bantu Studies XIV, (1940), pp. 153 to 154.

7

From an interview with Hoyo's son, Mgezeni Ndlela at Mantungweni, Mahlabathini, 16 May 1976. Mgezeni who was born in 1903 would have been present at Eshowe, although the conversation he records would most likely have come to him through Hoyo. For further details from Mgezeni, where he recalls how he first came to praise in public, see Chapter 3.2. The close reliance of a monarch or leader such as Chief Buthelezi on his bard which this passage demonstrates echoes the remarks Mpande is reported to have made at the time the bard Magolwana was to be executed. See James Stuart, Uhlangukula, (London: Longman, 1924), p.139 and Gunner, op.cit. p.139.

8

P.comm.17.1.84.

9

For an analysis of the complex inter-relation of Solomon kaDinuzulu with other political figures such as John Dube and A.W.G.Champion, see Shula Marks, "The Ambiguities of Dependence: State, Class and Nationalism in Early Twentieth Century Natal", Public Lectures given to the Atlantic History Seminar, Johns Hopkins University, April 1982, (being revised for publication).

10

Gluckman, op.cit. p.165 and see also 172. After Solomon kaDinuzulu's death in 1933 his brother Mshiyeni kaDinuzulu acted as regent until 1953. When Gluckman refers to the King I imagine that he means Mshiyeni who had "royal" authority.

11

The notion of Shaka guarding the Zulu nation is expressed in the poem in "Ilanga" in February 1954, see p.47 and is one that is quite widely held, I believe.

12

From an interview at Nkonjeni, Mahlabathini, 5th February, 1976.

13

In 1976 KwaZulu consisted of "Forty-four detached land units", and a statement on "consolidation" reads as follows: "If the 1975 consolidation proposals are executed, KwaZulu will consist of ten detached units of land", T.Malan and P.S.Hattingh, Black Homelands in South Africa (Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, 1976), p.159. It is important to remember that the rich connotations of the term "KwaZulu" which praise poetry can exploit, as for example in the izibongo of Shembe (see A 2 1.20), are very different from its meaning in the official terminology.

14

See Note 12 above.

15

Interview, 29th July 1976, Hlabisa. Khonjwangekhanda said that the Mdletshe forebear Mfusi, son of Gwabashe, had been given their present territory by Mpande. Mfusi had, he said, carried Mpande across the Thukela River on his back when he fled to Natal from King Dingana. He was later rewarded for this and deeds of bravery in war.

16

Interview, KwaDlangezwa, April 22nd, 1976. See Krige, The Social System of the Zulus (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1950), pp.135-6. She does not mention this reporting prior to setting out for the bridegroom's homestead. A number of informants in Ngoye and Hlabisa confirmed Masoswidi's information, however. There were a number of different wedding procedures in Ngoye. Even some which people termed "umshado" (i.e. a modern wedding) included praising by the bards of each lineage. One such wedding I attended was a customary wedding, not a Christian one and there were praises recited.

17

Interview, see Note 16. R.C.Samuelson, Long Long Ago (Durban: Knox, 1929), p.290 also gives the order of praising mentioned by Masoswidi.

18

For details of the "ukubuyisa" ceremony, when a deceased man's izibongo are added to those of other lineage ancestors for the first time, see C.L.S.Nyembezi, Zulu Proverbs (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press), 1954, pp.2-3.

19

The Dindi family, under its head, Alec Dindi, were unfailingly kind to me and were of great assistance during fieldwork. The izibongo in question had been recited by their elderly neighbour, Nyonyovu Mdletshe see A 114-116.

20

Both A.I.Berglund, Zulu Thought-patterns and Symbolism (London: Hurst, 1976), p.347 and Samuelson, op.cit. p.290 mention that elderly women of the homestead may also address and praise the shades.

21

P.comm.June 1980.

22

I do not know the title of the text as I was given only four loose pages, all that was left of the book, I think. It was given to me as an aid to my mastering spoken Zulu, in Hlabisa in November 1975.

23

"Ukugiya" is an improvised 'dance' usually mimicking war movements, accompanied by song, chant and stylised speech. I refer to it several times in following chapters because of its intricate connection with non-specialist praising. See Chapters 3 and 4 in particular. I use "his" in this description for convenience. Women's praises are performed with dance but not the warlike "giya" dance.

24

See for instance Notebook 77, Folder 9b ii in the James Stuart Archives.

25

In Zululand proper, i.e. north of the Thukela River, I was told chiefs were referred to (usually) as "uMnumzane" and the term iNkosi" usually used for a chief was reserved for the King.

26

This is the case particularly in women's praises for babies, termed izangelo or izibongo zengane, see Gunner, "Songs of Innocence and Experience: Zulu Women as Composers and Performers of Izibongo, Zulu Praise Poems", Research in African Literatures Vol. 10, No. 2, (Fall 1979), pp.228-256. See also the examples cited in Ruth Finnegan, Oral Poetry: Its Nature, Significance and Social Context, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977, pp.224-5, of the use of insult and hostility in song by Negroes in the American South and by the subordinate Mapuche women of Chile. See also Finnegan, Oral Literature, pp.278-9. Examples of criticism expressed through a lullaby rather than in ordinary speech are also in S.Akivaga and A.Odaga, Oral Literature: A School Certificate Course, (Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books, 1982), pp.71-3. Possibly groups which are marginalised by society tend to favour oblique forms of criticism in their artistic expression.

27

This is mentioned in Chapter 3 as well.

28

For an account of a Xhosa imbongi and chief working together in a modern situation, see Archie Mafeje's "A Chief Visits Town", Journal of Local Administration Overseas 2, (1963), pp.88-99. The following is an extract from the interview with Mgezeni Ndlela to which I have already referred.

29

I think izibongo could be called out during "iNgoma" dances but I am not sure. For a fascinating account of new dance styles evolving in urban and rural situations see J.Clegg, "Towards an Understanding of African Dance: The Zulu Isishameni Style", in A.Tracey ed., Papers Presented at the Second Symposium on Ethnomusicology (Grahamstown: International Library of African Music, 1981), pp.8-14. Clegg is critical of Ngoma dancing in so far as it represents a fixed dance form, resistant to change and conforming to White patrons' views of African dance. See also A.T. Wainwright's thorough study, "The Praises of Xhosa Mineworkers", M.A. thesis, University of South Africa, 1979.

30

I am grateful to Mrs Joyce Ngcobo of KwaMagwaza Hospital, Melmoth

for a written version of these izibongo and to M.B.Yengwa for pointing out to me who "Bokweni" was.

31

Ewart Nene was manager of the Durban football team, Kaizer Chiefs. His death was reported in Ilanga laseNatal, August 23-25, 1976. The izibongo appeared in September. The translation is mine.

32

The full text of the poem is in Ilanga laseNatal, January 17, 1976. The translation is mine.

33

The full text of these izibongo was kindly given to me by Sister Dietie van Spaun of Hlabisa Medical Mission. The izibongo were actually printed on the programme for the farewell party!

34

For a discussion of changes in the religious and political aspects of the Swazi ritual of Incwala see Hilda Kuper, "A Royal Ritual in a Changing Political Context", Cahiers D'Etudes Africaines 48, Vol. XI, (1972), pp.595-615.

CHAPTER 3

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERFORMERS

3.0. Introduction

In this chapter I shall discuss the development of both non-specialist and specialist performers (3.1. and 3.2.). The development of both groups needs to be viewed against the background of the general importance given to performing skills in Zulu culture. Great emphasis is placed on the ability of individuals to perform well in speech, song and dance. The expression of admiration, "Uyigagu" ("He/She is a real performer!"), is one that is sparingly used and highly valued. The term applies to a wide spectrum of verbal, vocal and dramatic skills. It includes the ability to initiate a dance or song, to sing or speak clearly and forcefully in front of others, to compose new songs and new praises. It also implies that such a person will, naturally, because of their special gifts, give pleasure to others. One of the people I met during fieldwork who was known as an "igagu" was MaSimansika Dube (see Example 50 Chapter 8). At the Dube/Sikhakhane wedding I attended in January 1976 she was frequently to the fore, encouraging the younger men as they "giya'd" (see 4.2.) and performing her own impromptu dance steps. At a second wedding a few weeks later MaSimansika performed as *imbongi* and recited *izibongo* of the Dube lineage ancestors. MaMnguni was another local figure with a reputation as a good performer, an "igagu". She too had recited lineage *izibongo* at a recent wedding (shortly before I began fieldwork in Ngoye) and was known to have a wide repertoire of songs and a knowledge of many *izibongo*. Gosa Mncwango, leader of the men's group

("iviyo", see 4.2.) from the Qwayinduku ward, and therefore responsible for leading and initiating the songs and chants of the group on public occasions such as weddings, was also widely spoken of as an "igagu". The term and its usage in Ngoye, give an indication of the range of skills which are highly regarded within the culture. Another term which showed, in a negative way, the value placed on the ability (or the attempt!) to perform well was the derogatory term, "ukuba unyube". Thus MaZulu of Hlabisa, "The Bitter Tobacco Leaf", ("UKhasi lomdloti"), underlined the emphasis on communal enjoyment and on entertaining through performance in her comment on her own izibongo:

I made these (praises) when I was quite old, well, when I was married. I didn't want to sit and be mournful and hold back (ukuba unyube).
(see Gunner, "Songs of Innocence", p.250)

Not to perform (on suitable occasions), to hold back, is regarded as a clumsy, anti-social act, and to perform, even if one cannot be outstanding, is highly approved of. Composing praises and participating in praising is part of the way in which an individual conforms to the high value which the culture still places on verbal, vocal and dramatic skills. The craft of composing is therefore one which individuals who will never become specialist poets are encouraged to master and put to use.

3.1. The Development of Non-specialist Performers

The numerous social and religious occasions where praising takes place provide, in the first place, excellent learning opportunities for non-specialists. Later they provide them with the opportunity to participate themselves. Because of the emphasis on performing in Zulu

culture, children are encouraged to dance and sing almost as soon as they can walk and talk. The association of izibongo with song and dance is made early on in a child's life and children learn to project praises in a multi-dimensional context of poetry, song and dance. This nexus of praises, song (or chant) and dance, forms the central performance situation for non-specialists (see 4.2.). I shall describe in the following pages the kind of informal socialization into the poetic conventions of izibongo which is still experienced by many children and young adults in rural areas but by few who live in townships or locations. The material is divided as follows:

3.1.1. The importance of names

3.1.2. The acquisition in childhood of skills relating to izibongo

3.1.3. Developing a complex of skills

3.1.1. The importance of names

In Zulu culture a person is likely to be known by a number of names in his lifetime. Krige (1950:74) refers to "the true or great name" ("igamu elikhulu") by which a child is known to his parents and to people of his parents' generation even after he has received a new puberty or regimental name (1). Koopman (1976) mentions the importance of the "great name" to the individual and Berglund (1976) mentions its use in witchcraft. The special light in which "the great name" is regarded was shown once during fieldwork when, after a man had recited his praises and I asked him his name, his companion, the imbongi George Ngobese said, "Say your great name". I had the strong impression that this name was not something that was passed on lightly. Individuals' puberty or regimental names were also often used. Women and men would use the term, "ibutho lami", to refer to the name used (chiefly) by other members of their age-grade, and men sometimes also

referred to their "igama lokugiya, meaning the name they had coined for themselves when they began to "giya". Thus, one of my principal informants, Mashekelela Dindi, was widely known by his "giya" name (Mashekelela - The Short-cut Taker). His "great name" was Mbhekeni, this was infrequently used when referring to him, and I never heard it used to his face. Certainly when I once inadvertently used it, I was met with a rebuke from him.

Besides "the great name" and the new name taken on reaching adulthood, individuals are often given names which commemorate an event relating to them or which comment upon some characteristic. In some cases such names become part of a person's praises and are either expanded or added as they stand. For instance, as a young man, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi was given the name "iMbabazane" ("The Stinging Nettle") by a member of his chiefdom. This name became a popular one among members of his chiefdom and was then, the Chief thinks, expanded and became the praise,

iMbabazane kaMahaqa ehaq' amadoda...

Stinging Nettle, Encircler that encircles men... (A 4 and 5)

Whether a name is absorbed into a person's praises or not, the habit of giving names which are "laudatory, derogatory or merely apt" (Doke, 1948:298 and see Finnegan, 1970:475) is a central feature of Zulu culture. Speakers of the language are therefore predisposed to using names not merely to refer to a person but also to describe him. This need to use names for descriptive as well as referential purposes finds its fullest expression in an individual's izibongo. Although the bards may give a more complex and perhaps more aesthetically satisfying expression of izibongo, it remains a form of artistic expression for all who choose to use it.

Another aspect of name-giving, which points up the importance in the culture of praising and celebrating an individual through names, is the use of clan praises or clan praisenames (P. izithakazelo, S. isithakazelo). Stylistically, clan praises tend to represent only the most basic techniques of praise poetry (see Mzolo, 1978:214-220; Koopman, 1976:7-9; Rycroft, 1976:155-159). Nevertheless, their widespread usage for address, self-identification and as a means of reference for individuals at all levels of society provides non-specialists with the means of familiarisation with some of the techniques of izibongo. The clan praises (izithakazelo) define a person through reference to his or her clan ancestors and their deeds (Ngubane, 1976). They demonstrate the way in which, in common with other African cultures such as the Akan and the Yoruba, Zulu names often "evoke more than just their individual referent on a particular occasion" (Finnegan, 1970:477, 156). Clan praises, therefore, not only provide the individual with a limited knowledge of izibongo technique but also emphasise the importance of praising through naming. In this sense they underline the way in which, in Zulu culture, names and praises are celebratory and descriptive as well as referential.

3.1.2. The acquisition in childhood of skills relating to izibongo

Non-specialists acquire their skills through informal learning situations which in many instances begin in infancy and childhood. The variety of ways in which the culture still transmits the skills of praising were evident during fieldwork and are described below. What was clear, both from watching and listening to children performing and from adults' comments was the complex of skills learnt: the verbal skills are often closely associated in the minds of performers with

vocal and dramatic (or what Ben-Amos usefully terms "phonic and mimetic" skills (1977:16)). As the play performances of young boys, which are described below demonstrate, the intricate association of praising, "dance" and song (or chant) is one that is formed early in the consciousness of the non-specialist performer. For the young child, the praises do not exist in a verbal vacuum but as part of a web of related skills which are verbal, phonic, mimetic and musical. Only in the performances by bards which most young children do observe at some stage, is the verbal element strikingly predominant. Even then phonic and mimetic features are still much in evidence.

The paragraphs below cover the following points: parents' (particularly mothers') use of a child's clan praises; acquiring izibongo as a child; learning the izibongo of other children and beginning to compose oneself; listening to and observing performances; performing as a child; learning and composing izibongo at school.

Parents' (particularly mothers') use of a child's clan praises (izithakazelo)

Members of a young child's family, the child's peers and friends of his parents are all likely to address him by one or more of his clan praises. Nevertheless, it is the mother who sees herself as having the greatest responsibility in instilling in the infant and young child a sense of clan identity and a personal relationship to the past of his father's clan. The young child will learn the praises of his mother's clan later, but the most important ones are those of the father's clan. Mothers have a variety of ways of using the clan praises. They use them for address, as terms of endearment, encouragement and praise. They are also considered an important means of soothing and quietening a young child and are often used as

lullabies. Absolom Vilakazi, working with the Nyuswa and Qadi Zulu in Natal in the early 1960s, notes the importance placed on teaching young children their clan praises. He gives the following example:

A girl of about four years of age recited to the writer its clan and [the clan's] praise names in reply to the simple question of 'What is your surname?'. [He continues], Family pride and family solidarity were taught to the children, so that they grew up with a very clear idea of what were the fine points of the clan to which they belonged. The Ngcobo children, for instance, among the Qadi, were always told they were the beautiful black ones. "UNgcobo omnyama omuhle, ozandla zimhlophe sengathi zizophenya isahluko," ie. "the beautiful black Ngcobo, with white hands fit enough to open a chapter in the Holy Book."
(Vilakazi, Zulu Transformations, 1965, pp.124-5)

Besides instilling a sense of pride, these Ngcobo clan praises introduce their young users to stylistic devices typical of izibongo and also serve as an introduction to the range of content and imagery they might encounter in typical izibongo. The confidence demonstrated by the child in the situation which Vilakazi describes is the product of the informal learning situations to which we now turn. A group of mothers whom I met at Ebuhleni Church (2) were categorical about the pride of place given to clan praises in soothing and quietening their infants. Mrs Ellen Khumalo spoke as follows, showing how she used the Khumalo clan praises:

Example 1 "Ngiyengithulisa ingane yami nalezi izithakazelo, ngithi,

Ntungwa, Mbulazi

Abanye bemudla

abanye bemyenga ngendaba.

Wena owehla ngesilulu

Wena Ndoni yesiziba."

"I often soothe my baby with these clan praises, I say,

Ntungwa, Mbulazi
 Some destroy him
 Others deceive him with a tale.
 You who came down with a grain basket
 You of the beautiful black skin
 (Literally, You, Black Berry of the pool)". (3)

By directly addressing her child in this way, the speaker instils in him a sense of his own personal relation to the mythic past and also to heroic figures of the clan. In addition personal beauty and worth are stressed in the last line.

The next example shows the way in which a mother combines general terms of affection with the use of her child's clan praises, those of the Ngubane. As in Example 1, the child is praised through the names of famous ancestors; "white" occurs (as it does in the Ngcobo clan praises quoted by Vilakazi) suggesting purity of spirit, linked through simile with the white, sea-washed and therefore pure sea sand.

Example 2 "Ngithi, uma kufika umfana wami, ngithi, "Nyawo, Ngubane,

Ngubane omhlophe kufana nezihlabathi zo lwandle".

Ngithi, "Ubani lowo, umfana kanina? Sengathi ingane yami".

Ngithi, mntakaBaba, uMazalinkosi!"

"I say, if my boy comes along, I say, "Nyawo, Ngubane,

Ngubane white like the sea sand".

"I say, 'Who is that? (Is it) Mother's boy? It must be my little one'".

"I say, 'Child of his Father, Begetter of a king!'" (4)

The following example of how a mother might use the Mhlongo clan

praises in addressing her young son illustrates again that the *izithakazelo* are taught through repeated usage in contexts of intimacy and affection. Moreover, as in Example 2, the compact, metaphorical language of praise poetry with its vivid associations of war, honour and a heroic past are presented to the child in a direct and personal way. The eulogy of the clan praises is something that must enhance the young child's sense of identity and sense of worth.

Example 3 Umntwana wami uyafika, uma efika ngithi,

"Sawubona wena wakwaNjomane, kaMgabhe weMguga!

Wena weNjomane eyaduka iminyaka

kwathi kwesine yaqhamuka.

Wena uBuhlalu obubomvu obunjengegwalagwala.

Wena kaMhlathuze. Khula ubengangezintaba Njomane!"

My child comes up to me and as he approaches, I say,

"Greetings, you of the people of Njomane, the son of Mgabhe,
Mguga!

You Njomane who lost his way for years

but in the fourth he appeared.

You Red Bead which is like the purple-crested loury.

You of the Mhlathuze. Grow and be as great as the mountains
Njomane!" (5)

Besides their use as salutations and as expressions of affection clan praises also feature as expressions of thanks for tasks well done (see Krige, 1953:29-35). Children in Standard 2 at Ebuhleni Primary School who were on average between seven and nine years of age, gave the use of clan praises to express gratitude (and praise) as the one

they were most familiar with (6). A number of children in the class were able to recite their own personal *izibongo* or their clan praises and some children recited both. The Mzimela clan praises were recited by Margaret Mnguni; like most members of the Mzimela clan who lived in the chiefdom administered by Chief Lindelihle Mzimela she used the clan praise name, "Mnguni", as her clan name. These clan praises, like Examples 1-3, include ancestral names and praises which are both narrative and commemorative, referring to the clan's northern and perhaps coastal origins (see A 57-61). The use of figurative language and structured syntax in these *izithakazelo* is again typical of praise poetry in general (see Chapters 7 and 5).

Example 4 The izithakazelo of the Mzimela clan from Margaret Mnguni:

- | | | |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Mnguni, Donda, Vezi, Mzimela./Mnguni, Donda, Vezi, Mzimela. | |
| | Ulwandle aluwelwa, | The sea is not crossed, |
| | luwelwa zinkonjane, | it is crossed (only) by swallows, |
| | zona 'ziphapha phezulu. | those which fly up above. |
| 5 | Mnguni wasenhla, | Mnguni from the north, |
| | Wena owadla izinkomo | You who devoured the Xhosa |
| | zamaXhosa. | cattle. |

Through repeated usage, therefore, children not only learn their clan praises, they also regard them as part of their personal and social identity. They also learn to address their peers by their clan praises or, more commonly, by a single clan praisename, and this process of using other clan praisenames can begin very early. At a clinic at Madondo in Hlabisa a toddler of no more than three handed a sweet to a younger Mthethwa child, addressing him by the clan praisename, "Nyambose!". Women in Hlabisa also mentioned that girls frequently

learn the clan praises of many of the families in the vicinity so that they would know the *izithakazelo* of future suitors and possible husbands! (7)

Acquiring *izibongo* as a child

Although boys and girls identify closely with the praises of their clan name (*isibongo*), these cannot reflect their own thoughts, circumstances, characteristics or the comments of those who know them. They are notionally fixed, i.e. they may and in fact do vary quite widely from district to district and even within a district, but individuals never add their own personal material to them. Personal praises which define and set apart the individual are still sometimes composed for young children by their parents and grandchildren. This at least was the case in Ngoye and Hlabisa. In some instances children specifically mentioned the fact that they were used as greetings and salutations by parents who worked in urban areas and were returning home to see their families. Before considering these children's *izibongo*, brief mention must be made of another type of praise poetry, specifically for infants, and often called, not *izibongo* but *izangelo* (8). This category of praise poetry is composed only by women and is characterised by its use of allusion for the purpose of complaint and sometimes invective directed (usually) at the composer's husband or at one or more of her co-wives. Even though children do not usually use their *izangelo* among themselves, they often know them and some remember them throughout their lives. Only one child from Ebuhleni School recited *izangelo* (see A 148). The child who did so mentioned that they were used in particular by her mother on the latter's return from work in Durban; the fact that this was emphasised suggests that they were used as a formalised expression of deep emotions and of the bond

between mother and child.

Izangelo are always composed by a child's mother and used mainly by her. **Izibongo**, on the other hand, may be composed by parents, grandparents and others including a child's peers. It is these widely used personal praises which relate a child most directly to the conventions of praising. Evidence from my fieldwork suggests that parents who compose **izibongo** expect their children to know them from the age of five years or even earlier. Consider these **izibongo** of Muntuwamkholwa Phenyana, composed by his mother in 1973 when he was two years old. His mother used them to express thanks and encouragement and told me (in November 1975) that her son already knew them. If he wished to, he would keep them on as his praises when he was a youth. The **izibongo** both comment and define. Also, unlike most **izithakazelo** and **izangelo**, they are humorous, and humour is a feature of many **izibongo** of ordinary people. The first lines make fun of the bearer's bandylegged gait and comical figure. His mother teases him for trying to steal food and comments on the shape of his ears. She also, though, compares him to a bull with wide, sweeping horns and calls him by a second bull's name. She thereby introduces a note of celebration and draws on the cattle imagery which features so prominently in praise poetry and which is often associated with male strength and beauty (see Chapter 7). Also, and this seems a characteristic of **izibongo** composed by women, it has a compressed narrative element (lines 1-3 and 6-9) which focuses on domestic scenes:

Example 5 The **izibongo** of Muntuwamkholwa Phenyana, from his mother, Thokozile Phenyana of Hlabisa.

1 INxangalazi yabonwa zingane emfuleni.

 Zayibalekela zathi, "Mama! Sibone inxangalazi emfuleni!

Sayibalekela amasende aluhlaza anjeng' awekhonde!

INkunzi uMagaliyoni!

5 INkunzi uMasidisi!

UNyampe kaNyampe!

UMama ethi usezwa uswayi

waze waphela ibhodwe!

I'ndlebe zomuntu exwayile efunainja yakhe. (A 149)

1 The Walker-with-legs-wide-apart was seen by the toddlers at
the river.

They ran away from it, saying, "Mama! We've seen a walker-
with-legs-wide-apart at the river!"

We ran away from its green testicles [they're] like those of
monkeys!

Bull with wide sweeping horns!

5 Bull - Masidisi!

Pot-licker!

Mother thinks he's testing for salt

and then he finishes off the pot!

Pricked-up Ears of a person on the look-out for his dog.

When a grandfather composes izibongo for his grandson they are likely to echo lines from the praises of members of his own age-grade or they may even be praises of his own. Themba Dindi (see A 142), born November 1972, knew the first four lines of his izibongo (the praises from his grandfather), and the "giya" chant that accompanied them. In the Appendix version, lines 1-4 were recited with great vigour by Themba himself and the succeeding lines were spoken by his mother, MaCele. I heard the izibongo of "The Little Trickster" ("uBhojongwane") a number of times during fieldwork, and their different repro-

duction on various occasions - the different order of the praises, the changes of syntax and slight additions - underlined the shifting, "multiform" nature of even these short praises.

Learning the izibongo of other children and beginning to compose

Because izibongo are freely used in a variety of contexts such as dancing (ukusina), stickfighting (ukuncweka) and sometimes at school football matches and netball matches, children often know the izibongo of a number of their peers. They may know only a few snatches of each other's izibongo but they recite and use them with assurance and develop the habit of identifying individuals closely with their izibongo. Moreover they gain familiarity with handling such features of the genre as formulas, and the more commonly used structure patterns such as the "negative to positive" device (see Chapter 5). The following examples (from Ntshidi, Ngoye) show the way in which childish humour is combined in izibongo with the beginnings of skill in handling features of the style and content typical of the genre. The izibongo of twelve-year old Siphon Khanya were recited on several occasions when I was with the group. The first version given below, contains praises composed both by other boys and by himself, a feature which underlines (as do the izibongo of Themba Dindi, A 142) the composite nature of many izibongo. The second set of Siphon's izibongo were from his friend, Dumezweni. They leave out the most personal, exploratory and confessional lines composed by Siphon himself, (Example 6a lines 3-4) but include another (Example 6b line 4) which teases him about his size. Siphon's opening praise name, "Sapheqa" ("We-Stuck-out-our-Buttocks"), demonstrates the way in which a praise name can supplant an individual's "true name" in everyday use. His friends always referred to him as Sapheqa rather than Siphon ("Gift")!

Example 6 The izibongo of Sipho Khanya, Ngoye, (a) recited by himself;
(b) recited by Dumezweni Buthelezi:

(a) 1 Sapheqa sadunusa,
 laqhiyam' ijongosi,
 lasuz' ihashi esitebeleni, jwi!
 Ngiyini mina? NgiNkungu nje,
5 ngiLuhlaza khona le ehlathini kwaMdelwa.
1 We-Stuck-out-our-Buttocks we bent over.
 The young girl stood up straight.
 The horse farted in the stable -pshwit!
 What am I? I am only Mist,
 I am The Green over there in the forest at Mdelwa's.

(b) 1 Sapheqa sadunusa.
 Laqhiyam' ijongosi.
 Lasuz' ihashi esitebeleni jwi! (lines 1-3 as in (a))
4 Dedela umfazi impihlimpihli! Out of the way great wobbly
 woman!

Even amongst children who have equal opportunity to use and compose izibongo, their skills develop in different ways, and some show a particular aptitude for composing from an early age. Two of the children's izibongo in the Appendix illustrate this. In A 139, the praises of Khadlana Mtshali, use is made of three humorous formula lines which refer to the stock subjects of popularity with the opposite sex and the unpleasantness of mothers-in-law. The composer is therefore incorporating izibongo formulas but is unable as yet to include more individual lines of the kind introduced by Sipho (Example 6a). The praises of Busangokwakhe Xulu (A 137), known to his friends

as "Pepper-Bush" ("ISihlahla sikapelepele") were composed in the main by their bearer. They show the composer trying to work in a narrative section (lines 2-4); he also includes conventional metaphors to suggest his strength (the "bull" in line 9), his ability to inflict punishment (the "pepper-bush" in line 5) and his power to ward off evil-doers (the "horn of the rhinoceros" in line 6); he includes a reference to the opposite sex (line 7) and uses a praise popular for its expressive quality, referring to "black" and "blackness". In general, this set of izibongo shows how even a young composer (he was not more than eight years old) can select a variety of metaphors from among those widely used, can include formula lines and can weave in a personal narrative section.

Children as composers of izibongo for cattle

Men are generally regarded as the composers of izibongo for cattle but in some cases boys, who usually herd the cattle, compose their own praises for them. B.W.Vilakazi (1945:124) quotes a set of izibongo for a bull, which were often recited in Ngoye, and these could perhaps be called the standard set of praises, made up of a succession of formulas. In some praises of bulls these formula lines are combined with commentary, not on the animal itself, but on matters relating to the composer, and so they serve (like izangelo) as a vehicle for self-revelation. The following praises for a cream-coloured bull (inkunzi empofu) were composed and recited to me by eight-year old Fodo Fakazi of Ngoye. He has chosen four formula lines (lines 1-3, 5) and includes more personal comments in lines 4 and 7.

Example 7

- 1 UMahlab' ehlangeni njengemfoloko.
 UBhukuda esinengwenya
 ingwenya ingamnaki inaka amagweba ehlanza.
 UMame akamthandi uthand' amantombazane.
- 5 UPhappe lwensingizi uMabikizulu.
 Washesha waxamalaza kwavel' ijongosi.
 Abafazi bakwaZulu bany' esangweni. (uncatalogued)
- 1 Stabber at the reeds like a fork.
 He bathes in a crocodile pool,
 the crocodile takes no notice, it notes the fishes' bubbles.
 Mother doesn't like him, she likes the little girls!
- 5 Feather of the yellow hornbill, Weather Announcer.
 He quickly stood with legs astride and a young girl appeared.
 The women of Zululand use their gateways as a lavatory.

Listening to and observing the performance of izibongo by adults

An integral part of a child's education in praising consists of observing adults perform at formal and informal social occasions and on solemn ritual occasions. Boys benefit particularly from observing praising in the context of the "giya" "dance" at weddings, engagements and puberty celebrations (see 4.2.). They use such situations as models and rehearse among themselves the speedy delivery of praises, the simulated ferocity of voice and gesture, and the musical items which are part of "ukugiya". Boys and girls of homesteads where sacrifices are made to the ancestors are also allowed to listen to the izibongo of the lineage shades. This must serve as a potent learning context and several bards mentioned this as an important part of their informal education in praising (see 3.2.).

Performing from an early age

Besides observation in a largely non-participatory role, the active participation of children in the non-specialist, Mode B (see 4.2.) type of performance is encouraged. Both girls and boys are praised as they dance and this was often cited as a form of entertainment at homesteads. The type of dancing (called by my informants "ukusina") is usually solo. The dancer's praises are called out in sequences of end-stopped lines, or snatches with no obvious pause, by anyone who wishes to do so. They are called out above the words and melody of the song and the accompanying rhythmic hand-clapping:

Example 8 Two songs used during dancing (ukusina) while individual children danced and were praised at Ntshidi, Ngoye.

Song A, repeated many times.

Accompaniment: fast rhythmic hand-clapping.

Leader: Liyamanyazela izwe lakithi.

Chorus: Liyamanyazela gqam' gqam'!

Leader: How it sparkles this country of ours.

Chorus: How it sparkles like a flame!

Song B, repeated many times.

Accompaniment: fast rhythmic hand-clapping.

Leader: Wamshalazela ntombi, ngeke kulunge.

Chorus: Wamshalazela!

Leader: You spurned him girl, that's bad.

Chorus: You spurned him!

Boys also gain practice in praising through stick-fighting (ukuncweka). The onlookers recite the praises of one or both of the contestants as the sticks of the boys clash against each other. Izibongo

are called out very quickly and boys may repeat praises or call out a number of them in quick sequence. If boys compete in quick succession, a boy may test his skill by calling out the praises of as many of his friends as he can. This, like the dancing described above, anticipates the performance situations of adult life, particularly "ukugiya" (see 4.2.) where men need to know and call out the *izibongo* of their companions as each one "dances".

Boys often learn to synchronize the calling out of *izibongo* with the chants and songs of "ukugiya" through close imitation of their older relatives and other men whom they watch performing. In a play performance I watched at the home of the *induna* Qabatheka Dlamini, Ngoye, a group of boys aged between six and nine imitated the voice and gestures of older performers, used the martial chants and songs familiar to them from "real" performances and called out the *izibongo* of each solo performer. Sometimes they made mistakes and their chants petered out (as adult performers' also do) and they could not always combine the "giya" "dance" with introducing a range of chants, songs and rhythmic statements, but they were clearly enjoying themselves and had obviously observed their elders very closely (11). Much of the reciting by these boys reflected their own experience, while also showing a grasp of *izibongo* style as the parallelism of the lines (in Example 9a) below indicate. The rhythmic statements, chants and songs, however, were those which their elders used. Besides learning how to combine the musical and verbal items which together form the non-specialist mode of performance, the boys were also training themselves - through play - in responding as a group and working as a team, features vital to "ukugiya" and to praising in the non-specialist mode. Also they were learning the rigours of solo performance and tasting the satisfaction of being praised in the "dance".

Example 8 Izibongo and verbal and musical items used during the "play" performance.

a) From the izibongo of Fundakubo Dlamini:

Bamdud' abantu bazomthengela amateki

kanti bamthengela imbadada!

People humour him (they say) they'll buy him tennis shoes

whereas they (actually) buy him rubber-tyre shoes!

b) Rhythmic statements as part of "ukugiya":

1.

Solo performer: Ngikhaful' ukhambi! Ngikhaful' umuthi!

Other boys: Uhla! uyakhafu! Ukhaful' ukhambi! Ukhaful' umuthi!

Solo performer: I spit from the pot! I spit out the (war) medicine!

Other boys: You keep spitting from the pot! You spit from the pot!

You spit out the war medicine!

2.

Solo performer: Ngidindile! Ngidind' eNdlovini! *

Other boys: UDindile! UDind' eNdlovini!

Yebiya intombi yaseNdlovini!

Udindile udind' ikhovane!

Solo performer: I got into a fight! I got into a fight at Ndlovini! *

Other boys: You got into a fight! You got into a fight at Ndlovini!

Ha! It's a girl from Ndlovini!

You got into a fight with a little owl!

* Ndlovini is the ward adjoining KwaFelisilwanyane, where the boys lived .

3.

Solo performer: Ngithi ngiyahamba ngikhutshwa utshani!

Other boys: Wathi uyahamba! Wakhutshwa utshani!

Solo performer: I am about to run (when) I trip up in the grass!

Other boys: He was about to run! He tripped up in the grass!

c) War chants (izaga) (12) as part of "ukugiya":

1.

Solo performer: Awuzishay' avume! Hit the enemy - let him respond!

Other boys: Yize! It's nothing!

2.

Solo performer: Niyaphi? Where are you going?

Other boys: Niyaphi? Itshe nqi! " A stone, a hit!

Iyashis' insimbi! The iron is hot!

Owethu ukenqe! Our man snaps!

3.

Solo performer: Nang' ez' egijima! Here is one who comes running!

Other boys: Bagijim' ezafika (?). They run and one comes (?).

Siyakhungatha! We perplex (them)!

d) War songs (amahubo empi) used as part of "ukugiya":

1.

Solo performer initiates the song and all join in:

All the boys: INkonyane weSilo* The Lion's Cub*
ayidl' amaBhunu. May he devour the Boers.

Kushay' amaBhunu! It strikes the Boers!

Heshe! Swoop!

* The "Lion's Cub" (i.e. The King's Son) refers perhaps to Cetshwayo or possibly to Dingana. I did not ask.

2.

Solo performer: Ngasenkantolo. Ngingedwa enkantolo.

Other boys: Mana wethu!

Ingani wabaleka. Wangishiya.

Wabhangazela! Uyizw' uvalo -

UMangotshwa izizwe!

Solo performer: I was at the charge office. I was alone at the charge office.

Other boys: Wait our man!

Instead he ran away. He left me behind.

He lost his nerve! Fear took hold of him -

One defeated by nations!

Learning and composing izibongo at school

None of the learning situations and uses of izibongo which I have referred to so far were part of formal, school education, although some of the children whom I interviewed or observed attended school. Yet the systems of traditional learning and of school learning are by no means mutually exclusive and some teachers, it seems, do try to use the skills of praising in the classroom.

One situation in which children can make use at school of any skills in praising which they have acquired is when a teacher leaves. Children at rural schools such as Ebuhleni, are frequently asked to compose and recite izibongo addressed to the departing member of staff. They are by no means always entirely complimentary and from the one I was shown (by Norbert Mbonambi) pupils may sometimes be quite unflattering in their izibongo. Printed izibongo of eminent personalities or of royalty are also sometimes publicly recited on special occasions such as speech day. At KwaDlangezwa High School, Ngoye, in September 1976, a schoolgirl recited the izibongo of Chief Gatsha Buthelezi composed by Myeni (1969). Mathabela and Cope also record the delivery of (freshly composed) praises for the KwaZulu Minister of Education, J.A.W.Nxumalo, by the headmaster (Mathabela) on speech day.

M.B.Yengwa recalls reciting the praises of the Zulu kings on special occasions when he was at school in the 1940s and the above examples suggest that this tradition of public recitation of *izibongo* has been maintained. The *izibongo* of the kings and of famous figures in Zulu history are also used in school textbooks (such as Nyembezi, 1958 and Nxumalo, 1965) and these are frequently learnt at school. Phemba Mzimela, *imbongi* for Chief Lindelihle Mzimela of Ngoye, mentioned that "nowadays children learn *izibongo* from books" and the royal bard also clearly expected the *izibongo* he had composed for King Zwelithini to be studied by schoolchildren (13). In general, however, it seems that the skills in composing and performing which children may have acquired at home are not put to use at school. Patrick Khumalo, of Ntshidi Primary School, who had a long set of praises and who had shown himself to be expert in praising his friends remarked that "school makes one forget *izibongo*". Possibly the verbal and performing skills which children put to use in praising are ones which the school curriculum could fruitfully exploit far more than it does at present (14).

3.1.3. Developing a complex of skills

The way in which non-specialist performers combine the complex of skills needed for competent performance will be described in Chapter 4. The progress from childhood skills to adult proficiency is of course no longer smooth and automatic. Boys who are expert praisers may leave to seek employment on White-owned farms or in towns and may rarely or never return. School (especially secondary school) may deaden one's interest in and regard for non-specialist praising. Others, though, may have been discouraged by Christian parents from learning the skills when young and may try to learn them when they are

adults (15). In the various "performing units" (known as "amaviyo") which I saw at celebrations in Ngoye, the lower age limit seems to have been around seventeen years of age. Once a youth is a member of his ward's "performing unit" he will go with them to celebrations in his own and neighbouring wards and sometimes further afield. He is on these occasions exposed to the range of praises belonging to his companions and is expected to master these and the chanted and musical items which accompany them. He will also have the opportunity to compose new praises both for himself and his companions. The age of men in a single unit varies from approximately seventeen to fifty years or more. A young man joining a unit will therefore come to know the izibongo of men much older than himself. When I asked Mashekelela Dindi how it was that he knew the izibongo of a man some fifteen years older than himself, he replied, "I grew up in the iviyo alongside him and we would go together as members of the iviyo to celebrations". Some members of such a local unit may master as many as forty izibongo. Mashekelela himself knew the izibongo of a great number of young men. Nyonyovu Mdletshe (A 115) of Ngoye, was too elderly and unwell to perform the "giya" "dance" any more but was able to recall the izibongo of more than forty of those who had at one time been his companions in "ukugiya". Perhaps, as he was also at one time imbongi for the local Mdletshe lineage, this number is unusually high for a non-specialist, but it seems standard practice for men to know at least some snatches of many of their companions' izibongo.

The development of relevant skills by women

Women have no performing group which parallels the men's unit (iviyo) which is such a focus of attention at events such as weddings, engagement parties and coming-of-age celebrations. Nevertheless

unmarried girls are praised as they dance in the company of other girls and young men (Gunner, 1979:246). After marriage a woman's izibongo are considered an important expression of her personality and they are known and used by the women in whose company she dances. Nowadays when people socialise women sometimes dance when men are also present and are praised by men too. Although many women concede that by comparison with their own, "men's praises are difficult" ("zilukhuni ezamadoda"), they do not underestimate women's izibongo as a means of personal expression and as entertainment. For women too, therefore, the ability to praise others and to elicit praises as one dances, is an important social skill.

The opportunities for performance

Non-specialist performers may never achieve the renown or even the modest local reputation enjoyed by the specialist imbongi. Yet as a group and individually they are essential to the success of many occasions. A bride's family (in particular) needs not only a good bard at a wedding but also good "giya-ing" by the bride's party. A non-specialist never holds the rapt attention of a great gathering in the way an imbongi may hope to do, yet he may perform far more often. He does not have to wait for a dignitary to visit, for a ceremonial occasion or for a member of his clan to marry; as a member of the "performing unit" of a ward he may - even if his work keeps him away sometimes - attend many festive occasions and may "dance", be praised and praise his companions. Even when on his own in a smaller social or family ritual gathering he may "giya", be praised and praise others.

Performing izibongo in urban contexts

The fact that many men work away from their rural homes and

communities for months on end means that where possible they recreate or adapt praising in an urban or industrial environment. The dual emphasis in non-specialist praising, on the solidarity of the participating group and on the skills of the solo performer, makes it possible for a man to "dance" and be praised even if he is far from his local unit and his home district. Men inform others of their praises when they find themselves among strangers, and as long as the basic conventions are shared, men can perform in new situations and if necessary adapt the rules of performance. A number of these were mentioned: using a guitar as a background melody and saying one's own praises at intervals during the song was mentioned and demonstrated by a young man from Ceza in Northern Zululand who was on leave from Witbank in the Transvaal (see Rycroft, 1974:66); a form of "stokvel" referred to as "isitokofelo" was mentioned, where men performed an improvised "giya"-type dance to Zulu popular music on records and were praised as they did so. On one occasion where this took place, most of the men had come from neighbouring White sugar farms; the venue was a large storage barn on the outskirts of Mtunzini and the entrance fee was ten cents. Similar events also took place in Ngoye; they were in some cases a useful source of income for the organisers, and were valued as entertainment both by men back from the towns and by men who worked locally in Empangeni but who lived in the reserve, in Ngoye. Another informant mentioned that men still performed the "giya" "dance" in crowded rooms in a location at events such as a wedding. Mention was also made of the fact that hostel dwellers in Durban often arranged "ukugiya" as entertainment for themselves on Saturday nights. There are, in other words, a number of situations which Bauman (1975:302) calls "emergent performance situations", where men adapt and change the basic rules of performance to suit new conditions. This

emphasises the creative, experimental aspect of Zulu art forms, an aspect which Clegg (1981) stresses in his discussion of evolving Zulu dance forms. But perhaps the loneliest places of all, for country men in towns, are reserved for those in domestic employment, living on the premises (17). The prevalent lack of sympathy towards Zulu culture by White employers means that individuals may exist in a state of limbo with - apart from the guitar - few chances for expression of a modified form of praising. The boredom, and the attempts at diversion in such situations are expressed in these extracts from the *izibongo* of men from Ngoye who had obviously at one time been in domestic employment:

Example 10

a) NginguBhodabhoda lapha engadini.

I am the (idle) potterer here in the garden. (uncatalogued)

b) I'ntombi azibuyi ekhaya,

zibheke izishimane eKulufu* engadini koMehisi,

azisayi koMama ekhaya. (uncatalogued)

The girls aren't coming home,

they're making eyes at callow bachelors in Missus' garden at

Kloof*,

they don't go home to Mother anymore.

* Kloof is a very pleasant outer suburb of Durban.

3.2. The Development of Specialist Performers: the Izimbongi or Bards

Most of those who later become bards are exposed to one or more of the informal learning situations which are described in 3.1. Those with special talent sometimes have additional opportunities which enable them to reach a higher level of performing skill and so become known as *izimbongi*. Zulu society has no caste of bards which could be

compared to the "griot" caste among the Mandinka (Innes, 1974). Nor does it have an institution comparable to the old guild of dynastic poets of Ruanda, with its own school of rhetoric which youngsters attended in order to learn the dynastic poems (Kagame, 1950:22-24). If there is neither an exclusive caste of artists nor any formal school of rhetoric, how do certain individuals become *izimbongi*, in some cases acquiring national reputations or being widely respected and called on to perform for a chief and his lineage or for members of a lineage segment? Evidence from existing literature and from bards whom I interviewed suggests that there are a number of ways in which the acquisition of specialist skill in praising is and was encouraged. Opland remarks that among the Xhosa an *imbongi* is merely an individual more gifted "in spontaneous poetic expression" than his fellow tribesmen. He goes on to make a further distinction between memorisers (who are not bards), and improvisers. The latter are bards true to Lord's definition of oral poetry, namely that it is poetry composed in performance (Opland, 1975:192 and Lord, 1960:101). Most Zulu bards (unlike the Xhosa *imbongi* with whom Opland has worked) put a premium on "received" *izibongo* because of the emphasis on the memorial in the work they often have to do, namely, praising the ancestors. Nevertheless, "memorisation" and "recreation" can overlap: bards often rework passages, use their own favourite stylistic devices, introduce new features and impose their own order on material (see Chapter 8). Some also compose completely new *izibongo* for contemporary figures (see A 1 and A 3). However, only in a limited sense can they ever be said to compose in performance, and improvisation is not a skill that is highly valued by Zulu audiences (see Chapter 8). The ways in which Zulu *izimbongi* acquire their skills are both formal and informal and will be discussed under the following headings:

3.2.1. Apprenticeship

3.2.2. Informal association with bards

3.2.3. The acquisition of skills through listening

The final section on the development of the skills of the specialist performer is:

3.2.4. The opportunities for performance

3.2.1. Apprenticeship

Although formal apprenticeship is not the rule, there are a few instances of it. A reference is made to apprenticeship by the bard Msebenzi in his narrative, part prose and part poetry, of the history of the amaNgwane and their chief Matiwane. The amaNgwane lived in what is now Northern Zululand before the rise of Shaka. They were dislodged, first by Dingiswayo and Zwide, and again by Shaka. Under their leader Matiwane they became one of the many roving bands seeking stability and new territory in the hinterland of Southern Africa (Wilson and Thompson, 1969, Vol.1:347, 393-4). Msebenzi was himself of the ruling house and would have been a youth in the 1890s. The practice described below may have been typical of a number of Nguni chiefdoms prior to and after the Zulu centralisation under Shaka. Msebenzi's talent as a poet was recognised "early":

According to the custom of royal houses, he was therefore handed over to an old bard, Siyikiyiki, for instruction in the traditional poetry and history of the tribe...He proved to be a good pupil and acquired in time a great reputation as a reciter of izibongo and as a repository of tradition.
(van Warmelo, History of Matiwane, 1938, p.7)

The following accounts obtained during fieldwork are comparable in some ways with Msebenzi's apprenticeship. Mkhohliseni Mdletshe, the

understudy of the royal *imbongi*, while not a member of the Zulu royal house, comes from a family which was devoted to the fortunes of Dinuzulu and the uSuthu section of the Zulu royal house. Mkhohliseni's father decided that his son had great potential as a bard and therefore sent him to live with the royal bard, J.Dlamini, for several months. There, at the royal homestead of Khethamthandayo in Nongoma, he listened chiefly to Dlamini whenever he recited the *izibongo* of the Zulu kings. He also listened to "others who praised" (19). He also accompanied Dlamini when he travelled with the King as *imbongi*. On later occasions he was allowed to praise at official events, with Dlamini present, and later still he was allowed to accompany the King alone and act as *imbongi*. By June 1976 he had deputised for Dlamini on three such occasions but still regarded the former very much as his mentor. He had not composed any lines himself and said that Dlamini knew the allusions behind several of the praises but he himself did not. In contrast with the bard Msebenzi, Mkhohliseni has learnt the royal *izibongo* not from an old man but from one only a few years older than himself. There is also a close bond of friendship between the two men, and the travelling together and the deputising suggests more of a partnership than the demise of one and the rise of the other. It will be interesting to see whether Mkhohliseni Mdletshe begins to compose his own *izibongo* for the King, adding these to the existing praises, and whether he develops a distinctive performing style as he becomes more established.

Another *imbongi*'s account of how he learnt the *izibongo* of the kings includes a similar journey to the royal homestead of the then Zulu King. In this case, however, George Ngobese had no close family connection with royalty nor was he sent there by his father. He said that as a young man he was "filled with an overwhelming desire" to

learn the *izibongo* of the kings (20). He travelled from Ngoye to Nongoma (a distance of some two hundred kilometres) in 1955 and spent several months listening to Amos Mathambo Gwala, *imbongi* of Cyprian Bhekuzulu, father of Zwelithini. Here again, although like Mkhohliseni Mdletshe he may have listened to others praising, Ngobese stressed that he came with the intention of hearing a single bard, namely Gwala. He therefore took every opportunity of listening to Gwala whenever he praised at meetings or during celebrations at the royal homestead. In the case of George Ngobese, his stay at the royal homestead as an apprentice of Gwala did not lead to his being accepted as partner or understudy. He returned to Ngoye where he has acted as *imbongi* of the royal *izibongo* at infrequent intervals over many years. A performance he had given when a member of the royal family visited the University in the early 1970s was still talked about in 1976 but he did not perform publicly whilst I was there.

3.2.2. Informal association with bards

The latter two bards mentioned above made a conscious decision to associate themselves with an acknowledged expert, but many bards acquire their skills without any conscious decision to do so. In some cases the ability to praise well, and becoming known as an *imbongi*, runs in a family. Some of the bards interviewed by Stuart in the early years of this century mention that their fathers or grandfathers were also *izimbongi* (bards). The *imbongi* Sende, of the Zondi tribe, learnt the *izibongo* of the Zondi chiefs from his grandfather (Webb and Wright, 1979:209); the *imbongi* Baleka mentions that her father was a bard of the Qwabe chiefs and continues, "My brother takes after my father in being a good *imbongi* " (Webb and Wright, 1976:8). Hoye is another bard in whose family there seems to have been a succession of

accomplished praisers. He himself was one of three royal bards whom Solomon kaDinuzulu sent to Pietermaritzburg from Nongoma, at Stuart's request, so that he could obtain from them "the Zulu kings' eulogies" (Webb and Wright, 1976:167). Almost all Hoye's knowledge of the royal *izibongo* was obtained from his father Soxhalase, who "used to recite praises in the assemblies of Mpande and Cetshwayo" (ibid.). Hoye also had other mentors besides his father. He adds, "Dinuzulu's *izibongo* I got from other people no longer living" (ibid.). This suggests that Hoye, perhaps after he had decided that he would be an *imbongi* and in order to extend his knowledge, sought out those who were expert in Dinuzulu's *izibongo* and learnt from them.

The emphasis on learning from an older member of one's family was also apparent in accounts of some of the bards interviewed in 1976. Zizwezonke Mthethwa is better known in the Eshowe district as a doctor (*inyanga*) than as a bard. Yet he recites *izibongo* of the Mthethwa lineage descended from Dingiswayo (the patron of Shaka) on numerous occasions at his own homestead (21). Besides observing and listening to the performance of *izibongo* as a boy, he spent a great deal of time listening to an aged great-uncle (*ubabamkhulu omncane*), Mhoyizana, the son of Mngoye kaDingiswayo (A 75). From him he learnt *izibongo*, and the history of the Mthethwa kingdom prior to its break-up. Zizwezonke also touched on the part he felt the ancestors had played in his ability to praise. In talking about how he came to be an *inyanga*, he recalled his return from the forest having been summoned by an ancestor who had taken the form of a snake in his dream:

I returned singing a song not known to me before and I praised and praised and praised. The old people knew who it was, So-and-so and So-and-so and So-and-so, that I was praising.
(Zizwezonke Mthethwa to E.G., Mbongolwane, Eshowe, 28.4.76)

A similar combination of historical knowledge and expertise in izibongo of the chiefly lineage was shown by Phemba Mzimela, brother of and imbongi to Chief Lindelihle Mzimela of Ngoye. He too had observed and listened to the performance of the lineage izibongo from boyhood, but mentioned also a particular imbongi, Nohozwayo, his father's younger brother, as having been an important source of information on the izibongo and history of the abakwaMzimela. For him too the inspirational element in being able to praise was important and he said that the skill was "a gift from the ancestors". Yet another case where a bard cited an older bard as "teacher" was that of Sunduzabanye Hlabisa. In his case he and the older bard, Mnyezane Mthembu, worked as a team and when they performed at weddings the older bard would recite the most distant izibongo, and Sunduzabanye those of more recently deceased ancestors (see A 17-42). Even when they recited at my request, the way in which they worked as a team was noticeable. Mnyezane Mthembu, the older imbongi, recited first and said very softly, at one point, "Tell me well, so that I can recall (them) again", and a few izibongo later the younger bard prompted him when he hesitated (A 28). At a later point, after Sunduzabanye had taken over, Mthembu added a praise as his colleague paused:

Mthembu: "ISinyaka senkomo saseNkoqongweni". uGade.

Hlabisa: uGade-ke lo? Nakho-ke.

Mthembu: "UNondamela kwezinyoni".

Hlabisa: Nakho-ke kaMsuthu-ke lowo.

Mthembu: "Intestines of the cow of Nkoqongweni". (That's) Gade.

Hlabisa: That's Gade? Ah yes!

Mthembu: "The Flocking-together of birds".

Hlabisa: Ah yes! That's the son of Msuthu! [Gade's father]. (A 34)

This mutual assistance and "checking" occurred several times and suggested the close way in which they were accustomed to working.

Lord (1960:21) states that in the first stage of the learning process in Yugoslav epic poetry, an aspiring guslar "sits aside and listens". He continues, "even at this stage the oft-repeated phrases which we call formulas are being absorbed". Certainly the following account suggests that absorbing the verbal, phonic and mimetic skills of praising, and more particularly absorbing the words and underlying patterns and rhythms of specific izibongo, can occur so imperceptibly that someone who is in fact "learning" may not be aware of the process. It also demonstrates the strong memorial strain in Zulu izibongo where too much deviation from the expected praises would not be tolerated, and it illuminates the key role of the izimbongi as poet/priest on occasions such as weddings. Mgezeni Ndlela, imbongi of Chief Buthelezi is the son of the very Hoyo who was once bard to Solomon kaDinuzulu (and later to Chief Mathole Buthelezi). He recounted to me the unexpected way in which he became an imbongi, as follows: when his father, Hoyo, lay too ill to praise the Buthelezi lineage ancestors at a wedding he turned to Mgezeni for help:

And then Father, who had that job, died and I took it over. But father didn't tell me this beforehand, as we are sitting and talking here; it's difficult to explain how it happened. Father was very, very sick; it was clear that, alas, death was close at hand. Shortly before death snatched him away, the son of Sonkeshana arrived, thinking he was only slightly ill, to ask him to assist at the marriage of his daughter to one of the Mncwangas, the Ndabokanye lot. [So] that Buthelezi man, the son of Sonkeshana had come to ask Father to help at his daughter's marriage. Father replied,

"Ah, Buthelezi, it's so hard, I am ill", - we were then living in the old homestead down below, called Nomthambayo. Father repeated it,

"I am ill, I could never get there, even though I have until now been working for all of you of the Buthelezi line. Here I am as you see me, lying down, ah, I do feel as if [death] has got the better of me." My goodness how that Buthelezi man wrung his hands knowing that he had to go to unfamiliar territory - and

what would he say there?

He said, "This is a terrible blow, Ndlela. What am I going to do?"

Father shouted for me: "Hey Mgezeni!" I was on this side in my young man's hut.

"Mgezeni!"

I answered, "Ndlela!" and out I came. I took a short cut across the main gate so that I could get to Father quickly because he'd shouted for me. I found the Buthelezi man sitting, say...here, and father lying over there. Really, it was all quite extraordinary, quite, quite extraordinary. Father had only recently performed the praises, and I was there, but I hadn't taken special notice. It was all above my head because he was the imbongi for all the Buthelezi. I hadn't paid much attention to it.

Father said to me, as I was sitting in the upper part of the hut, he said, "You see here, Fikizolo, son of Sonkeshana. He's come to beg me to assist in a Buthelezi ceremony, as I usually do. I am ill, and quite unable to go through the ceremony for Fikizolo. Now because it's such a blow to him, I realise what a bad business this is and I don't want to die disappointing somebody. You go, give away the daughter of Fikizolo and go to the Mncwagas at Ndabokanye. Do the praises for him, leave his child safely for him. There is nothing that will defeat you because I have told you to do it. I am telling you, 'Go and praise!'."

As for me, if I'm right, I didn't say, "Father, how can you say I should go when I don't know how to do this work?" I didn't ask him that, but that's what I was thinking! I was thinking of saying to him, "You're passing your burden onto me!" I was just thinking this...I couldn't think of anything to say. I simply said, "Ndlela!" and out I went, and just when I had got to my own hut (called 'I-Like-to-Talk') it suddenly dawned on me that I was really going to Zakhohlwe, the Ndabokanye lot related to Mgilitsha. This extraordinary thing had really happened. I felt as if I was sleep-walking...in a daze.

Father kept well; I performed the ceremony and he was alive when I got back. I was amazed: there I was, standing in the midst of a great assembly of Zulu people, speaking what my father had previously spoken, and I had never taken particular note of it.

People said, "Fancy, he's taught his child, he's taught him well!" But he never did train me [face to face] as we are talking now. He never did that, oh, I don't know how it happened, believe me, I'm telling the truth. I began to praise on that very day, without really knowing [what I was doing], without my father teaching me to 'Come over here, it's like this and like this; if I die it'll be you who will remain behind with them!'. No. (22)

How an individual fulfils his potential and becomes an imbongi is to some extent a matter of luck as well as a matter of temperament and aptitude. All these factors play a part in the royal bard's brief remarks on how he came to be an imbongi. The Zulu tradition of

praising obviously allows for new composing whilst also stressing its memorial, "recreative" aspect. Whereas Mgezeni Ndlela and the Hlabisa izimbongi appear more at home performing izibongo they did not initially compose, the royal bard performs the izibongo of the line of Zulu kings but is also the composer of (almost all) King Zwelithini's izibongo.

John Dlamini is not from a family of bards. Nor has his family close links with royalty. His account of how he became an imbongi is (like the izibongo he has composed) an interesting example of the intertwining of tradition and modernity. Whereas he mentions his association with his predecessor, Amos Mathambo Gwala (bard to Zwelithini's father Cyprian), Dlamini stresses the indefinable quality, talent, and also emphasises the progressive nature of mastering the skills that make a good bard. For him, being a bard, obviously involves composing as well as recreating. Lord (1960:24) defines the second stage of the guslar's learning process as one of imitating the techniques of composition of his master or masters. The third stage is marked by an increase in repertory and growth in competence. Dlamini seems almost to have combined these two stages. Also, because Zulu praising (unlike the Yugoslav epic tradition) is both a non-specialist and a specialist skill, he seems to have been able to build effortlessly on the informal general training available within the culture. (23)

E.G: When did you begin to praise?

John Dlamini: I began when the King was installed [November 1971] but on occasions before he was installed I used to come bearing gifts. We brought them from the sugar factory where I worked, the Phongolo Sugar Mill. We brought gifts for the Lion [the present King] when he was bereaved through the passing away of the Lion, Cyprian. And so I began to praise him by naming praises for him. I named him before he was installed - that was 1969.*

E.G: By whom were you taught to praise?

J.D: Praising is not taught. That is to say, if you have a talent enabling you to do it, you will do it. You will grasp some elements initially and other parts you will gradually acquire as you go along. But certainly you grasp some elements without being taught what to do.

Simon Mbokazi: When you were young didn't you hear anyone praising a person?

J.D: I used sometimes to do so. I did indeed.

S.M: Whom did you hear praising?

J.D: I used to hear the praising of R.R.R.Dhlomo. [E.G. interjects: R.R.R.Dhlomo!]** Then again I heard Gwala praising, when I was grown up, [I heard him] praising the Lion Cyprian.

E.G: But Gwala didn't teach you?

J.D: No. Gwala didn't teach me - but I used to listen to him; I didn't ask him to teach me.

* Cyprian kaSolomon passed away in 1968.

** English in Africa, ed. N.Visser, March 1975, Vol. 2 No. 1, makes no mention of R.R.R.Dhlomo ever having actually performed the praises of the kings that appear in his "royal" novels (see Bibliography). So Dlamini probably means that in his years at primary school (it seems he went up to Standard 4) the izibongo in Dhlomo's novels were taught or at least recited in class. They may also have been recited on the radio.

3.2.3. The acquisition of skills through listening

There are a number of situations which involve the performance of praises and which therefore afford invaluable instruction for those who have the talent to become bards. The performances may be formal (as in i below) and in what I call "Mode A" (see Chapter 4) or they may be less formal situations where the emphasis is still on praising by a single individual. Four kinds of listening and learning situations are briefly described in the following pages: listening to izibongo of the lineage shades or of people of importance; listening to the reciting of izibongo over the hemp horn or over beer; listening

to records or to izibongo read from books; listening to izibongo during ukugiya.

Listening to the izibongo of the lineage shades or of people of importance

This "Mode A" performing situation is one which many individuals observe and listen to from their childhood. Listening to recitals by izimbongi of the izibongo of lineage shades must be of particular importance for those who have the potential to become bards themselves. Zizwezonke Mthethwa and Phemba Mzimela both mentioned the significance of this and Adelina Dube (see A 63-73), who performed at the same wedding as Phemba Mzimela, said that she had learnt the Dube izibongo in this way.

Acquaintance with the izibongo (and the bards) of one's own lineage may be the first step in learning the art of praising. Added to this may be exposure to the izibongo either of royalty or of a chiefly house and to the performing styles of the bards responsible for them. The imbongi Azariah Mthiyane regards himself as the fifth in the line of bards who have praised the Nazarite prophet, Isaiah Shembe. He, like Mgezeni Ndlela, seemed amazed at the way in which he found himself able to recite praises without any conscious prior rehearsal or learning. Mthiyane's emergence as an imbongi was linked to his hearing, over a number of years, the izibongo of Isaiah Shembe recited by the talented bards whom he himself was to follow. Mthiyane's account of his debut as an imbongi stresses that it was unexpected but behind it lay years of the kind of inconspicuous grounding in the tradition that Lord found amongst the Yugoslav singers. He too, like the young guslar had been sitting aside and listening:

I remember in my case, the day I began to praise. I really didn't know where the *izibongo* had come from. And then the Leader of Ekuphakameni (Johannes Galilee son of Isaiah Shembe) asked to whom I had listened. I told him that I used to hear the praises when I was still a boy, because whenever there was a meeting, whether it was in January, or in July, or in October, I would go along to carry my father's baggage and then I would hear the *imbongi* praising, and I stored the praises in my heart. (24)

Listening to *izibongo* over the hemp horn or while drinking beer

The recitation of *izibongo* as men sat in groups smoking the hemp horn seems to have been an accepted social occurrence in nineteenth century Zulu society. Van Warmelo (1938:7) mentions that when the young Msebenzi was apprenticed to Siyikiyiki, he "was permitted to smoke hemp to a certain extent, a practice forbidden to other chief's sons." He adds rather sweepingly, that "in the whole of South Africa, hemp smoking is commonly resorted to as a preliminary to the reciting of poetry" (ibid.). Because of heavy fines which can be incurred nowadays and because of a certain amount of contemporary disapproval of hemp smoking it is not likely that this is now so widely practised - but I did not enquire too closely. Nevertheless, Mathambo Gwala, bard of the late Cyprian, mentioned it as one of the ways in which he had learnt *izibongo* when he was a youth. He had, he said, listened to the older men as they smoked and recited the praises of the heroes and great soldiers, men "like your Churchill!" (25). Other bards whom I questioned, confirmed the importance of this as a learning situation.

The exchange of *izibongo* accompanied sometimes by the "giya" dance, as men drink beer is probably more common now than praising over the hemp horn. While this may not be such an important learning context for a future *imbongi*, it was one that was mentioned by the royal bard's understudy, Mkhohliseni Mdletshe, and could provide a context for the recognition and development of early talent.

Listening to records, to the radio or to izibongo read from books

The new means of communication which the above represent need not be inimical to the art of praising. No bards actually mentioned that they had learnt from hearing izibongo on the radio, but izibongo were frequently broadcast over Radio Bantu's Zulu service in 1975-6. I was sometimes asked, "Did you hear those izibongo over the radio on such-and-such a day?" The various royal praises were recited, and knowledgeable bards were sought out; I heard the izibongo of Mpande kaSenzangakhona recited and discussed on one such programme. K.E.Masinga, the "father" of Zulu broadcasting made a series of programmes on izibongo in 1975 and Amos Mathambo Gwala, also in 1975, gave an in-depth programme on the izibongo of Dinuzulu, together with a partial recitation, which included snatches of the izibongo of Cetshwayo and Zibhebhu. The radio, therefore, could be a useful medium of instruction and inspiration to aspiring izimbongi. There are to my knowledge no recently cut records of royal izibongo but a limited number were cut by Zonophone, in London, in the late 1920s, and by Gallo, in Johannesburg in the 1940s (Rycroft, 1974:77-8). The performers were James Stuart and John Mgadi. One imbongi, Alpheus Luthuli from Empangeni, mentioned to my surprise, that he had learnt the royal izibongo "from listening to records". He must have listened to the Stuart and Mgadi recordings.

The izibongo which Stuart collected from the dozens of bards he so avidly listened to were in some cases included (often in a collated form) in his school readers (Stuart, 1923, 1924a, 1924b, 1925). They must have profoundly influenced not only many generations of Zulu schoolchildren but also the writers and compilers of successive textbooks. R.R.R.Dhlomo, as I have mentioned in Chapter 1, also included the izibongo of each king in each of his "royal" novels

(1935, 1936, 1938, 1952, 1968) and this too must have helped in their dissemination. The fact that John Dlamini cited R.R.R.Dhlomo as an early influence suggests the complex of forces at work in the bard's background. It demonstrates as well, the way in which praises may move from the oral tradition into print and then once again play a part in informing and vitalising the oral tradition.

Listening to izibongo performed as part of "ukugiya"

This is the most important context for the non-specialist performance of praises and I call it "Mode B" (see Chapter 4). It may be of less direct influence on future bards than "Mode A" situations. However it was cited by Elias Mjadu (see A 62 and 112-4), an *imbongi* of the Dube chief Ndesheni, as the performing context where he was able to use and - by implication - develop his skill in praising. He, like John Dlamini, obviously enjoyed composing new *izibongo* as well as recreating the established ones of the lineage. He clearly enjoyed performing in both the specialist and non-specialist "Modes" and could move from being an *imbongi* to being a non-specialist praiser/performer as necessity required.

What emerges from the above brief account of how bards learn their skills, is that there is no single type of training even though the art, in the hands of its best practitioners, is a specialised one. Moreover there are now bards (Phumasilwe Myeni for instance) who both write and perform *izibongo* as do some Xhosa *imbongi* such as Yali-Manisi and Burns-Ncamashe, and as S.E.K.Mqhayi the celebrated Xhosa bard used to do (Opland, 1981; 1983, Chapter 4). This is in addition to those like Dlamini and Alpheus Luthuli who have been influenced by *izibongo* in print or on disc. The present situation as regards learning how to be an *imbongi* is dynamic rather than static, with new

influences at work together with the older, more established ones.

3.2.4. The opportunities for performance

The development and maintenance of specialist skill in praising is, clearly, closely connected with the opportunities available for performance. In the period of the Zulu Kingdom (1818-1879) the involvement of bards in the military organisation of the state, in its hierarchical structure and in its religious life, ensured that they had ample opportunity for performance (Samuelson, 1929: 253). Bards were, moreover, often highly placed and influential individuals (Gunner, 1976). The different political, social and economic circumstances of the present mean that bards have more varied but on the whole fewer opportunities for performance. There are fewer bards than there were sixty or so years ago and even those who are locally known as experts in the royal praises, men such as George Ngobese and Alpheus Luthuli have to wait for a royal visit to their place of work before they can perform. Months, even years may pass in the interval between such visits. In these circumstances not only may the skills of bards grow rusty through lack of use but also the status and effectiveness of praising is brought into question. At the highest level, that of the royal praises and the praises of members of the Buthelezi chiefly house, the focus seems to be on a small number of talented and mobile bards who travel (usually) with their patrons and perform often. They perform on occasions such as the sessions of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly. They also perform at new venues and in new situations such as crowded township halls in the Transvaal, factories on the Witwatersrand, at the opening nights of Zulu musicals in Durban and at the opening of new agricultural centres in KwaZulu. John

Dlamini, who is the most obvious example of this type of bard, told me that he had sets of clothes at three of the King's residences so that he could go off with the King to any engagement at a moment's notice. Amos Mathambo Gwala also stressed how much he had travelled when he was *imbongi* to Cyprian kaSolomon.

Bards who are attached to chiefly houses which still value praising (Khonjwangekhanda Mdletshe of Hlabisa and Phemba Mzimela of Ngoye are among these) do find opportunities for performance on the standard occasions such as weddings and ritual addresses to the shades. There are also other occasions, such as the hearings of court cases by the chief and the monthly meetings of chiefdom councillors, where bards praise the ancestors of the chiefly house. For such bards too, there are new opportunities for performance such as praising at the ceremony for opening the new wing of a local school. Whether or not a bard performs on such an occasion depends to a large extent on the wishes of the chief, of the bard himself, and of whoever is drawing up the programme. For bards too, as for non-specialists, there are a number of "emergent performance situations" (Bauman, 1975:302). Families, particularly (but not only) if they are non-Christians or if they are attached to important lineages, still require bards to officiate at weddings and to address the shades on other occasions.

None of the above performing situations brings in regular payment or indeed any financial payment (with the exception, I think, of those undertaken by the royal bard and possibly Chief Buthelezi's bards). Whereas the customary gift for the bard for performing at a ceremony is the cow's stomach (*itwani*) and top nineteenth century bards such as Magolwana became extremely wealthy in terms of the cattle they possessed, today's bards (like many poets in other societies) have no regular reliable source of payment. Indeed, within the *umndeni*

(lineage segment) it is regarded as one's duty to praise, and financial payment would not be in order.

Of the bards whom I met in Ngoye, George Ngobese was, for part of 1975-1976, employed as a painter by the University of Zululand; Alpheus Luthuli worked at a sugar mill near Empangeni; Masoswidi Mkhwanazi was a gardener at the home of the Principal of the University; another bard who performed with Phemba Mzimela in December 1975 was a cook for a family at Richards Bay. Many able bards, it seems, were engaged in lowly and poorly paid occupations. Others, such as the Hlabisa bards, were chiefdom councillors (izinduna), positions which carried status within the community, but as peasant farmers their income came from the soil, not from praising. Phumasilwe Myeni, who was a headmaster and a published poet as well as an imbongi, was one of the very few Zulu bards who seemed to have achieved recognition as a bard, and wider status and financial success. Another who could perhaps fit into this category is C.B.S.Ntuli, also a headmaster, who has written and performed izibongo for Chief Buthelezi.

Artists in any contemporary society cannot survive on prestige alone. Nowadays, even though the status of the imbongi, especially if he has influential patrons, is high, the lack of any material benefits to be gained from becoming an imbongi must act as a disincentive to many. Greater patronage by radio, by educational institutions, by industry and by Zulu cultural and political organisations would offer greater scope for bards and increase opportunities for performance.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined ways in which children acquire and use the basic skills which enable them to participate as non-specialists in praising: they learn to recognise verbal and non-verbal cues which

signal the shift from standard to poetic utterance; they learn to manipulate some of the structures of the poetry; they encounter its themes and its range of figurative language and they learn to master the interaction of words, song and dance. The chapter has also explored the means by which those with particular talent may become solo performers and contribute to the continuity and growth of the tradition. What is also passed on from childhood is the multi-faceted significance of the act of praising in Zulu culture: it conveys respect for individual identity and family and clan origins. On a wider level it provides a means of expressing a pride in the past and a belief in a national identity in the present. The following chapter will consider in more detail the features of specialist and non-specialist performance and will demonstrate the way in which both bards and non-specialists contribute to the broad-based art of praising.

Notes

1

A.T.Bryant, The Zulu People, (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1949), pp.432-6, has discussed Zulu names in some detail. For the magical power of the "great name" and its identification with the being of the individual see A.I.Berglund, "Zulu Ideas and Symbolism" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Cape Town, 1972), quoted in A.Koopman, "A Study of Zulu Names" (B.A.Hons dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1976), p.3. J.Lyons, Semantics Vol.1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p.218 note II refers to the ritual or magical significance of the name in many cultures and the fact that the name is held to be an essential part of a person. I did not come across the term, "isithopho", referred to by Bryant, op.cit. p.434, which Doke and Vilakazi gloss as "praise-name, name of endearment, pet word, pet name", Dictionary, p.802, and to which Koopman refers in "The Linguistic Difference between Nouns and Names in Zulu", African Studies 38, 1, (1979), p.67. For a discussion of the formation of praise names see Chapter 5.

2

Ebuhleni Catholic Church and Ebuhleni School were in the Qwayinduku ward about two miles from the Dindi homestead. I met members of the Ebuhleni Mothers Union in February 1976. As an introduction to the topic of *izangelo* and *izithakazelo* I played them the recording of Princess Magogo reciting *izangelo* of her son, Chief Buthelezi, and of other members of the royal family. Many Christian married women (like Mrs Khumalo) used their husband's surname rather than keeping their own clan names after marriage.

3

The name Ntungwa (line 1) is important in the early movements of the Nguni on the south-east coast. Bryant, Olden Times, p.290, mentions the "elegant skin-trappings of the Ntungwa Ngunis as opposed to the simpler dress of the Thonga-Nguni". See also Shula Marks, "The Traditions of the Natal "Nguni": a second look at the work of A.T.Bryant", in L.Thompson (ed.), African Societies in Southern Africa (London: Longman, 1969), pp.131, 141, 143-4. Marks suggests that an earlier non-Nguni Bantu-speaking substratum was present but was undetected by Bryant and absorbed into his Nguni categories, one of which was "Ntungwa Nguni". Line 4: several of Stuart's informants commented on this well known sentence which occurs in many clan praises; it is taken as meaning that they came from the "Abesuthu" (in the north). See Webb and Wright, James Stuart Archive Vol. 2, pp.46 and 281.

4

J.K.Ngubane, "Shaka's Social, Political and Military Ideas", in D.Burness (ed.), Shaka King of the Zulus in African Literature (Washington: Three Continents Press, 1976), p.135, gives a different example of the Ngubane clan praises:

Ngubane! Nomafu!	Ngubane! You like the clouds!
Ngogo zabantu nezezinkomo.	(I see around you) skeletons of men and cattle.
	(My translation)

Clan praises for the same clan may differ from each other, sometimes only in detail, but sometimes they differ completely. Their functions, though, of celebrating the individual in terms of his clan and his clan's past remains the same.

5

The *izibongo* of the mysterious Njomane were recited by Mr Mhlongo of Mbongolwane, as part of his Mhlongo lineage *izibongo* see A 84.

6

I visited the class in February, April and May, 1976. Their teacher, to whom I am very grateful, was Sister Johanna Ntuli.

7

Much of the information about and examples of *izithakazelo* were collected in Hlabisa, mainly from women. Sister Marlene Koch and Sister Dietie von Spaun of the Hlabisa Catholic Medical Mission helped a great deal in collecting examples.

8

Izangelo are mentioned by Stuart, Notebook 76, p.96, Stuart Archives, K.C.A.L., Durban. George Ngobese, the *imbongi*, (see 3.2.) frequently recited his *izangelo* to me during fieldwork, always at a furious speed. He always stressed that his mother had composed them.

9

Mrs Phenyana recited these *izibongo* on one of the occasions when I had accompanied Sister Dietie von Spaun to a particularly inaccessible clinic in Hlabisa.

10

Doke and Vilakazi, Dictionary, p.364, gloss "ijongosi" as meaning "a young ox fit for inspanning". It is used in Ngoye to mean "a young girl of marriageable age"!

11

There were no men present and I assume all had gone to a celebraton a mile or so away, where I too was going (see 4.2.Description C). Whether the boys would have been quite so uninhibited in their play performance had the men been present, I do not know.

12

War chants and war songs (izaga and amahubo empi) are usually cryptic and elliptical. For examples of others see Samuelson, Long, Long Ago, pp.254-282 (passim), and Rycroft and Ngcobo, Say it in Zulu (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1981, 2nd ed.), Appendix D; also see Chapter 4.2.

13

M.B.Yengwa mentioned his early practice as a "bard" in a letter to me, written in October 1975. Phemba Mzimela commented that children learn izibongo at school in an interview on 24 April 1976; John Dlamini remarked that he thought schoolchildren would (one day) study the royal izibongo he had composed, in an interview at Nongoma, 16 October 1975.

14

Kenya has since 1980 placed far more emphasis than before on oral literature (in translation) and in particular the oral literatures of Kenya, in its Literature syllabuses. It features in both the KCE (Form 4) and KACE (Form 6) literature syllabuses.

15

Norbert Mbonambi who acted as my assistant and language teacher in early 1976 recalled several boys in their mid-teens whom he knew, who were expert at praising cattle but who were now scattered and looking for work. Stefan Mnguni, who sometimes acted as my assistant, mentioned that many of the men in the Qwayinduku iviyo had gone up to Standard Five (i.e. they had completed Primary School) but no further. Stefan himself had not learnt praises as a child because his father was a devout Catholic. He began to attend weddings and other occasions where men would "giya" after he was married.

16

The term "iviyo" referred originally to a section of a regiment (ibutho). These were formed from men closer in age, with usually as little as four or five years separating them. For Bryant's version of the regiments from Shaka to Dinuzulu, see Bryant, Olden Times, pp.645-646. The militarism in the content and performing context of present and past izibongo is discussed in Chapters 4 and 7.

17

There are several comments on this in writing in Zulu and in English. See for instance R.R.R.Dhlomo's novel set in Johannesburg and the townships, Indlela yababi [The Way of the Wicked] (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1946) and O.M.Mtshali's poem, "The Master of the House" in W.Soyinka (ed.), Poems of Black Africa (London: Heinemann, 1975), p.209.

18

Guy defines uSuthu as follows: "Before the war [i.e.the civil war in Zululand] the name USuthu was given to Cetshwayo's following within the nation. After the war it was used to identify the faction which worked to revive and maintain the influence of the royal house, either through Cetshwayo himself or, after his death, through Dinuzulu".

J.J.Guy, "The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom: The Civil War in Zululand, 1879-1884", (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1975), p.121.

19

All the information on Mkhohliseni, his father and family, is from an interview with father and son at Ceza, Mahlabathini, in July, 1976. The area is close to uSuthu territory which begins a few miles to the north.

20

George Mbhekeni Ngobese lived in Ngoye near the University of Zululand and helped me on many occasions during field work. The interview where he told me about his stay at the royal homestead of Cyprian kaSolomon was in January 1976.

21

The chief occasion is the old Mthethwa first fruits ceremony, called by Zizwezonke, umswela, and celebrated by him on February 22nd each year. The lineage praises are also recited before apprentice diviners and doctors return to their homes on completion of their apprenticeship.

22

The interview was at Mantungweni, Mahlabathini, May 1976. Mr Ngidi, Chief Buthelezi's secretary for chiefdom affairs was with me. Mgezeni Ndlela's flair for dramatic re-presentation is clear from his account. This was my second long interview with Ndlela. The first was at Nkonjeni in February, 1976.

23

The interview from which this extract was taken (16th October, 1975) was my first in KwaZulu. Fortunately Mr Simon Mbokazi, then a master at Bhekuzulu College, was with me. My command of spoken Zulu was not good and my interviewing skills limited, and several opportunities were not followed through. To my sorrow I was not able to interview J.Dlamini again although I tried twice, on one occasion driving 200 kilometres in search of him!

24

From an interview with Azariah Mthiyane, at Emkayideni, Richards Bay, May 1976. Johannes Galilee Shembe took over the leadership of the Nazareth Church after the death of Isaiah in 1935. Huge annual meetings in different parts of Natal and Zululand are a feature of Nazarite worship and provide an important context for the performance of Shembe's izibongo. An annual gathering of the Nazarites which lasts for the whole of the first week of May, has been held at Emkayideni since the 1940s. In 1976 Nazarites from Ngoye were among those camped there but there were also people from as far away as urban areas such as KwaMashu outside Durban, and from Enanda.

25

From an interview with A.M.Gwala in Durban, in October 1975. Because of a breach of etiquette on my part, in that I had approached Mathambo Gwala without first asking permission from members of the royal family resident in KwaMashu, Gwala agreed to give me an interview but he would not recite the royal izibongo, nor would he allow any of his remarks to be tape-recorded. He did however agree to my taking notes!

CHAPTER 4

THE ART OF THE PERFORMERS

4.0. Introduction: The Two Modes of Performance

Praising, as I have outlined in Chapter 3, is an art that is mastered by a broad spectrum of individuals in Zulu society. Some become highly skilled izimbongi with a wide reputation, some become izimbongi who perform only for their lineage segment or for members of a clan in a particular district. Others are never known as an imbongi but are steeped in the artistic idiom of praising. They compose praises for themselves and their age-mates and they know the izibongo of many others besides themselves. These are the non-specialists whose knowledge of praising and of praises is essential to the continuity of the tradition. Equally essential to the vitality of the tradition is their contribution in terms of new compositions and the performance of izibongo. The division into bards and non-specialists is to a large extent reflected in the two distinct (although in some ways slightly overlapping) performing modes that exist within the art of praising. This chapter will focus on the art of the performers, both the bards, the izimbongi, and the non-specialists.

4.1. "Mode A" Performance of izibongo

In broad terms, performance by bards tends to be formal and there is great emphasis on the verbal and vocal art of the performer. As I have mentioned in Chapter 2, the occasions of performance for bards range from situations which emphasise the heraldic and political aspects of praising to those which underline its more solemn and

religious aspects. It needs to be remembered, also, that while the most skilled bards praise subjects (both deceased and living) who are of exalted status and widely acknowledged, other lesser bards praise the ancestors and members of a lineage which may not be at all widely known. It is still important that they are well praised, especially at an event such as a wedding where the honour of the family and the lineage is on show. For all bards, whether they are attached to royalty, a chiefly house or whether they represent a clan, the emphasis on verbal and vocal skill is considerable. An *imbongi* may conclude his performance with a brief *giya* "dance" (see 4.1.4.) but the focus of his performance is the delivery of *izibongo* addressed to one or more deceased and/or living members of a lineage. This solo performance by bards I call "Mode A". Performance by non-specialists is often less formal and verbal art is combined with song, chant and dance, in a composite, communal performance. In such "Mode B" performances, the subject of praise is always present and performs in a combination of speech, chant, song and "dance" (known as *ukugiya*) during the oral delivery. In Mode B performance, therefore, the close link between praise and action is symbolically acted out in the combination of *ukugiya* and the oral delivery of the dancer's praises by those present. A dancer may, and sometimes does, call out his own praises, but the onus is really on the participating group to do this. At an engagement celebration which I attended, the bridegroom-to-be was not known in the ward and Stefan Mnguni remarked to me afterwards, "We couldn't praise him as he *"giya'd"* because we didn't know him", ("know" here meaning both "did not know his praises" and "did not know him").

There are therefore two modes of performance. It is worth emphasising, however, that bards can perform in either mode; likewise

non-specialist performers are sometimes compelled through force of circumstance to assume the role of imbongi and perform in Mode A instead of Mode B. It is also the case that Izibongo may in some cases be performed in either mode. King Zwelithini and Chief Buthelezi are usually praised by bards in Mode A, but when and if they "giya" (leaders do so now far less frequently than they used to), then Mode B performance rules apply and many voices call out sections of their izibongo. Despite this flexibility on the part of performers and the adaptability of izibongo in that they can be performed by a bard (in the case of living leaders) or called out by non-specialists, it is important to recognise that there are two performing modes. Moreover there are other informal performing situations, such as when a person tells a group (of age-mates) or new acquaintances what his praises are, so that they can praise him when he "dances", and so that they "know" him. Praises (usually snatches of a person's total izibongo) are also frequently called out as greetings when people pass each other on the road. These praising situations, while obviously important to individuals and important for the expression and continuity of the art, fall neither into Mode A nor Mode B. As broad categories, however, Mode A and Mode B are valid; they cover most performing situations and show the unities and the distinctions that operate within the genre as a whole. The discussion in this chapter focuses in turn on each performing mode. 4.1. covers performance in Mode A, and 4.2. performance in Mode B.

4.1.1. Formality in Mode A

In general an air of solemnity and a sense of occasion accompanies praising in this mode. Certainly the nineteenth century bards mentioned by Stuart (1) seem to have created a special

atmosphere by the power of their presence and the eloquence of their words. Magolwana, for instance, is said to have held the whole assembly spell-bound and only the King was permitted to respond while he was praising. Dingana's general, Ndlela kaSompisi Ntuli, is said to have had a similar effect on his audience (Bang, 1951). The praises of a king or chief called out by a bard at (or before) dawn, (a practice still adhered to by the Nazarites), also emphasises the dominant figure of the bard imprinting his poetry in lonely formality on the waking community (2). Formality, though, has many guises. Singing or chanting may also continue during a bard's reciting. In some cases an *imbongi* recites against a background of controlled, rhythmic war chants. Fuze (1979: 103) records such an instance during Theophilus Shepstone's visit to King Mpande, and an S.A.B.C. recording of the present *imbongi* also demonstrates this type of performance situation (Tape 5). Here Dlamini recites the *izibongo* of King Zwelithini while the "regiments" chant the war cry of the iNala regiment, formed at the time of his installation. Such background chanting in no way lessens the dominance of the bard, nor does it reduce the formality of the occasion. It is simply another performance situation and it demonstrates the flexibility within Mode A. To some extent, the particular context of the performance dictates the level of formality and the particular way it is expressed. For instance, praising the ancestors is always a solemn event. On the other hand, reciting the praises of a living person seems (sometimes) to allow a more relaxed atmosphere. Certainly this contrast in atmosphere was very evident during two performances by bards at the same event in Mahlabathini in July 1976. The official Buthelezi *imbongi*, Mgezeni Ndlela, opened the occasion held in honour of Chief Buthelezi, with a solemn and dignified praising of the Buthelezi lineage ancestors. Later in the programme another

bard, Phumasilwe Myeni, performed Chief Buthelezi's own izibongo (see A 6 and Myeni, 1969). These were accompanied at certain points by shouts of laughter from the audience. A shift in atmosphere and audience response can occur in the same performance: as the imbongi moved from the izibongo of the lineage ancestors to praising the father of the bride at the Mzimela/Dube wedding which I attended in December 1975 (3), the audience became noticeably livelier. Laughter and cries of "Musho" (literally, "Speak him") replaced the silent reverence with which the earlier izibongo were heard (see A 73). In each instance though, the bard remained the dominant figure in the performance, and the contrast merely illustrates the range of response which is possible.

4.1.2. Solo performance and its implications

In most cases bards perform solo although at two weddings I attended two izimbongi strode around the arena reciting the lineage praises of the bride's family. There is in general an expectation of a high level of skill from performers in Mode A although in reality this varies considerably. Those who recite izibongo of the lineage ancestors at weddings are in some cases fairly perfunctory and sometimes the notion of "dominance" is not much in evidence. The ideal, though, is that those who perform as bards in Mode A have a complex of skills relating to movement, vocalisation and verbal art. In cases where the high level of skill which is possible is actually realised, bards exert great power over their audience as appears to have been the case both with Magolwana and Dingana's general, Ndlela as mentioned above, and some izimbongi in Ngoye were spoken of with great respect because of their impressive performances at weddings.

In the following account by Chief Buthelezi's imbongi, Mgezeni

Ndlela, a sense of the dominance of the solo performer, the *imbongi*, is communicated. Mgezeni was describing to me the Chief's 1973 tour of the Transvaal and Orange Free State:

I had to go to all the places he visited. I praised him, I announced him to the nation as befitted his status. I walked ahead of him; we would go into a hall as big as from here to that homestead which you have just passed. It would be jam-packed with people! I would announce The Child (a praise name for a member of the Zulu royal family); I announced him and there would be complete silence, total silence...I would praise the whole lineage of the Buthelezi (ruling) house, the whole lot! And then I would just stop because, after all, the Chief had his own work to do!

(Mgezeni Ndlela to E.G., Emantungweni, Mahlabathini, May 1976)

In some cases the dominance of the solo performer is measured not by silence but by the response evoked during performance. The success of Phumasilwe Myeni in this respect has already been mentioned (4.1.1.). Another example is the performance of the *imbongi* at the funeral of Chief Albert Luthuli in 1967 (see A 3). Here, on the evidence of a recording of the funeral (4), the audience register their approval and involvement at various points in the praises. When the bard allusively compares Chief Luthuli with Shaka (see 6.2.), they urge him on. When he comments on the Chief's career and lists the White politicians whom he outmanoeuvred (according to the *imbongi*) the crowd responds enthusiastically. They cheer him on with cries of "Musho!" ("Speak him!") when he refers to the "fraudulent Houses of Parliament", the hated pass system and Luthuli's refusal to be bought off by those in power (A 3). Clearly, then, the way in which a bard establishes control over his audience depends on the occasion of performance (which to some extent dictates the kind of audience) and on his own skills. It is to the deployment of those skills that we now turn.



1. Mgezeni Ndlela "announcing" Chief Buthelezi and praising the Buthelezi lineage ancestors at Mahlabathini in July 1976.

4.1.3. Costume as a frame for performance in Mode A

There are various ways in which an artist marks off his performance from everyday speech and everyday happenings. As Bauman points out, performance itself "sets up or represents an interpretative frame within which the messages being communicated are to be understood" (6). Costume can be a potent element in the framing of verbal art. It helps to distance the performer from the audience and to signal the entry into a specialised, distinctive form of communication. For contemporary bards, dress as a framing device seems to be optional. It could be said that it enhances a good performance but does very little for an indifferent one. The royal bard, John Dlamini, dislikes wearing traditional dress. Though he is often asked, even begged, to wear the traditional bard's attire, he prefers to perform in Western dress; similarly Mgezeni Ndlela wore Western dress for his July recitation at Mahlabathini. On the other hand, Phumasilwe Myeni on the same occasion donned traditional imbongi attire and in the eyes of his audience undoubtedly improved his performance by doing so.

Vividly distinctive attire was certainly frequently used by nineteenth century bards. Certainly it seems an essential part of the performance of the bards of Dingana, in the 1830s, described below; the adjective "grotesque" though, which is applied to their costume, marks Captain Gardiner as an outsider and one who did not see leopard skin as a poet's accepted attire (although Lord Byron may well have approved!):

At the conclusion of every song...two heralds swiftly cross each other,...shouting at the top of their lungs 0,0,0,0,0,0 to indicate its conclusion. These heralds are always disguised by some grotesque attire;...one completely enveloped in the entire skin of a panther...(7)

Another, somewhat later account, this time from a Zulu informant, suggests that costume intensifies the effect of a good performance but is not central to it. James Stuart's informant, describing the performance of royal praises by the famous Magolwana remarks that:

He would stamp tremendously; and all the trappings he had on would swing to and fro; because he had a lot on, he had dressed up; he adorned himself tremendously. (8)

The apparently optional nature of the use of distinctive costume as a frame for performance is stressed, by another informant of Stuart's; Hoye, bard to King Solomon kaDinuzulu (later bard to Chief Mathole Buthelezi) and father of the imbongi Mgezeni Ndlela, had this to say on the subject of dress: "The imbongi dresses up in all sorts of finery. I have no distinctive uniform of my own as imbongi" (9). Costume as a framing device is perhaps most effective when combined with movement and gesture and here again evidence suggests that there is a range of options open to performers.

4.1.4. Gesture and movement as a frame for performance in Mode A

Several early accounts of bards mention both their distinctive action and their fantastic attire. L.H.Samuelson, describing an imbongi performing on the third day of the national umkhosi (Feast of the first fruits) celebrations in the 1870s, lays emphasis on the dramatic and to her, court-jester-like quality of the performance. Her account also illuminates the use of the bull symbolism so dominant in Zulu culture. She mentions that the assembled men are drinking beer, and continues:

Now and then an "Imbhongi" (jester) comes forward, shouting praises to the King, and jumping about like a maniac, with long

horns fixed on his forehead. He acts the wild bull, tearing up the ground with his horns, then leaps into the air, shouting the King's praises all the time. (10)

Grant, some fifty years later, was also struck by the dress and dramatic gestures of the elderly izimbongi who performed for him the praises of the Zulu kings and of the Mandlakazi leader, Zibhebhu kaMaphitha. He remarks on the leopard skin dress of one of the bards, the garland of small bladders of animals around his temples, his shield and long, carved stick. During the performance, Grant tells us (1929:202), the imbongi became increasingly agitated, his shield and stick would be suddenly raised and shaken in the air, his gestures became more and more frequent and dramatic. Both these descriptions convey very strongly the sense of a dramatic performance, with the bard as leading actor. Phumasilwe Myeni's performance at Mahlabathini was very much in this vein. Other styles are also permissible and perhaps in certain contexts more suitable. At weddings which I attended, when the lineage ancestors were praised, the bards strode energetically around the arena but never played to the gallery with any extravagant gestures or movements. It was clear that such actions would have been out of keeping with the solemnity of the moment. Also, the onlookers clearly enjoyed the praising of the ancestors even though there was no flamboyantly expressive movement by the performers, apart from the brief giya "dance" (see 4.2.4.) which a bard breaks into when he has finished praising the ancestors.

Some contemporary bards have adopted what could be termed an optional "stationary" style which they easily and readily turn to in response to modern and novel conditions of performance. For instance, if one is performing in a large hall on a small platform, or standing in the aisle between rows of onlookers on tightly packed seats it is

not practical or even possible to make use of free-ranging action and acrobatic displays. Also today under such conditions, bards frequently have to use microphones, and often fixed microphones. For these reasons, perhaps, the King's bard praised standing still, on the two occasions at which I saw him perform, and the same was true of Mgezeni Ndlela when he praised at Mahlabathini. Neither seems to have suffered a loss in reputation because of this concession to modernity.

Because of the varying performance conditions under which contemporary bards operate, they sometimes have different options open to them as regards costume, gesture and movement, the same performance event can be exploited in different ways by individual bards. As we have seen, Myeni and Mgezeni Ndlela made different use of dress and movement on the same occasion. One chose the flamboyant tasselled loin skin, leopard skin head-dress, small shield and stick known to many Zulus as the costume of the *imbongi*, while the other donned sober trousers and jacket for the cold Mahlabathini winter's day. A third bard who also performed that day combined his options in yet another way. Like Ndlela he recited the lineage praises at the microphone but he like Myeni, wore the dress of a traditional bard and was further adorned with beads. These were slung down across his waist from his left shoulder, and like the *imbongi* who praised for Grant (1929), his costume included the bladders of small animals. To mark the end of his praising of the lineage ancestors and of Chief Buthelezi (see A 4), Ndongemuntu Buthelezi, who was the third performer, abandoned the microphone and the platform on the verandah of the building and leapt into the arena. Here he "giya'd" (see 4.2.4.) calling out his personal chant (his *izigiyo*) as he did so, and the words were repeated by a section of the audience, many of whom were councillors like himself, to whom he was well known. The third performer's final flourish gave

sparkle to what was otherwise a mediocre performance which had until that point failed to command the audience's attention in the way the two earlier performances had done. A fourth performer of what were described as *izibongo* for Chief Buthelezi, was the headmaster of Bhekuzulu College, C.B.S.Ntuli. He was dressed in the flowing black robes and colourful hood of the academic, and recited from the platform microphone, punctuating his delivery with expansive gestures of his arms. The style of voice and of language which C.B.S.Ntuli used were in many ways quite novel and outside the conventions normally associated with *ukubonga*.

The different combinations of dress, gesture and movement which I have mentioned above are reminders of what Bauman (1975:293) terms the "emergent structure" of much contemporary performance of verbal art, its variable, dynamic nature in modern situations. In some ways this is a liberating rather than a restricting factor for the *imbongi* and his audience. It provides the former with new options and might in some cases lead to really important innovations in the tradition.

4.1.5. Vocalisation in Mode A

Stylised use of the voice is a key feature of performance in this mode. Rycroft (1960:77) has defined *izibongo* as a form of "speech utterance with rudimentary musical characteristics, rather than a species of song". He concludes that (in the studio recordings which he cites as examples):

Tonal realization departs from that of other Zulu speech utterances in the following ways:

1. Use of a high vocal range approximately an octave higher than that of normal conversational speech.
2. Predominance of a limited series of notes...
3. Absence of downdrift until the end of each stanza, a notable feature being the fact that pitch-drop is withheld at points within the utterance where it would normally occur in speech.

4. Concluding formulae, applying to the last two syllables in a stanza, differ from those applying finally or before a pause in ordinary speech. Where the tone pattern of the word permits it, a distinctively large descending pitch interval can be realised suddenly, on the last two syllables, as a result of the suppression of downdrift in the stanza until that moment. (Rycroft, "Melodic Features in Zulu Eulogistic Recitation", African Language Studies 1, 1960, pp.77-8)

Certainly, the ability to adopt a recognisable vocal style which includes the control of intonation described in point 3 above, and the introduction of concluding formulas (4 above) mark the vocalisation of a number of bards whom I recorded. Mgezeni Ndlela (A 8-16), Phemba Mzimela, (A 57-61), Phumasilwe Myeni (A 6) and Zizwezonke Mthethwa (A 74-81) all employed a distinctive descending cadence at various points in *izibongo* which they recited. Mgezeni Ndlela usually kept such concluding vocal formula until he reached the end of each lineage *izibongo*. Phemba Mzimela and Zizwezonke Mthethwa, on the other hand, employed it to mark the ending of a section distinct in content from what was to follow. Whereas such formulas in the Stuart recordings mark off (in the main) large sections, in the far shorter *izibongo* which the above bards recited they often occurred after very short utterances. The royal bard, John Dlamini, makes little use of these distinctive cadential formulas. In contrast to Mgezeni, who makes quite a feature of the vocal formulas, using them as a vocal signal of completion in his passage through individual lineage *izibongo*, Dlamini's performances of royal praises tend to end in an anti-climactic way, the volume of his voice being much reduced and the final cadence being barely noticeable. Dlamini may employ this seemingly uncharacteristic vocal ending because he wishes to do two things: firstly, (in the recordings I have of the *imbongi* actually performing to an audience) (11) he ends the royal *izibongo* with a verbal concluding formula uttered in a low voice: "Ulibinda wena

wendlovu"; both the words and the voice seem intended to suggest that the bard is too overcome with emotion to continue the (in theory) endless praises of the monarch in question.

Dlamini has other ways, in performance, of achieving dramatic auditory effects to signal that he has completed the izibongo of one Zulu king and will continue with another. Having ended the izibongo proper with his softly uttered, "Ulibinda wena wendlovu!", ("You choke [the voice], you of the elephant") (11), he uses the royal praise name and hails the royal shade (or the living king) with the apostrophic, "Wena wendlovu!". This time he shouts the words out with maximum volume and the crowd roars its response. This call and response is repeated before the bard introduces the next royal salutation: "Bayede!", ("Hail O King!"), uttered (in the recordings) at the same intensity with greatly exaggerated lengthening of the penultimate syllable and with extra force on the final syllable. This royal salute is also repeated by the crowd. To some extent, the use of these royal salutations must be in keeping with protocol, and it is therefore expected of royal bards, but Dlamini seems to make maximum use of them to create the tense, fervid atmosphere that he needs in order to launch into each new royal izibongo.

The royal imbongi also introduces what seem to be his own distinctive vocal mannerisms into his praising style. For instance he begins the izibongo of King Zwelithini with an exaggerated initial syllable in the important opening praise name, "INDlondlo", ("The Hooded Viper"). Similarly, the royal patronymic, "kaMenzi", ("descendant of Menzi"), is also called out with lengthened penultimate syllable. Dlamini's opening praise for King Zwelithini is, therefore, highly distinctive in vocal terms, and in vocalisation alone constitutes an important means of cueing in his audience.

Other ways in which this bard seems to have created his own distinctive vocal style further demonstrate the degree of flexibility - within limits - that exists as regards vocalisation. Besides eliminating the usual speech feature of downdrift, he also varies his pitch and the volume of his recitation in a masterly way. This variation in volume and pitch is particularly noticeable in the repetitive, catalogue-like sections of the royal izibongo with their "lexical-syntactic" parallelism (a term I use, see 5.1.). In the October 1975 recording of Dlamini reciting the izibongo of Dingana (Tape 2), this is most noticeable. One of the key points of the izibongo is the listing of the Boers led by Piet Retief who met their death at the monarch's command. In the formula line leading up to this catalogue of victims, Dlamini lowers his volume, as if to signal to the audience, "Listen carefully!"; on the first name, "uPiti", ("Piet Retief") he lowers his pitch and then seems gradually to raise it in the course of the catalogue until at the end of it he is reciting at a high pitch and with considerable volume:

Example 1

Izibuko likaNdaba elimadwala 'bushelezi elishelela 'Mhloph'
em'bili,

elashelela uPiti kanye nendodana:

lapha kumaBhunu wamshay' phansi Jan Jablase,

lapha kumaBhunu wamshay' phansi uJan Qili (?),

lapha kumaBhunu wamshay' phansi uJan 'Mude,

lapha kumaBhunu wamshay' phansi uQuphana (?),

lapha kumaBhunu wamshay' phansi wadl' 'Mhloph' em'bi-i-li!

(Tape 2:1)

Ford of (Royal) Ndaba with the broad, slippery flagstones on
 which the two Whites slipped,
 on which slipped Piet and his son:
 here among the Boers he threw down Jan Joubert,
 here among the Boers he threw down Jan the Cunning (?),
 here among the Boers he threw down Jan the Tall,
 here among the Boers he threw down Quphana (?)
 here among the Boers he threw down, he destroyed the two Whi-i-
 tes!

Other versions of this key catalogue in the Dingana izibongo are in Nyembezi, (1958:48) and in the Rycroft and Ngcobo "Eulogies of Dingana" (forthcoming). Dlamini has his own version of some of the names and clearly uses the catalogue for maximum effect. Rosenberg has commented on the usefulness of catalogues to a skilful "singer" whether the "song" be part of The Iliad, part of a guslar's epic, an Anglo-Saxon lay or an element in the sermon of a Black American preacher. His remarks are also applicable to Dlamini's skilful manipulation of pitch and volume to highlight content, in other words, his deliberate combination of verbal and vocal style:

Reading a list of dishes to be served at a banquet is little more exciting than reading a grocery list, but a talented minstrel or scop could make it a descriptive highlight, if he recited it with vivacity. It did not matter to a fourteenth century minstrel what learned Virgilian or Ciceronian purpose lay behind the use of catalogues; what did matter was the performance. (Rosenberg, "The Formulaic Quality of Spontaneous Sermons", Journal of American Folklore Vol.83, 1970, p.20)

Certainly Dlamini is able to marry style and performance in a masterly way, demonstrating, as Finnegan has pointed out, (1977:80) that there

is no clear distinction in oral art between style and performance.

The royal izibongo and those of other lineages and of important individuals, if well performed, seem invariably to engender an atmosphere of tension and excitement. The use of a high vocal range and the absence of downdrift noted by Rycroft are the chief elements in the vocal creation of the taut and emotional atmosphere of Zulu eulogy as performed in Mode A. Beyond this, however, Dlamini's style of vocalisation suggests that bards may introduce features which become a mark of their individual performing style. Only the very best bards, such as John Dlamini or his predecessor, Amos Mathambo Gwala, would have the skill and confidence to carry off such individual characteristics of vocal style. Most, on the evidence of my fieldwork, kept within the limits of what was generally recognised as the ukubonga style.

Rycroft also comments (see point 2 above) that there is, in the examples of the izibongo on which he based his findings, a predominance of a limited series of four notes. I do not feel qualified to assess whether or not this is borne out in the vocalisation of the izibongi with whom I worked. I would guess though, that it is characteristic of some but by no means all. There is a style of praising which sounds more chant-like than that of the majority of bards recorded. Ndodengemuntu Buthelezi (A 4), the third bard to perform at the Mahlabathini ceremony to which I have referred, is the main exponent known to me of the chant-like vocal style which might be closest, in terms of its preference for a limited series of notes, to that described by Rycroft (1960). Another performer, (not a bard) whom I recorded on a different occasion but within the same fortnight, also used this distinctive, chant-like style. On enquiry, I discovered that he lived very near Ndodengemuntu Buthelezi, in the

Ceza district of Mahlabathini, and he may well have modelled his vocal style on that of his successful neighbour. Perhaps in this respect, Mgadi and Stuart (on whose recorded performances Rycroft bases his conclusions) and the imbongi Ndodengemuntu Buthelezi represent one possible choice among a range of vocal styles open to bards. Others keep to the established rule as regards elimination of downdrift and a higher than normal vocal range but do not restrict themselves in the use of pitch.

Although commentators such as Rycroft (1960) and Lestrade (1935;1937) maintain that vocal style is a key distinctive feature of izibongo in Mode A, another point of view is that the essential difference between izibongo and other forms of speech is based on linguistic criteria alone. A.C.Nkabinde in his Zulu Praises and Praising (1976:5) presents a view that discounts the existence of an inherent vocal style as an indispensable constituent of praises:

It is common to say praises deliberately without raising one's voice. Izibongo that are spoken in the normal way are never confused with ordinary prose. We suggest that the speed of recitation and the raising of the voice apparently have much to do with the quantity of praises to be rendered and the size of the audience.

It is undoubtedly true that the style of language in izibongo is distinct from that of normal speech, and that when individuals recite (in the course of conversation) their own or others' praises, they are recognisable as praises. It is equally true, nevertheless, that a flexible but recognisable vocal style very commonly pertains to izibongo when they are performed in Mode A. Nor can this haphazardly be ascribed to "the quantity of praises to be rendered and the size of the audience" (as Nkabinde would have it). In contrast, Zulu oratory

and speech-making does not show the characteristic suppression of downdrift, cadential vocal formulas and (in general) higher vocal range common to izibongo performance. This was clear at the Mahlabathini event which I have already mentioned, where speeches by Canon Biyela and Chief Buthelezi (among others) were quite different in vocal as well as verbal style from the izibongo performed by the four bards on that occasion. Trevor Cope confirms Rycroft's claim to the existence of distinctive vocal features of praising, in his description of the recitation of (written) izibongo at a Durban school prize-giving by the Headmaster (and composer of the praises), Mr E.Mathabela. Cope comments on the recognisable vocal style of the delivery and the atmosphere of tension and excitement which this helped create among the audience of schoolchildren and their relatives (1976:17). Nkabinde states that even spoken izibongo are never confused with ordinary prose. Certainly the often highly ordered and rich language of izibongo is different in kind from that of prose (see Chapters 5-7). Yet even people "speaking" izibongo are often conforming to some degree to rules of vocalisation that apply in performance in Mode A. Zizwezonke Mthethwa (A 74-81), Phemba Mzimela (A 57-61) and Nyonyovu Mdletshe (A 115-117) all gave "spoken" renderings of izibongo (in that I requested them) but even here the raising of the voice at the beginning either of sections or of successive izibongo, the suppression of downdrift and use of cadences was absolutely clear. An account of izibongo which fails to take note of elements of vocal style is one that is not complete, omitting as it does a vital component of the complete art of the performer.

Two further features of vocalisation to be briefly considered are the varying speeds of recitation and the way in which various performers make use of pauses and hence break up their utterances into

longer or shorter units. As regards speed of recitation, several styles of reciting are evident. A number of bards whom I recorded recited at great speed. Among these were John Dlamini and also George Ngobese whose versions of royal izibongo are not in the Appendix but who was regarded around KwaDlangezwa (where the University of Zululand is situated) as an expert in the royal izibongo, having learnt his art from Amos Mathambo Gwala, bard to the late Cyprian Bhekuzulu (see 3.2.1.). Another exponent of the fast delivery style is Hezekiah Buthelezi, one of the composers of izibongo for Chief Buthelezi (A 5). Some bards on the other hand, recite with great deliberation; examples of this slower reciting style are the recitations of Phemba Mzimela and Mgezeni Ndlela where the use of dynamic stress first commented upon by Lestrade (1935:294) is very noticeable. Others, such as Adelina Dube, who recited the Dube lineage izibongo at the Mzimela/Dube wedding at which Phemba Mzimela also performed, had only a moderately fast reciting style. She recited with far less deliberation than Phemba Mzimela but at nothing like the speed of the royal imbongi.

Not all bards who recite at great speed use what Rycroft (1980) has described as the "long stretch style". Some manage to recite very fast while still breaking the praises up into short breath groups and comparisons of recordings of Dlamini show that he too, sometimes breaks up his utterances into short units. The "long-stretch" does, however, seem to be an old and established vocal style. Gardiner, when visiting the court of Dingana, noticed what appeared to him to be a disregard for syntactic boundaries in the recitations of the royal bards; he describes, in his slightly arrogant idiom:

...two imbongas, or official flatterers, who fawned upon the King

and ceaselessly yelled his prowess, the climax of this species of impromptu composition being the volubility of the speaker, and his total disregard for punctuation.
(Gardiner, Narrative of a Journey to the Zoolu Country, 1836, p.59)

J.Dlamini also frequently runs syntactic units together in a way that defies what Milman Parry has referred to as the "adding style" of true oral poetry (Lord, 1960:57). For example, a section of the performed izibongo of King Zwelithini, transcribed according to breath group breaks, shows no regard for syntax or content in its pauses (whereas the text in the Appendix, from a spoken version, shows breath groups more clearly); it would appear in transcription as follows: (14)

Example 2

Igugu elihle likaKekana ade ehamba ezibuka ngalo ebhek' Mamelodi.

Udaxewadaxa MntakaNdaba Simomo vuka ntambama. (Pause)

Ubhaxabhule 'khukhu wakho ekuphekela. UMhlahlandlela ngowamakhosi ngowawoCetshwayo ngowawoMpande oNyawo-zinhle ezikaNdaba ezingakhethi 'mabala. (Pause) (A 1 ls.84-88)

The beautiful treasure of Kekana which he went in looking at his own reflection all the time as he headed towards Mamelodi. Sloucher Child of (Royal) Ndaba, the Handsome One you wake in the afternoon. (Pause)

You gave the cook who cooked for you a hiding. Pioneer of the kings' roads those of Cetshwayo, those of Mpande. Beautiful Feet of Ndaba which do not choose where they tread. (Pause)

Most of the bards whom I recorded favoured a more punctuated style of delivery than the above and J.Dlamini himself does not solely use the "long stretch" style. In catalogues in particular (such as Example 1 on p.148), he introduced pauses which coincide with the repetition of

lexical and syntactic patterns. Dlamini, therefore, is able to vary the length of his breath groups and can do so within the same izibongo. Another example, from the recitation of Hezekiah Buthelezi, suggests that in some cases at least, bards can vary the pauses and breath groups for the same material. In three different recordings, two made only minutes apart, and a third made ten years earlier (in a recording studio), Hezekiah keeps to exactly the same words (in the extract given) but varies the points of his pauses. Consider the following: A and B were recorded minutes apart in performance conditions. Hezekiah had praised Chief Buthelezi in the midst of a general tumult of noise and jubilation as the Chief was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the University of Zululand at KwaDlangezwa, May 8th, 1976. Outside the giant marquee, in a slightly less tumultuous atmosphere, Hezekiah began the praises again for my benefit (A below). He was stopped, in full flight, by a polite official who said we could be heard inside and would we move further off! This we did, and Hezekiah began again but changed his pause pattern (B below). Extract C below comes from a recording made under studio conditions in 1965, according to my informant at the S.A.B.C. studios, Johannesburg. The imbongi in C is without doubt Hezekiah.

Example 3

A. Shenge! Sokwali-i-sa! (Pause)

IMbabazane kaMahaqa ehaq' amadoda kwaze kwasa engabulele
ubuthongo. INkunzi beyithibele abakwaMadakadunuse. (Pause)

Useqa umlingwana, beyilingile, ngob' 'lingwe abaseNgwatho.

(Pause)

UMemezi kaZulu. (Pause)

B. Shenge! Sokwali-i-sa! (Pause)

IMbabazane kaMaHaqa ehaq' amadoda kwaze kwasa engabulele
ubuthongo. (Pause)

INKunzi beyithibela abakwaMadakadunuse. Useqa umlingwana.
(Pause)

Beyilingile. (Pause)

ngob' 'lingwe abaseNgwatho. (Pause)

UMemezi kaZulu. (Pause)

C. IMbabazane kaMaHaqa ehaq' amadoda kwaze kwasa engalele
ubuthongo. INkunzi beyithibela abakwaMadakadunuse. Useqa
umlingwana beyilingile, ngoba 'lingwe abaseNgwatho. (Pause)

A further, smaller example of a bard varying the pattern of his pauses comes from a line (or two lines) with a strong binary pattern recited by Masoswidi Mkhwanazi (A 55). Thus when he recited (at my request) the izibongo of Chief Muntu-ongenakudla Mkhwanazi, the praise:

Example 4

UMakhab' ukhamba Kicker of a pot
kuf' uphiso (and) a bigger one breaks

was a minute or so later repeated without a pause as a single unit:

UMakhab' ukhamba kuf' uphiso.

It seems that with some bards at any rate, the points for breath pauses are variable according to the preference of the moment. Opland, in discussing two previously unpublished izibongo recited by the Xhosa writer and imbongi, S.E.K.Mqhayi, has not noted any such variations in Xhosa performing style and he suggests a link between the pattern of

breaks in Xhosa recitation and the metre of the poetry:

The poet in performance seems to pause for breath at more regular intervals than the ordinary speaker does, and since the poet also tends to pause at the end of a syntactic unit, this linguistic fact may lead to an understanding of "metre" in Xhosa oral poetry (izibongo).

(Opland, "Two Unpublished Poems by S.E.K.Mqhayi", Research in African Literatures Vol.8. No.1., 1970, pp.27-8)

In general, in spite of the examples of variations in pauses which I have given, Zulu bards such as Mgezeni Ndlela (whom I recorded in February, May and August 1976) and Nodengemuntu Buthelezi (whom I recorded in May and August 1976) kept to a set pattern of pauses, as if, once they had chosen how to recite particular izibongo, they would keep to that pattern. Also, in general, the "short line" reciting style was predominant. Grant's description of the "short line" style of the bards he recorded in Nongoma, Northern Zululand would fit that of most of the bards whom I recorded:

It was noticeable that, apart from the clear emphasis on the penultimate syllable of each word, additional emphasis fell periodically on the penultimates of certain words, each of which would be followed by a perceptible pause. Thus the poem would be broken up into short phrases, each of which appeared to be uttered in one breath. A magnificent rhythm was in this way apparent to the hearer. (My underlining)

(Grant, "Izibongo of the Zulu Kings", Bantu Studies 111, 3, 1929, p.202)

4.1.6. Language in Mode A

i. Prosody

The question of how exactly this "magnificent rhythm" which is so apparent to listeners is actually created is still an open one. Cope, for instance, refers in general terms to "audible movement" (1968:29) but prefers not to make any categorical statements about rhythm and metre. Jordan Ngubane makes inconclusive attempts to relate speed of

delivery to metre. Having outlined a metrical system based on a slowish speed of delivery he then remarks, truthfully, but rather undermining his case:

The poets also went to the other extreme and crammed their metres with a surprisingly large number of syllables and sharply contrasting tones, either to relieve monotony or to allow for the intensification of dramatic action.

(Ngubane, "Zulu Tribal Poetry", Native Teachers Journal 3, 1, 1951, p.6)

B.W.Vilakazi (1938:112) has suggested that a single breath group is the basic temporal unit in izibongo and that "the verse...(ie. "line") is composed of two rhythmic parts, each of which may have one or more stressed sounds accompanied by unstressed ones". Such an explanation does fit a number of the binary constructions which are used by popular composers and (less frequently) by bards. It fits the example given above, "uMakhab' ukhamba / kuf' uphiso" (and others discussed in 5.1.2.). Lines such as the following, with clear binary structure, were recited (in each case by the bearers) with a distinct rhythm:

Example 5

a) Angihambi ngendlela/ ngihamba ngenhlanhlatho. (A 111)

I don't go on the main road/ I go by the side path.

b) Bathi, "Bam'phe ngaphansi/ bam'phe ngaphezulu". (A 129)

They say, "They've given it to her down below/ they've given it
to her up above".

However, as Rycroft remarks (1980:292), it is difficult to apply Vilakazi's "two rhythmic parts" theory to a very wide sample of izibongo lines.

Another approach is to talk of "the prosody of repetition". In discussing Akan funeral dirges, Nketia notes that, "When repetitions occur in close succession they give rise to artistic prosodies which have a musical meaning for users of the language" (1955:87). The suggestion that, in a similar way, the various forms of parallelism in izibongo may form the basis of metre, is a very alluring one. It was suggested by H.I.E.Dhlomo as early as 1936, when he remarked, quoting Lawrence Binyon on Hebrew poetry, that the rhythm comes not from any strict metre but from the expectation of the recurrence of form. The many varieties of parallelism that are possible and the prominence of parallelism in izibongo does suggest that it may hold the key to metre, but if so this has still to be proven. A further possibility, recently suggested by Rycroft, is that the rhythm so evident in izibongo may come from some extrinsic time factor which relates to the rhythm and which acts as a kind of metronome for the poetry. An example of an apparently unmetrical text being ordered according to the musical accompaniment is that of the Zulu ballad, "Nomagundwane", sung by Princess Magogo kaDinuzulu and discussed with transcription by Rycroft (1975,b). He maintains that "the strict metre of the musical bow though remaining extrinsic to the text itself, still regulates the overall metric structure of the song", and he demonstrates that there are "intricate timing relationships between the voice and the musical bow" (Rycroft, 1975b:82). He suggests in a later article (1980:304) that with Zulu izibongo too there may be some feature of extrinsic timing at work, such as accompanying movement which would be evident in performance but not if one were merely listening to a recording. In at least one poetic tradition where musical accompaniment is part of the total performance, such extrinsic timing has been tentatively suggested. Anthony King cautiously suggests such extrinsic timing in

his remarks on the use of the speech mode by griots performing the Mandinka epic, Sunjata:

There is a tendency, but it is no more than that, for vocalisation to recommence after each breath pause at roughly the same point in relation to the recurring accompaniment phrase.
(King in Innes, Sunjata, 1974,p.18)

With izibongo, where there is no such instrumental accompaniment or regular hand-clapping or feet-stamping, it is more difficult to decide what the source of the extrinsic timing could be. Some bards, such as Mgezeni Ndlela and Mr Mhlongo (A 84-5), who always recited the lineage izibongo at the Mbongolwane homestead made famous by his mother, the diviner MaShezi, tapped a foot as if to a regular beat, while they recited. Others (such as John Dlamini) stood still; others such as Phemba Mzimela paced with measured tread in the arena, and Phumasilwe Myeni cavorted and pranced as did the nineteenth-century bards described by Bryant (1949:486). There seems, therefore, to be no single type of movement among the bards whom I observed and recorded which could give credence to the "extrinsic timing" theory. Yet careful use of filming and video-tapes in future studies may show that this is a fruitful line of enquiry in the search for the basis of "rhythm" or "metre" in izibongo.

ii. Other features of verbal style

These are discussed in some detail in Chapters 5-7. As regards the difference in the language of izibongo used in the two performing modes, it is clear that in some cases izibongo recited by bards are more elaborate. They develop the features of style which are evident in Mode B performances of izibongo but are not in general developed. Catalogues of the kind quoted in Example 1 (4.1.5.) rarely occur in

Mode B performances of izibongo. Expansions of formulas occur in Mode A performances but rarely in Mode B. Figurative language is in general denser in izibongo from Mode A performances (or, from bards reciting praises on request). In general, however, the language of izibongo performed in the two Modes is very close and can be seen as part of the same continuum of style, marking a single genre with differing but crucially linked social functions. Underlying both modes of performance is the emphasis on identity which is perhaps the central unifying element in Zulu izibongo.

4.1.7. Audience response in Mode A

As I have already pointed out (4.1.1.) audience response varies according to the particular occasion of performance, whether it is a public "national" occasion such as Shaka's Day, a performance of lineage izibongo at a wedding, an address to the lineage shades in the cattle-kraal of a homestead and so on. Audience responses vary in other ways as well. In some situations, such as the recitation of izibongo at the funeral of Chief Luthuli in Stanger (July, 1967), bard and audience seem totally at one: the bard confirms and strengthens their own beliefs and does not in any way challenge the accepted view of Luthuli's greatness or the perfidy of his opponents. In the Luthuli performance (the bard is Nkosinathi Yengwa), the solidarity between bard and audience is emphasised in the imbongi's use of the African National Congress rallying cries which precede and follow the praises. In their antiphonal structure the rallying cries demand participation from the audience:

Example 6

Imbongi: A-A-A-frika!	Audience: Mayibuye!
"	"
Mayibu-u-u-ye!	IAfrika!
"	"
U-huru! (x4)	U-huru! (x4) *
A-A-A-frica!	Let it come back!
"	"
Freedom!(x4)	Freedom!

*See A 3 for the izibongo

These cries, which serve as a kind of salute to the African National Congress as well as a salute to their dead leader, parallel the royal salutes with which Dlamini introduces and concludes the national izibongo, the praises of the kings. In both cases the bard is a dominant figure demanding audience response in a public exhibition of loyalty. On other occasions, the bard can be seen to lead his audience towards a new set of opinions rather than merely to reinforce existing attitudes. This seems to be the case in the performance of Phumasilwe Myeni at Mahlabathini where he comments on the current political scene in South Africa in ways which his audience may not have anticipated (A 6). A bard does not always confirm the status quo for his audience. He can on occasions both tease and challenge them. Moreover in some situations such as rowdy weddings where the young men want to "giya" as soon as possible, the imbongi may not dominate the scene at all. He may call in vain for silence and his performance of the family's lineage izibongo may be crucially affected by a noisy and restive audience. This happened at a wedding I attended and I was told, by the imbongi herself, of another wedding where she had, "Cut short the

praises because the young men wanted to "giya" (16). The composition of the audience, therefore, and the kind of occasion, are crucial factors affecting the bard and his or her rendering of izibongo, and they further highlight the fluid nature of this oral art form.

4.2. Mode B Performance of Izibongo

This less formal mode of performance is the one in which most performers of izibongo are likely to take part. Although Mode A will be the one which they enjoy as spectators (and momentary participants, if they cry out "Musho" or praise the imbongi if he concludes with a flourish of "ukugiya"), it is in Mode B that the popular, as opposed to the specialist, art of praising finds its legitimate expression.

4.2.1. The relative informality of Mode B performance

Some of the overall performance events within which praising in Mode B takes place are fairly formal. Weddings, for instance, have moments of great solemnity, such as when the izibongo of the lineage ancestors of the bride's and (later) the bridegroom's family are recited, when details of the bride price are being discussed, and when the gifts from the bride are presented to the women of the bridegroom's family. In contrast to this, the times when the men of each party "giya" and are praised are moments for entertainment, and intense enjoyment. They also provide an opportunity for the release of the tensions that are present within each family group at such a time.

Ukugiya is a complex but flexible combination of praising plus spoken, sung and chanted features, and "dance". It is ukugiya which provides the performance frame within which popular, Mode B praising takes place. The extent to which men associate ukugiya with their own

and other men's izibongo was demonstrated to me when a group of men at the homestead of Chief Mkhwanazi told me that if I wanted to learn about men's izibongo I would have to watch them "giya". They then informed me of forthcoming events such as weddings where I could see this. In other words, they associated praising (and being praised) with ukugiya and saw it as the primary context for popular, non-specialist praising. During ukugiya the kind of suspense generated is that of dynamic interaction between performers, interaction primarily between the solo "dancer" and the seated group of performers who praise him and follow his lead in the sung and chanted items which he initiates. This interaction is crucial to the success of Mode B praising.

I shall base my discussion of men's popular praising on events which I attended, namely weddings, engagement celebrations and coming-of-age parties. There are also other occasions when giya-ing takes place and sometimes men dance and are praised. The events to which I refer below, however, seem representative of popular, non-specialist praising as a whole. I saw considerably less women's praising, and I base my discussion of women's praising on one event, in addition to discussions with many women and observation of informal demonstrations that were not actual performance events.

4.2.2. Solo and group performance as part of Mode B

Whereas in Mode A the bard dominates the performance space (or attempts to do so), be it cattle-kraal, municipal courtyard, platform and so on, in Mode B the visual and aural impression is of group activity with a momentary projection of an individual dancer. He may hold the floor for a shorter or longer time according to his skill, popularity and status. Nor is there any single voice calling out

uninterrupted izibongo for the individual dancer. Instead, a number of voices from the close-knit seated group (of age-mates and men from the same ward), from which the dancer has come, call out at random favourite parts of his izibongo, short known lines or sometimes a single endlessly repeated praise name for the dancer.

Stuart (1913) has described the martial associations of the giya dance as he understood it at the turn of the century. He stresses its associations with honour, courage and prowess in battle and he is quite clear in his later Zulu school text (1925:93-114) about the connection between the giya "dance" and izibongo. He is emphatic, and I assume here he is entirely faithful to his Zulu informants, that only brave men who had earned their old and new praises could giya. No coward would dare to do so on his return from battle. A mention is also made in the diary of Henry Fynn, the first White man to see Shaka, of a novel variant of "ukugiya". In the extract that follows, Fynn's furious galloping seems to be an acceptable substitute for the usual "giya" dance; his action is enough to symbolise the multi-faceted quality of courage associated with honour in battle and celebrated in the "giya" dance:

On entering the great cattle kraal we found drawn up within it about 80,000 natives in their war attire. Mbikwana requested me to gallop within the circle, and immediately on my starting to do so, one general shout broke forth from the whole mass, all pointing to me with their sticks. I was asked to gallop round the circle two or three times in the midst of tremendous shouting of the words "UJojo wokhalo" ["The Sharp/Active Finch of the ridge]. (Stuart and Malcolm, eds., The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn, 1950, pp.71-2)

Stuart, besides emphasising the use of "ukugiya" in wartime, mentions "dancing 'pas seuls' in the presence of many assembled and applauding comrades" as one of the amusements of peacetime. It was clear from my

fieldwork that "ukugiya" remains a very important form of entertainment for men. The symbolic expression of what Clegg calls "bullness" (17) is also an important element of contemporary "ukugiya". The long-standing emphasis on courage is today often accompanied by a statement of virility expressed in the improvised dance of the solo performer and (sometimes) in the chants which he initiates. The metaphor of the bull is commonly used in the chants which accompany the "giya" dance (these are known as izigiyo) and in the praises themselves. Certainly in the performances at which I was present in Ngoye, "ukugiya" expressed the links with honour and the old military ethic and it provided the opportunity for the expression of virility and "bullness". It provided a means of individual assertion and gave the assurance of group support, feverish encouragement and recognition of the individual. Moreover it was a powerful medium for entertainment and for the display of skills of "dancing", group control, group singing, chanting and verbal skills. The latter were most fully exploited in the calling out of a dancer's praises but were also needed for his self-initiated izigiyo chants (and sometimes songs) without which no performance of ukugiya would be complete.

An explanation of two terms closely associated with ukugiya

Izigiyo is the term used for the spoken or sung elements which accompany ukugiya. It could be translated as "items to giya" with. Each "giya" performer's izigiyo vary according to his personal choice but usually consists of two components: a) one or more "rhythmic statements" which he initiates and to which the supporting group respond; b) a chant, usually a war cry (isaga). or a song which may come from any of the categories of Zulu song. A number of the ones

I recorded were war songs (amahubo empi), some were nursery rhymes and girls' songs (such as izincekezo) could also be used. Gosa Mncwango (see description A below) used one of the latter, known as "Yash'ingan' ekhaya" ("The infant was burnt in the home"). The variety of choices for izigiyo makes it - for the audience and participants a very interesting element in ukugiya.

Iviyo formerly "meant the detachment of a regiment". Formerly men would attend weddings in groups based on the regimental detachments to which they belonged (Krige, 1950). This no longer happens but in Ngoye the term is used for a group of men, usually from a single ward but sometimes also including relatives and friends who may have come from further afield. The individual performer detaches himself from the iviyo to "giya" and returns to it afterwards. Interaction between the iviyo and solo performer is vital to a successful performance. Members of the iviyo must praise the solo performer as well as responding to his izigiyo.

Three Performances

The following three brief accounts (A and B of ukugiya and praising and C of women's praising) are intended to give some idea of the atmosphere of representative performance occasions. I have used the present tense to give an impression of immediacy.

A. The Ntuli/Mkhwanyane wedding at Manyameni, Ngoye, March 22nd 1976

The wedding celebrations are held on a fairly steep hillside next to the bridegroom's family homestead. This is just over the hill from the Dindis (the family who were my principal informants during field-work) although it is in a different ward (isigodi) and Mashekelela Dindi has told me about it. I ask a few people for their izibongo as groups of men and women start arriving in the early afternoon. A tall

young man called Dlamini gives me his. He has been working in Durban but is now at home, working for the KwaZulu Roads Department, and he joins the *iviyo* of the bridegroom which is assembling on the high ground. The *iviyo* of the bride approaches, also from the high ground. The men are tightly bunched and led by Gosa Mncwango, whom I know from the Dindis as an accomplished dancer and lead singer (his name means "dance leader"). Most carry two short staves and a few have small dancing shields. They move slowly down the slope singing war songs (*amahubo empi*) and shouting war chants (*izaga*). Gosa's role is crucial: he leads the songs and chants and he takes the *iviyo* (now composed of about fifty men) past its set place; they continue with the fierce martial songs and war cries; the strongly rhythmic beat of many of them is emphasised by the sharp clacking of their raised sticks. They turn and come back, chanting and singing all the time and take up their positions at the base of the slope, facing the bridegroom's *iviyo* who have the commanding position at the top of the slope.

The bride and her dancers form a line in front of their *iviyo* and sing the wedding anthems before forming a line up the hill, carrying wedding gifts to the bridegroom's family. As this happens, the bride's *iviyo* begins to "*giya*". Individuals bound to the front. They walk swiftly up and down, gesticulating wildly and speaking in hoarse, strained voices. They then break into leaping runs, jumps, lunges, anything that they consider dramatic and eye-catching. I recognise Mashekelela Dindi's two brothers and other friends, Dube and Mhlongo. They each "*giya*", as do Gosa and Mashekelela. Each individual has his own set of chants and songs which he initiates as he takes the floor. The sequence is so fast that it is hard (for me) to catch the words and the melodies. In some cases the "*giya*" performer uses songs and

chants sung by the iviyo as it marched and wheeled its way into position. I know, from watching people's mouths and by hearing what sound like "strings" of words called out very fast above the chants and songs, that those who "giya" are being praised by members of the iviyo who know their izibongo. I listen for familiar lines from the izibongo of those whom I know; I listen also for a familiar rhythmic statement, chant or song, the items which together form the izigiyo of each performer. The giya performances of each individual last from under a minute to two minutes or so. Each performance seems marked by abrupt, dramatic changes of tempo as the performer switches from rhythmic statement to chant, song, back to a statement, song and so on.

The focus shifts to the other end of the slope where an uncle of the bride walks in a circle, calling out the izibongo of the Mkhwanyane lineage ancestors. This takes a surprisingly short time; one has the feeling that there is such pressure for the "giya-ing" to start that the praising of the ancestors has to be curtailed. The praising ends with a burst of "giya" "dancing" from the imbongi. As he lunges this way and that with his stick and shield his izibongo are called out. The bridegroom's band of men (his iviyo) now has its turn to "giya". This begins against a background of sustained singing from the girls. The first to "giya" is the bridegroom. I cannot catch any of the words of his izibongo but I recognise one of his izigiyo from a wedding which I attended a few weeks previously. The words are the same but this time it is chanted martially, not sung:

Bridegroom:(the "giya" performer) UNyumpu-nyumpunya!

Iviyo: Inkunz' engenampondo

okade bethibela zonke izibaya nezibaya.



2. Two scenes from the Ntuli/Mkhwanyane wedding at Manyameni, Ngoye, March 1976. Mashekelela Dindi is the man fourth from the left in the top picture.



Yithi! Yithi! (18)

Bridegroom:(the "giya" performer) The Troublesome beast!

Iviyo: The Hornless Bull

whom they've just de-horned (those from) all the kraals.

It's us! It's us! (18)

A moment later the bridegroom introduces the words again; this time he leads in with the tune I recognise.

"Giya" performers follow each other in quick succession. Although each performer has a very limited time, the pace is so fast, the sequence within each performance so quick, that it is clearly a demanding time both for the solo performer and the iviyo, the band of men who support him and praise him. I watch for Dlamini, who has told me his izibongo, to "giya", but he does not. He tells me afterwards that he lacked the nerve to do so. Perhaps also, as he has only recently arrived back from Durban, he is out of touch with the songs and dances which the iviyo know and from which he must select for his own performance. Also, do the others know his praises? It would be humiliating for a man to "giya" and not have his izibongo called out. I notice that although each performance follows the same basic pattern, there are variations from one performer to the next. Some find the hectic miming of combat too intense: they introduce a rhythmic statement, follow it by a single song or chant, execute a few sheepish flurries and retire, having given members of the iviyo very little chance to call out their praises. Others generate a feverish, intense, atmosphere as soon as they step out in front of the iviyo: they seem to harangue the group, who sit forward straining to catch their words. The "harangue" becomes a sharp, rhythmic exchange between "giya" performer and iviyo. A bawdy, sexual reference occurs, one

which is typical of the licence in language which praising and ukugiya seem to allow:

Performer: Ngigwazile! Ngigwaz' isibumbu!

Iviyo: Ugwazile! Ugwaz' isibumbu!

Performer: I stabbed! I stabbed a vagina!

Iviyo: You stabbed! You stabbed a vagina!

The performer breaks into leaps, runs and warlike flourishes with his shield and stick. Long strings of izibongo are uttered by various members of the iviyo. He stands in front of them again and leads into a popular war chant (isaga) which is repeated several times:

Performer:(singing) Wawuthini, wawuthini ?

Iviyo:(singing and clapping in time) Wawuthini kithi umkhonto kaShaka?

Performer: (singing) What were you saying, what were you saying?

Iviyo:(singing and clapping in time)What were you saying to us O Spear
of Shaka?

He dances again as the chant continues and he is praised. Izibongo uttered terribly quickly issue from various points in the iviyo. I try to catch the words:

"UMantindane...INdlondlo indlobane/ Ushay' abantu amakhanda wabanikwa yini?"

"Little witches' assistant...Horned Viper and horned indeed./ You strike people on their heads. Were they given to you to do this to them?"

Members of the iviyo who do not know the performer's izibongo often

lean towards someone who does, as they sing, to catch the words. The man faces the iviyo again:

Performer:(speaking in a hoarse, strained voice) Thula!

Ngaphuza kwamthakathi!

Ngaphuza khona izolo.

Isigwadi ophoswa intombi yomthakathi!

Silence!

I drank at a witch's place.

I drank there yesterday!

The unpopular bachelor bewitched by a witch of a girl!

The iviyo quickly turn this into a rhythmic statement:

Uphoswa inkunzi! Inkunzi yomthakathi!

You are bewitched by a bull! A real bull of a witch!

Again, above this, I hear fast sequences of izibongo. The "dancer" gives a final, warlike flourish and retires. Another man leaps up and takes his place. The pitch and intensity of the "giya" performance gathers momentum as the time draws to a close. The last man to "giya" is the headman of the ward, Sokhesekile Seme. He is older than most of the others in the iviyo and his izibongo are well known. He breaks straight into a "giya" "dance" and is praised from all sides. His performance lasts longer than most of the others and includes three rhythmic, performer-iviyo statements and four sung or chanted items. I notice again that the izibongo are not all complimentary. Above a song (ingoma) a voice shouts:

Ulugwele kodwa wena ubaba wakho wayengenjena!

You're an unsympathetic fellow, you are; your father wasn't like that!

I wonder whether this is to be a new line for Seme's izibongo - someone letting off steam at a safe moment in an accepted way! (I notice later that it does not feature in his izibongo when he recites them for me later in the afternoon. Too new perhaps?) Someone in the iviyo sounds a trumpet and the group move off chanting, to the homestead. Onlookers set off home and some move to the homestead to partake of beer and other refreshments. I see MaNtuli, a member of the Mothers Union of the nearby Catholic Church at Ebuhleni. She looks guilty - it is Lent and she is not supposed to attend festivities such as this during Lent. I assure her I will say nothing about having seen her. Tomorrow there will be a second day of celebrations and ukugiya will feature again, but I do not attend this.

B. A coming-of-age celebration (umgongqo) for the daughter of the house at the Dlamini homestead, Thondo, Ngoye, August 2nd 1976

This begins slowly but turns out to be quite a big affair. The chief officiants are the girl's two elder brothers, both of whom I have seen at the Ntuli wedding and at an engagement celebration in February. Mbekeni Dlamini is also there but he still does not "giya". The participants on this occasion form a single iviyo consisting of some seventy men of all ages, although the majority are young. Some yards away from them a row of about twenty young girls dance and sing, supported by the married women who form rows two or three deep behind them.

One of the main features of this occasion is the obviously

important role played by the girls and by the female onlookers. I have come with MaMngema (who is married to a Dlamini) and as we left her home she announced that she had brought her umbrella "to cheer on our boys when they "giya"!" On this occasion the order of "giya" performers depends on the choice of the two girls in the centre of the row of dancers (one of whom is the girl whose coming-of-age it is). They leave the row of dancers and walk up to the seated group of men who form the *iviyo*. They then place their wooden, decorated spears in front of one of the men (or occasionally one of the female onlookers). The selected person then "giya's" (or in the case of a woman, dances) and then returns the spear to the row of dancing girls and at the same time places money in a dish in front of the girls. The girls wear short skirts and beaded waistbands and necklaces. Most of the men wear Western dress but add items of Zulu or Zulu-style dress, such as beaded waistbands, bead necklaces, bright towels over their shoulders and so on. One of the Dlamini brothers places a dancing shield and a feathered stick on the ground in front of the *iviyo* and most performers use these as they "giya". The girls' singing and dancing continues throughout the "giya" performance and men leave the *iviyo* to put necklaces on the best dancers as tokens of appreciation; handkerchiefs, caps, towels, scarves are given (and all returned to their owners afterwards). The older and married women who form the bulk of the onlookers are by no means a passive audience. They are at times singled out to dance by the spear-carrying girls and besides this, they laugh appreciatively at some of the more extravagant claims in the solo performer's rhythmic statements:

Performer: Ngabe ngidind' ikhova! Ah! I attacked a magician!

Inkunzi yekhova! A bull of a magician!

<u>Iviyo:</u>	Udindile!	You attacked!
	Inkunzi yekhova!	A real bull of a magician!
	Udind' ikhova!	You attacked a magician!
	Udindile!	You attacked!

They laugh also at lines from performers' izibongo, adding exclamations such as "Hawu!" ("My goodness!") or "Habo!" ("How shocking!"). They also observe the "giya" dancing keenly and cheer on members of their family and those whom they consider the best performers. I notice that some of the rhythmic statements (which are clearly a form of speech rather than song) and a number of the chants and songs which I heard at the Ntuli wedding (A) are used here also. Moreover one of the Dlamini brothers uses the same rhythmic statements (which are a part of izigiyo), songs and chants as he had used at the wedding. I wonder if any new lines are added to his praises as he "giya's". Although here the iviyo has not marched and sung its way to its place, the same rousing military songs and chants are integrated into the "giya" performances. Not all the items used are fast, however. One of the war songs is slow and solemn and mentions the "son of Ndaba". It must therefore be a royal war song. I hear swift izibongo directed at the performer as he paces to and fro:

Juma somjumase Chakide ojuma imamba.

Juma somjumase Chakide ogjima nogoqolo...

Attacker attacker indeed Mongoose that attacks a mamba.

Attacker attacker indeed that runs with a stiff tail...

To increase the tempo, perhaps, after the slow royal war song the performer brings in two fast rhythmic statements in quick succession.

Both are related to battle:

<u>Performer:</u>	Ngikhaful' ikhambi!	I spit from the (war) pot!
	Ngikhaful' umuthi!	I spit out the (war) medicine.
<u>Iviyo:</u>	Ukhaful' ikhambi!	You spit from the (war) pot!
	Ukhaful' umuthi!	You spit out the (war) medicine!

(Above repeated several times)

<u>Performer:</u>	Ngiya-ha-dlakula!	I sna-atch aw-a-ay!
	Ngihlale ngidlukula!	I always snatch away!

(The iviyo repeats the above, in the second person, and all is repeated.)

The performer "dances" and concludes with a war chant and a further extravagant leap, run and martial pose. Throughout his performance the women cheer him on, and his izibongo are called out by many in the iviyo. It seems that praising encourages a "giya" "dancer" and at the same time a good performance draws out yet more izibongo from the men. In this respect, and in the precisely timed interaction between solo performer and iviyo, the interdependence of the solo performer and the group is very clear. A great many men "giya" and a few do so even two or three times. The singing and dancing of the girls continues throughout and it is they who signal that this part of the celebration is drawing to a close. The line of girls moves closer to the men, the elder Dlamini brother executes a final "giya" "dance" and leads a closing song. MaMngema and I leave, together with several other women. I am invited by one of them to an engagement celebration (umkhehlo) in about a week's time at Ndlovini, about eight miles over the hills and I make plans as to how to get there.

C. The second day of the Mthethwa/Sikhakhane wedding, Sihuzu, Ngoye,
May 17th 1976. At the Mthethwa homestead.

I attend this wedding on both days with Mcasule Dube (A 129) who knows that I am particularly interested in watching women's praising. The wedding is over-shadowed by inter-ward hostilities (see Chapter 7) and only the women of the bride's family attend. On the morning of the second day after the men have "giya'd", a fast, insistent drumbeat sounds from one of the huts of the homestead (I learn afterwards that it is the bride's own hut). It is the signal for the start of the women's dancing and about twenty-five to thirty women are present, filling most of the space in the large hut. They leave a small space for the dancers who dance to the quick drumbeat and a specially chosen song. The dancing is very vigorous. With each strong, insistent downbeat the dancer stamps heavily. She bends at the waist, swinging her arms as she does so and lifts each leg high before swinging it down. The whole movement, swinging and stamping alternate legs, swinging the arms and keeping the waist bent, is swift and vigorous and repeated endlessly to the beat of the drum and the song. Most of the women know each other well, some are co-wives and most are married women, although a few of the young girls of the homestead are with us. There are no men present, and when towards the end of the dancing a youth and a young girl enter, it is obvious that he, particularly, is regarded as an intruder. In this performance situation, the predominance of song and dance seems to preclude the use of the rhythmic statements which women sometimes call their izigiyo, and which they often use as performance accompaniments for dancing and for being praised (Gunner, 1979:248). Each dancer has one song which she initiates and which the audience takes up, sings and accompanies with fast, rhythmic claps. One of the dancers is MaMkhwanazi. The text of

her song is simple and it is repeated endlessly. It is a comment on money, its necessity and its scarcity:

Imali-o, imali-o!	Money, oh money!
Amasente! (varied to:)	Cents!
Uyimalini-lo, uyimalini-lo!	How much is this? How much is this?
Amasente!	Cents!

Her friends who know her izibongo call them out swiftly and with gusto as the song continues. They seem able (as do the men) to sing, call out a line or more of izibongo, and take up the melody and words again. Another dancer takes the floor even before MaMkhwanazi sits down. Dayi Mhlongo leads into another briefly worded song:

Leader: Uziheshe MaDlamini! Dance MaDlamini!
Others: (repeat above)

The fast, insistent drumbeat continues, so does the rhythmic clapping and the vigorous dancing. This time I catch a few words of the izibongo which are called out by many women. Some lines are repeated by the same person and in some cases the same line (or lines) come from different people:

Simnyama 'silwane, sibomvu ngamehlo!
Ubomvu ugelentsha!
Black is the wild animal, red are its eyes!
Red is the (road) grader.

Another MaMhlongo dances and this time above the singing someone calls out her clan praises (izithakazelo) as part of her izibongo: (19)

Hamba *Njomane kaMgaphe Keep going *Njomane of Mgaphe
 Wena owaduka iminyaka You who were lost for years
 Ngowesine watholakala!* In the fourth you reappeared!*
 Ngiyabong' isoka lakho! I thank your boyfriend!

* The lines between the asterisks are the Mhlongo clan praises.

As dancer after dancer takes the floor, the fast tempo is maintained, although the melody and the song changes with each performer. In some cases the songs comment on social issues, separation from husbands or lovers, an unexpected arrest:

Leader: Wagcina nini isoka lakho ntombazane?

Others: UseGoli eNumber 4 (variation) eNumber 10.

Leader: When did you last see your boyfriend young girl?

Others: He's in Jo'burg in Number 4 hostel...

MaMcasule dances towards the end. "Will people call out all her izibongo?" I wonder. They do not. In the main they call out only her opening praise name, "USidlukula-dlwedlwe!" ("The Wild Snatcher!") and add lines which I do not recognise from the izibongo she recited to me two months previously. A voice calls out:

Duma ehlanzeni! Bathi Zulu! Thunder in the thorn country. They
 say (it's) the Sky!

As the dancing continues, beer and a less intoxicating brew (amahewu)

are passed around. The atmosphere is extremely sociable and good-humoured. Very suddenly the tempo lessens, the drumming stops, and we come out into the bright afternoon sunlight.

4.2.2. Solo and group performance as part of Mode B (continued)

From the above descriptions it is clear that in Mode B performance there are in fact two sets of performers, the *iviyo* or supporting group, and the solo performer. Moreover, although it is permissible to call out one's own praises, the main responsibility for praising lies with the *iviyo*. They must combine praising skills with their knowledge of the musical, chanted and spoken items (the *izigiyo*) essential to a "giya" performance. In this mode, therefore, the interdependence of the two sets of performers, the individual and the group, is most striking. Whereas in Mode A the *imbongi* declaims the *izibongo* of the ancestors and of highly placed individuals who may or may not be present, the popular praisers in Mode B need the "dancer" in order to praise him. The popular praiser, moreover, is rarely solely responsible for calling out *izibongo*, it is more of a shared activity. Also, for a "giya" dancer to be praised by only one person would make him appear something of a failure. It is important that the collective "they" should praise him, thereby symbolically accepting and acknowledging his manhood and his identity and, at another level, acknowledging that he too, is an able performer, one who can initiate the songs and chants necessary for a good performance, and one who can tell the men what his praises are, if indeed they do not already know "who" he is. The dependence of the solo performer on the group (which becomes a symbol for the whole community) was also evident from the way in which men spoke about their *izibongo*. They would, when asked if they would tell me their

praises, frequently say, "I am..." ("Ngingu...") but they would also punctuate lines with "They say..." ("Bathi...") and "Others say..." ("Abanye bathi..."), thus recalling the performance context, in which they "giya" while others praise them. This is also a reminder that a number of people may contribute to the composition of a single individual's praises.

Another important aspect of praising by non-specialist performers is the concurrence of songs, chants and rhythmic statements (the izigiyo) and izibongo. The solo performer initiates these and controls the choice of items, but the group must respond. It would sometimes happen at an event I attended that a performer would introduce an item not well known to the iviyo or one that they considered too slow and solemn. In this case the words and melody would fade out quickly, and the performer would be left with the choice of quickly introducing another item, or merely retiring back into the supporting group. The solo "dancer" must therefore provide the group (the iviyo), which is the second and vital component in Mode B performance, with the right cues. Only if he does so can those who know his izibongo and who wish to praise him, do so satisfactorily.

Women's praising (as C demonstrates) involves the same interdependence of dancer and group, praisers and dancer. The conventions of performance, however, seem less rigorous than in men's praising. Women seem freer to call out their own praises, perhaps because their "honour" is less involved than is the case when men "giya". Yet here too if no members of their group praise them, their performance would not be complete. The emphasis on being praised by others is clear in this brief remark from a married woman in Ngoye:

I would stand up and begin to dance and then my particular

friends would praise me - always!

An account of both self-praising and praising by others is given by MaJele of Hlabisa. Here she is describing praising during her pre-marriage days (she had been married about three years), where the structure of the performance event differs from any of the performances described above:

If we went to the river and saw the young fellows sitting down waiting to court us, we'd start saying izibongo as soon as we caught sight of them. The young men would perform the "giya" war dance as they came into view at the river - we too would go there - then a girl would do the gqashula dance on her own and say her praises while the others (girls) would egg her on and say her praises as well.
(MaJele, Hlabisa, February 1976)

What both the above accounts emphasise again, is the interdependence of solo performer and supporting group, which is such a key feature of Mode B performance of izibongo. The complex of skills needed by each "element" in the performance is also crucial. The social pressure on the individual to be able not only to compose and call out praises but also to be a good singer and dancer (qualities emphasised from childhood see 3.1.) leads to the many-faceted competence of the non-specialist praiser.

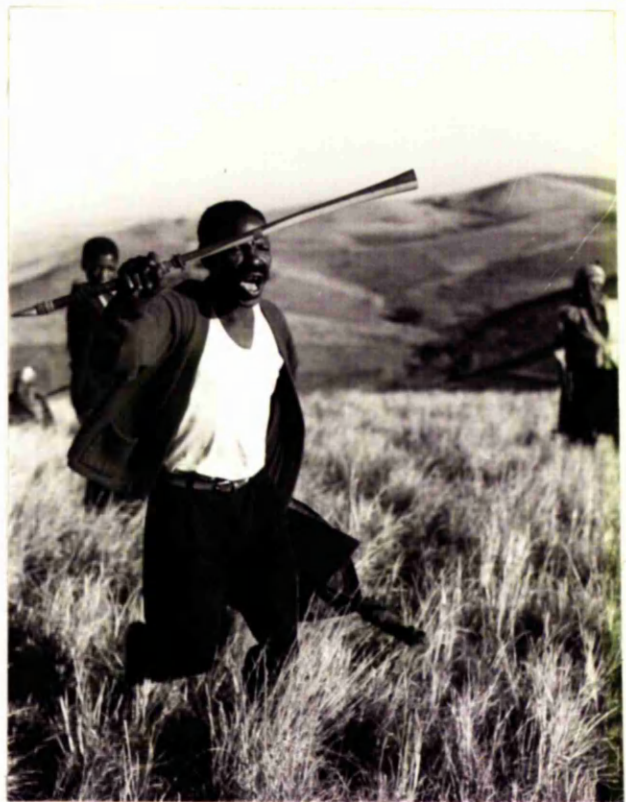
4.2.3. Dress as a frame for performance in Mode B

The above descriptions make it clear that in this Mode the (visual) focus is not on the praiser(s) but on the person who is "dancing" and being praised. On occasions such as weddings and coming-of-age or engagement celebrations, where men know they will have the chance to "giya" and to praise others, they come adorned in special finery (as in B above). Besides the items of dress mentioned in B, men

occasionally wore the traditional skin kilt, and many wore decorated white trousers (amabondo) and elaborately decorated leather work. Scarves on the head or draped from shoulder to waist like a crossband were also popular. It was clear that although there was no single accepted mode of dress, men considered it important to distinguish their "giya" dress from their everyday wear. In some cases such dress was flamboyant and eye-catching, in other cases a single item such as a tartan scarf tied low around the forehead was considered sufficient. There was an interesting blend of the traditional and the modern in styles of dress, with no attempt to keep to a stereotyped "traditional" or ethnically "Zulu" (!) attire. Yet two key accessories demonstrated the symbolic link with the strong past martial traditions: these were the two staves (isikhwili nobhoko) used in stick fighting (or a single stout stick) and the small dancing shield. Both of these were often used to great effect as men improvised their "giya" steps and gestures.

4.2.4. Gesture and movement in Mode B

As we have seen, the actions and movements of those who call out izibongo as a man "giya's" are not the focal point either for the audience or for others in the supporting group. In fact the only significant gesture of members of the iviyo (i.e. the praisers) is the rhythmic clapping which accompanies so many items. All interest focuses on the solo performer. Whether or not he is praised, how much he is praised, depends to a large extent on his "giya" performance. It would be impossible to set out any fixed choreography for a "giya" performer; the range of gestures, the sequence of movements and the kind of movements are very wide. The "dancer" must, however, communicate a sense of excitement, dynamic action and vigour. Many



3. A man "giya-ing" at an engagement ceremony at Ndlovini, Ngoye, August 1976.

"giya" dancers like to evoke associations of battle and fierce hand to hand combat through their mimes of battle, and clearly, the conventions of ukugiya encourage this: with "spear" poised they face an imaginary enemy ; they half kneel and then rush towards the foe. Others though, in what is probably an extension to the martial conventions of ukugiya, prefer to emphasise athletic prowess and virile grace; jumps, leaps, long hops, twirls, short runs all come within the gamut of what is acceptable. In addition to these movements there is also the "addressing" of the group (the iviyo). The solo performer paces to and fro, frequently making use of extravagant, emphatic gestures. Facial expression is also an important item in the repertoire of some performers. Again expressions of anger, ferocity and fearlessness are most favoured. So although there are no set rules for gesture, movement and facial expression, some kind of vigorously expressive, dramatic performance which combines all these elements is expected of a "giya" performer.

Women's praising exhibits the same interaction of dancer and praisers. Here too, the dancer is the focus of the group. For women's performance the emphasis is on vigorous self-expression through the dance, and the calling out of her praises momentarily confirms and validates her position in the community. There is for both men and women the pressure to perform and to perform well; and for many the notions of performing, praising others and being praised oneself are vitally linked.

4.2.5. Vocalisation in Mode B performance

i. Vocalisation by the praisers

Although it is true that in Mode B the solo performer is the focal point, both for his group and for the crowd of onlookers and

participants (see B above), it must be remembered that he "dances" so that he can be praised. It frequently happens that men call to their companions, "Giya, So-and-so and then we can praise you!". They also sometimes put pressure on a man to "giya" by calling out some of his praises as a sort of invitation to him to get up and "dance".

Although the speed of utterance during praising varies, it is usually much faster than normal speech. In some cases short praise names are repeated at intermittent intervals and at other times successive sentences are called out with no audible breaks between them. At such moments there is no attempt to call out izibongo in unison. Each praiser appears to address himself primarily to the "giya" "dancer". Whether he repeats the same praise name or combines these in successive lines is up to him. Usually, though, he recites at a higher pitch than normal speech and at a greater volume.

ii. Vocalisation of the supporting group during ukugiya

I have described in A and B above the three different kinds of items (songs, chants, rhythmic statements) that together were referred to (in Ngoye) as izigiyo. Further examples of these are given in Section E of the Appendix. The musical characteristics of such songs and chants are described in Rycroft and Ngcobo (1981: Appendix D, pp.13-14). The "rhythmic statements" I refer to would seem close to their account of "non-melodic song" where metre is of great importance. Certainly the very obvious imposed rhythmic pattern in these suggests a definite metrical pattern.

iii. Vocalisation by the solo performer

Essentially the same comments as in ii above apply to the solo performer's vocalisation, in that he initiates each item and is

usually expected to offer at least one of each of the three components of izigiyo. Also, a short explanation about real or imaginary exploits often precedes his "rhythmic statement", and this is the time when the solo performer will usually say his own praises for the benefit of any in the group who may not know them already. In both the explanation and the rhythmic statement the performer abandons his normal speaking voice in favour of the hoarse, strained tone already mentioned. This stylised type of utterance is designed to enhance the sense of stress, drama and suspense which the "giya" performer attempts to evoke.

4.2.6. Language in Mode B performance

i. The izibongo

It is difficult (for a field worker) to hear long sections of izibongo during performance because of the speed of utterance, but it is clear from recitations made away from the tumult of an actual performance, that izibongo are frequently made up of linear units of the same approximate length. Secondly, frequent use is made of what Lestrade (1935:7; 1937:307) calls "cross-parallelism" or "chiasmus". Thirdly, there is a great deal of alliteration and assonance (which itself may be a kind of parallelism) often within linear units. Fourthly, semantic and grammatical balance (again, a kind of parallelism) is much in evidence (see Chapter 5). In general the language is cryptic and allusive. In content it is more wide-ranging than the songs, which tend to be repetitive and simple in structure. Finally, the izibongo contain a high proportion of figurative language.

4.2.7. Audience response in Mode B performance

i. The praisers and their audience

The praisers are, in a sense, performing for three audiences. By

directing their praises at the dancer, he becomes their audience. His morale and his overall performance are affected by the amount and the quality of their praising. Secondly, the praisers have as audience their companions in the *iviyo*. They listen intently to those who praise, assessing both the skill of the reciter and the details of the *izibongo*. Amusement, surprise or agreement are frequently registered. Thirdly the praiser's audience is comprised of the often numerous onlookers who tend to be women, sometimes young girls (who may not be among the dancers), the young girls who are dancing and singing themselves (as in B), young boys, and older men who no longer wish to "*giya*". For both the *iviyo* and the onlookers, the praises themselves are of great importance. Men, in particular, like to know "who" people are, i.e. to be able to identify them through their *izibongo*. The "*giya*" performance is often crucially linked with *izibongo* in people's minds as the following remark by the *imbongi* Masoswidi Mkhwanazi indicates. Masoswidi was complaining about Christians who frequently refused to have anything to do with *ukugiya*:

When men "*giya*" we can hear who they are and that is one reason why I go to weddings. As for these men who walk along with their ties on and their Bibles under their arms and who never attend weddings (ie. *izindwendwe* as opposed to Christian and Westernised *imishado*). We never know who they are - they are nobodies!
(Masoswidi Mkhwanazi to E.G., KwaDlangezwa, Ngoye, April, 1976)

The women in the audience also enjoy the praising - the *izibongo*, the *izigiyo*, the dancer's movements and expressions, his skill in orchestrating the changes from one *izigiyo* component to the next. Aesthetic enjoyment of the total praising performance plays an important part in the responses of both men and women. As Finnegan remarks:

It is tempting...to brush aside as too obvious to mention, the element of enjoyment and aesthetic appreciation [by the audience]. But to play down this aspect is to forget what must often be the primary interest of the audience. (Finnegan, Oral Poetry, 1977, p.230)

Masoswidi remarked to me (shortly after his complaint about those who shunned traditional weddings) that good izibongo made you laugh when you remembered them, long after you had heard them. Wit and memorability are the marks of good izibongo as they are of much poetry.

ii The giya "dancer" and his audience

Although the praises and the backing of the iviyo are essential elements in the onlookers' enjoyment, their main focus of attention is on each successive solo **giya** "dancer". He is the key actor in each of the miniature dramas that constitute a "giya" performance. Not only do they observe his actions keenly and critically, they comment on his "rhythmic statements" (as in B) and women in particular often execute their own small dancing steps on the periphery, to show their appreciation of a good performance. To be judged a good "giya" performer is to have one's prestige enhanced both in the community generally and among those who are present. In the overall performance, both individual achievement and group solidarity are emphasised. The "dancer" acts out his individually conceived version of a standard artistic activity. By doing so he sharpens his sense of his own individuality and underlines his links with those who support and praise him. A man, through the stylized aggression which (usually) marks the overall solo performance, is conforming to a social ethic which places a high value on courage, endurance and virility (see Chapter 7).

Women's performances are outside the martial ambience that is characteristic of men's **ukugiya**. Also there is less emphasis on



4. Ukugiya at the Zibani/Mhlongo wedding at Sihuzu, Ngoye, January 1976. The "dancer" is Mr Mhlongo, the brother of the bride. Shishiliza Dube is seated fourth from the left wearing a white headscarf.

display, flamboyant gesture, improvised movement and dress, in their performances. Perhaps because they are performing for each other rather than to a wider public (a feature of their role in Zulu society) there is often a sense of release and a sense that the group and the individual may touch on topics that must lie hidden at other times. It is true that many women's praises complain of difficulties with co-wives (A 124 and 125 for example). In addition, though, problems relating to sex, status and marriage are aired in *izibongo* and in the songs that accompany them. In general, sexual matters are aired with a licence that is not present in everyday speech. This is true of men's praises also. In their performance, as with that of men, there is an expression both of individuality and of group solidarity, and the praises of the dancer are of aesthetic and emotional importance.

Conclusion

In two such different performing modes as A and B, it may seem difficult at first to find similarities which mark the unity of the genre. Yet in some ways (as I pointed out in the introduction to this chapter) the Modes overlap, and certainly in the consciousness of those within the culture, what I have called two "Modes" represent two aspects of the same activity, *ukubonga*, praising. "Ukugiya" can be seen as a bridge linking the two modes; as I have pointed out in 4.1.1., in some situations a bard will break into *ukugiya* when he has finished praising; thus, when he has finished bringing to the attention of listeners the praises of "the living dead" (and addressing the shades through their *izibongo*) he is himself praised. Besides the link formed by *ukugiya*, one can see the similarities as follows:

i. In the case of the *imbongi* and the praisers in the *iviyo* (or supporting group) the praising is directed at another person or persons, or, in the case of the ancestors, beings who are thought of as, in some mystical sense, still "living" (see 2.2.).

ii. Both are dramatic performances albeit of a very different kind. In one instance the *imbongi* holds all attention whereas in the other the praisers are visually in a secondary role in their more composite performance situation.

iii. Both the *imbongi* and the non-specialist praisers are concerned with expressing the identity of those they praise through *izibongo*.

iv. The language of both *imbongi* and non-specialist praisers exhibits many shared characteristics.

In a sense it could be said that Mode B performance is the primary performing situation, in that it is here that (for most people) *izibongo* are forged and tried, and it is here that performance context and poetic style impinge most closely on each other: the high level of repeated vowels, consonants and syllables which features particularly in popular *izibongo* is perhaps related to the need for audibility in a tumultuous "giya" situation. Also many *izibongo* which are later called out in the long string of *izibongo* of lineage ancestors begin as hectic *izibongo* called out during *ukugiya*. Mode A also, though, shows a relation between performance context and style in the *izibongo* of some bards: the expansive and elaborate style of the *izibongo* of Isaiah Shembe and of the present king is one more suited to the solo performance context than to the fast tumult of Mode B.

Notes

1

James Stuart has three chapters on izibongo in his textbook for Zulu schools, uKulumetule (London: Longman, 1925), 93-114. For his references to bards, in particular Magolwana, see Gunner, "Forgotten Men: Zulu Bards and Praising at the Time of the Zulu Kings", African Languages/Langues Africaines 2, (1976), 75-83. There are also many references to bards in the testimonies of Stuart's informants a number of whom were themselves izimbongi. See C.deB.Webb and J. Wright, (eds.), The James Stuart Archives Vols. 1,2 and 3 (University of Natal Press and Killie Campbell Africana Library), 1976-82.

2

Amos Mathambo Gwala, interviewed in Durban on October 25, 1975, mentioned this to me as one of the former duties of the royal imbongi. Members of the Church of Nazareth whom I interviewed at Emkayideni, May 1976 said that that such early morning calls to prayer by reciting the izibongo of Shembe was still one of the duties of Shembe's bards.

3

At Ntshidi, 21 December, 1975, at the home of Chief Lindelihle Mzimela, the bridegroom, who was also a staunch member of the Church of Nazareth.

4

This recording of the praises was kindly made available to me by M.B.Yengwa. I am very grateful to him.

5

I use "his" for bards because it is usually men who are bards. Women may also be bards, though. The best known woman imbongi is Princess Magogo kaDinuzulu. On 14th September 1976 she publicly recited the izibongo of Shaka and other royal praises when the mace of Shaka was given by Natal to the KwaZulu Government. Other women also performed as izimbongi at weddings (see note 16). All, though, were past child-bearing age and were perhaps therefore regarded as "honorary men"!

6

Richard Bauman, "Verbal Art as Performance", American Anthropologist Vol.77, (June 1975), p.292.

7

A.F.Gardiner, Narrative of a Journey, p.59.

8

Stuart, uKulumetule, p.110. The translation is from Gunner, "Forgotten Men", p.77.

9

Webb and Wright, James Stuart Archives Vol.1, 1976, p.69.

10

L.H.Samuelson, Some Zulu Customs and Folklore (London:Church Printing Co., n.d.), p.36.

11

Tape 2 is of Dlamini praising at the opening of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, 16.10.75 (my recording); Tape 3a is of Dlamini praising on Shaka's Day at Nongoma, 24.9.75. A copy of the original SABC recording was kindly made by Larry Benson and I am most grateful; Tape 3b is a spoken recording of Dlamini reciting the royal praises at Nongoma on 25.9.75. A copy of the original SABC recording was kindly made by Ernie Hilder and I am very grateful to him.

My interpretation of "Ulibinda" as "You choke the voice" is based on a number of factors: Firstly this was the meaning given to me by

Ernie Hilder as we listened to a tape of Dlamini praising in an interview conducted by Mr Hilder. He explained that "li" referred to the understood but unspoken noun "izwi". The reason for using this as a concluding formula, Mr Hilder explained, was that it gave one to understand that there were many more izibongo that could be said, if only the imbongi had the strength to go on! In other words it contributed to the total, eulogistic act of praising an important individual. Secondly, on two other occasions izimbongi used an identical or almost identical expression to signal the end of izibongo. One such occasion was the recitation of the izibongo of Chief Buthelezi by Hezekiah Buthelezi on May 8th 1976 at the University of Zululand. After completing the final praise, "izincele zamadoda zadudumela", he called out "Shenge! Ulibinda!". On another occasion, in Hlabisa, when Mnyezane Mthembu had finished praising the most distant members of the Hlabisa chiefly lineage and wished to hand over to Sunduzabanye, he said, "Imbongi ibindwe", which I understood to mean, "The imbongi is choked / silenced", again suggesting that there was more but he had no strength to go on. In "Forgotten Men", (1976), p.77, I have translated Magolwana's closing salutation, "Ulibinda", as, "He is inscrutable". I think, in the light of my later field experience mentioned above that this is probably not correct.

12

The translation of Stuart, uKulumetule, p.110 is in Gunner, Forgotten Men, p.77.

13

D.Rycroft and A.B.Ngcobo, Izibongo zikaDingana: Dingana's Eulogies, (forthcoming), p.126.

14

For a transcription of a similar "long stretch" utterance in the 1927 James Stuart recording of Shaka's izibongo see Rycroft, "The Question of Metre in Southern African Praise Poetry", in The Third African Language Congress of the University of South Africa, ed. J.P.Wentzel, 1980, p.293.

15

I have not yet studied Jeff Opland's Xhosa Oral poetry, Cambridge University Press, 1984.

16

MaMnguni lived near the Dindi homestead which I often visited. She was known as an "igagu", a talented performer (see Chapter 4) and had been able to perform the Mzimela lineage izibongo on a public occasion such as this wedding.

17

"Towards an Understanding of African Dance: The Zulu Isishameni Style", in A.Tracey, ed., Papers Presented at the Second Symposium on Ethnomusicology, (Grahamstown: International Library of African Music), 1981, p.13.

18

David Rycroft reports hearing a slightly different version of this which was well known in the Melmoth district and given to him by A.B.Ngcobo.

19

Clan praises (izithakazelo) are referred to in Chapter 3.1.2.. See also D.Mzolo, "A Study of Zulu Clan Praises in Natal and Zululand", (M.A. thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1977), and Mzolo, "Zulu Clan Praises", in J.Argyle and E.Preston-Whyte, eds., Social System and Tradition in Southern Africa (Capetown: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp.206-221.

CHAPTER 5

STYLISTIC TECHNIQUES IN IZIBONGO5.0. The Language of Izibongo

Both in the course of fieldwork and during subsequent analysis of izibongo recorded in KwaZulu in 1975-76 it became clear that bards and non-specialist composers alike were working with a range of established poetic techniques. These, as well as the features of vocalisation referred to in Chapter 4, served to distinguish the style of izibongo from standard speech and showed the links between izibongo and other verbal art forms, notably proverbs, (izaga) and clan praises (izithakazelo).

Not all composers and performers used the range of stylistic features with the same degree of skill, indeed composer/performers of a wide range of ability tended to choose certain devices and ignore others. These are aspects of the individual's application of the stylistic resources of the genre which will be discussed in Chapter 8. First of all, though, it is necessary to establish what resources of style the individual has to choose from and to apply.

Mukarovsky has suggested that the creation of poetry depends on the "violation" of standard language. As he puts it, "The violation of the norms of the standard, its systematic violation, is what makes possible the poetic utilization of language; without this possibility there would be no poetry" (1). Certainly there are a number of ways in which the verbal texts of izibongo represent a departure from the norms of the standard language. In a sense, the composer's choice of

both the form and the content of his utterance is constrained by the unspoken rules of the genre, just as social convention provides guidelines on when it is appropriate to perform *izibongo*. The awareness of the rules guiding the use of the genre is implicit and is never handed down in a formulated manner as were the rules of composition of the Welsh bards (Bell, 1936). It is possible also that the rules shift and that certain key composers and performers influence the general realisation and articulation of poetic techniques. Nevertheless it is clear from the poetry that certain choices are being made through the systematic exploitation of phonological, lexical, syntactic and semantic patterns by composers. Both Kunene, writing on Sotho *dithoko* (praise poems), and Hodza and Fortune, describing Shona praise poetry, have mentioned the way in which poets apply the unformulated but widely accepted poetic techniques applicable to their respective genres. Hodza and Fortune's remark applies specifically to poets' uses of parallelism:

It is clear that Shona poets are conscious of the variety of structural patterns at their disposal and show a great deal of skill in the construction of parallel verses along the two dimensions of structural similarity and degree of semantic comparability.

(Hodza and Fortune, Shona Praise Poetry, 1979, p.101)

Kunene's comment, on the other hand, has a more general relevance to the poet in relation to his particular poetic tradition and to performance:

It must be remembered that the poet composes "on his feet" spontaneously. He has no time to apply "rules" of composition and to correct unconventionalities: he must go on and what comes out of his mouth is the final thing. Yet he composes on the basis of a long standing tradition and subconsciously he is, in patterning his poem, drawing from this tradition.

(Kunene, Heroic Poetry, 1971, p.53)

In fact Kunene worked from printed collections made in the main some years earlier by other collectors (2) and therefore his remarks about "spontaneity" must be treated with caution. Damane and Sanders (1974:23-24) regard the tradition as being partly memorial and not one that relies heavily on composition in performance. Whatever mixture of memory and creativity is involved, Kunene's insistence that the Sotho bard is guided by the unstated constraints of his poetic tradition is a valid one. Jakobson makes a similar point with reference to oral poetry in general:

The phonology and grammar of oral poetry offer a system of complex and elaborate correspondences which come into being, take effect, and are handed down through generations without anyone's cognizance of the rules governing this intricate network. (3)

Before we look in some detail at the poetic techniques (in particular repetition and parallelism) used in Zulu izibongo a few general points need to be made about the "grammar" of the poetry. (4)

Lestrade (1935:6) has written of the "laconic even staccato" construction of sentences in Southern African praise poetry. Certainly the way in which composers present their material in a condensed, compact way is very striking. Information which in normal discourse would be presented in a leisurely, expansive form with subordinating conjunctions is compressed, even truncated, and distinctly paratactic, with a marked absence of the wide range of tenses of the verb available in ordinary speech (Nkabinde, 1976:16-18). Expression tends to be cryptic and aphoristic. Single lines (5) often recall the balanced structure and the gnomic brevity of certain proverbs (Nyembezi, 1954:21-22; Doke, 1947:101-104). Some of the patterns of parallelism described in 5.1. are themselves examples of the

Example 2

UMgoqo ovimbel' amashinga akwaGuphithuka. (A 67)

The Gatepole which keeps off the young scallywags at Guphithuka.

Another general, perhaps inevitable, feature of the brevity of the lines is their highly allusive nature (see 6.2.). In the above examples we are not given much detail about what happened, we are only told about the bearer's key role in the event. A line such as the following is typically compact but is more allusive. It hints at a story of sorrow and marital neglect:

Example 3

UMalal' edongeni abanye belal' e'ndlini zamadod' abo. (MaHlabisa,
Hlabisa, uncatalogued)

Sleeper against a wall others sleep in the huts of their menfolk.

A further example illustrates the co-existence of brevity and allusion. Here, war and heroism are hinted at through the praise name ("Blood") and through the historical associations of the place name, scene of a skirmish between the British and uSuthu Zulu forces in 1888:

Example 4

UGazi lagcwal' umsingizane kwaHlophekhulu. (A 13)

The-Blood saturated the tall grass at Hlophekhulu.

The economical and frequently allusive style of presentation which composers and performers must master is matched by another general - and at first sight contradictory - compositional technique and that is

the technique of expansion. As Cope, and B.W.Vilakazi have pointed out (6), Zulu *izibongo* are a series of praises strung together rather than poems composed on a single occasion. Stuart also, in an entry inside the front cover of his Notebook 76 (6) notes the use of the verb "jobelela" in Bishop Colenso's Zulu Dictionary (1861) and of Colenso's sentence, "ukujobelela izibongo zenkosi" ("to string together the king's praises"). In the case of ordinary composers, the "stringing together" is often of end-stopped lines with no obvious connection between them yet it would be wrong to associate bards with larger units (7) and ordinary composers only with single unrelated lines. Wainwright (1979:89-90) working in the related tradition of Xhosa *izibongo* has pointed out that many ordinary composers lack the skill to expand beyond an initial praise line and in general only *izimbongi* do so. Nevertheless he gives examples of some expansions beyond the line by ordinary composers and this supports the evidence from the present collection, namely that there are generally understood techniques of expansion which composers select from and use according to their inclination and ability.

Just as the single lines of *izibongo* frequently show internal patterning or follow a common pattern of sentence structure so too do expansions develop in ways which show deliberate manipulation of the phonology and structures of normal discourse. Redundancy of expression is a favourite stylistic device and perhaps one especially suited to the rhetoric of solo public performance. Salmond (1975:54,62), for instance, has noticed its powerful effect in Maori oratory. In *izibongo* redundancy is evident in the sequence of lines of "lexical-syntactic" parallelism favoured by some *izimbongi* and to a lesser extent by ordinary composers (see 5.1.3.). By "lexical-syntactic" parallelism I mean that lexical items and syntactic structures are

repeated over two or more lines with incremental items providing the necessary variables. In prose utterances such practice would be considered totally inappropriate and would be seen as a hindrance to communication. In the context of izibongo it is regarded as heightening both communication and overall poetic effectiveness. A single example will illustrate the difference between poetic and standard communication of the same content:

Example 5

Ugwaz' okaGatshu wazibethela.

Wagwaz' okaNkunya wazibethela.

Wagwaz' okaMaguladlanayo wazibethela. (A 86)

He stabs the son of Gatshu he struck for himself.

He stabbed the son of Nkunya he struck for himself.

He stabbed the son of Maguladlanayo he struck for himself.

In standard narration the redundancy represented by the repetition of "wagwaza" and "wazibethela" would be discarded and even the bare structure of the individual line with its two synonymous verbs might be looked at askance. The above three lines might in standard narration occur as:

Wabagwaza okaGatshu, nokaNkunya naye futhi indodana
kaMaguladlanayo; wazibethela ngokugwaza bona-ke.

He stabbed the son of Gatshu and the son of Nkunya, and the son
of Maguladlanayo as well; he struck for himself by stabbing them.

Clearly the use of both the pattern of Verb + noun phrase + reflexive verb (within the line in Example 5), and the repetitive pattern over all three lines is a deliberate choice for stylistic reasons. Moreover

this kind of expansion through lexical-syntactic parallelism is particularly suited to the solo performance of Mode A where the *imbongi* holds the stage and must use all his communicative resources to generate the highest level of audience response.

Besides expanding from the single line through such lexical-syntactic parallelism (see 5.1.3.) composers frequently move to a second line by "linking", (see Lestrade, 1935:5). Whereas lexical-syntactic parallelism often allows for no more (information) than an impressive cataloguing of names from line to line (as in Example 5), linking frequently allows composers to insert a short sequential, narrative element or to enlarge on and emphasise an initial statement. Here again the flow of words characteristic of normal discourse is disrupted in order to achieve the patterning which signals the use of poetic language.

Example 6

UXamalaza kwaMsipha,/ The Stander with legs wide apart at
Tendons'
imisiph' eyizigidi./ the tendons that are thousands. (A 79)

Example 7

UPhunyuka bemphethe abafazi namadoda.
Amadoda ahayizana nasekhaya nangasenhle.
 Escaper as they grab him, the women and men.
Men fight among themselves both at home and up-country. (A 112)

The range of means by which composers expand is discussed more fully in 5.1.2, 3 and 4. What needs to be emphasised here is that whether composers present their material in cryptic, unrelated lines or whether they expand by parallelism, repetition or other selected

methods, they are imposing on the language a variety of patterns which are alien to standard utterances.

The coining of praise names is another aspect of composition where individuals use techniques which are never or rarely used in standard language. It seems to me very difficult to distinguish in practice between a praise name and a praise, indeed sometimes between names and praises. The singular of izibongo, "praises", is not "*isibongo" meaning "a praise" ; isibongo means "a clan name", not the single praise of an individual's many praises. Mashekelela Dindi's remark, "Names go along with izibongo", ("Amagama ahambisana nezibongo"), suggests that in some cases it is contextual usage of names that defines izibongo and that any name (igama) has the potential to become part of an individual's set of praises or praise names.

The formation of praise names

The most striking feature of the formation of praise names is the use of the class Ia prefix u-. Any noun or verb (and less frequently other parts of speech such as the ideophone) may be used as the basis for a praise name. In the case of a common noun being used in such a way the class Ia prefix is often (but by no means always) substituted for the original prefix of the class from which the noun is drawn. Often a praise name is extended over a phrase or sentence and if this is so the prefix of the noun's original class controls the rest of the phrase or sentence (Cope,1968:48). Koopman (1979:76) calls this process, where an entire phrase or sentence, syntactically intact is subordinated to the prefix of class Ia "embedding" or "encapsulating". He notes that it is typical of "praises and their close relatives, compound names", but not typical of compound nouns which undergo structural transformations. He attributes this unusual linguistic

feature to a non-linguistic factor, namely the social and psychological significance of the name in Zulu life (Koopman, 1979:69 and see Chapter 3). Vilakazi also points to this strange usage of "concord" which he sees as "a special licence of poetry" and he suggests that the "purposive confusion of concords" heightens the metaphorical effect of the personified (as he calls it) praise name (1938:116-117). Although this unique personalising technique is available as a special poetic device, composers do sometimes use nouns as part of a praise name without switching the initial concord prefix to class 1a. The metaphoric impact may be lessened in such cases but it is nevertheless so frequently done as to seem quite acceptable. In some cases (such as Examples 10 and 11) the same praise name occurs, sometimes introduced by the class 1a concord prefix and sometimes not.

Praise names introduced by the class 1a prefix but subsequently employing concords relating to the noun's original class prefix

Example 8

- a. (Noun: i(li)gaqa - spear, class 5):

uGaq' elibomvu ngasekuphathweni. (A 2 1.54)

i.e. u[(ili)Gaq' elibomvu ngasekuphathweni]

Spear which is red even to the handle.

- b. (Noun: intothoviyane - large greenish-yellow, evil-smelling locust, class 9):

uNtothoviyane enukela abakwaMkhwanazi. (A 46)

i.e. u[(i)Ntothoviyane enukela abakwaMkhwanazi]

The Green and Yellow Striped Locust that stinks at the Mkhwanazis.

c. (Noun: imvu - sheep, class 9):

uMv' emnyama eyehlul' abaqophi. (A 59)

i.e. u[(i)Mv' emnyama eyehlul' abaqophi]

The Black Sheep which defeated the kilt-makers.

Praise names retaining the original noun concord in the initial word and in the phrase that follows

Here the class Ia prefix "u-" is not used in the initial word; instead the original class 9 prefix is retained and the class 9 relative concord is used with the verb that follows:

Example 9

a. iNkomo ekhathaza umelusi wayo.
 c1.9 c1.9

Cow that exhausts its herdboys.

A formulaic praise name showing the optional use of the class Ia concord

In Example 10 the class 9 prefix is used for the initial word of the praise name. In Example 11 the class Ia prefix is used in the initial word but not with the two verbs that follow which retain the class 9 prefix concord:

Example 10

INyanga bath' ifile yethwasa kuMnyamana. (A 11)

Moon they said it was gone whereas it was rising at Mnyamana's.

Example 11

UNyanga bath' ifile kanti iyofa kusasa. (A 18)

i.e. u[(i)Nyanga bath' ifile kanti iyofa kusasa]

The Moon - they said it was gone whereas it would go the next day.

Personal names can also be formed by substituting the class 1a prefix "u-" for the initial vowel of a three or four letter prefix. In the examples below ama- becomes uMa- and isi- becomes uSi-:

Example 12

- a. (Noun: amajubane, cl.6 - speeds):

uMajubane amabili elokuya nelokubuya. (A 49)

Double-speed Man! One (speed) for going and one (speed) for coming
back.

- b. (Noun: isiwiliwili cl.7 - confusion of sounds or voices):

uSiwiliwili 'beLungu "betok Ingilishi". (A 105)

The Strange Noises of the Whites "tokking Ingleesh".

Verb-derived nouns are common in Zulu and such nouns often form the basis for a praise name:

Example 13

- a. (Noun: umlandeli - follower, from -landela - follow):

uMlandeli webhodwe eliconsayo. (A1 1.46)

Follower of the dripping pot.

- b. (Noun: umudli - eater, from -dla - eat, capture, defeat etc.):

uMudli wezinkomo ezifihlwayo. (A 13a)

Taker of the cattle which were hidden away.

In some cases the class 1a prefix "u-" is joined to the noun formatives **No-**, **So-**, **Ma-** or **Noma-** and prefixed to a verb or noun. There are many examples of this naming and praise-naming device in this collection, and like the use of verb-derived nouns it frequently allows for expansion through the subsequent use of the cognate verb. At the discretion of the composer, the verb-derived noun may itself

continue to take a direct object, or to initiate an adverbial or noun phrase as if it were still a verb:

Example 14

a. (Verb: **-gadla** - strike):

uNogadla bethithiza. / Striker and they are confused. (A 144)

b. (Verb: **-chatha** - give an enema):

uMachatha nekhabe. / Enema-giver with a pumpkin. (A 116)

c. (Verb: **-dlalisa** - amuse, play with):

uNodlalis' ingane ngokuthand' unina. (A 104)

Cuddler of the young child through love for its mother.

d. (Verb: **-gasa** - stalk, move menacingly forward):

uNogas' omnyama onjengowasoVukeni. (A 111)

The Black One who Moves Menacingly Forward like the (royal) one
of Vukeni.

e. (Verb: **-khabuzela** - walk briskly):

uSokhabuzela onjengamashoba e'nkomo zeZulu. (A 2 1.43)

Brisk mover like the tails of the cattle of the Zulu.

g. (Verb: **-dida** - confuse (+ formative **-se**):

...uSodidase,

iNkonyan' encane kaNdaba edid' im'bala. (A 1 1s.11-12)

...Father of Confusion

Small Calf of Ndaba who hides his intentions.

h. Praise names are also formed through adding the class 1a prefix to a reduplicated verb stem. Here a praise name from a reduplicated verb stem is amplified by an explanatory "encapsulated" praise: (verb: xova - mix, perfect tense -xove:

uXovexove uGwayi omnandi waseLondoni.

The Finely Blended, Sweet London Tobacco. (Ngoye, uncatalogued)

The above-mentioned name formatives with the class 1a prefix may also be prefixed to an ideophone or as here, to a reduplicated form of the ideophone:

(Ideophone: moklo - cracking sound)

uNomamoklomoklo uSikhwili siyamokloza. (A 110)

The Cracking and the snapping The Fighting Stick cracks (it) open.

j. The class 1a prefix alone may also prefix an ideophone to form a praise name:

(Ideophone: gqamu - of a sudden flaring up of flame):

uGqamu njengelangabi.

Sudden Appearer like a flame. (A 73c)

Compound praise names

Koopman (1979:75) claims a structural distinction between "compound names", with final-vowel elision in the first word, as in Bonginkosi (-bonga + inkosi), "Praise the King" - a common process in spoken Zulu - and "compound nouns", where "the initial vowel of the second element is elided" as in indlulamithi (-dlula + imithi), "surpass + trees", i.e. "giraffe". Our present collection of praise names includes both these structural types: for the first, see Examples 1, 3, 5, 8a and 14c and d, above; and for the second, items under Example 15, below, the first three of which are drawn from B.W.Vilakazi's 1938 article, "The Conception and Development of Poetry in Zulu". Item c) has no initial u- because it is vocative:

Example 15

a. uMthapheya-thusi./ Wearer of brass bands.(Vilakazi,1938, p.117)

b. uSigwinya-mkhonto nothi lwawo./ Swallower of spear and its shaft.(ibid.)

c. Mashiya-nkomo./ Mr Leave-cattle behind.(Vilakazi,1938,p.120)

- d.uMlamula-nkunzi./ Peacemaker with the bulls. (A 2 1.12)
 e.uSambula-nkwezane./ Scatterer of the fog. (A 2 1.10)
 f.uMhlahla-ndlela./ Pioneer of the roads. (A 1 1.87)
 g.uSibambana-nkunzi./ Grappler with the bull. (A 1 1.107)

The class Ia prefix used with praise names which comment or narrate

In many cases in izibongo the class Ia prefix which replaces the usual noun prefix introduces a sentence which may be a comment or a condensed narrative rather than a description. Here too the class Ia prefix personalises and nominalises the whole sentence thus providing another instance of Koopman's "encapsulating" or "embedding" process referred to earlier. Through this process composers can do far more than describe an individual, they may include what Samarin (1965) calls the "attitudinal and autobiographic" aspect of naming. For example, the sentence:

Abantu baphuma bebakhulu kaZulu babhek' Engilandi...

People set out, those who were the important ones of the Zulu people they head for England... (A 20)

is personalised and nominalised as follows by substitution of an initial "U-:"

Example 16

UBantu baphuma bebakhulu kaZulu babhek' Engilandi... (A 20)

The-People set out, those who were the important ones of the Zulu people they head for England...

Example 17 An oblique, metaphoric reference to witchcraft directed against the bearer which failed. The witchcraft, like the egg of the monstrous snake never actually "hatched":

Before personalisation and nominalisation:

IQanda lomningi kaliphum' ebhokisini. (A 17)

After personalisation and nominalisation:

UQanda lomningi kaliphum' ebhokisini.

The-Egg of the many-headed snake does not hatch from the box.

The use of the class 1 relative or predicative concord prefix

Instead of the class Ia noun prefix, the class I relative concord prefix "o-" may be used. This is a device which heightens concentration and which is used far more extensively in izibongo than in ordinary speech. It is described by Cope (1968:46-47); relative or predicative concords are prefixed directly to initially elided nouns. Cope points out that this is used sparingly in normal language, for example, "ozitho zinde" (literally: "he who is limbs are long"), "long-limbed" (instead of the more cumbersome "onezitho ezinde", "he who has limbs which are long"). Instead of a relative concord, as in Example 18a, the class 1 predicative concord prefix, "u-", is occasionally used, as in items b, c, and d, below:

Example 18

- a. oNyawo zinhle ezikaNdaba ezingakhethi 'mabala. (A 1 1.86)
Beautiful Feet of (royal) Ndaba which do not choose where they tread.
- b. uSihlangu simagqabha sinamanxeba sigudl' iVuna. (A 1 1.51)
(He is) - The Shield spattered and with wounds skirts the Vuna River.
- c. uZandla zinemisebe njengelanga. (A 2 1.8)
(He is) - Hands that radiate like the sun.
- d. ubeSithebe sihle sisezintabeni zasoNgoye. (A 61)
He became the Beautiful Eating Mat on the hills of Ngoye.

To sum up, the formation of praise names may involve deviation

from the standard language, and signals to listeners the entry to the highly charged and compact poetic language of izibongo. For all its apparent flexibility, therefore, and its (apparent) freedom from the constraints of a metric system based on stress, tone or number of syllables, the language of izibongo is in many respects stylised and ordered. Remarks by commentators such as Lestrade that "the difference between prose and verse in Bantu literature is one of spirit rather than form" (1937:306) should be treated with great caution when applied to Zulu izibongo. Apparent freedom from metrical constraints need not sound a death knell to poetic form or banish the notion of prosody. Finnegan remarks that prosody is largely defined (by Westerners) in terms of metre because of the influence of Greek and Roman models. Metre, she argues, is only one aspect of prosody:

These various metres give structure to the verse in which they occur by a type of utterance based on sound patterning. But it is not only through rhythmic repetition that this structuring can take place, it is also produced by alternative (or sometimes additional) means like alliteration, assonance, rhyme or various types of parallelism.
(Finnegan, Oral Poetry, 1977, p.93)

Before we look in some detail at the working of repetition and parallelism in izibongo it would be as well to consider Stuart's comment on the constraints of form which operate in the composition of izibongo. His remark is directed primarily at the works of the bards but it has a general application:

[The imbongi] is obliged to throw his verse into a fixed traditional mould...[resembling] the limits of a Procrustean bed, surprising in its unyielding rigidity though charged with a fire and vivacity all its own. (8)

5.1. Repetition and Parallelism in Izibongo

Both of these are vital aspects of prosody in izibongo and occur

in a variety of ways. Although critics such as Jakobson have tended to perceive parallelism and particularly grammatical parallelism as the single most important structural device of all poetry (9) it seems more accurate in the case of izibongo to see it as one of a number of devices operating within the poetry to give it form. As Jakobson himself has pointed out:

Any form of parallelism is an apportionment of invariants and variables. The stricter the distribution of the former, the greater the discernibility and effectiveness of the variations. (10)

While there is ample evidence of this type of foregrounding (11) operating at the levels of phonology, lexis, syntax and semantics there is also evidence of repetition. Although this may lack the patterned regularity of parallelism it too constitutes a valid and useful poetic device in izibongo and one that is applied by composers of varying skill.

5.1.1. Phonological devices in izibongo

I shall discuss phonological repetition (5.1.1.1.) and phonological parallelism (5.1.1.2.) but a few general observations need to be made first. Although both alliteration and assonance occur in izibongo, the former plays a more important role than the latter. The "dominantly vocalic quality" of the language (Lestrade, 1937:302) means that the majority of utterances in normal discourse have an inbuilt assonance. Syllabic repetitions and vowel repetitions abound in such everyday remarks as:

Example 19

- i. Bobani bona? Who are those people? (bo and a repeated)
- ii. Kuze kube manje basisiza. Even to this day they help us. (ku and e repeated)

- iii. Ngavele ngasho. I said so from the beginning. (nga and e repeated)
- iv. Nigabe ngani? On what do you (pl.) rely? (ni and a repeated)

In a language such as Zulu which has (to use Lestrade's description of the South-eastern Bantu languages) "a natural sonority and beauty" (1937:302) how can phonology be manipulated to constitute a poetic device? The grammatical rules of the language, operating as it does on the concordial system, demand a syllabic, vocalic and in some cases alliterative harmony in any normal non-poetic sentence. Examples 19 i, 19 ii, and 19 iii, above illustrate concordial agreements operating over a sentence: i. bo-ba-bo ii. ku-ku iii. nga-nga.

The following examples, again from ordinary, non-poetic language, illustrate how the concordial system operates in Zulu. In other words we see how the class prefixes of nouns are used in linking the noun to other parts of the sentence by means of a concord derived from the class prefix (12). Because of the concordial system, syllables and/or vowels and/or consonants recur across a sentence, imposing what Cope calls a "natural" assonance or alliteration:

Example 20

- i. Recurrence of Class 5 concord prefix li- (referring to izulu, the sky).

Liyelibonakala uma lisuka lizoduma.

It is usually obvious if it is about to thunder.

- ii. Recurrence of Class 10 concord prefix zi-.

Lez' izinhlanzi zinqule abantu.

- iii. Recurrence of Class 11 concord prefix lu-.

Lukhona ukhamba oluhle emseleni.

There is a beautiful (large) pot just inside the hut.

It should be clear from these examples that the concordial system does indeed impose strong "natural" patterns of alliteration, assonance and syllabic repetition on normal utterances. Also in some cases the alliteration of concords is reinforced by consonant or consonant-vowel repetitions in the stems of words, for instance in Example 20 ii where the *zi-* in the stem echoes the class prefix: *izinhlanzi*. In other instances the concordial repetition is present plus another set of alliterations in the stems of words, for instance *kh* in Example 20 iii : *lukhona ukhamba*. So in addition to the natural phonological patterns there are various other independent and cross patterns which are possible. Also there is the pervasive euphony of the vowels *a* and *e* both of which occur so frequently in normal utterances that it is almost impossible to see how they could be foregrounded for poetic purposes.

In spite of the strong presence of alliteration and assonance in normal discourse, phonology is nevertheless exploited for poetic purposes by composers. In the following line from (A 66) the two brief statements are bound together by a strong pattern of *i* assonance, arising from its recurrence firstly in the class concord prefixes *si* and *i* and secondly in the stems of four of the five words in the line:

Example 21

USikhwili sivimbel' amashingana, ayikh' impi.

A secondary pattern is the *a* assonance in the contiguous "amashingana ayikh'...", a phonological link which further binds the two statements into a single poetic "linear" unit (see note (5)). Much of the alliteration and assonance in *izibongo* comes from an artful combining of repetitions arising from concordial agreements and repetitions of vowels, consonants or syllables within the stems or suffixes of words.

Cope (1968:45-6) terms this second kind of alliteration and assonance "artificial".

Many composers who are not very skilled but who are nevertheless competent in the art of ukubonga (praising) use phonological foregrounding a great deal. In their case, though, it is often within a line and may - in its indiscriminate positioning and its lack of extension to a second or even a third line - lack the aesthetic force and polish of an imbongi's usage. Also, bards in particular often achieve multiple patterns of phonological repetition within the line. The royal imbongi, John Dlamini, in his izibongo of King Zwelithini, uses phonological patterning more than lexical or syntactic parallelism. In the following "long stretch" line (13) of the type favoured by Dlamini, several groups of phonological patterning are discernible: the "natural" syllabic repetition of the impersonal concord kwa- placed contiguously at the front of the line; the syllabic repetition fu in the contiguous "i'mfunda zemfula" and the z alliteration of the izi- reinforced in "Mkhuze". Another factor that provides patterning at the levels of lexis, phonology and syntax is the end-line formula "-nye ----- -nye-----", a favourite of both bards and popular composers (see 6.3.1.3):

Example 22

Kwaye kwagcwal' i'mfunda zemfula ezinye zoMkhuze ezinye zoThukela.

(A 1 1.92)

And the banks of the Mkhuze and the Thukela rivers were full to
the brim.

5.1.1.1. Phonological repetition in izibongo

The following examples which illustrate composers' use of phonological repetition are drawn from the izibongo of both popular

composers and izimbongi. In some cases composers seem to use phonological repetition for the sake of sound rather than sense. But in other cases the words sharing the repetition are linked and the semantic connection emphasised. The amount of flexibility for the coining of new words is considerable and in such coining the non-specialist composers seem to operate more freely than the bards. In some cases, however, izibongo performed by bards retain coinages made by a non-specialist composer. In the Buthelezi lineage izibongo for instance, Mgezeni Ndlela had no idea what "Moni" meant in the line "UMoni-moni inkomo yabeLungu" (A 14) but as sounds, the words were considered pleasing and rhetorically effective.

In the following examples there is often more than one kind of phonological repetition operating over a line although only one may be singled out for comment. The examples are grouped as follows:

- A. Alliteration
- B. Assonance
- C. Linked alliteration and assonance
- D. Syllabic repetition within a word
- E. Syllabic repetition in more than one word
- F. Stem reduplication with the possessive prefix "ka-"
- G. Stem reduplication

A. Alliteration

In the first three examples alliteration of non-identical consonants occurs. These examples are formulas (see 6.3) and therefore this is a sound combination which is used many times. It is likely that alliteration plays a part in the stability of each formula and though the sounds are phonetically distinct they count as alliteration in poetic usage.

Example 23 Alliteration of **kh** (voiceless aspirated velar plosive) and **k** (voiceless ejective):

INKomo ekhathaza umelusi wayo. (A 103)

Beast which exhausts its herdsman.

Examples 24 and 25 Alliteration of **bh** (bilabial plosive)

24. Abaleka amaMbatha / abhangazela. (A 16)

The Mbathas ran away / they were panic-stricken.

25. UBhusha "bhe" iqola lezinyoni. (uncatalogued izibongo zebhola:
netball izibongo)

Butcher Bird, shrike among the birds.

Example 26 and 27 Alliteration of **b** (bilabial implosive):

26. UGodi abalubande balubanda / abafana baseBanganomo. (A 32)

Log which they split and split again / the boys of Banganomo.

27. AbakwaShange babaleka bambuka / baze bayohlala eNtumeni. (A 89a)

The Shanges fled gazing at him / then they settled at
Ntumeni.

Example 28 Alliteration of **d** (alveolar explosive):

UMdabula 'zidwedwe bosala beyithunga abapheth' izinayidi. (A 119)

Tearer of petticoats - those with needles are left to repair
them.

Example 29 Alliteration of **ph** (Voiceless aspirated bilabial plosive):

UPhapha oluphezu kwendlu kwaNtombane. (A 11)

Feather above the hut of Ntombane.

Example 30 Alliteration of **hl** (alveolar lateral fricative):

Umfana uyahloma uyahlasela unjeng' uShaka

ngoba uhlasela kwabezizwe. (A 104)

The boy storms and attacks, he is like Shaka
because he attacks in the midst of foreign nations.

Example 31 Alliteration of **sh** (palato-alveolar fricative):

IVangeli silibone elisha selishis' intaba. (A 2 1.23)
The New Gospel, which we saw setting the mountain on fire.

Example 32 Alliteration of **z** (voiced alveolar fricative):

UZulumba zobe ziyaliphuza iboza, mntakaNdabayakhe. (A 92)
He Lies in wait (his enemies) will drink the bitter medicine one
day, child of Ndabayakhe.

B. Assonance

Example 33 The use of the diminutive suffix **-wana** increases the effect
of the **a** assonance in this formula line:

USifohla 'thangwana bosala belubiya. (uncatalogued)
Breaker of the little fence, people will remain and repair it.

Example 34 **a** assonance

UMathang' amahle afanele okwenziwa. (A 93)
Beautiful Thighs perfectly formed.

Example 35 **u** and **e** assonance:

Nithi , "Lukhulu, luyeza, luyanyelela". (A 1 1.24)
Say, "It is great, it is coming, it is gliding along".

C. Linked alliteration and assonance

Patterns of linked syllables and vowels are also found in some
cases. In the examples below they overlap and reinforce each other.
For instance both **si** and **i** are repeated in the following example:

Example 36

UNomasikisiki, inyoni esindwa sisila. (A 112a)

Cutter-up, (14) bird weighed down by its tail.

D. Syllable repetition within a word

Many composers use syllable repetition within a word as a means of achieving acoustic patterning. Syllabic repetition is a feature of a great many words in the language but such words occur so frequently in **izibongo** that it is clear that they must be selected for poetic purposes from a wider range of possible choices.

Example 37 Repetition of **xha**

UMxhaxhaza usengela kwelivuzayo. (uncatalogued)

Extensive leaker he milks from one that leaks.

Example 38 Repetition of **to**:

UNtotoviyane enukela abakwaMkhwanazi.

The Green and Yellow Striped Locust that stinks at the
Mkhwanazis. (A 46)

Example 39 Repetition of **khuthu**:

UMkhuthukhuthu uSigobongo samafutha. (A 64)

Knobbly bumpy Gourd for keeping fat in.

Example 40 Repetition of **hala**:

UHalahala bobebakuloyile. (A 96)

Energetic One, they will do their best to work charms against you
one day.

Example 41 Repetition of **nqiki**:

UMnqikinqiki ihashi lakwaKopoletsheni. (A96)

Great Leggy youth (like) the Corporation horse.

Example 42 Repetition of **vu**:

USivuvu , amanz' abilayo. (uncatalogued)

The Burning Heat of Boiling Water.

Example 43 Repetition of **phindla, ndlo** and **lu**:

USiphindlaphindla siyizindlondlo, siyizimamba, singamabululu.

(A 79)

Oh the Attacking Movement of hooded vipers, it is that of mambas
and also that of puff-adders.

E. Syllable repetition in more than one word

Besides selecting words with syllabic repetition composers choose and set in close proximity words with identical syllables which are in some cases but not always, lexically related. In some cases syllables already repeated within a word are used again without any sense of surfeit.

Example 44 Repetition of **nta**:

UNtanta ziyantanta. (A 92)

Floater, things are floating.

Example 45 Repetition of **mbi**:

Umbimbi yebiya indoda embi! (uncatalogued)

Heavy-jowled One yes, the ugly man!

Example 46 Repetition of **so**:

USongo olusongwe zinduna zasOndini. (A 15)

The Plot which was plotted by the headmen of Ondini.

Example 47 Repetition of **nge**:

Bathi, "MntakaMngema ngen' emangeni!" wavuma. (A 2 1.75)

They said, "Child of Mngema start lying!" and he did.

Example 48 Repetition of ngu:

UMahlombe ayingungu ayingungunu. (A 47)

Broad-shouldered One, bad-tempered one.

F. Stem reduplication with the possessive prefix ka-

Composers' liking for repetition shows itself in another device of acoustic patterning. This is the repetition of a word stem immediately after the initial use, preceded by the possessive formative **ka**. In this usage which seems to be confined to praise poetry and is not found in standard speech **ka-** seems to have an emphatic function. Perhaps English equivalents conveying a similar meaning would be "of" and "among" in "king of kings" and "a man among men".

Example 49

UHolobha kaholobha. Galloper among gallopers. (A 79)

Example 50

UNocuphe kacuphe. Trapper of trappers. (A 27)

G. Stem reduplication

Stem reduplication in Zulu normally implies that the diminutive form of the verb is being used. For example **geza** - wash, but **gezageza** - wash a little; **bona** - see, but **bonabona** - see somewhat. In some of the examples below, such as ii and iii, the diminutive form of the verb may be used for semantic reasons, but in i and iv, sound seems to predominate over sense. Examples i and iv are of stem reduplications. Examples v - viii are of ideophone reduplications; here too in normal usage reduplication conveys diminution, but in **izibongo**, composers seem free to reduplicate without this constraint on meaning.

Example 51

UVondlavondla ziyethuka eNtuze. (vondla - crash about)

The Crash-crashing-about - (the girls) get a fright at the Ntuze
stream. (uncatalogued)

Example 52

UBhojabhoja abantu abakaMsengana. (A 81)

The Prodder-a-little of the Msengana people.

Example 53

UXovexove uGwayi omnandi waseLondoni. (xova - mix by kneading)

The Finely-Blended sweet London Tobacco. (uncatalogued)

Example 54

UBanjwabanjwa ngoboyi. (banjwa passive of bamba - grab)

The Grabbed-and-grabbed-at by "boys". (uncatalogued)

Example 55

UNyakunyaku uyahamba emnyameni. (nyaku - of walking quietly)

Tipper-on-tiptoe he walks around in the dark. (uncatalogued)

Example 56

UMqimuqim' oshaya iKopoletsheni. (qimu - of suddenly falling
down dead)

Drop-Dead who whacks the Corporation fellow. (A 109)

Example 57

UPhonyophonyo umuntu ngothi lwakhe. (phonyo - of masticating
roughly)

Chewer-up of a man by means of his stick. (uncatalogued)

Example 58

UMabathubathu labaneka. (bathu - of being spotted)

The Dappling of clouds as lightning flickers. (A 115) (15)

H. Phonological repetition between lines

There is frequently phonological repetition between lines where the foregrounding effect of the repetition is striking. A frequent and effective device is that of "linking" (Lestrade's useful term to which I have already referred) where a word (or related word) used at the end of a line (or near the end) is repeated at the beginning of the next (16). Not only is this a key device of expansion but it also establishes important relationships between lines. The izibongo in the appendix are full of examples of such linkings.

Example 59 Repetition of a word with the same root, -chitha- - spill:

"Igula likaJama lichithekile,

lichithwa yinqwel' endala yakithi kwaMalandela. (A 1 ls.4-5)

"The gourd of Jama is spilt,

it is spilt by our very own elderly chief herdboys of Zululand.*

*i.e. "the land of Malandela", an ancestor of the Zulu royal house.

Example 60 Repetition of *umnewabo* - his brother (and phrase inversion,

A-B/B-A):

UMudli wentombi ejinge engayenele ayinike umnewabo,

umnewabo eyinike abakwaMpukunyoni* abasindwa zinene. (A 112)

"Eater" of the girl that pestered and was never satisfied whom he
passed on to his brother.

His brother passed her on to the Mpukunyoni* fellows with the
weighty private parts.

*Mpukunyoni is the widely used name for the town of Mthubathuba, north of Mtunzini and Richards Bay.

Example 61 Repetition of passive root -fihlw-- to be hidden:

UM'dli wezinkomo ezifihlwayo,

ezifihlwe uMtshekula kaNogwaza kwabamhloph' abalungu. (A 13a)

Taker of the cattle that were hidden away,
 that were hidden by Mtshekula son of Nogwaza among the White
 people.

Frequently, linking is only one of two or more poetic devices in the same line. The co-existence for instance, of linking and alliteration, or linking and punning, intensifies the poetic texture of the lines in question.

Example 62

Repetition of **hl** and of passive verb **hlalwa** + noun:

ISihlahla esihle somdlebe engasihlalwa zinyoni,
 siyasehlalwa zinyoni zeZulu. (A2 1s.70-71)

Beautiful Euphorbia Bush on which no (ordinary) birds perch,
 it is a perch for the birds of the Zulu.

Example 63 Repetition of a word as a personal name (lines 1 and 2) and as a verb (lines 2 and 3) with a pun on the meaning of **thunga** - pour out/ sew or impale:

INzama enjengekaSithunga;
 ubheka Sithunga uthung' utshwala.
 Yona ithung' amadoda. (A 27)

Trier like the son of Sithunga.
 He looks at Sithunga (as) he pails out beer.
 As for him he impales men.

5.1.1.2. Phonological parallelism in izibongo

In phonological parallelism the position of the repeated sounds is important and the regularity of their position in lines or in

syntactic units is what distinguishes phonological parallelism from phonological repetition. The following two examples will suffice: in the first example the prefix and initial stem-syllable are repeated in identical positions in successive lines and in the second, u-, nge- and -a are repeated in identical positions in successive lines:

Example 64

INkomo ekhathaza umelusi wayo.

INkosi yensizwa, uMaphikelela. (A 103)

Cow that exhausts the herdboys.

King of a youth, the Perseverer.

Example 65

UMthunduluk' ovuthwe ngeNala ngowakwaThayiza.

UMdlokombane (?) vuk' ume ngentaba. (A 1 ls.44-45)

Wild Plum ripened by the Nala Regiment, offspring of Thayiza.

(?) arise, stand like a mountain!

5.1.2. Lexical patterning in izibongo

The arrangement of words is of great importance in an utterance which is intended to call forth a heightened response in the person or persons to whom it is being addressed. The ability to pattern words and thereby increase the expressive power of praises is a skill composers must master. Both lexical repetition and lexical parallelism feature in *izibongo* and we shall examine each of these in turn.

(1) Lexical repetition

Lexical repetition, or "free repetition", as it is called by Leech (1969:76-79), is used by composers to give structural coherence to their praises and it is an important unifying device even though it lacks the more formal orderliness of lexical parallelism. The emphasis

that comes with repetition can be used for humorous effect (as in Examples 66 and 67) or to drive home a point as in Example 68:

Example 66 Repetition of **amantabunga** - thin little ones

UMantabunga adl' amany' amantabunga, and' amantabunga. (A 113)

The-Thin-little-ones "eat"* thin-little-ones and there are
more thin-little-ones.

*i.e. have sex with

Example 67 Repetition of **bonwa** (passive of bona - see) used as a deverbative noun and as verb:

IBonwa elabonwa izinsizwa nezintombi. (uncatalogued)

Sight which the youths and girls caught sight of.

Example 68 Repetition of **inkosi** - king, chief. Mashekelela Dindi was appointed "chief" by the young men of his age group but he lost the position very soon afterwards and he hints in this version of his **izibongo** that his sister was the cause of this. The repetition of **inkosi** emphasises the theme of authority gained then lost:

INKosi abayibek' ekuseni ntambama bayiphika.

Yaphikwa udadewabo - uNtozokudla.

Bathume bathi, "Hambani niyofuna inkosi ekhaya kubo. Nizoyithola
yini na?

Wathi uNtozokudla, "Ayikh' inkosi". (A 119)

Chief whom they installed in the morning, in the afternoon they
rejected him.

He was rejected by his sister Ntozokudla.

They sent (people), saying, "Go and find the chief there at his
home. And will you find him?"

Ntozokudla said, "There's no chief here".

(2) Lexical parallelism

Lexical parallelism is another important structural device in izibongo and one that is often used to expand a praise and sometimes to increase its narrative content. Examples of it are found in the izibongo recited by bards and non-specialists alike. The examples below are grouped as follows:

- A. Initial-word repetition in successive or nearby lines
- B. Final-word repetition in successive or nearby lines
- C. Lexical parallelism within the line

A. Initial-word repetition in successive or nearby lines

In some cases repetition of a word at (or near) the beginning of a line is coupled with end-line repetition. In the following example the first two lines use this wider lexical parallelism and then continue the narrative thrust and humour by repeating the initial "-fika:

Example 69

Kwafika waseManzimeleni wayebuka nje;

kwafika kwaCele wayebuka nje;

kwazekwafika waseManyandeni,

wafika, wayithatha, wazidla. (A116)

Along came an Mzimela man he just looked (at the dish of maize);

along came a Cele man he just looked;

and then along came a Nyanda man,

he came, he took it, he ate the lot.

Example 70 Repetition of **qhatha** - set on to fight (first in the active voice and then in the passive). The lines, set in the allusive style

so favoured by the royal bard, refer to a quarrel at one of the royal homesteads, Mahashini; the whole affair is given a comic, bathetic twist through the reference to starting a fight "buttocks first":

Impi eqhathwe uMathangalitshitshi ozalwa uMaswabhula
lapha kwaMgilitsha eMahashini,
wayiqhatha ngesinqe esab' ukungena ethwel' idloko endlunkulu.

(A 1 1s.48-50)

The fight started by Thigh-of-a-young-girl, the son of Maswabhula here at Mgilitsha's at the (royal) home, Mahashini.

He started it buttocks first, afraid to enter the royal house adorned with headplumes.

B. Final-word repetition in successive or nearby lines

This type of lexical parallelism allows the composer to drive home his remark by putting a key word in this final and often dominant position. In the example, below the criticism of arrogant Christian girls is heavily underlined through the end-position of the bitter "-negqajo".

Example 71

Hanyanamahanya intombi enegqajo.

Intombi eyikholwa eyinegqajo. (A 114)

Hard-mouthed nagger, the girl full of scorn.

The girl who is a believer is one full of scorn.

C. Lexical parallelism within the line

Another type of lexical parallelism consists of a two-part contrastive statement where the emphasis is on the balance of the whole. These neat, two-part statements could be written on two lines on the basis of syntactic division (see Mzolo, 1978:218) but in most

cases where I recorded them they were recited in a single breath group. Clearly, in the two examples below, syntactic and semantic parallelism also operate but it is the lexical with which we are concerned here: in Example 73, *gqaba* is repeated first as a deverbative noun forming the introductory praise name and secondly as the verb. In Example 74, *-nkosana* and *bekwa* are repeated, together with the formative *ng-*:

Example 72

UNogqaba ngebhuku abanye abanumzane begqaba ngophondo. (A 4)

Finder of strength with a book other chiefs find strength with a
medicine horn.

Example 73

UNKosana obekwa nguyise amanye amakhosana abekwa ngonina.

(uncatalogued, Hlabisa)

Young Chief who is installed by his father other young chiefs are
installed by their mothers.

Another type of lexical parallelism is where a contrastive statement employs polarity of positive and negative; Cope refers to this as "negative-positive parallelism" and sees it as an essentially two-line device (Cope, 1968:43-44). In the present collection though, the examples are shorter and tend to occur as single breath groups which are represented as single lines. In the following examples, as in Examples 72 and 73 above, syntactic and semantic parallelism often co-exist with the lexical, but our concern at present is with the latter.

Example 74 Repetition of **hamba**, in the negative and then in the positive:

Angihambi ngendlela ngihamba ngenhlanhlatho. (A 111)

I don't go on the main road I go on the side path.

In some cases the word order in the second part of the line is inverted; this happens both with verbs used both in the active and the passive:

Example 75 Repetition of **hlokozwa**, in the negative and then in the positive:

UMamba kayihlokozwa ihlokozwa abanesibindi. (A 126)

The Mamba is not prodded, it is prodded (only) by the brave.

Lexical parallelism also takes the form of a cryptic, two-part statement with a single repeated word and a single variant. Here too, syntactic parallelism is evident and in some cases (see Example 78) the variants are semantically paired.

Example 76 Repetition of **-baba**:

Uyababa umLungu iyababa imbabazane. (A 107)

Bitter is the White man bitter the stinging nettle.

Example 77 Repetition of **-gwaza**:

(UMzimba uneyikhala njengingubo)

bamgwaz' amanhla bamgwaz' amazansi. (A 88)

(Body with rents in it like a cloth)

they stabbed him high they stabbed him low.

5.1.3. Syntactic parallelism

Much of the syntactic parallelism in izibongo in this collection

combines with lexical parallelism. In many cases it is the syntactic pattern and most of the words, that are repeated, leaving a slot for a single variant word or phrase. D.Kunene (1971:xxii) calls this the incremental element in the parallelism. In this kind of lexical-syntactic parallelism one finds:

- A. Final word variants
- B. Medial variants
- C. Variants between stanzas

A. Final word variants

Example 78

USimayedwa abagwaz' udonga.

USimayedwa abagwaz' indlwana. (A 83)

He Stands Alone - they don't stab the wall.

He Stands Alone - they don't stab the little hut.

B. Medial variants

In this example the promiscuous nature of the girl in question is emphasised through the changing place names in the middle of the lines:

Example 78

Noma ungayaphi -

noma ungaya eMathikhulu kodwa ufebile,

noma ungaya eThekwini kodwa ufebile. (A 122)

And if she goes anywhere -

And if she goes to Mathikhulu she's a whore,

And if she goes to Durban she's a whore.

Syntactic parallelism is also an important component in the overall

structure of the single line (see for instance Examples 76 and 77); a further example showing the importance of syntactic repetition in providing a compact impression of regularity and variety uses polarity of number, balancing the singular uNo- (One...or The...) with the plural abanye (others) and contrasts -ntombi (girl) with izinhlangu (shields):

Example 79

UNovika ngentombi abanye bevika ngezinhlangu zabo. (uMswelakuthini
Mjiyakho, Mahlabathini, uncatalogued)
One who wards off (a blow) with a girl others ward off (a blow)
with their shields.

C. Variants between stanzas

Very few izibongo have the repeated formal regularity of the examples below and in general the term "stanza" does not seem appropriate to the flexible, elastic nature of many praises. However, some of the izibongo of the Buthelezi lineage, performed by Mgezeni Ndlela, were remarkably "stanzaic" in their repeated regularity. The liking for such regularity may have been a feature of Mgezeni's personal poetic rhetoric, his shaping of his received material, as it was largely absent in recordings made by other Buthelezi bards. A combination of syntactic and lexical parallelism occurs in the examples below. In Example 80, three stanzas with the short lines reflecting Ndlela's staccato style of delivery have syntactically identical lines and total lexical repetition except for the variant slot in which the names of various victims can be inserted. In Example 81, two stanzas, again with the short lines so typical of Ndlela, are syntactically and lexically identical except for the names of the

defeated:

Example 80

ISihlahla simsithi	Bush which blocked a man from view
esisith' uMaxabana	blocked from view Maxabana
ezalwa nguBhambula.	born of Bhambula.
Wasibon' ukukhanya	He saw it shining
efun' ukusinda	as he longed to recover
efun' ukugoduka.	as he longed to head for home.

Samsith' uNoyiphungwana	It blocked Noyiphungwana
ezalwa uNyanda,	the son of Nyanda,
wasibon' ukukhanya	he saw it shining
efun' ukusinda	as he longed to recover
efun' ukugoduka.	as he longed to head for home.

Samsith' uHemulana	It blocked Hemulana
ezalwa nguMbangezeni,	born of Mbangezeni
wasibon' ukukhanya	he saw it shining
efun' ukusinda	as he longed to recover
efun' ukugoduka.	as he longed to head for home.

(A 10)

Example 81

ISilo esimazipho	Leopard with claws
esidl' uSwayimana	which finished off Snyman
kwabamhloph' abeLungu.	at the White people's place.
Wabaleka	He ran away
wagond' eGoloza.	he made for Goloza.

Wadl' uAndelisa	He finished off Andries
kwabamhloph' abeLungu.	at the White people's place.
Wabaleka	He ran away
waqond' eGoloza.	he made for Goloza. (A 12)

5.1.4. Semantic parallelism

Semantic parallelism operates through the pairing of items that are either similar or antithetical, in other words, by "the restatement of ideas through synonyms and indirect reference or through the presentation of contrasting ideas or statements" (D.Kunene, 1971:89). The items paired may be in successive lines, may be separated by several lines or may even be within the same line. Here too, syntactic and lexical parallelism are often employed so that composers are using patterns operating at the levels of lexis, syntax and semantics.

- A. Semantic parallelism in successive or nearby lines.
- B. Semantic parallelism within a line.

Example 82

The following lines use lexical and syntactic parallelism, and the variant items at the end of the two lines restate the same idea of rain, either imminent or actual. The lines are from the izibongo of Zizwezonke Mthethwa, the renowned inyanga, (doctor or diviner), and therefore refer appropriately to an ability to control the elements:

IVimbela elibuk' izintaba zasithibala
labuk' izintaba zaphum' amanzi. (A 79)

The Fabulous Water Snake that cast its eye to the mountains - and
they were covered in cloud,
it cast its eye towards the mountains - and the water poured down.

Semantic similarity is again used in the following praises where a state of acute discomfort is described in successive lines, and the appropriate words are placed each time in the final position. Like the previous example these lines were recited by Zizwezonke Mthethwa, but these are from the izibongo of the Mthethwa ancestor, Mngoye kaDingiswayo (17):

Example 83

(UGagane luklwebe abantwana esibunjeni),
 uyasa kusasa sebeyathunukala,
 kuyasa kusasa sebehamba begxamalaza. (A 75)
 (Thorn Tree which scratched children down below),
 at dawn the next day they were itching,
 at dawn the next day they were walking with straddled legs.

In the next example the idea of attraction and desirability is stated at the beginning of two successive lines from the izibongo of Obed Mnguni:

Example 84

Gugu lamagugu elituswa abafazi namadoda.
 Mabuthela obuthela izinsizwa nezintombi. (A 108)
 Treasure of treasures recommended by women and men
 Collector who collects together young men and girls.

Semantic parallelism in izibongo also frequently uses antithetical phrases. In the following example, again from the izibongo of Mngoye (see Example 83), the variant items in lines with identical syntax and lexical repetition are themselves antithetical:

Example 85

IMbaxa-matsheni	Hider among stones
ezivimb' izintaba 'zimbili.	who blocked off the two mountains.
Yavimb' iSadoko neNsungweni;	It blocked off Sadoko and Nsungweni
bathi uma bekungezansi	when they were down country
bafik' isivimbile;	they got there and it was blocked;
bathi uma beya kwelengenhla	when they were over there up-country
bafik' isivimbile.	they got there and it was blocked.

(A 75)

The semantic parallelism in the following example consists of two sets of contrasting pairs in lines which also contain syntactic and lexical parallelism; the contrasting pairs are i) birds, the praise name uMahlkohloko is derived from ihlokohloko, the yellow weaverbird and izintaka are finches; ii) times of day, kusasa, at dawn/in the morning and ntambama, the afternoon:

Example 86

UMahlkohloko uyofa kusasa,	The Yellow Weaverbird will die tomorrow.
Izintaka ziyofa ntambama.	The finches will die this afternoon.

(A 85)

At another point in the same izibongo (those of the grandfather of Mr Mhlongo of Mbongolwane) another praise occurs built round a contrastive pair, the adjectives -de (tall or deep) and -fushane (short or shallow): (18)

Example 87

INcuncu ephuze kwezid' iziziba.

Yaphuza kwemfushane yagunduk' umlomo. (A 85)

The Honeybird drank from the deep pools,

had it drunk from the shallow one it would have broken its beak.

B. Semantic parallelism within the line

The use of tightly-knit, binary lines with a repeated syntactic pattern can be seen in the following examples:

Example 88 Here, both semantic similarity and semantic antithesis are employed: *shika* (avoid, cold-shoulder) and *zonda* (hate) have related meanings while *amakhosi* (kings, chiefs) and *abantukazana* (commoners) are antithetical:

Ushik' amakhosi wazond' abantukazana. (MaJele, Gunner, 1979:253)

She cold-shouldered chiefs she hated commoners.

Example 89 In some cases, as here, the syntactic pattern is repeated and the two parts of the statement are bound together, each having one item of similar meaning and one item of contrastive meaning in identical positions:

Abadala bayamfuna abancane bayamdinga. (A 108)

The old want him the young need him.

The liking for semantic antithesis in lines and even within parts of lines, thus producing small units of semantic parallelism, can be seen in the following examples. In some cases the antithesis is in the opening praise name which may itself be so widely used as to constitute a formula:

Example 90 Here the antithetical *phunyuka* (escape) and *phetha* (finish off) are juxtaposed and the "coupling" of the unit (Levin, 1973) is intensified through the alliteration of the *ph*:

UPhunyuka bemphethe... (A 112)

Escaper as they grab him...

In many cases the antithetical pairs are at the end of a line and this way of completing a line seems to be very popular in the izibongo of non-specialists, and a widely used technique. The first example below appears so frequently that I regard it as a formula (see 6.3.). In the following examples each part of the pair is morphologically identical and the conjunctive formative *na-* (and) links the words. In addition there is a strong rhythmic feel to the pairs with the main, penultimate stress on each word much in evidence:

Example 91

- i. ...abafazi namadoda. (A 112)
...women and men.
- ii. ...ezimhlophe nezimnyama. (A 79)
...the white as well as the black.
- iii. ...nasekhaya nangasenhla.
...at home and up-country. (A 112)
- iv. ...elokuya nelokubuya. (A 49)
...one for going and one for coming back.
- v. ...ngemuva nangaphambili. (A 49)
...from the back and from the front.
- vi. ...ngemikhonto nangezibhamu. (A 148)
...with spears and with guns.
- vii. ...ezokufa nezokuphila. (A 68)
...of dying and of living.

It should be clear from the range of examples given in this chapter that repetition and various forms of parallelism are of great importance in creating the poetic language of the Zulu izibongo tradition. It would be a mistake, however, to regard these, important

as they are, as the only devices at composers' and performers' disposal. They are expected to use other ways of expansion. They must master the art of allusion. Those working in the tradition must also learn to work with and increase the stock of formulas built up through generations of composers and performers. The use of the dramatic device of direct speech and direct address is also a skill available to individuals. Finally there is a range of subjects and a range of familiar imagery the mastery of which is essential for successful communication. All these could be said to constitute essential features of the poetic tradition of this performing art. I will discuss them in the following two chapters.

Notes

1

J. Mukarovsky, "Standard Language and Poetic Language", in Chatman and Levin, (eds.), Essays on the Language of Literature (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967), pp.241-249.

2

Kunene cites as his "most important single source", Z.D. Mangoela's Lithoko tsa marena aBasotho, (Moriija: Moriija Sesuto Book Depot, 1921).

3

R. Jakobson, "Subliminal Verbal Patterning in Poetry", in Studies in General and Oriental Linguistics, presented to Shiro Hattori (Tokyo, 1970), pp.302-308.

4

A term used by both Lord, Singer of Tales, and Jakobson in "Grammatical Parallelism and its Russian Facet", Language 42, 2, (1966), pp.399-429.

5

The use of the term "line" is in some ways difficult to justify in discussing oral literature as it is so obviously an imported term. In the main I have used breath groups and syntactic divisions as guides in determining line breaks. Even fast reciters in Mode A often make very clear breaks in delivery and although Mode B performance style encourages a continuous stream of utterance where syntactic divisions are frequently over-ridden, in some cases participants praise a dancer by repeating in varying order, a number of end-stopped lines. Divisions between lines, or "linear units" as Nketia calls them are also frequently clear when performers recite their own izibongo before or during the **giya** dance (see 4.2.) as in A 119. The fact remains that division into "lines" cannot be hard and fast: a great deal depends on an individual performer and the circumstances of performance. While

observing what seem to me aspects of form which operate from line to line I have tried to keep in mind that there is no such thing as a fixed "line" in the poetry. In some cases, therefore, as both Innes and Babalola observe in relation to Mandinka and Yoruba poetry, the same material can best be recorded in more than one way because of a different delivery. As Finnegan has observed, "...how you reproduce a particular oral poem is a matter of degree and of judgement, not an absolute one", Oral Poetry, p.106. For observations on "lines" in oral poetry see G. Rouget, "African Traditional Non-prose Forms: Reciting, Declaiming, Singing and Strophic Structure", Proceedings of the Conference on African Languages and Literatures, ed. J.Berry, R.Armstrong and J.Povey, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966), pp.45-58; J.K.Nketia, Funeral Dirges of the Akan Peoples, (Exeter and Achemota, 1955), Chapter 5, "The Language of the dirges"; J. Opland, "Two Unpublished Poems of S.E.K. Mqhayi", Research in African Literatures Vol.8, No.1, (1977), pp.27-53. David Rycroft also debates the usefulness of the "line" in his article, "The Question of Metre in Southern African Praise Poetry", Third African Languages Congress of South Africa, ed.J.P.Wentzel, (Pretoria: University of South Africa 1980), pp.290-296.

6

See Cope, Izibongo, p.38 and B.W. Vilakazi, "The Conception and Development of Poetry in Zulu", Bantu Studies, X11, 2, (1938). The practice of "stringing together" praises was one that Stuart himself sometimes followed in his transcriptions of the recitations of izimbongi whom he interviewed. See 8.1.

7

The terms "stanza" and "paragraph" have both been used for these larger units, by Cope and Kunene respectively. Neither seem to me satisfactory but stanza is the better of the two as long as one remembers that stanzas in izibongo are flexible in length and form.

8

From the Stuart Papers, folder 9b (ii) with Notebook 77, dated 27.7.19, and headed "Zulu izibongo: supplementary to my lecture before the Science Association, July 1916".

9

R.Jakobson, "The Poetry of Grammar and the Grammar of Poetry", Lingua 21, (1968), pp.597-609.

10

Jakobson, "Grammatical Parallelism", p.423.

11

A term introduced by Mukarovsky in his seminal essay, "Standard Language and Poetic Language", see Note 1 above.

12

See J.Louw, D.Ziervogel and J.Ngidi, A Handbook of the Zulu Language, (Pretoria: Van Schaik, 1967), p.15; Cope, Izibongo, pp.45-6 where he uses the term "natural" and "artificial" alliteration and assonance.

13

A term coined by D.Rycroft in his article, "The Question of Metre".

14

The praise also occurs in the izibongo of D.Rycroft's grandfather, Mr A.W.Baker.

15

The previous five "uncatalogued" examples (51,53,54,55,57), are all from the izibongo of his age-mates recited for me by the elderly Nyonyovu Mdletshe (A 115, Example 58). This suggests either that they all liked using reduplications in their compositions or that Nyonyovu

added them in his rendering because he liked them, thus shaping the received izibongo much in the same way as Mgezeni Ndlela also appears to have shaped his rendering of the Buthelezi lineage izibongo.

16

Cope, Izibongo, also refers to the term "linking"; he mentions "initial linking", which I class as a variety of lexical parallelism. What I term "linking", he terms "final linking" see pp.42-3.

17

Mngoye, a son of Dingiswayo, is mentioned in uBaxoxele, 1926, pp.41-2. Stuart interviewed Mashwile, (A 76) who was killed shortly afterwards fighting the Natal Government during the Bhambatha Rebellion.

18

This praise is widely known as being that of Solomon kaDinuzulu. The royal bard J.Dlamini recited it in his "long stretch" style as, "INcuncu ephuza kwezid' iziziba, iphuza kwezimfushane ibuye ngodaka". It could become a formula but composers probably take over royal praises less often than others, out of respect. On the other hand particular devices used by royal izimbongi may well be copied. For instance, Dinuzulu's izibongo contain a number of puns on names, and other izibongo from the same period, and later in some cases, show a similar punning on names.

CHAPTER 6FURTHER STYLISTIC TECHNIQUES IN IZIBONGO6.0. Introduction

This chapter will explore further stylistic techniques used by those who compose and perform izibongo. Once more I will aim to demonstrate the broad-based nature of the poetic tradition and to illustrate the wide use of poetic skills in a tradition in which both imbongi and non-specialist participate. The ability to expand and elaborate, often introducing a more narrative element into an individual's izibongo, is a further technique which many composers make use of. Even when there is expansion and elaboration, however, it is still within very confined limits. There is no leisurely elaboration of detail of the kind that is possible in the narrative art forms of the Xhosa *ntsomi* or the Zulu *ingane kwane* (1). Allusion is a device which characterises both the cryptic, loaded line and the expanded statement. It is a kind of poetic shorthand which enables a composer to call up associations that can be historical and national or more local, personal and contemporary. Allusion can also operate as a baffling code which it is accepted that only a few will be able to unlock. In many cases, listeners accept these unfathomable allusions as part of izibongo style. Mastery of at least a few formulas is another necessary skill for anyone who wishes both to be able to compose acceptable izibongo for himself, and add to the praises of others. For bards, the knowledge of a range of formulas and the ability to use them aptly are essential in establishing a successful reputation. The devices of direct address and the use of direct speech

are also features of the style of izibongo of ordinary people and of those recited by the bards. All these devices constitute further aspects of the poetic language of izibongo and will be discussed in this chapter under the following headings:

- 6.1. Some techniques of expansion
- 6.2. Allusion as a poetic device
- 6.3. Formulas and their use
- 6.4. Direct speech and direct address

6.1. Some Techniques of Expansion

As I have mentioned in Chapter 5, expression in izibongo is often cryptic and aphoristic. Tightly contained and epigrammatic lines are highly appreciated in izibongo and occur quite frequently in the praises of ordinary people and in those recited by bards. Consider the following praise:

Example 1

UNkosi ekhaya uyinja ekuhambeni. (A 114)

A King at home he is a dog on his travels.

Yet this kind of unelaborated, condensed line may be accompanied in many praises, even those of ordinary people, by statements that do elaborate in some degree. There seemed to be no regular use, though, in the izibongo I recorded, of what Cope calls the Shakan praise stanza with its statement, development, extension and conclusion (Cope, 1968:53-62). The use of lexical, syntactic and semantic parallelism to link lines has already been described (5.1.2.-4), and this is clearly one way of expanding, and in some cases introducing, a narrative or explanatory element into a sequence of lines. Composers also frequently use certain subordinating conjunctions to help them

move from one linear unit to the next, and they often combine this with lexical parallelism, or with linking as the examples below indicate. In some cases, the conjunction seems almost superfluous and the repeated verb is all-important in continuing the thrust of the narrative or comment. In other cases, however, the conjunction is more functional.

Subordinating conjunctions as aids to expansion

The three most commonly used conjunctions are ngoba (because), kanti (whereas) and ingani (whereas). There are numerous examples of ngoba and kanti in the izibongo in the appendix. Ordinary composers and bards tend to use them with equal facility. In the case of the bards, though, such a use may be a part of a longer, more elaborate expansion, as in A 2 lines 21-32, which describe the opposition to the Nazarite prophet Shembe's evangelising. In the two following uses of ngoba, one is from the izibongo of Zizwezonke Mthethwa who did not call himself an imbongi, and the other was recited by Azariah Mthiyane, imbongi of Shembe:

Example 2

ULibazisi' umuntu okusomeni
ngoba ulibazisi' uMhlezebonwa. (A 79)
 He delays a man on his way to his sweetheart
because he delays The-Always-gazed-at.

Example 4

UNogijimisi' amadoda engasakwazi' ukugijima
 enye kungeyasovene enye kungesoNgobamakhosi
ngoba ugijimise abasekhaya konina abaseMpangazitha.* (A 73b)
 Maker of a man to run who was no longer able to run,

the one was of the Vene regiment the other of the Ngobamakhosi,
because he made run those of his mother's people the Mpangazitha.
 * Mbangazitha is the clan praise name (isithakazelo) for the Mpangelas.

Kanti (whereas) is used to introduce a statement or idea antithetical or contrary to what has gone before. Cope (1968:54) mentions that kanti serves as a "conclusion" after an "extension" and "development" to form a typical Shakan stanza. In this corpus kanti is sometimes the second half of a shorter statement (as in Example 5) and in other places it functions as the antithetical twist to a longer statement. The royal bard, J.Dlamini, uses kanti with either a short or a long statement. This suggests that skilled composers do not necessarily take the more elaborate construction but choose what suits their immediate purpose.

Example 4

Wena kaQhabula bethi uyaminya
kanti akaminyi lutho. (uncatalogued, Ngoye)
 You the Gulper-down, they say he's taking it all
whereas he's not taking a thing.

Example 5 Here the royal bard sets the familiar royal motif of rejection followed by acceptance (2), in a contemporary context and ends with an affirmative line introduced by kanti:

Unesibindi Buthelezi ngokukhuthazela.
 MntakaNdaba bemthuka bemgokofula
 bethi, "UZwelithini kayokubusa kayokuba inkosi",
 kanti bamgcoba ngamafuth' emphepho. (A 1 ls. 6-10)
 Buthelezi was brave in his encouragement,
 they insulted the child of Ndaba, they pecked at him,
 saying, "Zwelithini will never rule, will never be king",

whereas people annointed him with oil from the (sacred)
imphepho plant.

Ingani, like kanti, is used to introduce a contrary statement. In the following example from a woman's izibongo, it is used to introduce a short negative to positive statement, intended to shift criticism from herself onto her detractors:

Example 6

Nguxafaza bathi, "Unyile!"

Ingani akunye yena kunya uzakwabo. (A 124)

I am Squish on something and they say, "She's defecated!"

Whereas she hasn't defecated, a co-wife has defecated!

The use of the deficient verb -ze

The deficient verb -ze (indicating action eventually accomplished) is often used as a means of adding to a praise name and expanding the narrative element. The precise way in which it is used is flexible: it can introduce a second line of initial lexical parallelism (Example 7); Example 8 shows -ze in a longer narrative unit and Example 9 shows -ze as part of a formula phrase used exclusively by bards to indicate the effect of an action:

Example 7 -ze introducing lexical parallelism

ITho1' elehle ngamandla kwaMpisintshaka

laze lakwehla koFabase ebaThenjini. (A 75)

Calf that descended fiercely at Mpisintshaka

until it descended on Fabase of the Thembu.

Example 8 -ze as part of a parallelism in a longer unit

UMlilo oshe eNkandla

Fire that burnt at Nkandla

kwaze kwayosha eMacubeni

then it burnt at the Cubes

kwaze kwayovutha abasoHwebede then it blazed at the Hwebedes
 abakwaShange babaleka bembuka, the Shanges fled gazing at him
baze bayohlala eNtumeni. then they settled at Entumeni.

(A 89a)

Example 9 -ze in a formula phrase, "kwaze kwasa"

IMbabazane kaMahaqa ehaq' amadoda
kwaze kwasa engabulel' ubuthongo. (A 5)

The Stinging Nettle The Encircler that encircles men,
 until dawn they were sleepless.

'Linking' as a means of expansion

Linking, which involves final to initial repetition in successive lines, is an invaluable means of knitting together lines which relate to a single incident. It is a device often found where there is an element of narrative and has already been referred to in 5.1.1.1. (p.221). Most examples of linking in this corpus are in *izibongo* recited by bards, which suggests that this technique may be one of the ways in which they elaborate praises composed in the first place by non-specialist composers. The following example shows how the narrative element in *izibongo* can be strengthened through linking. In this case the word "Engilandi" is repeated and highlights Zofa Hlabisa's travels as part of the South African Native Labour Contingent in World War I. It was clearly not an experience which he enjoyed. In the remainder of the *izibongo*, however, he is praised for fighting in his old age while others rest at home.

Example 10

UBantu bephuma bebakhulu kaZulu bebhek' Engilandi.

Bafik' Engilandi baphenduka inansense!

Ichitha inyama yomfokazana uGwebu bangayidli.

UMgugu wegugel' empini abanye begugel' emakhaya. (A 20)

The-People set out, those who were the important ones of the Zulu
people, they head for England.

They arrive in England and become little "nonsenses"!

He throws away the meat of the commoner Greville, they don't
touch it.

Old One ageing on the battlefield while others were growing old
at home.

Expansion through the inclusion of names and places

Lord (1960:34) has remarked that patronymics, and the time and place of action are "the foundation stones" of the epic style. Praise poetry too, in its drive to convey ancestry, action and achievement, lays great stress on clan names, patronymics and places. Such items become an integral part of the technique of the poetry. Thus in praises composed by bards and by ordinary composers the names of those involved in the action not only furnish an air of authenticity, but they also provide useful and wholly acceptable ways of filling out a praise name. An ordinary composer may take a formula, and slot in not only the clan names of those he quarrelled with, but their personal names too. In the following example, Masofeyisi Mthethwa of Ngoye uses the image of the slippery rock, encapsulated as a formula, and adds the particulars of his own story to it:

Example 11

UDwaya eyishelelezi
 elashelela abaseMkhwanyaneni uKompoza benoTshibongo.
 L Ashelela abasekhaya konina eLangeni
 uMakhalakuzwebani noMazinyo-engane. (A 103)

The Smooth Slippery Rock

it was slippery for the Mkhwanyanes, Kompoza and Tshibongo.
 It was slippery for his mother's house the Mhlongos, Cry-and-
 who-will-hear and Teeth-of-a-child.

References to places, particularly in the old *izibongo*, underline a victory and allow the bearer's lineage to share in the associations of glory which the name invokes for a particular audience familiar with the historical allusion. This is the case in Example 12 where the praise records that Zimema Mzimela, grandfather of Chief Lindelihle, fought at Sandlwana; in addition, the praise that follows provides a cryptic but graphic statement of loss on the battlefield, as well as individual achievement. A place name may also convey something important about an individual's (or clan's) movements and origins as in Example 20. In contemporary *izibongo*, the addition of a locative or an adverbial phrase of place is regarded as a means of adding authenticity and particularity. It often makes a topical point more accessible and tangible to an audience, as well as providing important continuity in style between contemporary and older *izibongo*.

Example 12 A place name signifying a victory

UGojela kwezibomvu kwezamasosha eSandlwana.
 UMajubane akalingananga esaya phambili
 ngoba wath' ebuya
 abakwabo babesebefile. (A 59)

The Plume of feathers (disappearing) among the red ones among the
soldiers at Sandlwana.

Swift One who went ahead but with unequal eagerness
because on his return
his brothers lay dead.

Example 13 A place name signifying movements and origins

According to the imbongi Phemba Mzimela, Sihubela moved with his followers from present-day St. Lucia to the Ngoye hills at the behest of Shaka, displacing the Qwabe under Phakathwayo. Sihubela's izibongo record the move from the sea to the mountains; the metaphor of the eating mat, suggesting chiefly plenty and generosity, conveys aptly the way in which his authority supplanted that of the Qwabe rulers:

UbeMdeyi kantaba owadela izintaba
wahlala olwandle
abanye behlala ezintabeni.
UbeSithebe-sihle sisezintabeni zasoNgoye
esasidlela oPhakathwayo
sidlela oKhondlo
inamuhla sidlela yena okaTshintshwayo.* (A 61)

One who has abandoned, Mountain who abandoned the mountains.
He lived by the sea,
others lived in the mountains.
He became the Beautiful Eating Mat of the Ngoye Hills
from which the people of Phakathwayo ate
and the people of Khondlo ate
and today the son of Ntshintshwayo eats off it.*

* Compare Senzangakhona's izibongo, Cope, Izibongo, pp.74-5, ls.5-6.

Example 14A place name giving a sense of locale in contemporary izibongo

Here the name of a local stream in the territory of the late Chief Magemegeme Dube, south of Richards Bay, completes the metaphor and gives immediacy to his praise:

INTaka eyakh' amadlangala phezu kweCush'. (A 67)

The Tiny Finch which builds its rough nests above the Cush'.

Example 15 A place name making a topical point

Here the reference to the bustling and prosperous nearby town of Empangeni adds to the realism - and humour - of the praise:

UGologo ophuzwa zinjinga eMpangeni. (A 73)

The Hard-stuff drunk by the well-to-do at Empangeni.

6.2. Allusion as a Poetic Device

The allusive, elliptical style of Zulu izibongo is a characteristic it shares with the praise poetry of other regions of Africa such as Rwanda (Vansina, 1965:64-70; Kagame, 1950). In general, allusion and ellipsis are marks which distinguish eulogy from narrative poetry and from epic (Finnegan, 1970:117; Opland, 1977:50). It needs to be remembered, though, that allusion as a distinguishing feature also occurs in other genres and other poetic traditions. Somali poetry, for instance, is highly allusive. Johnson mentions that "the hidden message" is a device common to most genres of Somali poetry (1971:46); A.Y. Mohamed, also writing on Somali poetry, (1973:34,41,42) illustrates the use of allusion, and in particular allusive imagery, as a means of political protest. Strathern, (1975:185-204) writing on the poetry of Papua New Guinea, illustrates how allusion with its oblique messages can defuse potentially violent situations between negotiating groups. Allusion can therefore be a mark of a particular

type of poetry, namely eulogy. It can be found in a range of genres in quite distinct communities and it can have various functions. It may also be part of what Nketia terms "the speech style" of a community. He quotes the use among the Akan of *mpaniu kosa* which is also referred to as "deep" language, "meaning that the implication of a statement must be sought 'deep down' and not at the surface" (Nketia, 1971:735-737). Such a speech style may, he suggests, provide a basis for the development of the texts of verbal art forms. Certainly, among the Zulu, allusive diction is found in many speech situations as well as in poetry. For instance, in public speeches proverbs are often used to drive home a point in an oblique way, and such use is considered skilful and is enjoyed by an audience. At the Mahlabathini celebration which I have described in Chapter 4, one of the speakers, in congratulating Chief Buthelezi on his honorary doctorate from the University of Zululand, summed up the ambivalence towards the institution felt by many Zulu speakers at that time when he remarked, "Good soup can come from a bad pot". The use of the oblique phrase for reasons of diplomacy is also noted by Gluckman (1940:33) in his account of councillors discussing state matters in the presence of the Zulu king. In personal conversation, also, people often refer to a subject - particularly a delicate one - in an indirect way which may also be metaphorical. Thus girls are urged, "Do not spoil Father's cattle!" ("Ningazeneki izinkomo zikaBaba!") i.e. "Do not become pregnant before marriage and so reduce the payment of bridewealth to your father!". Names given to babies by their mothers are often highly allusive and often make comments that could not be stated openly. Thus the name "uFuna-elinjani" ("Which-(vagina)-do-you-want") expresses dissatisfaction with a husband's sexual performance; on the other hand, the name "uKudla-akusuthwa" ("Food-that-is-'more-ish'") states allusively

the husband's continued sexual interest in the name-giver (3). Zulu songs are frequently terse, repetitive and allusive. For instance the work-song recorded by Rycroft (1971: 231) with the repeated "Bayasibopha" ("They imprison us") alludes with economy to a wide network of official harassment for petty matters such as pass offences. Allusion is a mark, therefore, of the general style of eulogy in izibongo but it needs to be seen as well against this wider use of allusive diction in a range of speech situations and in song. It is also perhaps, in part a response to the constraints of performance, particularly Mode B performance (see 4.2.). Nketia's comment on the reasons for the use of allusion in Akan funeral dirges is equally relevant to izibongo performed in Mode B:

Because of the length and form of stanzas and possibly the controlling situation of the funeral, what a mourner has to say is compressed, as far as possible in the form of allusions rather than in full narrative and descriptive form. (my underlining) (Nketia, Funeral Dirges of the Akan people, 1955, p.103)

6.2.1. Allusions through names of people and places

References to people, places and events are, as the previous section has illustrated, essential to izibongo. In cases where the name or place is widely known to Zulu audiences its use brings instant associations of a glorious past or of the glory of a particular lineage. Such allusions are particularly potent as an affective device in a performance situation. Thus the royal praise names "Menzi" and "Ndaba" which occur in the opening praises of King Zwelithini's izibongo (A 1) fix his descent from the Zulu royal line in an allusive, economical and highly affective way. Praise names may also (as in the above case) be patronymics and are therefore themselves a kind of allusion with powerful associations for the group who can

automatically respond to the hidden referent : the glory of a royal line, memory of past greatness and so on. A praise name with strong associations can itself be borrowed and shed its allusive aura on the new individual who is given it. This seems to be the intention behind the use of some of Shaka's most famous praise names in the izibongo of the late Albert Luthuli, at one time (1952-1959) President of the African National Congress. Thus the bard, praising the late Chief Luthuli on the occasion of his funeral at Stanger in July 1967, opens with probably the best known of Shaka's praises:

Example 16

UDlungwane kaNdaba
 odlung' emanxulumeni,
 kwaze kwasa amanxuluma abikelana.
 Ngiyesab' ukuthi "Luthuli"... (A 3)
 Ferocious One son of Ndaba
 who raged among the large villages,
 until dawn the large villages spread the news.
 I am afraid to say "Luthuli"...

To most of the assembled audience on that occasion the allusion to Shaka would have been quite clear; the association of Luthuli with Shaka (one already present in the minds of many) (4) would immediately be made and an enormous reservoir of emotion would be tapped. The allusive power of such praise names and the success of such literary borrowing is far more evident in performance than when izibongo are committed to the printed page. Hence one of the most effective assets of the genre in performance is greatly reduced when it is transformed to print. Another example of allusion through a well-known praise comes in the izibongo of Chief Buthelezi which were performed at

Mahlabathini in July 1976. Here the *imbongi*, Phumasilwe Myeni, wishes briefly to refer to Shaka in order to have him as a point of comparison with the Chief. He thus refers to him through another of the best known of his praises, one that is fixed around the image of the buffalo ("iNyathi ejame ngomkhonto", see Chapter 2 p.46) and linked to Shaka's 1828 Mpondo campaign. Again, this is a praise particularly associated with Shaka and one which is widely known among Zulu speakers: (5)

Example 17

Yingabe isilwane sini?

Yingabe iNyathi?...

Bekuyakuba iNyathi kanjani ?

Ingani iNyathi isivul' ubuhlathi lapha phezu kweMzimvubu
namaMpondo kaFaku bayesaba nokuyehlela. (A 6 ls.65-6;70-72)

What kind of a wild creature is this?

Is it a Buffalo?...

How could it be a Buffalo?

When the Buffalo has gaped with its lower jaw above the Mzimvubu
River,

even the Mpondo of Faku are frightened to come down. (6)

The introduction of the Shakan presence as a point of comparison, through the allusive use of a praise, means that what follows about Chief Buthelezi gains from the heightened atmosphere created through such a loaded allusion.

The use of key place names associated with a particular leader or house, or the names of battlefields can strengthen the bonds of solidarity among those for whom the names have strong associations of

shared kinship or shared glory. Hence the Buthelezi lineage *izibongo* refer to "Nkonjeni" (see A 12), perhaps the best known mountain in their territory; they refer to homesteads of a particular leader such as Mnyamana's homestead, "Ekushumayeleni" ("The Place of Discussions") (A 10) and they allude to past courage and bravery in battle through mention of a battlefield such as Hlophekulu (A 13).

What is a necessity of form is also valued for aesthetic reasons. Hence contemporary and topical political points are often appreciated more if they are expressed in an allusive (and often metaphorical) manner rather than in a bald and straightforward way. In the *izibongo* of Chief Buthelezi to which I have just referred (A 6) two of his political opponents are alluded to by their home district and the metaphor of angry bulls is used for them. During performance, the audience's appreciation of the allusion was evident from their enthusiastic response:

Example 18

Udid' uwenz' i'mbokodo,
 zijikwe zinkunz' ezimbili, [Laughter]
 enye yaseMbumbulu enye yaseMtshezi. [Laughter]
 You deflected the river pebbles,
 they were swung by the two bulls,
 one from Mbumbulu, one from Estcourt. (A 6 ls.88-90)

6.2.2. Allusion as criticism and personal comment

Allusion in *izibongo*, as in Somali poetry, can be a useful way of making a point that it would be dangerous or indelicate to state directly. The royal bard seems particularly to enjoy using allusive diction. He referred to this when I interviewed him at Nongoma in

October 1975:

...as regards my praising him (the King), I don't shout out in an obvious way about something that's just happened. I usually just say it, and then the King asks me, "There - what are you really getting at?" (7)

In some instances, the real meaning behind the allusion does not need an explanation from the bard. Near the beginning of the King's praises a veiled accusation of incompetence aimed at the former Regent is neatly conveyed. At the same time the young King's time-honoured right to rule is alluded to through mention of the name of "Jama", an early ancestor (see Cope, 1968:72-3), and the ancient Zulu "possession" of the land is allusively evoked through referring to Zululand as "the land of Malandela" (the latter being another early ancestor of Shaka):

Example 19

...igula likaJama lichithekile,
lichithwa yingqwel' endala yakithi kwaMalandela. (A 1 ls.4-5)
...the gourd of (royal) Jama is spilt,
it is spilt by our very own elderly chief herdboyc of Zululand.*
* i.e. "the land of Malandela".

The use of allusion as a commentary on personal affairs features mainly in the izibongo of ordinary men and women (see A 103, 106, 119, 129) but izibongo of leaders also show quite intimate personal commentary couched in allusive terms. The account of the young King's visit to Swaziland to choose a bride from among the daughters of the late King Sobhuza II includes a humorous, sly allusion to his choice:

Example 20

Bathi, "Thatha Ndaba, nank' umqamelo wakho uyoqamela ngawo
eNaleni", (A 1 1.93)

They said, "Here Ndaba, take your pillow to rest your
head on when you are with the Nala regiment". (8)

The above allusion is accessible to and enjoyed by many who hear the present king's praises. Other allusions by the royal imbongi are so oblique that only a small inner circle will discern their true meaning and sometimes, as I have mentioned, even the King is baffled. Dlamini's reputation has not suffered through his liking for oblique allusions. In fact it may even have been enhanced because of it: people discuss among themselves what is behind a particular line (9). In some cases the poetic language in which an allusion is couched helps to make its mystery acceptable. In the following line the identity of the individuals alluded to was, according to the bard, known only to himself. However, the use of the familiar mountain metaphor and the semantically antithetical structure of the line means that it is acceptable and interesting. The audience knows that he is referring critically to the enmity between two eminent people who, it is hinted, live close to each other, and that is enough for them:

Example 21

'Ntaba zimbili zakhelene kodwa zintula ngisho ukuxhawulana.(1.119)

The two mountains adjoin each other but I say they do not even
shake hands.

The skill in handling allusion seems to lie in being able to hint at what has happened, and here the general expectations as to subject

matter, and the use of widely understood formulas and recognised metaphors are very important. Familiarity with the cattle metaphor and with the formula in which it is set makes it clear to listeners that the following praise refers to a hard physical conflict, or at the very least, trouble of some kind. This formula occurs both in the King's praises (A 1 1.38) and in those of ordinary people:

Example 22

INkomo esengwa iviyo...

Cow milked by a band of men...

Another metaphorical formula (perhaps local to Ngoye) which allows listeners to allude to a fight is:

Example 23

Izinja zimqhuza zimthela ngofenisi. (A 122)

The dogs chase him they hurl abuse at him.

(Literally: they hurl a thorn bush at him.)

As the above examples illustrate, therefore, allusive diction often makes use of standard metaphors, formulas, established themes and recognisable structural patterns within the genre.

As we have seen (Example 19) criticism can feature in the use of allusive diction by bards. It is often the central thrust of allusion in the izibongo of ordinary men and women or in a special type of praise poem such as izangelo which are also known as the izibongo of infancy. In men's izibongo, criticism or warning, stated allusively, is usually only one of a number of briefly explored topics. The izibongo of Nyonyovu Mdletshe contain one allusive line of warning to a young bride not to stray beyond her new homestead, and to accept the

new and difficult restrictions which marriage entails:

Example 30

Umncele 'zinsika makoti!

The boundary is the hut-poles young bride! (A 115)

In women's izibongo, criticism and complaint tend to be dominant themes. The butt of this (usually) allusive criticism is almost invariably co-wives, often alluded to by the concord "ba-" ("they") or sometimes addressed directly. The izibongo of the elderly Linna Mkhwanazi (MaGumede) allude to unfair treatment at the hands of a co-wife. They mock the "guilty" party, state her own innocence and end by hinting strongly that the "guilty" one will get her desserts. The izibongo were recited by MaGumede with great fluency, great venom and considerable satisfaction, as if the events were recent and the individuals behind the utterance still present (neither of which was the case). The event or events that started the dispute is alluded to but never mentioned directly:

Example 25

Hamba juba ba'kuhlutha phambili!

Kusasa ziyobuya ngawe ziyokushaya izinduku

zokushaya ungabe usayibona ubusukhomba abanye (uzo)'bahlokoza
ngeminwe.

Ihlokoze Nomahlokohloko.

Nakho okwazi kokuwe ngaphakathi kwenhliziyi yakho

mina eyami angazi lutho.

Kodwa ngiyokukhumbuya kuhliwe izoyo.(10) (A 125 1s.10-16)

Go on dove, they'll pluck you on ahead!

Tomorrow they'll be back for you, the sticks will hit you,
they'll hit you, maybe then you'll accuse others, you'll poke at
them with your fingers.

You'll poke at The Weaver Bird (ie.the speaker).

Here is what you know, hidden in your heart,
as for me, my (heart) knows nothing.

But I will remember you and that it was dark yesterday. (10)

The izibongo of infancy or izangelo (kisses), which are composed far less frequently than used to be the case (11), often combine allusion and the language of indirectness with the themes of complaint and criticism. Composers' allusions to co-wives and their "unpleasant" actions can be highlighted by skilful use of figurative language. The metaphors may be standard ones such as the cattle metaphor, set in a specific, pointed context, or less usual ones given force by their mode of expression. Because of their familiarity with the themes of complaint and criticism, women (who are always the main audience for izangelo or izibongo zengane) are able to unravel and decode allusions of varying degrees of obliqueness. Moreover, as in men's izibongo, an allusion cast in an acceptable style and on a recognised theme can maintain its force even if the full story is not known. An additional reason, perhaps, why allusion is particularly prevalent in women's izibongo and izangelo is that women already use a coded form of Zulu in the ukhlonipha custom of using substitutes for any word that occurs in the name of their husband's ancestors, out of respect for the "living dead" of their husband's lineage. The ukhlonipha avoidance also sometimes to the names of senior living men of the lineage: at the Mkhwanazi homestead, (home of MaGumede and

MaMhlalise, A 125 and 124), the word "dla" ("eat") was never used because it was part of the name of the Mkhwanazi chief at the time, Muntu-ongenakudla (see A 55) and the "hlonipha" word, "maya", was always used instead. (12)

In the *izangelo* composed for her son, Gatsha Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Princess Magogo kaDinuzulu takes the standard themes of criticism and complaint. Using these, she alludes, mostly through metaphor, to her co-wives (she was the tenth wife) and their animosity to her, particularly during her first pregnancy; an animosity intensified by the knowledge that because of her own royal birth, her child would inherit the Buthelezi chieftaincy. She alludes to various women: one she simply calls "The Field Mouse", another is "the otter" and "the mamba" (here the mamba metaphor does not have its usual connotations of royalty, but only that of danger (see 7.2.3.)). Through the extended metaphor of the mamba the composer constructs a brief allegory of her illness in early pregnancy (caused, she hints, by the witchcraft of "the mamba") and her subsequent cure far away from the Nkonjeni homestead and in "the lonely highveld". I could not have arrived at this understanding of what lay beneath the poem's surface had it not been for the Princess's own patient and careful explanations to me (15.5.76). Women within the culture, knowing more of the circumstances of her life and - perhaps most important - accustomed to decoding their companions' *izibongo* and *izangelo* composed for their children, would not have needed such tutoring. For them, such oblique references (when skilfully done) are a mark of technique; they "spice" ("nonga") the *izibongo*. Moreover, the habit of speaking insultingly, sarcastically and ironically, known as "ukubhinqa" and used mainly by women, is one that they expect to find exploited in these poems. In the final part of Princess Magogo's

izangelo for her son (ls. 11-19) she alludes again to the co-wife whom she has earlier called derogatively, "The Field Mouse". She calls her "a commoner's daughter" and refers to her metaphorically as a "switch"; she then uses emotive historical allusions to the Mandlakazi-uSuthu conflict of the 1880s as the deepest thrust in a sweeping attack on the women ranged against her, and here she has in mind not so much her co-wives as her numerous mothers-in-law, some of whom were also hostile to her! She concludes by using the best known of her royal father Dinuzulu's praise names. The reference to her father as "Mamonga" is itself another allusive weapon. It emphasises her own royal stock and recalls her father's victory at the battle of Ndunu; as the father won his battle, so will the daughter win hers. Besides using allusion extensively, the izangelo are more narrative than apostrophic, reflecting the introspective and confessional nature of this specialised kind of praise poetry: (13)

Example 26 From the izangelo of Chief Gatsha Buthelezi

- 12 Umendo ngabe ngiwendile 'mfana kaShenge
ukuba angigananga noNombiba.
Ngangithi ngilele abengichinsa usengumthini. *
- 15 Nginxanelwe luhududu lunye lungahlali lakwaSondaba
Lungumamba yehlane lakwaSondaba
yona ilala ohlungwini engethuswa umkhwani.
Ngithe mina ngiyahamba yangilum' isandla
yangilum' unyawo lokunyathela.
- 20 Ngijjuqwe imamba ehlanzeni
Ngaye ngavuswa isibiba samageceke.

Ndansundansu yangishay' intombi yomuntu.

Yangishaya yangehlula-ke mina.

Loluswazi lungishaya-nje mina

25 angiqondene nalo

ngoba angibangi lutho mina.

Mina nginefa lami lokudalwa.

Amaxheg' amadala nehlule empini yaseTshaneni.

Nisazithembisa nisathi niyabuya kwaNdunu ningahlabana

30 kanti eyakwaNdunu sekuyintombi kaMamonga.

Shenge!

12 Married life would be sweet, son of Shenge,

if only I were not married in the company of the Field Mouse.

I felt as I was sleeping that an otter squirted me.

15 I was pursued by another long trailing thing that would not

remain in the (cursed) forest of Sondaba.*

It was like a mamba there in the wilderness of Sondaba,

the one that lies in the freshly burnt veld, where the sedge

grass does not disturb it.

And I felt as I walked along that it bit my hand;

it bit my foot as I set it down.

20 I was struck down by a mamba there in the thick bush country

and I was brought back to life by medicine from the lonely

highveld.

Touch and touch again, a commoner's daughter struck me.

So, a switch struck me,

she struck me and she lost against me.

25 I don't care in the least
 because I compete with nothing,
 I have my own established inheritance.
 You old dodderly men, you won at the battle of Tshaneni,
 you still promise yourselves that you are going back to Ndunu
 for another battle;

30 but I tell you the one at Ndunu is Mamonga's daughter.
 Shenge!

*The forest of Sondaba is north of Mahlabathini. It was cursed by Mpande and has associations of evil and ill-omen to this day.

Such intricately constructed, allusive invective is probably not the rule in *izangelo*. Few composers would have the skill with words which seems to come so easily to Princess Magogo who is renowned for her artistic gifts which include her skill as an *imbongi* (14). Yet, as the following example confirms, Princess Magogo has made use of an established mode of artistic expression even if she exploits it far more skilfully than most women can. The use of metaphor, allusion and the complaint theme is also shown in the *izibongo* of the infant Mphakamiseni Shando, composed by his young mother Rebecca Hlabisa. She uses an extended cattle metaphor to comment on her enforced stay at her family homestead at Madondo in the wild and mountainous district of Hlabisa in northern Zululand. She also incorporates the quality of the landscape into the rejection theme which dominates these *izibongo* of infancy. Her stay at the homestead of her own family is necessary because Shando, the father of Mphakamiseni, has not paid the required brideprice. The allusive use of the cattle metaphor which carried the hidden burden of her message was, on the occasion of recording, quite clearly immediately evident to the group of listening women, not all of whom would have heard it before. A number of them made sounds of

sympathy and added softly such remarks as, "Bantu!" ("What a shame"):

Example 27

1 UMshikashika,

Izinkomo ziyenqaba ukukhuphuka eLenjani.

Zigudl' amaqele,

zithi zingasebaleni,

5 zingasebaleni zithwel' amashoba

(kusho umfo kaShando-ke)

ziyenqaba ukuza kwaMadondo,

ziphindela eLenjani.

Ngabe kozekube nini zingakhuphuki

10 ukuza kwaHlabisa emzini omkhulu

kwaLa, kwaMadondo?

1 Toiling One.

The cattle refuse to climb up from Elenjani.

They skirt the sides of the hill,

they head back for the open,

5 they turn back, their tails up high

(so says the child of Shando).

They refuse to come to Madondo,

they go back to Elenjani.

For how long, I wonder, will they refuse to climb up

10 and come to the great house of Hlabisa,

here, at Madondo?

6.2.3. Allusion and loss of meaning

Allusive diction in izibongo is particularly vulnerable to the erosion of time. Perhaps partly because of the "homeostatic" nature of

social memory in oral cultures (Goody and Watt,1968:30-32), even a formalised speech form such as izibongo cannot always save what is exciting and interesting when new, from becoming obscure and remote with the passage of time. Allusive diction can be a short cut to communication, and it can strengthen the bonds between those in a shared "community of knowledge" (15), as we have seen in the case of the still powerful praise names of the Zulu kings (6.2.1.). Yet when such shared knowledge, "Changes or is eroded, [allusive diction] is no longer a short cut to communication but a source of obscurity and semantic blockage" (Andrzejewski,1972:31). The heavy reliance in izibongo on allusive place names and personal names means that the risk of obscurity is high; allusion to personal, private events by the composer be he a specialist poet or ordinary composer is another factor likely to lead to obscurity over time. Earlier commentators have stressed this "semantic blockage" caused by allusion. B.W.Vilakazi refers unhappily to "the great difficulty of explanation because the praise singer uses mainly private and personal imagery" (1945:40). Grant refers to the number of places mentioned in the royal izibongo which are no longer known about (1929:203). Samuelson also mentions allusion in izibongo but draws the reader's attention to it as an aspect of technique, its intentional use for aesthetic appeal. He sets out the praises of Mtoniya who was (he tells us) the mother of Ndaba (great-grandfather of Shaka) and demonstrates how in the izibongo the "real meaning is covered" (Samuelson,1929:255). Certainly, as in the case of Samuelson's informant, allusions can be understood by bards for many generations, and long after they have passed out of general knowledge. Even though bards recite lines of which they no longer know the meaning (see for example the "INGcayi eMatayi" line in the izibongo of Ngqengelele Buthelezi, A 8), it seems

that in some cases, "knowing" the meaning behind a personal allusion is not directly related to enjoyment of the izibongo as a whole. During the interview to which I have already referred (Nongoma, 16.10.75) the royal bard told me that he had an apprentice who was learning the royal praises from him (see 3.2.). He went on to say that he would (at some future date) tell him the meaning behind the allusions (here he was clearly thinking of the izibongo he had composed for the present king) so that if he himself died, schoolchildren learning the praises "in the classroom" would still know what the lines meant. Significantly, Dlamini did not seem to consider it necessary that his audiences knew all the meanings behind all the allusions. It would seem, therefore, that in the context of performance total verbal comprehensibility is not a prerequisite for the enjoyment of izibongo. The atmosphere of solemnity or of hectic excitement during performance, the act of praising, the manner of praising, are all elements which also count in the overall assessment of a good or mediocre or poor performance. Finally it must be remembered that there is in the genre a tolerance of a certain amount of non-recognisable allusion. This tolerance is increased if the allusion falls within certain recognised themes, uses standard metaphors and employs recognised poetic structures. Allusive diction, as it exists in izibongo, is far more effective, as well as emotionally powerful, when izibongo are performed for those who share the poet's knowledge and traditions. The extent to which izibongo and the allusions in izibongo can fall on stony ground when they are presented to those untutored in the tradition is perhaps best illustrated by the comments of the Times Literary Supplement reviewer of Cope's Izibongo: Zulu-Praise Poems:

The Zulu izibongo as produced here contain long passages which offer nothing but the iteration of unpronounceable names, holding no echoes or associations for any but the learned Zulu reader ...[he continues grudgingly] Amid all the tedium of recited victories and acts of slaughter, transposed phrases and genealogical descriptions the izibongo do survive translation to English and the printed page with a little of their formidable martial energy intact.

(Times Literary Supplement, 26.9.1968:1089)

6.3. Formulas as a Technique of Composition (16)

Formulas in izibongo do not, as far as can be ascertained, work according to metric rules. Nor are they as prevalent or as indispensable to composers as formulas appear to be in Yugoslav epic (Lord, 1960). Nevertheless they constitute an important technique of composition which both bards and non-specialists make use of. For our purposes we need to provide a looser definition of the formula than that put forward in the first place by Parry (1930), Lord (1960:5) and later by Bird. The latter sees the value of accepting that formulas exist, without being over-categorical in defining them:

[A formula] may be roughly defined as a kind of abstract pattern sentence in which the words will meet the metrical requirements of the poem.

(C. Bird, "Heroic Songs of the Mande Hunters", in Dorson, ed., African Folklore, 1972, p.283)

Certainly some of the formulas with which Zulu composers work are constructed on "a kind of abstract pattern sentence"; others show the use of the kinds of repetition and parallelism outlined in Chapter 5; others again use established metaphors and encapsulate dominant themes in the genre. In a number of cases formulas combine two or more of the above features. In general, formulas in Zulu izibongo are stable enough to be recognisable to those familiar with the tradition. At the same time they are sufficiently flexible to allow for creative variations which allow a composer to feel that the line (or lines)

bears his or her stamp. After coming across phrases, clauses and in some cases sentences that occurred in two or more izibongo which were recorded often in places far apart, or composed in different periods, it seemed clear to me that these must be formulas. Wainwright, working among Xhosa specialist and non-specialist composers on the mines of the Witwatersrand noticed a similar recurrence of groups of words:

Xhosa speakers from the Southernmost point of Africa to the gold mines of the Reef, have in their praises, used the same lines, sentences and phrases that are found in the izibongo of fellow Xhosa hundreds of miles away.

(Wainwright, Xhosa Mineworkers, 1979, pp.98-99)

He uses the term "formulae" for these and concludes that "formulae in Xhosa izibongo do not have to fit any prescribed metric pattern nor do they have a fixed number of syllables" (1979:99). Wainwright stresses the memorial element in Xhosa izibongo far more than does Opland who has consistently pointed to the ability of Xhosa iimbongi to compose in performance (1975;1981). It may be that Opland has selected one trend, albeit a dominant one in the tradition, and has perhaps underestimated the validity of the memorial aspect of Xhosa praising (Opland, 1971, 1974, 1975, 1977). Be that as it may, it is interesting that Wainwright mentions both formulas and the memorial aspect of Xhosa praising. Whereas Opland's work stresses the difference between the two related poetic traditions of Zulu and Xhosa praising and praises, Wainwright's study tends to underline their similarities.

In oral performance it is important that the communicative links between performer and audience/participants are clearly established. As Moyo (1978:44-47) has pointed out in his discussion of Ngoni poetry, it is necessary for poets to work with material with which the audience is familiar and he mentions formulas as providing one such element of familiarity. For Zulu izibongo too, formulas, which

use the familiar, but make provision for the novel, provide invaluable points of recognition for an audience or participants. Formulas are also of great use to composers. They provide in one way "a mnemonic tether" (Okpewho,1979:161), and in another way they are a readily available means of including references to the standard themes and metaphors of the genre.

6.3.1. Types of formulas used by composers

Okpewho has remarked that "in more recent years scholarship has succeeded in shifting attention away from the fixed and on to the variable aspects of the formula unit" (1979:160-161). Some scholars seeking to analyse the relationship between tradition and innovation have looked for generative patterns other than the formula. Nagler, for instance, in his analysis of spontaneity and tradition in the Homeric poems, has set aside the idea of a tightly defined verbal formula. Instead he proposes the Gestalt notion of generative patterns both lexical-syntactic and thematic which composers constantly re-create and interweave (1974:26 and passim). Certainly, with few exceptions, the formulas in Zulu izibongo contain a degree of flexibility which allows both for stability and for the creative contribution of the individual. If commentators can turn away from the myopic concern with "repeated word patterns" which blinds them to other important aspects of a genre (Finnegan,1976:160), and see formulas as flexible yet stable units which allow memory and creativity to inter-relate, and which heighten performer-audience communication, then the concept of the formula may still prove a useful one.

The following classification of formulas used in izibongo is based on a number of considerations: a) whether the formula seemed to be

fixed or flexible; b) the presence of figurative language; c) the importance of the underlying syntactic or semantic structure or the pattern of phonology; d) whether the formulas were generally available or were used exclusively by bards. Several of these categories overlap, as formulas in one group sometimes contain characteristics of those in another. Nevertheless it seemed useful to attempt some kind of categorization in order to show the range of formulas available to composers as a compositional technique in the poetic tradition. Okpewho (1979:139) refers to further possible categories of formula in his discussion on "Form and structure in the African oral epic". He mentions the "verbal matrix" formula used both in Sunjata (Innes,1974) and in the epic, Kambili (Bird et al,1974); he mentions also, the "call and response formula" in the same epic and what he calls "the lament formula", namely, "My mind turns to..." in Sunjata (1974, for example p.111).

Further examination of izibongo recited by particular performers might reveal a tendency for individuals to re-use a limited number of formulas particularly suited to their composing and performing style. My analysis here has not done this but concentrates merely on demonstrating that the formulas are exploited in a poetic tradition that is both memorial and creative and, moreover, one which embraces the specialist and non-specialist composer and performer.

The examples given below are only a small fraction of what appeared to be formulas in the corpus as a whole. They are discussed under the following headings:

1. Fixed formulas
2. Flexible formulas
 - a) using figurative language
 - b) with a marked pattern

3. Shorter formulas a) used only by bards
 b) in general use

6.3.1.1. Fixed formulas

There seem to be few of these and one of their characteristics is their use of metaphors drawn from nature as analogues for an individual's character or experience. Even these fixed formulas can be varied slightly. Hence in the example below, which is a proverb used in *izibongo* as a praise name, the inserted patronymic "kaJama" (descendant of Jama") alludes to the royal blood of the individual whose praise name it is. When applied to a contemporary (non-royal) chief the formula lacks any such insertion. The way in which formulas (which are often, as here, praise names (see Moyo,1978:394)) can economically pinpoint a particular characteristic is aptly demonstrated in Example 28. Here the formula is used for an individual who takes high office and therefore great responsibility at an early age. He is thus in his precocious competence like the stiff Silverspike grass (*Imperata arundinacea*), prickly even before it reaches full height (see Nyembezi,1954:186).

Example 28

1. UMthente uhlab' usamila.

The Silverspike Grass it stabs whilst still young. (Chief
 Qokinsimbi Ntuli, Eshowe, uncatalogued)

2. UMthente kaJama uhlab' usamila. (Dinuzulu kaCetshwayo,
 A.M.Gwala, Tape 5)

3. UMthente kaJama uhlab' usamila. (Zwelithini kaBhekuzulu, A 1
 1.54)

6.3.1.2. Flexible formulas

Firstly I shall discuss formulas distinguished by their use of figurative language and secondly those with a marked pattern, either syntactic, semantic or phonological.

(a) With flexible formulas that use figurative language, one of the attractions for composers is the way in which the formulas combine stability and flexibility. The metaphors used remain stable and are invariably the first or second word in the line. In Example 29 the cattle metaphor remains constant but there is some flexibility for the verb although the passive mood is kept in both cases. Even the limited choice offered by the slot options for the verb gives composers a little room for manoeuvre in choosing a praise.

Example 29

I	II
a. INkomo <u>esengwa</u> iviyo. Cow <u>milked</u> by a band of men. (A 1 1.38)	
slot	slot

b. INkomo <u>ebanjwa</u> iviyo <u>kwaNomahengisi</u> . (Shampi Manglele, Hlabisa)	
slot	locative phrase expansion

Cow <u>grabbed</u> by a band of men <u>at Hennessy's place</u> .	
slot	locative phrase expansion

Example 30 shows a different kind of flexibility involving a formula in which the "vanished moon" describes metaphorically an individual's apparent disappearance and subsequent return. The formula which occurs as a praise in the izibongo of both leaders and ordinary people is clearly linked to the theme of resilience and courage which is so pervasive in Zulu praise poetry. In this formula the initial metaphor which is the dominant word in the praise is constant, as is the subsequent "bath' ifile". The flexibility comes in the choice of how to complete the statement and how, if necessary, a composer expands it, making it the basis for a narrative unit. This happens, for

instance, in the *izibongo* of Isaiah Shembe (see b below).

Example 30

a) UNyanga bath' ifile / kanti iyofa kusasa. (A 18)

Moon which they said was gone / whereas it will die tomorrow.

b) UNyanga bath' ifile / kanti basho nje iduk' emafini.

Ugudlagudla i'ntaba zoMkhambathi,

Uthe ngimbona eshona ngaleziya 'zintaba zakwaMadladla.

Uthi namhlanje unempilo eside simbona.

Waseqhamuka esekhazimula esexhophaphakathi kwamasango aseKu-

phakameni. (A 2 ls.105-9)

Moon which they said was gone whereas /it was only wandering
among the clouds.

He skirted the mountains of Mkhambathi,

And then I saw him disappearing in the direction of those far-off
hills of Madladla.

Even today he is alive and we behold him constantly.

He appeared shining, dazzling the eyes within the gates of Eku-
phakameni.

(b) The formulas described here all have marked patterns. They make use of patterns of syntax, semantics and phonological repetition already outlined in Chapter 5. On the whole they exhibit a high degree of formal neatness, coupled with a marked rhythm; the options for flexibility tend to be more restricted and limited to slot substitutions. It is tempting to conclude that the combination of recognitions stemming from a known syntactic or semantic pattern (or both) plus familiar words makes these formulas doubly attractive to both performers and listeners. Example 31 uses the negative to

positive sequence with lexical repetition which I have discussed under "lexical parallelism within the line" (see 5.1.2.). Example 32 uses the common deverbative noun to cognate verb sequence which I have discussed under "lexical parallelism" (5.1.2.).

Example 31

UMamba kayihlokozwa ihlokozwa abanesibindi. (MaNtombela, A 126;
Mr Dube, Ngoye)

The Mamba is not poked at, it is poked at only by the brave.

Example 32

UMabhala ngozipho abanye bebhala ngepensele. (MaMngema, A 127; A
59)

Writer with a finger-nail, others write with a pencil.

The high degree of assonance and alliteration which is a feature of the poetic language of Zulu izibongo has already been demonstrated (5.1.1.). The following formula in its opening, rhythmic, fixed words is highly alliterative ("d" is repeated) and it also makes use of assonance ("a" is repeated). The sexual theme is one that is common to men's and women's izibongo but the strong tone of censure so noticeable here is usually limited to women's izibongo.

Example 33

fixed variable
UDlula bedlana / o'Nto zawonina! (A 129)

Passer-by as they're having sex / One who is the worthless privates
of her mother!

variable
/ umfana ongenamhawu. (unidentified woman, Ngoye)
/ the boy who knows no shame.

6.3.1.3. Shorter formulas

Some shorter formulas are used only by bards, and others are more

widely available. I shall discuss the shorter formulas used by bards first and secondly those used by both bards and non-specialist composers.

a) Some of the formulas used only by bards are not praise names (as are many other formulas) but have more of a "verbal matrix". They suit the expansive, inspirational tone often found in the praises of people of high rank and they often add to the sense of expectation and excitement which such *izibongo* generate. Thus the commanding precept, "**Awulalele lomuntu omemezayo**", ("Listen to the one who is shouting"), with its heraldic overtones, is an exclusively royal formula (initiated perhaps by the great bard Magolwana); the equally heraldic, imperative, **Gijimani...izindlela**" ("Run ye...(along) the roads"), is similarly the preserve of royalty. Another heraldic formula is one that was first recorded in Dingana's *izibongo* (see Stuart, 1924(a): 64). With its "u" and "e" assonance, its sense of mystery and imminence this is a formula which seems to have great aesthetic appeal and appears in the *izibongo* not only of the Zulu royal house, but of other chiefly houses as well: "**Lukhulu luyeza luyanyelela...**", ("It is great, it is coming, gliding along..."). Like the previous example, this is also kept for royalty or those of high status.

Two other formulas which are also reserved for royalty and for those of high rank imply the effect of the eminent personage on others:

Example 34

kwaze kwasa - until dawn

Example 35

bebikelana bengalele - they exchanged reports without sleeping.

Bards often use two or more of the above formulas in conjunction with

praise names evocative of royalty thereby aiming to create the maximum effect of awe and eulogy. The following examples show how they might combine; they also illustrate the combination of stability and variety which is a characteristic of so many formulas. In Example 36, one of the Buthelezi *izimbongi*, Ndodengemuntu Buthelezi, adds an impression of grandeur and consequence to the initial praise name, "The Cricket", by following it up with two royal formulas. Example 37, from the *izibongo* of the present king, illustrates how the bard J.Dlamini takes over and redeploys the two heraldic formulas, "Run ye..." and "It is great, it is coming...", in the *izibongo* he has composed. He uses them to add sting to his criticism of the "rats" who have opposed his patron's attempts to be installed as king. Example 38 shows the same two heraldic formulas with different expansions as they occur in the *izibongo* of King Dingana recorded in the Rycroft-Ngcobo text (forthcoming) which is based on James Stuart's work with several bards. In this instance the bard draws on the affective names of the royal Zulu ancestors, Ndaba, Phunga and Mageba to intensify the impact of the formulas.

Example 36

USihlonono sakhal' endlebeni yendoda -
 kwaze kwasa amadoda bengalele bebikelana,
 athi, "Kukhulu, luyasabeka luyanyelela ngalowo kaMenzi". (A 4)

The Cricket chirped in the ear of a man -
 until dawn men spoke exchanged reports without sleeping.
 They said, "It is great, it is fearful, it is gliding
 along, descendant of (royal) Menzi.

Example 37

Nani magundwane ahlala eyikhotheni kwaNongoma,
 gijimani nge'ndlela zonkana niyobikela abangakezwa,
 nithi, "Lukhulu,luyeza luyanyelela",
 silufanis' nendlovu emnyama yasoBhalule
 luzoshis' i'khotha zakwaNongoma. (A 1 Is.20-24)

As for you, you rats who live in the long grass at Nongoma,
 run along all the paths announce to those who have not heard,
 say, "It is great, it is coming, it is gliding along",
 we compare him to the Black Elephant of Bhalule*
 he will burn the long grass of Nongoma.

*i.e. an allusive reference to Shaka or Dingana.

Example 38

Gijimani niyotshena abakwaMashobana
 Nifike nithi: "Lukhulu, luyeza,luyanyelela,
 Silufanisa noNdaba wakokaBayeni,
 Silufanisa noPhunga noMageba".

Run ye and announce to the people of Mashobana
 Arrive and say,"It is great, it is coming, it is gliding along,
 We compare him to Ndaba of the descendant from Bayeni,
 We compare him to Phunga and to Mageba".

(Rycroft-Ngcobo, Eulogies, Is.48-51, my translation)

b) Non-specialist performers, when composing for themselves and for others, do not use the elevated formulas quoted above. Even when they coin a praise for an important person they would be unlikely to include these formulas, although the bard might take up such a praise

and reshape it, including one or more of them in his version. There are, however, a number of shorter formulas in general circulation to which I shall now turn. These part-line formulas are immensely useful in giving expression to the usually very brief and compressed narrative element in the izibongo of ordinary people. The adverbial phrase, "ekhaya konina kwa...", ("at the home of his mother's people at/of...") can be appended to any description of action and in particular one that involves conflict of some kind (see A 110, A 112). Such a formula gives the composer an opportunity either to include the name of his mother's family or to include the name of a homestead. The formula can be used by bards as well, in which case it tends to be part of a more elaborately structured set of lines which may include a second formula; "enye...enye...", ("one... the other/another..."), is another such formula (see Example 39b).

Example 39

a) INkunzi abayibambe ngamasende khona ekhaya kwaDliwayinyama.

Bull which they grabbed by the testicles there at the homestead Where-Meat-is-Eaten. (Mr Sibiya, Richards Bay, uncatalogued)

b) UNogijimisa amadoda engasakwaz' ukugijima,
enye kungeyasoVene, enye kungeseNgobamakhosi, *
 ngoba ugijimise abasekhaya konina abaseMpangazitha.

(Chief Mhawu Mthiyane, late 19C, A 73b)

Maker-of-men-to-run when they could no longer run,
 one of the Vene, the other of the Ngobamakhosi regiments, *
 because he made his mother's people, those of Mpangazitha, run.

*Mpangazitha is a clan praise name of the Mpangelas.

A formula which is used to complete a line is "abafazi namado-da". It can be attached to a great variety of praises some of which may themselves be so widely used that they too must be regarded as formulas. Its use of a widely exploited antithetical end-line pattern (see 5.1.2.) must make it doubly attractive both to listeners and to composers. Also, it gives expression to the dominant theme of conflict which may be either physical, verbal, or both.

Example 40

UKhasi lomdloti,
 beligaya belishikiza abafazi namadoda. (MaZulu, Hlabisa)
 The Bitter Tobacco leaf,
 they ground it and powdered it the women and the men.

6.3.2. How composers and performers use formulas

Both memory and creative variation are clearly significant factors in individuals' use of formulas. It may be that formulas in the first place help composers to create with fluency; they may also, because of their greater stability, make it easier for participants and the dancer himself to call out *izibongo* with speed and fluency in the heat of the *giya* dance in Mode B. In other words, the mnemonic and stabilising function of formulas is of use both to bards and to non-specialist composers/performers (i.e. both in Modes A and B (see 4.1. and 4.2.)). Thirdly, because of their high recognisability, formulas are an important communicative factor between performer(s) and audience in both performance Modes.

Another aspect of the formula's usefulness for composers and performers is its potential as a base or launching pad for expansion. A non-specialist may add only a single line or may use a formula to

introduce a subject which he (or she) develops over several lines. Similarly a bard may use a formula to introduce a narrative expansion such as the four-line development of the "vanished moon" formula in the izibongo of Isaiah Shembe (A 2).

The Zulu formulas in some cases occur in praises which cover a wide range both in time - some having been first composed several generations ago - and in region. Others seem more local in circulation. A formula may in fact begin by being simply a line or a praise borrowed from another set of praises, then borrowed again, and so gradually become established as a widely liked and useful line. Compact single-line praises, or a cluster of lines are often passed from father to son (see A 108 ls.13-15) and previously praises were also taken from the izibongo of the conquered and included in those of the victor (see van Warmelo,1938:63,67). The regimental system, (now defunct in all but name), where men spent periods away from their homes, and where ukugiya and the performance of izibongo formed part of regimental life (Stuart,1913), must also have contributed greatly to the dissemination of praises and to the creating of new formulas, as men re-used in their own compositions what seemed to them particularly apt and striking phrases and sentences. Parry has described how formulas come into being in the composing of oral epic verse and his remarks highlight the way in which formulas, if they are to last, must be found both pleasing and useful:

When one singer (for such is the name these oral poets most often give themselves) has hit upon a phrase which is pleasing and easily used, other singers will hear it, and then, when faced at the same point in the line with the need of expressing the same idea, they will recall it and use it.
(Milman Parry, "Studies in the Epic Technique of Oral Verse-making, 11:The Homeric Language as the Language of an Oral Poetry", Harvard Studies in Classical Philology, 1932 Vol.XL111, p.7)

This process of formulas evolving through use from one composer to another is still evident in Zulu praising. One contemporary example from Ngoye of what was perhaps a formula in the making, is the following: it has very local references and refers humorously to the cattle dip, a local meeting point for many people situated on the banks of the Mlalazi River (see A 150). It is a very contemporary formula in its easy use of loan words ("dibha" and "phoyizeni"). Yet it is also, in its patterned structure, a formula which uses established rules of composition. I heard it three times over a period of several months in 1976:

Example 41

Waphuz' umuthi omubi ngoba waphuz' idibha eMlalazi,
waphuz' iphoyizeni! (MaGumede, Ngoye, uncatalogued)

She drank horrible medicine because she drank the cattle dip at
the Mlalazi.

She drank poison!

One of the bearers of this praise, MaGumede, who was a frequent visitor at the Dindi homestead maintained that she had slipped into the cattle dip after drinking too much beer and so had composed the above lines! The second person who used the praise was a young boy, Fundakubo Dlamini, who lived a few miles away and very near the cattle dip (see 3.1.). In his izibongo the "formula" is shorter and the personal note is missing, but it is still recognisably "the same".

Maselesele phuz' iphoyizeni edipini. (uncatalogued)

The toads drink poison at the dip.

It is likely that he heard the lines (possibly from MaKhumalo's praises) and then included a shorter version in his own izibongo. Only

time can tell whether the above example becomes established as a formula and then perhaps moves off to other districts to feature - possibly with slight differences such as the name of the river - in the izibongo of other individuals.

Formulas not only come into being from lines or sets of words which strike listeners as apt and pleasing, they also disappear altogether or alter over generations, and gather around them a different set of associations. This seems to have happened in the following instance where mention of the topic of literacy versus non-literacy overlays the earlier association of violent physical action in combat:

Example 42

UMabhala ngozipho abanye bebhala ngepensele. (A 59; MaMngema
A 127, Ngoye)

Writer with a fingernail others write with a pencil.

This has probably grown out of an earlier praise (and formula) where the verb **bhala** has its primary meaning of "scratch, make marks", rather than "write":

Uklebe lobhalayo, uMabhala nganzipho.

Hawk that makes its mark, Marker with talons. (Mantshontsha
kaSonkeshana Buthelezi, 19th Century, uncatalogued)

Evidence suggests, therefore, that the formulas are not static, they shift to include new words and new concepts. Freshly composed and long established formulas co-exist in the tradition of listening, composing and performing.

6.4. Direct Address and Direct Speech in Izibongo

Because praise poetry is most completely realised in performance it is in essence a dramatic art form. H.I.E.Dhlomo (1936,1939a,1939b) emphasised the dramatic (as well as the ritual) aspects of traditional art forms long before the current emphasis on the importance of performance in oral literature. Certainly the optional use in Mode A (see 4.1.4.) of vivid gestures and facial expressions and the special use of the voice (4.1.5.) - what Ben-Amos (1976:16) calls the "phonic and mimetic features" of African verbal art - all help to make performance a dramatic event. In the more complex performing mode of popular praising (see 4.2.) the dramatic nature of the total performance is equally obvious: each individual's "dance" has its complex of praises, song and chant, hand-clapping, mime and fast interplay between the principal "actor" and the supporting group.

Another factor which can intensify or reduce the element of overall drama is the mode (or modes) of address which occur in the actual izibongo. Here too, both bards and non-specialists show skill in varying the mode used. In general the third person is used but there is quite a degree of flexibility, with swift changes to direct address. There is also in some cases the introduction of direct speech within the izibongo, giving the effect of a miniature play being briefly acted out within the performance of the praises. The effect of these switches in mode of address varies from one izibongo to another but in general they introduce a greater sense of immediacy and provide a reminder of the importance of interpersonal relationships in everyday life, an importance which the izibongo in their content often try to mirror and recapture. Some praises recited by the composer/performer (and even occasionally when recited by someone other than the

composer and bearer of the izibongo) use the first person. Many of these praises begin with, "I am...", thus emphasising the unique individuality of those particular izibongo and underlining the fact that they are a personal statement and an artistic expression of identity that is most fully articulated in the brief, intense moment of performance. Examples of each of these kinds of address will be discussed below before I go on to examine the use of direct address in particular izibongo.

6.4.1. The use of the first person

Although the use of the first person has been noted in Sotho praises and in Igbo and Ankole praise poetry (Nwoga and Egudu, 1973; Morris, 1964), its usage in Zulu izibongo has rarely been mentioned, probably because of the emphasis on the compositions and recitations of the bards who were, of course, praising others. Only very rarely do bards use the first person and when they do the intention seems to be to denote a moment of particular intensity (see Shaka's izibongo, Cope, 1968:106-7, 1s.295-7). A number of the shorter, personally recited izibongo in this corpus make use of the first person. Not only does the use stress the importance of identity in praises, it is also a reminder that the speaker is addressing an audience and is projecting himself or herself into a dynamic relationship with a group or individual. Most of the uses of the first person are at the beginning of izibongo, as in Example 43 where the composer/performer introduces his izibongo with the first person and then sets the praises in the third person.

Example 43

Ng'uShishiliza kwelimahole limshaye limbhedule,
limphose phezulu ubuye sekumhlophe kuthe wa!

Amhloph' amahawu amhloph' amagabela,

"Ayife sisik' amahawu!"

Ubhucu kagezanga kulenhlango... (A 106)

I am The Slitherer over the rough rock it cut and grazed him.

It tossed him up and when he came down he was scraped dead

white

white are the shields and white the (shield) laces,

(they say), "Let that bull die we want his hide for our

shields!"

He flicks off (the water) before he's washed at the river...

6.4.2. The bearer (or persona) addresses others

As part of their function as a vehicle for expressing identity, izibongo also allow one to give vent to strong emotions in a socially acceptable way and to give voice to personal animosities which might otherwise smoulder away within the individual's consciousness. Such strong emotions and hostile attitudes can be expressed through direct address, as in the izangelo of Chief Buthelezi to which I have already referred. A humorous comment can also be made through this kind of direct address. All instances of this mode of address again emphasise that the praises are conceived with an audience in mind, as if in answer to the question, "Who are you?", ("Ungubani?"), a question which is often asked, and which requires in reply not the individual's personal or clan name, but his or her praise names.

The first three examples below are humorous and show how individuals can use direct address in their izibongo to tease others or to make light-hearted comments on courtship. Each example, in various ways, makes use of structural devices outlined in Chapter 5.

Example 44 Here Simansika Dube of Ngoye provocatively contrasts her own diligence with the laziness of the women she is addressing:

Bafazi nithatha amageja nje, niyaphi?

Lokhu nidlala ngegeja nje, nilimaphi? (uncatalogued)

Women you're just picking up your hoes, where are you going?

Since you're just playing with the hoe, where are you cultivating?

Example 45 In this example a young girl, Zondo Mthethwa, addresses an imaginary friend suggesting that they take each other's brothers as lovers. The line echoes a similarly constructed formula line also in the imperative and is constructed on the same binary pattern (see A 66, 1.4 and A 67, 1.3):

Ntombi qom' ubhuti nami ngizoqom' owakho! (A 131)

Girl, you propose to my brother and I'll propose to yours!

Example 46 Here the speaker combines the use of the first and second person in his opening lines:

NgiwuNgilazi, ngiyacobonga,

ngiphatheni kahle amantombazane! (Gosa Mncwango, Ngoye, uncatalogued)

I am Glass, I break easily,

handle me carefully young girls!

Example 47 The standard theme of jealousy in courtship is expressed in this formula in an allusive, metaphorical manner:

Xulu ungibukani? Ngidla okwakho yini?

Ngidla okwami nje na? (A 122)

Xulu what are you looking at me for? Am I "eating" what's yours?

Am I not "eating" what's mine?

The following example shows that a challenge and direct address in praise poems can remain even when they are recited by a lineage descendant. Later in the same izibongo the direct address is inverted, and advice is given to the bearer.

Example 48

Hawu wemfokazana ungangiphathi kabi!
 Uma ngikhuleka wangiphatha kahle!
 Awungiboni yini ukuthi ngiyinsizwa enje? (A 85)
 Hey you miserable stranger don't treat me badly!
 If I pay my respects to you, you treat me well!
 Don't you see what kind of a young man I am?

6.4.3. Direct address to the bearer

Eulogy, advice, criticism and comment directed to the bearer of the izibongo or the persona can bring with it a strong sense of immediacy. In some cases what is stressed is the momentary impression of the intimacy of bard and patron (see A 1 ls.75-76). Contrast, and a general climactic effect is also achieved by a sudden infusion of apostrophic praise names delivered directly in the second person as if suddenly face to face, as in the izibongo of Shaka:

Example 49

UyiSilo! UyiNgwe! UyiNgonyama!
 UyiNdlondlo! UyiNdlovu!...
 You are a Wild Animal! A Leopard! A Lion!
 You are a Horned Viper! An Elephant! (Cope,1968:108-9, ls.306-7)

The general emphasis on action in the izibongo can also be stressed through this mode of direct address. Immediacy, the imaginative recreation of the actual moment of crisis are conveyed through the use

of the second person in the following contemporary izibongo of a now elderly man:

Example 50

UGadla bangafiki oNoqhazana.

Hawu mntakaFelaphakathi kanti usulapha na?

Baleka, nank' amaphoyisa! (uncatalogued, Ngoye)

Threatener before the Ear-ringed Police arrive.

My goodness child of (the) Felaphakathi (warrior) are you still
here? *

Run, here are the Police!

* A regiment of Dinuzulu the members of which were born c.1870. Members were often addressed by the name of their regiment.

It has often been remarked that the bards were the mouthpiece of popular opinion (Cope,1968:31;Ngubane,1976) as well as publicisers of their patron's ancestry, deeds and personality (for example see the words of warning to Cetshwayo, Cope, 1968:218-9, ls.74-77). The same process of communal comment and advice is given expression through the use of direct address in the izibongo of ordinary people. In the lines below, someone is giving the bearer of the izibongo advice on the subjects of courage and survival:

Example 51

UNogadla ukuzisiza.

Ukuma ndawonye mntakaMhlongo

uyofela ndawonye. (A 85)

Threatener to save your own skin.

By standing on the same spot, son of Mhlongo,
you will also die on the same spot.

Comment from the community expressed in this way can be not only well-meaning (as above), but also mocking, as the following praises of an ancestor of the Dindi lineage show. The bearer (an uncle of my informant, Mashekelala Dindi) had suffered from smallpox and his skin must have been badly marked; the use of the clan praise name, "Nontonga", softens an otherwise abrasively defining praise:

Example 52

UXam' obomvu ozishaya imfashini.

UBomvu, uhlinziwe yini, mntakaNontonga na? (uncatalogued,Ngoye)

Red Monitor Lizard who starts his own fashion.

You're red, have you been skinned, child of Nontonga?

6.4.4. Direct speech within izibongo

Like direct address, direct speech can recreate a moment of crisis far more vividly than the mere relating of it in the third person. Even in the typical highly telescoped reference to an event, a sudden brief use of direct speech has the effect of foregrounding the critical moment, of throwing it into relief (as in Example 53). This climactic use of direct speech is noted by Innes in his discussion of the Gambian Mandinka narratives, Kaabu and Fuladu (1976:17-18), although in these narratives direct speech plays a more pervasive role than in izibongo. Rycroft (1975b:62;64-70) also notes in his commentary on the rendering by Princess Magogo kaDinuzulu of "The Ballad of Nomagundwane", that the persona in this haunting song of love and rejection uses direct speech at crucial moments in her story. In his discussion of the Mandinka historical narratives, Innes (1976:18) mentions the way in which direct speech can highlight interpersonal relationships "between the heroes and their supporters, their rivals, their opponents". The telescoped, synthetic rather than

sequential, style of izibongo does not allow for lengthy glimpses of any such exchanges, such as one finds in epic, but they occur in vivid flashes. In some cases only a single representative comment is dramatised in the praise poem itself (as in A 150) but in a few izibongo a single theme seems to dominate and is recreated in miniature dramatic form (see Example 54). There are even - and these seem to occur mostly in the izibongo of women - a small number of stock dramatic exchanges, such as the cockroaches begging the cook to fix the spoon in the rafters after cooking, for them to lick (Gunner, 1979:249-251); there is also the theme of jealousy, and rivalry can be expressed in the half-humorous, half-serious formula "Uyofa nini...", ("When will he die...?"), which figures in Example 54.

Example 53 The bearer of these izibongo, Masofeyisi Mthethwa, apparently killed a man in a dispute over the bridewealth cattle in a marriage settlement. Masofeyisi was from the Sihuzu ward, the men of which were at daggers drawn with the men from the neighbouring ward of Matholanjeni, from where I think the victim came (see Chapter 7). In the extract below the critical moment of action is dramatised in an allusive, elliptical fashion and the victim's dying words tell all!

UMkhongikhongi,

wafa eyibala ethi, "Ziwu-onayini"

Ngamshaya waze wafa umuntu ebaya. (A 103)

The Go-between,

He died, as he was counting them, saying, "There are 9!"

I hit the man and he died - out there in the open.

Example 54 In these izibongo, recorded in one of the convalescent T.B. wards at KwaMagwaza hospital, Melmoth, the performer, MaBiyela, called out her izibongo as she danced. She introduced her performance with

her song/chant which was sustained by a group of female patients who became the audience/participants with whom she interacted as she danced and "sang" her own praises. As in many izibongo, a standard theme is used which fits the composer's particular circumstances. MaBiyela's husband died when she was young, and according to her praises, the independent young widow attracted many men. In her case, almost the whole praise poem is conceived in dramatic terms:

UMkhanyis' omdala
 bathi, "Uyofa nini?
 Aphel' amadoda eZingongonini".
 Ushukashuka impunga.
 Avuke azithuntuthe.
 Nayo ivuke izithuntuthe.
 Baphume abaniniyo nocelemba namasikela,
 bathi, "Uyofa nini Mkhanyis' omdala?
 Aphel' amadoda ethu!" (A 130)

Attracter of old.
 They say, "When will you die?
 Our men are finished off at Zingongonini".
 She fancies even the grey head;
 she gets up and shakes herself,
 he too gets up and shakes himself.
 Out come the owners with bush-knives and sickles,
 they say, "When will you die, Attracter of old,
 our men are finished off!"

A particular, dominant characteristic of an individual can become the subject of personal comment from within izibongo and be presented

by a persona inside the praises, as in the following example. In this case gluttony and its consequences are commented upon; in addition, the irritation of the voice within the izibongo is vividly conveyed, giving a rare instance of a dramatised account of a wife's comment on her husband. The bearer of these izibongo was a senior member of the Mkhwanazi clan who enjoyed "giya-ing" and his izibongo were widely known and much enjoyed around KwaDlangezwa; his izibongo (below) were recited for me by Masoswidi, the Mkhwanazi imbongi.

Example 55

UMudli weyino funofana;
 into engakaze nibona idliwa umuntu ezweni.
 USibhodla ematafuleni.
 UBilyos' 'bengasho ukuthi, "Skuse!"
 Uzokuyodinwa okaSomotha,
 wathi, "Yini Mkhwanazi ubhodle uqede
 ungabisasho 'Skuse!', Mkhwanazi na?" (A 54)

Eater of soft squishy things
 even a thing you've never seen people eating before.
 The Burper at tables.
 Bilious, who never says "Excuse me!"
 Somotha's daughter will be sick to death of it.
 She says, "Why is it Mkhwanazi that you burp without ever saying
 'Excuse me!', Mkhwanazi?"

6.4.5. Direct speech in particular, longer izibongo

Clearly, composers have the option of introducing various kinds of direct address into their izibongo, and they sometimes set in their praises remarks which others have made to them, or remarks which

typify an attitude within the community. The use of direct speech is therefore a feature of technique which can create contrast and dramatic interest and in some cases inject a brief sense of moments of personal relationships in the often remote if charged atmosphere of izibongo. A range of mode of address can add an element of richness, a certain suppleness of tone to longer izibongo and this is evident in the praises of the present king. His bard, John Dlamini, uses a number of different modes of address, switching from third to second person (as in 1s.1-2) and keeping a sense of the closeness of the bard-king relationship by frequently inserting in a longer line the vocative form of the royal praise name and ancestral name, "Ndaba" (1s.71-72). He also uses the device of direct speech within the izibongo; for instance when the royal daughters of the Swazi king, Sobhuza 11, tease him about the choice of a prospective bride (A 1 1s.91-93).

Almost immediately after this Dlamini uses direct speech again, this time to convey a moment of crisis when the "fathers" of the young King-to-be try to dissuade him from marrying a Swazi princess; they are presented as timid and unnecessarily cautious.

Example 56

- a) Bathi, "Ndab' ungaluweli uPhongolo uyodayisa ngezwe likaSenzangakhona kwelakwaNgwane". (A 1 1.95)

They said, "(Royal) Ndaba don't cross the Phongolo River, you will be selling the land of Senzangakhona to Ngwane".

Not only does Dlamini vary the usage of the third person by addressing the King directly and by using direct speech within the praises, he also directly addresses sections of the public whom he singles out for praise or reprimand. The young king's married sister

and her husband's Transvaal Ndebele people to whom he fled when in danger are addressed with gratitude:

b) Nani maNdebele seniyoguga nidelile.

And you, Ndebele, may you grow old and be happy.

In contrast, those who opposed Zwelithini's wish to be installed as king are collectively addressed as,

c) Nani magundwane ahlala eyikhotheni kwaNongoma...

And you rats who dwell in the long grass at Nongoma...

Direct speech and direct address by the bard are also used sparingly but effectively in one of the praise poems composed for Chief Buthelezi (A 7). In the first example below, the use of actual words spoken conveys the suspicion and hostility of the "Prince" (ie. a member of the Zulu royal family) towards the Chief. The second example has non-Zulu sounding words uttered by a woman whose name is distinctly non-Zulu. This simple dramatic device is used to signify the variety of Black ethnic groups who mingle together on the Witwatersrand. Her name and her "words" convey in a concise and direct way that the Chief won the acclaim of many ethnic groups beside the Zulu when he spoke at the Soweto Shaka's Day rally of September 1974. At another point in these izibongo (Example 57) the composer, Selby Xaba, turns suddenly to address directly a section of the public (as Dlamini does in his "And you rats..."), his sharp words introducing an element of direct personal confrontation:

Example 57

a) Bethi, "Kunkunzini lokhu kuthi, "Hawu, hawu" ekhona uMntwana wakwaDlashiye?"

They said, "What kind of a bull is this going, 'Hey, hey' at
the home of the Prince of Dlashiye?"

b) INkunzi eqhwinde eSoweto

kwakikizela uMakhwenabatwana wathi, "Harubatsha! Harubatsha!
Harubatshatshade!"

Bull that pawed the ground at Soweto

MaKhwenabatwana cried out in joy saying, "Hurrah! Hurrah!
Hurrah!"

c) UMIlo oshise ubuhanguhangu eMnyangeni wokwazisa.

Nani Mnyango wokwazisa, angizondi nina ngizond' imisebenzi
yenu.

Fire that sent quivering heat waves in the direction of the
Department of Information.

And as for you, you Department of Information, I don't hate
you, I hate your deeds.

The praises of Chief Albert Luthuli (recorded from the performance at his funeral at Stanger in July, 1967) show the composer/performer making a far greater use of dialogue within izibongo than either of the above bards, Selby Xaba and John Dlamini. Indeed, dialogue features as one of the main structural elements in the praises. The words uttered by those for and those against Luthuli swing back and forth and create a strong sense of the controversy that often raged around Luthuli in his lifetime. The dialogue suggests that he was both loyally followed and vigorously opposed. The pressures on Luthuli to succumb to the forces of intimidation or to the lure of bribery are also conveyed through dialogue and in what is perhaps the key utterance of the praises,

Luthuli is shown wrestling with the choice between a safe option and a back seat or a life of leadership and hardship. The difficult realities of political leadership in a beleaguered situation are therefore conveyed through what the leader himself and those against him say. The issues about which Luthuli was campaigning are presented through dialogue: Luthuli is questioned by his own people, "What is it you are holding forth about?", and through a widely-used, potent cattle metaphor he points in reply, to the losses in political and material terms suffered by the "children of Africa" (see A 3 ls.48-65). Albert Luthuli's izibongo are distinctly the most narrative in this corpus, and the sections of direct speech show the unusually sequential pattern of the praises as a whole, following his career through from his election as President of the African National Congress in 1952, the Treason Trial of 1956-1960, to his being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1961 (the African National Congress having been declared a proscribed organisation in 1960). In the last section of the izibongo the centre of the dialogue shifts, as the bard attempts to move the focus away from the immediate contemporary political arena to the struggles of the past (although to some degree the past has been "present" through the allusive use of Shaka's praises at the beginning of the izibongo). The White-Black political struggle is paralleled by the reference (presented through cattle metaphors) to the Battle of Sandlwana. This last section seems to me not entirely successful, it is muddled in its focus; moreover the recording gives the impression of the bard faltering a little in his delivery and there is less evidence of audience support - at least until the final line. However, it is interesting that the bard presents this final section through dialogue as if it is his intention to represent the voices of the past speaking to the present generation

and inspiring them with the account of past victory (A 3 ls.71-81).

Conclusion

What I have tried to establish in this chapter is the scope of techniques which exist in addition to those of repetition and parallelism which were discussed in Chapter 5. It should be evident from the examples cited that many single lines or groups of lines show more than one of the poetic techniques of praise poetry operating simultaneously. Much of the skill in composing lies in creating praises that bring into play a number of devices, each of which exercises its appeal. The questions of content and the range of figurative language constitute two further important elements of poetic technique and these will be explored in the following chapter.

Notes

1

For instance, the *ntsomi*, "The Boy who Murdered his Sister", a long tale of great psychological complexity and considerable narrative detail, in Harold Scheub, The Xhosa ntsomi, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), pp.335-367.

2

The struggle for accession theme is expressed in Shaka's *izibongo* in the following praise:

UTeku lwabafazi bakwaNomgabhi,
Betekula behlez' emlovini,
Beth' uShaka kakubusa kakuba inkosi,
Kant' unyakan' uShaka ezakunethezeka.

Cope, Izibongo, p.91.

3

I am grateful to M.B.Yengwa for supplying me with these names as examples. See also, as regards allusive names, W.J.Samarin, "The Attitudinal and Autobiographic in Gbeya Dog Names", Journal of African Languages 5, (1965), pp.57-72.

4

The "audience" was the huge crowd that attended the funeral at Stanger. Tim Couzens refers to the link between Luthuli and Shaka in the minds of many Africans; he argues that H.I.E.Dhlomo particularly towards the end of his life felt very strongly that there was a kind

of continuity of leadership between the two figures. See his "'The New African': Herbert Dhlomo and Black South African writing in English 1857-1956", Ph.D. thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1980, p.636. J.K.Ngubane also sees a link between the achievements of a chain of Southern African leaders from Shaka through to Seme, Chief Luthuli and latterly, Chief Buthelezi. See his essay, "Shaka's Social, Political and Military Ideas", in D.Burness, ed., Shaka King of the Zulus in African Literature, (Washington D.C.: Three Continents Press, 1976), pp.127-164.

5

When I was reading these izibongo to Father John Ngubane at S.O.A.S. in 1981 he said at the "Buffalo" praise, "Ah! Shaka!"

6

See Cope, Izibongo, pp.94-95, ls.113-4.

7

Interview at Bhekuzulu College, October 16th, 1975. Also present was Mr S.Mbokazi who assisted greatly with the interview, my thanks to him and to the Headmaster, Mr C.B.S.Ntuli, for his co-operation.

8

The iNala regiment was nominally formed when Goodwill Zwelithini kaBhekuzulu was installed as King in 1972.

9

An example is the line about the royal cook in A 1 1.86 I was given two widely different explanations for this line. One, from a devotee of the King's izibongo, was that it referred to an occasion when the cook had ruined a special royal meat dish on a visit to Johannesburg; the second, from J.Dlamini himself, was that the cook had been indiscreet in his talk about the King and had suffered for this!

10

Ma Gumede, like many Ngoye speakers, uses the coastal Thefula dialect of Zulu which substitutes "y" for "l" in many words.

11

This section on izangelo and izibongo zengane is based largely on Gunner, "Songs of Innocence".

12

The subject of ukuhlonipha among women has not been widely discussed, but see R.Finlayson, "Hlonipha - the women's language of avoidance among the Xhosa", paper delivered at the Twelfth African Linguistics Conference, Stanford University, California, April 12th, 1981.

13

See Gunner op.cit.pp.256-7. I have changed the punctuation and translation a little but have kept the divisions into "stanzas" which reflect changes in content. "The Ballad of Nomagundwane", sung by Princess Magogo and transcribed and discussed by D.Rycroft is also introspective but unlike these izangelo it has a strong narrative line. See Rycroft, "The Zulu Ballad of Nomagundwane", African Language Studies XVI, (1975), pp.61-92.

14

See Rycroft's other articles on Princess Magogo's musicianship, a) "A Royal Account of Music in Zulu Life with translation, annotation and musical transcription", Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, XXXV111, Part 2, (1975), pp.351-402; b) "The Zulu Bow Songs of Princess Magogo", African Music V, 4, (1975/6), pp.41-97.

15

See the Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetics ed. O.Preminger, (London: Macmillan, 1975), p.18.

16

This section is a shortened version of a paper entitled "Wand or Walking stick? The formula and its use in Zulu praise poems". The paper was read at the Sixth Ibadan Annual Literature Conference, which was entitled "The Oral Performance in Africa", and held at the University of Ibadan in July 1981.

17

See D.Rycroft and A.B.Ngcobo, Izibongo zikaDingana: Dingana's Eulogies, (forthcoming), p.126.

CHAPTER 7CONTENT AND FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN IZIBONGO: COMPOSERS'OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS7.0. Introduction

The focus in this chapter will be on the themes discernible within the general content of izibongo and the use composers make of figurative language. Both continuity and innovation operate in this poetic tradition. On the one hand composers rely on the themes, the ideas and the formulas validated by continued use. On the other hand the izibongo which are composed today are in some ways innovative. They reflect new experiences and sometimes changing values. There is therefore a constant interplay between past and present, tradition and innovation and this is expressed in the content and the figurative language used by composers.

Composers tend to express themselves in figurative language, particularly metaphors which often relate closely to the themes which dominate the tradition. It is therefore convenient to discuss content and figurative language in a single chapter. Moreover figurative language in a way encompasses all the features of style which have so far been discussed : it may occur with repetition and parallelism ; it may initiate or be part of an expansive narrative section; it may involve direct address; it is also closely related to allusive diction and as we have already seen, formulas are frequently set in figurative language.



5. The izimbongi Mnyezane Mthembu and Sunduzabanye Hlabisa at the homestead of Chief Jeremiah Hlabisa, April 1976.

7.1. The Biographical Content of Izibongo and the Dominant Themes of Conflict and Courage

Because izibongo are primarily commemorative and biographical - and in some cases autobiographical - there is on one level no limit to the kind of subject matter on which composers may draw. If an individual has been to jail or has had his hut burnt down or has been involved in a court case, he is quite free to include a reference to these events in his izibongo and people often do just this. He is also free to include comments on his personality and appearance as well as those of other people and to comment on life and on society. He may also make a praise name for himself through objects that have caught his eye or that have become part of the local scene. Other people who know a man are also free to add brief comments on his activities, character and appearance, and these may also become a part of his known praises. Women's izibongo have the same broad basis of biography, although within this framework the emphasis is somewhat different. The izibongo of royalty, and of chiefs and leaders, are in general more elevated in tone. In some cases they are more heroic in their vision and more dignified and beautiful in their use of language. They have, nevertheless, the same central biographical focus as the izibongo of ordinary individuals.

Within the broad biographical framework outlined above, certain themes, in particular the themes of conflict and of courage predominate. This means that a composer tends to cast at least part of his or her poetic statements within them. The formulas, which I have discussed in Chapter 6, often link into the themes and provide composers with a ready-made way of expressing an idea or a value constantly re-iterated within the tradition. The predominance of the

themes of courage and conflict, in other words themes that express the heroic ideal, is very striking in this corpus and will be discussed before we turn to the wider biographical content of izibongo.

7.1.1. The Heroic Ideal and its Expression: the Themes of Conflict and Courage

James Stuart's late nineteenth and early twentieth century Zulu informants stressed the importance of war both as regards the performance and the content of izibongo. A coward, Stuart's informants told him, may not "giya" before the assembled warriors, neither praise himself nor be praised because he will have done nothing to earn any praises (Stuart, 1925:97). The royal Zulu izibongo, like the Sunjata epic, were also performed before battle as if to inspire the regiments to even greater feats of bravery. The whole izibongo tradition (apart from women's praises) was in the last century, and more particularly after Shaka's nation building (1812-1828) permeated with the values of war and of the martial ethic. Evidence of the close link between the nineteenth century izibongo and war came from a number of izimbongi with whom I spoke during fieldwork. Mgezeni Ndlela referred to a praise of the Buthelezi ancestor, Maphovela (The Plume), son of Mnyamana; his remarks emphasise the importance placed on bravery and stress also the way in which approval of courage came from the lips of one's fellows:

" Now then , you could say that these were his izibongo from his stabbing . If he had not stabbed and had not therefore achieved his goal he would never have those which said he stabbed ! But if he was successful in a battle he could be praised by something saying that at a certain place he performed a certain deed ".

E.G : Did he say them just after fighting if they had just returned ?

Ndlela : They would be praised with those praises when they had returned from fighting .

(Mahlabathini, May, 1976)

The courageous way in which one bore oneself in battle was therefore given great prominence in one's izibongo. The two Hlabisa bards, Mnyezane Mthembu and Sunduzabanye Hlabisa, are both descendants of those who supported Zibhebhu and his Mandlakazi followers against King Cetshwayo and his son Dinuzulu in the 1880s. They made it clear in my first interview with them that in the early lineage izibongo which they recited war played a central role - although even in this set, the general biographical emphasis is also evident, see for example A 19. After reciting the izibongo of ten ancestors (A 19-28) the senior imbongi, Mnyezane Mthembu, said, "All whom I am praising now were Zibhebhu's men. I am still praising those connected with battle". Shortly after this he announced, using the typical imbongi formula, that he was tired, "Imbongi ibibindwe. Ngisabindiwe" (literally, "The imbongi is choked. I am still choked"), and handed over to his partner, Sunduzabanye. In answer to my question, "Did they fight?", he remarked, "I am praising the young ones (abancane) who did not fight in battle . I am praising the young ones who were the generation after those who fought" (i.e. many of the first to go into employment in urban areas, as their izibongo show. See A 29-42).

Yet another imbongi's comments show the influence of the war ethic on praise poetry even when the izibongo belong to the new context of a Christian Zionist sect. The bard Azariah Mthiyane was telling me how the prophet Isaiah Shembe received his izibongo, and discussing their significance, during one of several visits which I made to the Naz-

arite base at Emkayideni , Richards Bay :

Azariah Mthiyane: They (his izibongo) are the medals of a hero, of his heroism - the imbongi would compose for him medals of battle (iziqu zempi)...With Shembe his "medals" are like those of battle - he fought in a certain place where people were against him (in spite of them) he preached there, and his praises sprang forth; he would come to people, they would hold him, bind him, but he preached and his izibongo sprang forth .
(Emkayideni, June, 1976)

Here izibongo are associated not with successful physical attack (as in Ndlela and Sunduzabanye's accounts of the Hlabisa and Buthelezi izibongo) but in a wider sense with struggle, difficulties, courage in adversity and a spiritual battle for gaining people's religious convictions. The established themes, therefore, of courage and conflict are capable of what Sherzer (1974:229) talking of American Indian Cuna poetry calls "creative adaptation", and the heroic ideal is here absorbed into a wider framework of Nazarite aspirations.

Poetic expression of the themes of courage and conflict in late nineteenth century izibongo

The late nineteenth century izibongo of the Buthelezi lineage in the present corpus reflect time and again the bloody heroism of those who fought in the main with the spear but also with the gun and who faced a range of artillery fire. Consider for instance the following extracts :

Example 1 Here a formula line compares the way war "chooses" a victim to a girl choosing her lover :

UMpi kayiqomi kayinjengantombi . (F)*

Yaiyoqom' uHemulana kaMbangazeli .

The-War does not fall in love, it is not like a girl .

(If it did) it would have fallen in love with Hemulana son of
Mbangazeli.

(A 11 Tshanibezwe kaMnyamana Buthelezi)

* The bracketed (F) indicates that the praise is a formula

Example 2

UGazi lagcwala umsingizane kwaHlophekhulu...

UMhlephuka abuye ahlange.

The-Blood saturated the tall grass at Hlophekhulu...

Broken One and he comes together again .

(A 13 Maphovela kaMnyamana Buthelezi)

Example 3

USiba-gojela ngapha kwaSandlwana.

Ugojela amakhand' amadoda ...

USandla sagudl' umbayimbayi kwaNolele .

The-Plume disappearing over there at Sandlwana .

He "disappears" the heads of men...

The-Hand rubbed against a cannon at Nolele .

(Ndabokanye kaMnyamana Buthelezi uncatalogued)

Other izibongo of the same period which are not those of members of an aggressive and important chiefly house such as the Buthelezi show the same concern with the heroic values of courage expressed through physical conflict. UDLakudelwa Mdletshe of Mahlabathini (the father of the present king's apprentice imbongi see 3.1.1.) recited for me the izibongo of his father Mavukefile (Riser-after-dying) whom he described as "a hero of King Dinuzulu". Pride in the wounds received in battle, in enduring them, and courage in facing the enemy mark the following extracts from Mavukefile's izibongo :

Example 4

Umlenz' i'bomvu yombili.
 UNondel' ukulala,
 amavaka asesaba ngabe ukulala ngamanxeba ...
 UManxeba angamanxuluma
 unjengumuzi kayihlo ngabe lapha eSikhebeni ...
 Umlamula-nkunzi ngabe waziyeka
 ngabe zabulalana
 UNondela umzimba onikela abezizwe (F)
 ngoba wawunikela abakwaMandlakazi.
 UMzimba unezinhla ngokubhekela abakwaMandlakazi amabhosho.

The-Legs both of which are red .
 He who is happy to sleep,
 cowards are afraid to sleep because of their wounds ...
 The-Wounds that are the size of large homesteads
 like Father's homestead here at Sikhebeni ...
 Peacemaker between the bulls when he could have just left them
 killing each other
 at the foot of Tshaneni ...
 He who is happy to present his body to foreign nations (F)
 because he presented it to the Mandlakazi .
 Body scored with lines from facing the bullets of the
 Mandlakazi . (A 88)

Poetic expression of the themes of conflict and courage in
twentieth century izibongo

The dynamic of courage is certainly a very strong factor in
 izibongo in this corpus which date from the last three decades of the

nineteenth century. Their heroic aura expresses what Walter Ong, considering the emphasis on physical violence in a great deal of oral poetry, calls "the external crises of action" (Ong, 1982:44). Yet how are these strong themes of courage and conflict affected by the continuing break-up of Zulu political power in the early years of this century, the increased involvement of Zulu men (in particular) in a cash economy, their experiences of industrial society as what Gluckman (1940:165) calls "labouring cyphers", their experience as labourers on white-owned farms, in short, their experience of South African political and economic life?

Even after the demise of Zulu power, strenuous efforts were made by the Natal authorities to strip the Zulus of any remnants of what was regarded as dangerous militarism and offensive military pride. The King (only officially Chief of the uSuthu) was closely watched as a potential rallying point for military fervour. Marks records the anger of the Natal administration when Dinuzulu's successor, Solomon, on his own initiative held a traditional funeral hunt for the nation after his father's death in 1913 (Marks, 1978:177-194) and this was perhaps in the mind of the *imbongi* who composed the praise of Solomon's:

OkaNdaba wayengaxabene nomuntu

Wayedl' umhlambi wezinyamazane ngaseNkonjeni.

He who is the descendant of Ndaba had no quarrel with anyone.

He (merely) devoured the herd of buck at Nkonjeni.

(John Dlamini, Tape 3, September 1975)

Krige also notes how the practice of forming Zulu regiments from all the young men of the nation of a particular age was gradually watered down after the formation of the 1918 regiment, *Inqaba yokucasha* (A Tower for hiding in):

... the formation of the Uphondo Iwendlovu (Tusk of the elephant) regiment in 1925 appears to have been purely nominal, without the ceremony that was observed in 1918 for the Inqaba yokucasha...and had it not been for the fact that the Zulu nation had to gather together (at Eshowe) to meet the Prince (of Wales) there would probably have been no new regiment formed at this time.

(Krige, Social System of the Zulus, 1950, pp.115-6)

The words of General Botha to Solomon kaDinuzulu and his followers which Carl Faye quotes are also quite specifically aimed at countering any continued Zulu espousal of the old military ethos:

You must also understand very clearly that you are not being sent back to raise military kraals or impis [armies].

(Faye, Zulu References, 1923, p.46)

In such circumstances how is it possible to maintain in the poetry an atmosphere of physical courage and martial achievement? To some extent it is not. The division in the minds of the two Hlabisa bards between "those of war" and "those who did not fight" is to a degree reflected in the *izibongo* themselves. Those recited by Sunduzabanye, the younger of the two bards, introduce words which suggest that the bearers of the *izibongo* had spent time in urban centres such as Durban and Pietermaritzburg. Loan words such as "imelikazi" ("mare") and "ikalishi" ("carriage"), "ilampu" ("lamp" or "gaslight") and comments on the appearance of those of other races, such as "uMlungu omhlophe 'khenkewane" / "The White Man little pale one" (A 38), suggest a deliberate attempt to absorb features of the new experience into the known verbal construct of the praise poem. In the Hlabisa set of lineage *izibongo*, the theme of personal courage set in a martial context is largely absent from the praises of "the young ones", in reality men born in the first or second decades of this century. Yet in many *izibongo* composed in the early twentieth century and up to the present time the many-faceted theme of courage expressed in physical

combat persists. Moreover the link between izibongo and war is still very strong in the minds of many men. Mboneni Ntuli, a headman and imbongi for the Ntuli chiefs of Mbongolwane, Eshowe, was adamant about the connection between war and praises. The idea that praises were earned, moreover earned through battle, was strongly stated by the imbongi. After praising Ndlela Ntuli, the famous general of Shaka and Dingane, then three of his descendants and ending with the recently deceased Chief Mfungelwa Ntuli, the imbongi remarked that the newly installed chief "has no praises". When pressed (by me) he repeated, "He has no praises. A battle - which battle did he fight in? They are the izibongo of war, those praises (which I have just said). Praises are not made if you (just) sit chewing maize; you are praised according to battle and what you achieved". Interestingly, the assertion that the present chief "has no praises" was challenged by others who were present, and eventually the imbongi's son stepped forward and gave the - rather brief - praises of Mzungezi, the present chief:

Example 5

UJamlude loManqindi .

UVava lwenkunzi yasOdidini .

UMthent' ohlab' usamila. (F)

Jamlude, the De-horned bull,

Sharp-horned bull of Odidini .

The Umthente grass stabs even as it grows . (uncatalogued)

In spite of the Ntuli bard's assertion that wars are past and so too, therefore, are izibongo, many izibongo composed by elderly and younger informants showed that this was not so. Nyonyovu Mdletshe of

Ngoye (see A 115-6) recited the izibongo of forty or so of his brothers and age mates during many visits I made to his homestead between February and September 1976. Most of the men whose praises he recalled had been either in domestic service or employed by South African Railways and returned regularly to their Qwayinduku ward in Ngoye. Nyonyovu himself worked in Durban in the late 1930s and 1940s as a domestic servant, much of the time for the same man, a Mr Dennis McCarthy. These praises of men who were composing in their youth in the 1930s and 1940s are full of references to fights and skirmishes between small groups of men. Although the fights are tied to local events and local issues they nevertheless carry an aura of achievement and martial enjoyment, see for instance Example 57 of Chapter 6 where the martial tone of the praise is increased through the bearer being addressed as "Child of Felaphakathi", (Felaphakathi being the name of one of King Dinuzulu's regiments and hence the name applied to anyone who belonged to that regiment). Interestingly, the praise also reflects the changed circumstances in which the "child" of the Felaphakathi warrior fights:

Threatener before the Ear-ringed Police arrive.

My goodness child of (the) Felaphakathi (warrior) are you still
here?

Run, here are the Police!

His skirmish, it is implied, is against the law, and the local (Zulu) police arrive to break it up. Yet even if in some of the praises the martial references are in some cases boasts rather than actualities they show the tenacity of a heroic ideal in changed social and political conditions.

Further evidence of the continued emphasis on conflict and courage

comes from the izibongo recited at the Mthethwa wedding in the Sihuzu ward of Ngoye (A 92-105). These contain several martial metaphors and formulas and a reference to an actual death. The Mthethwa wedding in mid-May of 1976 was in fact overshadowed by the fierce hostility between the men of the adjacent wards, Sihuzu and Matholanjeni. A fortnight previously there had been fierce fighting at a wedding nearby and three men had died. One of the Mthethwa men at the wedding I attended "giya'd" in flamboyant warrior style. He prefaced his "dance" by kneeling on one knee and holding his dancing stick as if aiming it, spearlike, at an imaginary foe. I learnt afterwards that he was due to appear in court shortly after the wedding on a charge of manslaughter arising from the events at the earlier wedding. No men from the bride's family or from the ward came to the Mthethwa wedding. Only the women came; the men's role was taken by others from the home ward and the bride's lineage izibongo were recited (very indifferently) by a senior female member of the bride's lineage, the Sikhakhane.

Examination of the praises which I recorded at the Mthethwa wedding illustrate the degree to which the composers were drawing their inspiration from the known imagery and the formulas relating to warfare. The metaphor of the shield spattered in blood, encapsulated in a formula, with its connotations of fierce and honourable struggle appeared in the izibongo of Mehlo-engane Mthethwa:

Example 6

ISihlangu-sibomvu isingazi samadoda . (F) (A 93)

The Red Shield it is (red from) the blood of men .

Another man's izibongo referred explicitly to Shaka's soldiership as an inspirational example:

Example 7

UMfana uyahloma uyahlasela unjengoShaka
 ngoba uhlasela kwabezizwe, uMkhont' ogwaz' amambuka. (A 104)
 The Boy storms and attacks, he is like Shaka
 because he attacks in the midst of foreign nations, Spear that
 stabs traitors.

In another instance, a single reference to blood suggests (as it often does in *izibongo*) that it is a decoration of honour gained by fighting :

Example 8

UNogqiza nogazi ekhweni lakho kwaDlamini . (A 99)
 Decorator with blood there at your in-laws home at the
 Dlaminis.

The themes of personal courage and of honour gained through successful physical conflict are also frequently expressed in *izibongo* through the cattle imagery and in particular the bull imagery which is so pervasive in *izibongo* and in *izigiyo*, the statements, songs and chants which accompany *izibongo* in performance in Mode B (see 4.2). The significance of cattle imagery is explored later in this chapter (7.2.), in the meantime it is important to remember that the continued emphasis on conflict and honour is part of the wider importance still accorded to the martial ethic in the performing of *izibongo* in Mode B (see Chapter 4). It would be a mistake to regard such adherence to the symbols and the poetic language of a bygone martial era as a kind of cultural atrophy or a blind, backward-looking nostalgia. It seems rather, a tenacious desire to give expression to Zulu culture in the context of a wider society that is often seen as both hostile to and

negating the wider values of "isiZulu", the Zulu way of life. Also, within the old adherence there is abundant evidence of change. Thus although courage is usually seen as a quality expressed through violent physical action it is also sometimes viewed in a more general light and linked to a wider concept of manhood. The urge to endure, itself a part of the many-faceted courage theme, is sometimes expressed in the nineteenth century izibongo, in terms which express a resilience of spirit applicable to other situations besides warfare. Take, for example, the formulaic praise in the izibongo of Ndulungu kaMnyamana Buthelezi:

UZama ngenhliziyo, amandla engenawo /

Trier with the spirit, when his strength is gone. (A 14)

The example below is, perhaps, also an attempt to represent a broader view of honour; it hints at something wider than honour through conflict. The composer (from Mahlabathini) seems to be searching for a new, contemporary definition of manhood. Although the content of the praise may be to some extent novel the form in which he expresses it is recognisably and typically that of izibongo, balanced, antithetical and compressed:

Example 9

Mana Sohlando. Mana streit!

Ubudoda abuthengwa abunjengibayi.

Stand Sohlando. Stand straight!

Manhood is not bought, it is not like a girl's shawl.

(uncatalogued)

Poetic expression of the themes of conflict and courage
in the izibongo of contemporary leaders

The presence of these themes in the *izibongo* of contemporary leaders varies considerably. The present king's praises give an aura of grandeur, royalty and dignity through the use of imagery associated with power and kingship, royal praise names and royal formulas. The conflict and courage themes are expressed primarily through the constant references to his struggle to attain the kingship, a recurrent motif in royal and chiefly *izibongo* and one which Damane and Sanders (1974) mention as recurring in the *dithoko* (praise poems) of Sotho chiefs. The *izibongo* of Isaiah Shembe (A 2) are full of references to his struggle to win converts to the Nazarite Church in the face of great odds. The record in the *izibongo* of how Shembe established his Church is in some ways comparable to records of the military campaigns of Shaka and Dingane in their *izibongo*. The military imagery and in some cases the formulas as well as the imagery of royal *izibongo* occur in Shembe's praises (Gunner:1982). So for instance, Shembe like Shaka (and Zwelithini) has the martial, formulaic praise name :

Example 10

UGaq' elibomvu ngasekuphathweni .

Spear red even at the handle. (A 2, 1.54; see Cope, 1968,p.89, 1.15)

The themes of conflict and courage are therefore presented very much in the old heroic terms. The *izibongo* of Chief Luthuli (see 6.5.) are expressed largely in terms of conflict and they gain much of their power from the allusive use of martial, Shakan praise names and praises. The area of conflict, however, is a contemporary political one. Moreover Luthuli is praised for courage and integrity in with-

standing attempts to "buy him off":

Example 11

53 AmaNgwatha namaNgisi bebhuluma ePitoli .

Bethi kasazi uLuthuli sizomenzenjani ?

55 Bathi, "Luthuli thath' imali ulahle abantu ",

Wathi Luthuli, kepha, "Ngingalahl' abantu noma ngithath'
abantu?

noma ngilahl' imali ?"

Bakhuluma abanezindlebe ezimhlophe

bebhuluma behlebana bodwa.

60 Bethi, "Singamenzenjani uLuthuli ngoba akayifun' imali,
ufun' abantwana baseAfrika.

Kwenzenjani ube singamnika i'nto zonke kodwa

alahle imali athatha amaAfrika?"

Wathi Luthuli kepha,

65 "Ngilungile uma bengilambe nabo".

53 The Afrikaners and the English had talks in Pretoria.

They said, "What on earth are we going to do with Luthuli ?"

55 They said, "Luthuli take the money and reject the people !"

But Luthuli replied, "Shall I reject the people or take them?

Shall I reject the money?"

The white-eared ones conferred

speaking in hushed voices among themselves.

60 They said, "What on earth can we do with Luthuli, because he
doesn't want money,

he wants the children of Africa!"

How is it that we have offered him all these things but still

he rejects the money and takes the children of Africa?

65 And Luthuli spoke, saying,

"It suits me if I am hungry with them."

Although the allusive Shakan praise names and the bull imagery of the Luthuli *izibongo* (see ls.1-3,14,73-81) evoke the old martial courage, the portrait that emerges from the praises is very much that of a leader grappling with contemporary issues, and the new is therefore grafted onto the old without any sense of incongruity.

The four *izibongo* of Chief Buthelezi in the Appendix present varied views of the Chief. The *izibongo* composed by Selby Xaba (A 7) are probably the least known of the four. In February 1976 when I interviewed him Mr Xaba was working as a cashier for Barclays Bank, Nongoma. He told me that he had started composing in 1971 out of admiration for the Chief: "I began (to compose) because I realised his great skill in working for Black people ("isizwe esimnyama", literally, "the Black nation"). Xaba based his oral compositions on topical political events concerning Chief Buthelezi, events which were either common knowledge or which he had read about in the press. He had performed in public only once. This was at a gathering of several hundred at Paulpietersburg in northern Natal where Chief Buthelezi was the main speaker. In spite of only one public performance, Xaba was known locally as an unofficial *imbongi* for the Chief and whenever he saw either Chief Buthelezi or his chauffeur in Nongoma (where until 1976 the KwaZulu Legislative Assmebly was held), he would call out snatches of the *izibongo* he had composed, often having the latest section based on the most recent event. Xaba was also a great admirer of the royal *imbongi* and frequently heard him perform. Significantly, Xaba mentioned that when composing he particularly selected incidents where the Chief had been criticised, thus suggesting that he saw it as

his role to defend the Chief from his critics. His izibongo for Chief Buthelezi give a sense of tension between opposing forces; they refer constantly to external pressures upon him and then express counter-aggression from within. He also makes great use of the recognised imagery of strength such as the bull and of imagery associated with royalty and leaders, such as the eagle. The praises are therefore entirely topical while at the same time exploiting a rich vein of figurative language and techniques of style recognisable as those of izibongo.

The following lines from A 7 suggest forcibly how the Chief is himself hemmed in and under attack. He is described as :

Example 12

INkunzi ekakwe ngamakhosi nezinduna ogwini lwasolwandle.

Bull hemmed in by chiefs and headmen on the sandy place near
the sea.

And as :

Example 13

INkunzi abayigwaze emseleni .

Bull that they stabbed in the furrow.

And as:

Example 14

UMnyonkolozi ongadinwa zinsolo.

Frowner not tired out by criticism.

Conversely he is presented as a fighter and given praises which present him in an aggressive, martial light, with the "Buffalo" praise perhaps intended as an allusive comparison with Shaka. Even though the battles are those of a politician, not a military leader, they are unmistakably martial in tone :

Example 15

INkunzi eqhwinde eSoweto...

INyathi ejame ngomtheth' osisekelo uHulumeni wakwaZulu,
besabe bonke ukuyehlela.

Yehlelwe nguRamusa Lebua.

Yehlelwa nguJoji Mathanzima kwelamaXhosa.

Bull that pawed the ground at Soweto....

Buffalo that stared fiercely at the constitution of the KwaZulu
government,
all were afraid to challenge.

Then Ramusa Lebua challenged.

Then George Mathanzima of the Xhosa challenged.

The *izibongo* for Chief Buthelezi composed by Phumasilwe Myeni were first published as "Mangosuthu" in a collection of Myeni's poetry entitled Hayani maZulu (1969). The *izibongo* he performed at Mahlaba-thini in July 1976 begin by repeating the published version, but only for the first four lines. After this Myeni puts identical (or very nearly identical) sections in a different order. Towards the end of the performance, however, he adds new material, and sections of the published poem are omitted. What is left out and what is added are significant. The rivalry-over-succession motif, where the aspiring Mangosuthu has his claim to chieftainship hotly disputed by his older half-brother Mceleli, is largely omitted. Included are accounts of Chief Buthelezi's difficult, often explosive dealings with South African Government officials in Nongoma, with the (then) Minister of Bantu Affairs, Mr M.C.Botha, and with other Bantustan leaders such as Chief Mathanzima and Chief Mangope. In other words, Myeni, in updating the *izibongo* also changes the emphasis. He adds a more national view

of Chief Buthelezi as leader to the earlier, more inward-looking one, where the Chief is seen primarily as leader of the Buthelezi people. In both the published and the performed *izibongo*, though, Myeni includes lines which compare the Chief to two of his illustrious royal ancestors, "Mamonga", ("The Sustainer"), ie. King Dinuzulu, his maternal grandfather, and Ndabuko kaMpande, perhaps the most famous of King Cetshwayo's brothers; elsewhere, (lines 18-19 are additions to the 1969 version) he compares the Chief's "happy" journeys overseas with the sorrowful crossings of his great-grandfather Cetshwayo and his grandfather Dinuzulu, both of whom went overseas during their period of exile from Zululand. Cetshwayo travelled to England to petition Queen Victoria and Dinuzulu went to St Helena where he remained from 1890-1898 (Binns, 1968:148-159):

Example 16

- 15 Wanhlanhlatha ngokudabul' amanzi emoyizela,
 ingani uJinindi wawadabul' ekhala,
 ingani uMamonga wawadabul' nemvula yezinyembezi
 ethi-ke le eSentelina
 kanti kwaThengisa esuk' ebuya esezashiya 'mathambo. (A 6)
- 15 He made new tracks by crossing the water smiling,
 whereas Jinindi (Cetshwayo) crossed weeping,
 whereas Mamonga crossed in a rain of tears
 thinking on his way to St Helena (that he would end his days)
 whereas he was to return to KwaThengisa and leave his bones
 there.

Passages such as the above combine essential resonances of the past, and of royalty, with the image of an active, thrusting contemporary leader. The Chief is also, though, in the midst of conflict,

both attacking and under attack: he is " a mamba that will hit them (men) on their soles as they turn their backs", ("imamba iyobashaya ezithendeni bewufulathele") and he is "stabbed in two places" by hostile bulls.

In the izibongo performed by the two non-literate Buthelezi bards the aspect of fierce political struggle is hardly present (A 4 and A 5). It may be that these izibongo recited by Ndodengemuntu Buthelezi and Hezekiah Buthelezi are not the most representative of the compositions by non-literate Buthelezi bards. Perhaps such compositions are not considered as important and not given as much prominence as the compositions of Myeni and other educated men such as C.B.S.Ntuli (1). Certainly there have been much longer izibongo in circulation until at least 1964 and possibly much later. A copy of a very long praise-poem of two hundred or so lines was given by Chief Buthelezi to David Rycroft in 1964 (2). It is typed, set out in fifteen stanzas and is attributed to "Sophandase, Inkunzi ephand' iduli (The Bull that digs anthills), imbongi." The Chief's struggle for succession in the face of intense internal opposition from his immediate family and from other interested parties within the Buthelezi people dominates these izibongo. Here the struggle for succession is the central theme rather than a single, slight motif. The theme is repeated time and again in the fifteen stanzas but is expressed in a range of imagery which adds constantly to the variety and the aesthetic appeal of the izibongo . The following extracts portray an active, at times aggressive, leader surrounded by hostile forces from among his own Buthelezi people. Education and its importance, a secondary theme in several izibongo for the Chief, is also mentioned, but in one instance it is given a strong combative emphasis and is presented as a necessary and enviable weapon. The

lines from stanza 11 present a variety of praise names and enumerate in the condensed narrative fashion of izibongo both the Chief's foes and allies in his struggle - the last line names three of his uncles (including the *imbongi* Sophandase), who supported his claim as successor. The names of the two residences, Salabengafi and Hambabengamthandi, are allusions to the forces opposed to the Chief, namely his half-brother Mceleli and his senior uncle and ex-Regent, Maliyamakhandi :

Example 17 (from stanzas 5, 10 and 11 of the 1964 typescript)(3):

- St.5 UMadladlamela owadladlamela izincwadi zomnyelete,
Sezingaphakathi ePitoli; kwathi izikhulu zasePitoli zaqwebana
eMona.
Ungasho Shenge Nkosi kaMlambo ukuthi bayakuzonda,
Abakuzondi bayakwesaba, ngoba uqgabe ngebhuku bona begqaba
ngamafuth' eNgwe nakaBhejana, bethi bazobanesithunzi kanti
bazifak' isichitho.
Inkosi abayihlasela ngemikhonto, yona yababhuqa ngephensela.
- St.10 Mveli wamazibuko abushelezi,
Nhlambi ehlamba kwezid' iziziba, ngoba ingahlamba
kwezifushane ibuya nodaka.
Nkunz' enzoma yakithi kwaPhindangene, ebhonga yehla ibuyelela
ngamaqele aseKoloni.
Yabuya sebeyigax' iminyezane yawoNdlebezikhanyilanga...
- St.11 Mpangel' ekhal' igijima ibange kwaHambabengamthandi,
Ithe isabuza kwasuk' izelemani zayivimbela...
Izelemani zithe zithinta umebuzo kanti zithin' imamba.
Umgeqi wamagula awaphanyeke esiganwini
Izul' elidume kwaSalabengafi izingane zikaZimbu liziphambanisile.

The Sky that thundered at Salabengafi and the children of
Zimbu were dazed by the flash.

The Rooster which crowed on top of the house of the royal
prince,

The people of Shenge heard its cries.

The Fire that raged above Qhoza and the Buthelezi people
were in hot pursuit.

It was started by Nsingwana, Zephania and Sophandase.

Ndodengemuntu and Hezekiah's izibongo for Chief Buthelezi each contain praises very similar to the 1964 typescript (see 8.1.), yet in their izibongo there is no sign of the kind of updating and shifting interpretation that has obviously taken place in Myeni's izibongo of Chief Buthelezi (Myeni, 1969 and A 6) and to some extent in those by Selby Xaba (4).

To sum up, it seems that in some cases in the izibongo of contemporary leaders the martial and heroic themes of conflict and courage can be set in a modern context. The extent to which this happens depends on the personality and the role of the leader in question. It also depends on the particular skills of the individuals who praise him.

7.1.2. The wider biographical framework

In spite of the dominance of the theme of war and in particular the themes of conflict and courage, other biographical factors also feature in izibongo in this corpus which are attributed to individuals composing at the end of the last century. Stuart, too, basing his remarks on izibongo of ordinary individuals mentions their biographical element (5). He also, in his private jottings, remarks on

the way in which izibongo illuminate character, albeit - in his view - character of an active, energetic nature:

It is really character which is the true basis of zibongo [sic]. All a man's characteristics are taken note of, especially such [as] are firm, energetic, swift, whilst personal bodily features are noted, as it were incidentally.
(Stuart, Notebook 77, inside cover)

Later he remarks - again, as it were, to himself - that the ordinary Zulu speaker "is peculiarly observant and quick to detect characteristics, of which we have millions of examples in his izibongo" (6). Certainly, the striking ability of izibongo to lay bare, sometimes with fierce clarity, the essential nature of an individual is evident throughout the present corpus. Biographical details, comments on appearance, positive and negative characteristics, all appear in the izibongo as testimony to the incisive, all-embracing "eye" of the praiser - or self-praiser. These elements constitute the wider framework of izibongo and I shall discuss each one briefly in the following pages.

The general biographical details in izibongo are of tremendous importance and many such details are totally unrelated to the conflict and courage themes. These general biographical details represent in a way the essential and vivid small print of people's lives. The forty or so izibongo from men of his generation which Nyonyovu Mdletshe recited do, as we have seen (p.312), mention conflict. They also provide a record of the small events in people's lives and they show - as do the lines concerned with personal detail in the present king's izibongo - the importance which the poetic tradition places on the stating of personal details. Many of the praises which people give themselves or are given are shaped from a variety of tiny, seemingly

mundane facts or oblique allusive observations: two of the four extracts from the Mdletshe collection record events at home such as sickness and death and the other two show how people turn their work experience into praises:

Example 21

Kukhona umuntu onosuku laph' ekhaya.

There is a person who has a single day left at home.

Example 22

Ugez' umuntu efile khona uzothandwa idlozi.

UNCwebencwebe amatsh' ethuna.

The washer of a dead person so that the spirit may love him.

The Flicker and Shine of the stones of the grave.

Example 23

UMakhanda enqola ukunyakanyaka.

The Steam-engines - their clatter and screech.

Example 24

UDokotela phuthuma!

Baphelile abantu kwaDambuza.

The-Doctor hurry!

People are dying at Dambuza (ie. The Point, Durban).

Very few men's izibongo have the inward-looking, confessional aspect which marks some izibongo composed by women. A few men's izibongo in the corpus do, however, dwell on crises or difficulties that move away from the more usual depiction of conflict situations, revealing instead inner difficulties and states of mind. The following izibongo were recited during the Mthethwa wedding mentioned earlier. The bridegroom's group had just returned to the homestead having

"giya'd". Although the earlier part of the *izibongo* consist of short, varied praises with no particular theme, the *izibongo* below focus on the bearer's wanderings, the loneliness and difficulties of those times; he mentions a game popular among Sotho speakers, and the *Hotso* referred to may be a reference to a Xhosa diviner, stressing once more the extent of his wanderings. Each reference lends strength to the impression of travel far afield, far from the security of family and friends offered by *KwaDlangezwa*:

Example 25

Yimina uMbila-khahlela sidl' ihlobo.

Yimina uMathunzi entaba.

Yimina uSheyi 'mlabalaba uyadlala 'beSuthu.

UHotso ovela ngamehlo eyitezi.

Ngangingehla ngihlangane nembila enhla nezwe langikhona
ngangihluphekile kulezo'ndawo.

Kwakungekho uMama kungekho uBaba nganginabani?

Ngathi uma sengibuya lapha ngabuya sengihluphekile.

...Ngase ngihamba...(he pauses)

Ngase ngith' izintaba ziyadilika ngoba-ke mina...(he tails off)

Ngase ngafic' umbila usukhona kwelakithi KwaDlangezwa.

Ngase ngiwudla.

Ngase ngiwudla ngiphinda ngasho ngathi, "Yimina sengibuyile,"

USwidi-nonkamfela,

USoka-lamanyala. (A 105)

It is I Maize-please-blossom so we can eat the ripe fruit.

It is I The Shadows of the hills.

It is I Sheyi the (draughts) game the Basotho play.

Hotso - only his eyes were seen on the stairs.

I met a rock-rabbit from up-country. Oh what trouble I had in
those parts.

I was without my mother and without my father, whom did I
have?

And then when I returned home I returned sick at heart.

...Then I went...(he pauses)

Then I thought the mountains were tumbling down because...

It was then that I found maize still to be had in our own
place of KwaDkangezwa and I ate.

Then once more I spoke and I said, "It is I, I have come
back,"

Sweet-tied-in the-middle,

Bachelor-among-bachelors. (A 105)

Although other izibongo comment briefly on the difficulties of work situations, or make cryptic social comments (for example A 107, A 112-4), the emphasis on action that characterises izibongo makes it difficult for such introspective self-analysis and confessional narration to feature in them.

Commentary on physical appearance

Many izibongo, in their commentary on physical appearance, demonstrate the incisive eye of the beholder. Because izibongo are used to define an individual, people expect negative as well as positive praises, and in some cases praises which define - in terms of appearance - without being excessively negative or positive. Because they can also be a means of passing judgement on a person and censuring qualities considered to be too far from the norm, some

praises are extremely critical, as if this is a way of exerting social pressure and pulling behaviour back into line. The strong humorous impulse particularly noticeable in the *izibongo* of ordinary people is very evident in negative, even neutral commentary on physical appearance. Any unusual physical characteristic can be seized upon and set in *izibongo* as the following examples indicate. A familiar physical characteristic can be expressed by the use of a formula (see Example 27). At the same time, the continuing impulse to absorb new words and new material, as long as this covers familiar subject areas, is very evident:

Example 26 (a very short person)

UMkhovu ubashile umkhovu onesilevu. (A 69)

Midget of a goblin, goblin with a beard.

Example 27 (a small frame)

I'mbambo kazephukanga (F)

kwakuyoba insizwa enkulu kaPhayane*

wabanjwa izimbambo.

The ribs did not break (i.e.expand out) (F)

there would have been a well built youth of Phalane*

he was held (in) by his ribs.

* A clan praise name for the Mkhwanazi. (Ngoye, uncatalogued)

Example 28 (an awkward posture)

UManxambombo ukuma kwehayipeni.

The-Skew-stander (with) the stance of a hairpin. (Dube, Richards Bay, uncatalogued)

Besides such praises which comment on negative or neutral aspects of appearance, *izibongo* also remark on physical beauty in men and women. Thus Example 29 is a praise for a tall person of good carriage

which is used for both sexes. Some positive izibongo relate directly to sexual prowess, and the wide use of the bull metaphor carries with it connotations of strength, virility and physical beauty with its precise associations controlled by the immediate context of the praise. The calf metaphor is also widely used and a formula such as, "ISithole esimdludlu", "The Sleek Calf" carries with it connotations of health and good looks. Another formula compares a tall, straight-standing person to the straight, high stalks of millet and to high grass:

Example 29

UMqangabhodwe phumel' ekhwaneni.

UHlanga zamade amabele.

The Tall Rank Grass grows above the sedge grass.

The Spears of Tall Millet. (Ngoye, uncatalogued)

Commentary on virility and sexual prowess

Many men's and some women's izibongo contain references to their bearer's sexual attractions and in some cases sexual prowess. The earthy, bawdy nature of many Xhosa izibongo is noted by Wainwright in his study of the praises of Xhosa mineworkers (1979:138-159). Some commentators have found it difficult to reconcile this element of izibongo with their conception of its elevated, heroic tone. Thus Mazisi Kunene refers despairingly to eroticisms of "the vulgar type" in izibongo (Kunene,1962:121) and notes, a little primly, that the printed izibongo of the late Bhekuzulu kaSolomon contain "vulgarisms reminiscent of pre-Shakan poetry" (1962:188). It seems likely that the earthy, vulgar, bawdy element is an old, well-established strain in the izibongo by no means confined to pre-Shakan poetry. Certainly a

number of nineteenth century izibongo which I recorded, even those of chiefs (for example A 13), contain very earthy lines. These are called out by the bard on solemn occasions with as much care as more obviously heroic lines. To ignore the bawdy element in izibongo is to fail to see the extent of their biographic nature, and perhaps to underestimate the link between izibongo, youth and courtship, an element which must have been present even during the height of Shaka's military rule (1812-1828). Vilakazi has little to say on vulgarities in Zulu izibongo but he mentions that Rubusana's collection of the Xhosa izibongo of chiefs and heroes is frequently marred by "obscene language carelessly thrown into the poetry" (7). It would seem, then, that at least some Xhosa izibongo, like Zulu, mix earthy references with general and heroic ones, and to ignore the former is to misrepresent the poetry and the attitudes behind the poetry.

With Zulu izibongo, as with some songs such as girls' puberty songs (Krige, 1968), it seems that there is a certain amount of licence attached to the use of bawdy language. Thus there is licence to state in the controlled context of a performance situation what one may certainly not state in ordinary conversation. Not all praises dealing with virility and such qualities are bawdy; as the examples below illustrate, they range from general statements on the attractiveness of the bearer to the opposite sex, to extravagant claims of sexual prowess and phallic power:

Example 30 (general attractiveness)

UMthunzi othamel' amaledi. (A 114)

Shade in which the ladies bask.

Example 31 (irrestibility)

UNTombi zimnik' ukhis' nangamuhla engasafuni. (F) (A 119)

The-Girls give him a kiss even on the day he no longer wants one.

Example 32 (phallic boasting)

Nombhobho lwendlovu. (A 114)

Trunk of an elephant.

Example 33 (boasting - and punning)

UBantwana dlanini ubisi mina ngizodl' onyoko. (F) (A 67)

The-Children partake of your milk as for me I shall partake of
your mothers.

Personal characteristics

Izibongo are a vehicle for the acute observation of personal characteristics. The emphasis on defining the nature of the individual, as well as his or her appearance means that negative or neutral, as well as positive comment feature in praises. Not surprisingly, the element of critical comment in izibongo comes often from praises composed by others and not by the bearer. At the Mthethwa wedding to which I have already referred (p.313) I asked Tikidi Mthethwa, one of the bridegroom's party, "who" had composed his izibongo? He replied, simply, "The young fellows composed them". His cousin's subsequent remark, however, highlighted the way in which critical comment from others becomes part of a person's praises. Thus Masofeyisi Mthethwa (A 103 and A 98) continued, "They're composed by others from something that happens. You do something, or something happens - you do something wrong, maybe you hit someone and you collect praises like that. Then others will give me izibongo because I've done something. Izibongo are like that, they go according to your wrongdoing".

The critical dimension in izibongo is not an innovation and is not confined to the izibongo of ordinary people. While the role of the

Zulu *imbongi* in the past as the voice of the people, conveying popular opinion to the monarch (Ngubane, 1976:131) has probably been exaggerated, there is ample evidence that a king's (or chief's) unpopular actions and unpleasant characteristics were sometimes remarked upon in his *izibongo* (and sometimes still are, see A 57 1s.3-4). Thus Cetshwayo is warned by his *imbongi* against impulsive aggression: "Do not stab that elephant" (the "elephant" being the Natal leader Theophilus Shepstone), (Dlamini, Tape 3). The *izibongo* of King Dingane contain some extremely caustic comments, such as the following assessment of his shifty nature:

Example 34

Uvezi ngifice bemzila.

Ngifike ngamudla

kanti ngifak' iloyi esisweni.

Vezi, I found them abstaining from his company.

I came, I partook of it

but I put poison in my stomach. (Dlamini, Tape 2 and see Nyembezi, 1958, p.49).

The position as regards criticism in the *izibongo* of contemporary Zulu leaders is rather different. The praises of Isaiah Shembe, Chief Buthelezi (in any of his sets of *izibongo*), Chief Luthuli, King Zwelithini, have very little if any criticism of the bearers themselves - a situation very different from that of Xhosa praising where both Mafeje (1963:91;1967) and Opland (1974;1977:49) comment on criticism as a feature of *izibongo* of leaders. The reason for this apparent falling away of criticism of the leader in contemporary Zulu *izibongo* may be because the *izimbongi* feel that external pressure on

those they praise is so great that they themselves ought not to be criticised. The criticism of the bard is directed outwards, away from the leader, rather than at him.

With ordinary people, the critical comment in izibongo is more freely given and can be seen as part of the overall definition of the individual through the eyes of his or her companions and perhaps self-critical lines also sometimes originate from the bearer. In this corpus the characteristics criticised include selfishness, indiscretion, stubbornness and in one case, excessive wife-beating. As a group, mothers-in-law or the mothers of young girls were criticised almost as much as were co-wives in women's izibongo, and criticism of the former group is a stock theme in men's izibongo. Obviously criticism in izibongo acts as a form of social control. Sometimes, though, the bearer composes lines which defy such criticism. Thus one of the examples below (Example 39) is a comment on advice ignored. The bearer of the praises was having an affair with the wife of a blind man. He was severely censured for this but went his own way, as his izibongo record.

Example 35 (selfishness and lack of hospitality)

Uyashalaza nje. Uhlabile yini? (A 22)

You are avoiding us. Are you having a feast?

Example 36 (stinginess)

UNqodoyi amehl' amnyama ngasemalini. (Ngoye, uncatalogued)

Stingy person (with) greedy eyes for the money.

Example 37 (excessive wife-beating, temper)

UMfazi akushaywa kuhlathshiwe.

The-Wife should not be beaten when there's a feast. (Ngoye, uncatalogued)

Example 39 (advice successfully ignored)

UNkalankala 'dung' amanzi.

Bakhuza, bathi, "Nkalankala mus' ukuwadung' amanzi kuzonakala".

Inkalankala yadung' amanzi yawelela ngaphesheya. (A 119)

The Crab disturbed the water.

They admonished him, saying, "Crab, don't cross the water the thing
will go wrong."

The Crab disturbed the water and crossed over to the other
side.

Positive commentary in izibongo, like negative, operates as a form of social control; although many of the positive remarks in izibongo relate to the themes of conflict and courage there are other qualities which are singled out for praise. Qualities such as generosity (the obverse of the selfishness criticised in Examples 35 and 36) are remarked upon in izibongo, particularly (but not only) in those of chiefs or people in authority (see A 57). A number of positive qualities are stressed in the following izibongo of Obed Mnguni, a store-keeper in Ngoye whose father had at one time served as acting chief in the Mkhwanazi territory. The first three lines below are his father's izibongo which have been given again (as often happens) to the son. Mentioned below are the respect and love in which he is held by others, his ability to draw people to him expressed through the metaphor of a storage pit which remains for ever full, the need people have of him and the way in which he in turn helps people and is widely known. Although Mr Mnguni wrote out these izibongo for me, he stressed that many parts of them were composed by other people who praised him when he "giya'd" at weddings. He mentioned also that there was a

family **imbongi** who "gathered together" what people said about a particular individual. Certainly his noticeably structured **izibongo**, rich in metaphors, formulas and personal references seem to me to bear the mark of an **imbongi** who both "gathered together" and elaborated:

Example 40

Gugu lamagugu elituswa abafazi namadoda.
 Mabuthela obuthela izinsizwa nezintombi.
 Mgodì kawugcwali ngoba ubuthela zonke izinhlobo.
 Abadala bayamfuna abancane bayamdinga.
 Ndumandumane ekhalelwa 'zinhlanga zonke... (F)
 UMdidiyeli wezinto zonke ngoba abashay' uhabhu bamdingile...
 Kukhulume uZulu wonkana wakufuna,
 iziqu zakhe kuze kube namuhla ziyafuneka. (A 108)

Treasure of treasures recommended by women and by men.
 Collector who collects together the young men and girls.
 Hole that is never filled because you bring together all the
 clans.

The old like him the young need him.
 Famous one cried out for by all the clans...
 Generous giver of all things because those who play the mouth
 harp* need you...

Zulus from all over spoke about you and needed you,
 Your degrees** are in demand to this very day.

* i.e. the poor who play only the mouth harp

** a reference to his education and the power to help others brought by knowledge.

Mr Mnguni's **izibongo** represent some of the ideal qualities associated

with being a chief. Another is the ability to deal fairly with people and this, together with the notion of protective strength is mentioned in the izibongo of Chief Ndesheni Dube of Empembeni near Richards Bay who was installed in November 1975:

Example 41

UMgoqo yasekhaya nayasendle.

UMashiya kubalansiwe nakobaba nakomama. (A 62)

Gate-pole (which protects) at home and in the wilderness as well.

You who manage things fairly both with your father's people and
your mother's.

The izibongo of ordinary people also contain statements marking the bearer's strength and ability to protect, together with qualities such as energy and vitality. In both the previous and following examples the "pool" metaphor of the gatepost, with its associations of strength and security introduces the praise. As Example 45 demonstrates, boasting and hyperbole as a means of expressing vitality are also permissible here:

Example 42

UGoqo ohlay'* i'ngane zaseNtuze.** (A 102)

Gate-pole on which the children from the Ntuze (stream) perch.

* The speaker uses a dialectal "y" for the usual "l".

**See the izibongo of Senzangakhona, Cope, Izibongo, pp.78-9, ls.56-8.

Example 43

UShanela kome kuthi qha.

Sweeper until there's not a speck to be seen. (Ngoye, uncatalogued)

Example 44

UMjahaza-khathale Imfene yasoNgoye. (A 106)

Hurrying-One-who-tires-himself-out, Baboon of Ngoye (forest).

Example 45

Ng'uNdumandumane eyaduma ezizweni. (F) (A 127)

I am the Famous One famous among the nations.

Courage and resilience are qualities usually associated in izibongo with fighting and therefore with war. They are expressed, for instance, in the formula uZama ngenhliziyo amandla engenayo (Trier with the spirit when his strength is gone) (8). They are also qualities noted, though, in women's izibongo where the composers are clearly thinking of other situations besides warfare in which those very qualities are called into play. In the first example below, Ma Jele commemorates her unusual courage when as a young girl she crossed the Hluhluwe game reserve alone. The road from Mtubatuba to Hlabisa runs through the reserve. People often walk along the road in groups but for a girl to do so alone is unusual, as it is full of game such as rhinoceros, lions and buffalo. She also, like the speaker in Example 39, commemorates her singlemindedness in the face of opposition. In the second example below, Ma Mngema likens her ability to endure life's hardships to the hardest of wood which when used as firewood burns for a very long time; the metaphor of wood associated with resilience also occurs in men's izibongo but then it is usually linked with physical conflict; see for example A 32 where the log is hacked but to no avail.

Example 46

NgiwuDabuli isiqiwu

esingadatshulwa intombi.

Ng'uSibindigidi ogidela abathakathi.

UPhikelela ngenkani;

UZulu wafunga waphindekezela.

I am She who cuts across the game reserve
that no girl crosses.

I am the boldest of the bold, outfacer of wizards.

Obstinate Perseverer

the Zulu nation swore at me then ate its words.

(Gunner,1979,p.246)

Example 47 (resilience)

Ng'uSikhuni somsense uManyamuzela.

I am the Firebrand from the hard wood, the Smoulderer. (A 127)

The constant, often allusive expression of hostility to co-wives which features in women's izibongo has already been mentioned (6.2.2.). The above two examples show, however, that women's izibongo can and do move outside this dominant theme and express other qualities which stress the strength and vitality of women in Zulu society in areas quite removed from physical and emotional conflict.

The above section has shown how the izibongo of both men and women can serve as a rich and satisfying medium for the expression of experience, appearance and personality. Although men's izibongo often contain the heroic themes linked to the martial ethic, izibongo as a whole range beyond these themes. The izibongo of individuals are often kalaedoscopic and prismatic in their fragmented colourfulness, bringing together momentarily brief, brilliant flashes of incidents and insights. A final example of the way in which humour, vitality, insight into character and biographic detail can be briefly contained in a single individual's izibongo is the praises of MaMpanza of Hlabisa, which were recited to a group of women by her great-niece,

Elizabeth Dube (see Gunner, 1979:251-3):

Example 48

UGeja*
 UGej' elibomvu
 UMqamathi wendlela eyodwa ebhek' ezulwini.
 Vi violet! Ayithundi iyahohoza.
 UMcophozi wesikiki sakwaNgcobo.
 MaKopana odlala kwaNongoma.
 Ngqobho! Ntabayezulu!
 Uyibhayi eisehla 'senyuka Mantaba.
 UNdlovu edla ophinela! (F)

The Hoe!
 The Red Hoe!
 Perseverer on the lonely road pointing to the sky.
 Splasher in the Ngcobo's potty.
 Mrs Little-Tin who dances at Nongoma.
 Prodder! You of the Ntabayezulu regiment!
 She is the shawl that goes up and down Mantaba (mountain).
 Elephant that devours the great ones! (F)

* I have altered the punctuation slightly and have marked some elisions to reflect more closely the spoken word but have otherwise kept to the 1979 text.

7.2. Figurative Language in Izibongo

Praise poetry is exceedingly rich in imagery, particularly in metaphors; both bards and non-specialist composers have access to a store of figurative language which they may redeploy in new compositions. The special characteristics of the Zulu tradition as

regards the use of established imagery needs to be considered before the imagery itself is discussed.

7.2.1. Composers, audiences and the poetic tradition

The division into memorisers and improvisers which Opland (1975) demonstrates in the Xhosa tradition does not apply to the Zulu tradition of praise poetry. There is a strong liturgical emphasis in the Zulu tradition because of the functional importance of izibongo of deceased members of a lineage. People also need to remember izibongo of members of their age group and their male relatives; women know the izibongo of their women friends (and also in many cases of their male relatives), young boys and girls know the izibongo of their peers and older relations and so on. There is therefore a strong memorial emphasis in the tradition balanced by an emphasis on composing. The weight of received tradition represented by the izibongo which are in circulation shapes people's aesthetic sense as regards what is considered apt and fitting in figurative language just as the unspoken conventions of parallelism and grammatical structures shape the form of the poetry. Moreover, received tradition as regards izibongo may mean different things to Xhosa and to Zulu speakers. The idea of stability is of tremendous importance in the Zulu poetic tradition; in part this is because of their liturgical role but it must also be related to the political nature of (in particular) the royal praises, their use to confirm and validate the credentials of a lineage or, as today, to reassert a people's history. The stability of the praises of the various Zulu kings is quite striking (see Chapter 8.1.). Thus a number of the metaphoric praise names and the praises by which the kings were known in their lifetime are still the ones by which they are praised today. The praises of the kings are performed as a present

reality and the illusion of permanence is created through the power of the poetry. Shaka, therefore, is "The Axe which surpasses all other axes in sharpness", ("ILemb' eleq' amany' amalembe ngokukhalipha"), and for the duration of performance, past and present are fused in the consciousness of the listener. The aesthetic aspect of this is that Zulu audiences expect to hear what they consider the "same" izibongo for the kings and would be outraged and disappointed if they did not do so. No Zulu bard who drastically reworked the royal izibongo of the nineteenth century and produced noticeably different praise names would last more than a day. This sense of the rightness of accumulation and stability also - but to a lesser degree - shapes the audience expectations of the izibongo of contemporary leaders. The difference between the Xhosa and Zulu practice with regard to izibongo was pointed out to me by Chief Buthelezi in 1976 when he remarked on how strange he found it that on each of his visits to the Transkei (to the same town) he was praised with a completely new set of praises. The Zulu izibongo tradition is strongly past-oriented, the praises are autobiographic and biographic - in the case of ordinary individuals - and are regarded as memorials and this nexus of emphases on stability perhaps explains why there is such a dense use of formulas and recognised metaphors from a common pool.

7.2.2. The association of figurative language and central themes

The dynamic of war expressed through the major themes of conflict and courage is, as I have demonstrated, a major preoccupation in izibongo. Closely related to the two major themes is the theme of strength and virility. There are a number of metaphors, both free-floating and set in formulas, which are linked to the former themes, and by far the most widely used body of metaphors used for the

strength-virility theme relates to cattle.

In general among composers, performers and audiences, metaphors which have been frequently used seem not to be despised as "worn-out and hackneyed", in fact quite the opposite is true and their very familiarity increases their attraction for composer/performer and listener alike. In many cases the very fact that metaphors are known and recognised means that the connotations are quickly grasped and in the often very fast oral-aural performing situation of izibongo this is very important. Leisurely musing and time-consuming poetic analysis to tease out the associations of a new metaphor are rarely possible. Whatever is new must also in some way(s) be strongly recognisable. Leech's remark that the "literary metaphor par excellence is an image freshly created in the imagination of the poet" (1968:147), cannot apply to the performing art of izibongo.

Figurative language associated with war and honour

a) The use of metonymy

Leech (1968:53) notes the compressed, allusive nature of this figure of speech : "Metonymy can be regarded as a kind of ellipsis: its obvious advantage in poetry is its conciseness. It is also defined as "a figure in which the name of an attribute or adjunct is substituted for that of the thing meant" (9). I use the term here to define the way in which the weapons of war, the finery of war and even parts of a man's body are used to evoke swiftly and economically a particular individual's heroism. The "shield" or "spear" or "plume", "thighs" or "hand" in the praise thus relates immediately to the bearer and evokes associations of courage and valour in fierce combat. Examples of praises using the "shield" and the "spear" have already been given (see Example 6 p.312 and Example 10 p.315). The izibongo of

Chief Tshanibezwe Buthelezi (A 11, late nineteenth - early twentieth century) contain three praises in which the plumes worn by warriors evoke the appropriate martial associations. In another izibongo the bearer's hand and its brave actions are mentioned (see Example 3 p.306). The formula which begins, "The Thighs crossed..." ("UMathangadabula...", A 11) again associates the bearer with brave deeds. In contemporary izibongo some of these images still occur and other references to less ferocious weapons continue the heroic associations of valour in conflict:

Example 49

INtantane enjengekaBhuqwini.

USisaka singumnyakanya. (A 11)

(Warrior's) Bunch of Plumes like that of Bhuqwini.

Black Finch Feathers that ripple and shake.

Example 50 (contemporary)

USikhwili siyabatshwa

ngoba sabatshwa emahwanqeni koJikiza. (Mbongolwane, uncatalogued)

The Fighting-Stick is grabbed

because it was grabbed among the bearded ones of Jikiza.

b) Metaphors linked to the theme of war and honour

Because the theme of war and honour is so pervasive in the poetry a very wide range of metaphors relate to it. Many praise names refer to the bearer in terms of a ferocious wild animal although in general such metaphors are reserved for royalty and members of chiefly houses. Other praise names with associations of heroic action refer to the bearer in terms of the elements, in particular fire. Cope (1968:47-49) has termed these usages personifications and Vilakazi (1938) also regards them as such. It is true that in many cases the word used as a

praise name loses its normal concord and assumes the personal "u" concord even though it still controls its original concord in the phrases or clauses that follow (see Chapter 5). Yet to call this personification is misleading. The term is usually applied to an inanimate object or quality being personified, not vice versa. I shall therefore not use the term. In addition to the noun-based metaphorical praise names there are others which are verbally derived and which stress violent or decisive action. Some of these although not directly connected with war suggest warlike, aggressive qualities which can be applied to a modern politician as aptly as they were to a warrior of the king or to a chief. In some of the examples below, the metaphor is extended to create a short narrative section which may include formulas linked with action. There are constant references, particularly in the nineteenth century *izibongo*, to crossing a ford or crossing a river; this is equated with bravery presumably because it was dangerous if the river was in spate and because it was then that a man was particularly vulnerable to attack. The bard Magolwana is reported to have reminded King Mpande that he had helped him "to cross rivers" (ie. come through difficult situations) by praising him (10). In general, the reference (sometimes set in a formula) to crossing rivers and fords carries the association of courage in battle; thus Stuart's account of *izibongo* (1925:93-98) stresses the close association in the minds of nineteenth-century warriors between courage, crossing fords and rivers, and the use of one's praises by others at such critical moments. In a few instances, such as Example 56 below, the bearer is addressed as the river, and the river's danger and power in its summer spate is then identified with the man. When contemporary *izibongo* mention rivers the associations of power are sometimes spelt out, as in the *izibongo* of Isaiah Shembe (A 2) and of

King Zwelithini (A 1).

Example 51 (Fire)

UMlilo ovuth' i'ntaba zonkana
obubaswe nguDumukumuka
ezalwa nguFaku. (A 12)

Fire that sets ablaze all the mountains
which was kindled by Dumukumuka
born of Faku.

Example 52 (Forceful or aggressive action)

USigawuli semith' emikhulu emincane iyaziwela. (F) (A 57)
Hewer down of great trees the little ones fall on their own.

Example 53 (Forceful action)

UGinida wezimbande. (A 77)
Lopper-off of shin-bones.

Example 54 (Rivers and fords)

Usuwela kwela inxele. (contemporary, uncatalogued)
You cross by the ford on the left. (ie. the more difficult one)

Example 55

Bathi "Manjanja uwela ngaliphi?"
Uwele ngalo woShaka noDingane. (early twentieth century, Ngoye,
uncatalogued)

They say, "Manjanja which ford do you cross by?"
You crossed by the ford of Shaka and Dingane".

Example 56

UMfoloz' omnyama okheth' abaweli. (A 21)
The Black Mfolozi choosing those who cross it.

The use of cattle metaphors

Cattle feature in the poetry of many African societies where the culture itself places great value on them. The poetry of the Dinka, the Bahima, the Karamajong and the Nuer (11) for instance, make great use of cattle imagery as does the praise poetry of Southern African peoples such as the Xhosa, Sotho, Tswana and Zulu (12). D.P.Kunene (1971:111) remarks that among the Basotho the bull is a status symbol and a symbol of virility, strength and endurance. He notes also the frequent occurrence of the bull as a metaphor for the warrior. Zulu *izibongo* are steeped in cattle imagery and so powerful are the metaphors of the bull, the cow, the calf and the generic "beast" that it seems they can never be overworked. Cattle are connected with religious beliefs concerning the ancestors (see 2.2); they are associated with marriage and with ceremonies after death. They are also connected with war, historically, in that they were often a pretext for attack as late as Dinuzulu's era; their hides formed the shields with which men fought (and danced). The intimate knowledge of the multiple colour combinations of Zulu cattle was shown in the way that each Zulu regiment had its own shield pattern and colour. It was known by this (and other items such as head-dress) as well as by its regimental songs and war cries (Krige,1950:262-3). The ferocious qualities of the bull are also admired and the ideal fighting qualities of man and bull are seen as similar. As Mzondeni Buthelezi of Mbongolwane, Eshowe, expressed it when he explained why he praised his bull:

I praise him if I want to urge him on; I just praise him as he bellows because he wants to hear if there are other bulls near. He wants to fight with others and as I praise him I too am aroused. So it's just like a man "giya-ing" because he too wants to fight...the men urge him on so that he "giyas" well and becomes a man of fire.

But "bullness", as Clegg terms it (1981), can be more than ferocity and strength. It is also male beauty, sexual power and it encompasses a general sense of worth (13). The bull as a symbol in Zulu culture is multi-valent and many-faceted. When it is used as a metaphor in men's izibongo all the above-mentioned elements may be present, or one may predominate. The particular associations are often regulated by the wider context in which the metaphor is set.

The bull metaphor in men's (and some women's) izibongo cannot be seen in isolation from the use of the bull image in the rhythmic chants and the songs which form part of izigiyo (see 4.2.). Epithets from izibongo appear in izigiyo and vice versa. Thus the izigiyo of the bard Ndodengemuntu Buthelezi, chanted at the Mahlabathini celebration ("Bull that is hemmed in!" / "INKunzi ekakiwe!", see 4.1.), also appear as part of a longer praise in one of Chief Buthelezi's izibongo (A 7, 1.5). Another example of the free movement of bull imagery and bull-based praise names between izibongo and izigiyo is the praise in the King's izibongo, UNompunompunwana iNkunzi abayibambe ngandleb' ende (Intractable Bull which they grabbed by its long ears", A 1 line 91). This was also sung or chanted as izigiyo in Ngoye. Often with the cattle metaphors in general but particularly the bull metaphors, verbs denoting aggressive action are used, for example, hlababa (stab), gwaza (stab), gweba (gore).

The metaphor of the cow also appears in men's izibongo, and besides the general connotations of worth, some usages suggest the qualities of energy and liveliness. The wild, intractable qualities of an ox that is hard to tame are also referred to elliptically in one formula. The calf too is a potent metaphor in praise names. Again, according to context, it has the general connotations of worth and beauty and is often used in a royal or chiefly praise name. In some instances,

though, it appears in a praise where energy and strength are also quite clearly emphasised. The same individual's izibongo may include many cattle metaphors, and individuals in the praises may be alluded to as cattle or bulls (see for instance A 6). The royal bard uses the cattle metaphor many times and each time he modifies the association and adds something new and different. Thus King Zwelithini is "The Small Calf of Ndaba" (lines 11 and 25); he is also "The Bull that climbed onto the hills of Mbabane" (l.96), "The Beast milked by a band of men, / The Beast beloved by flies" (ls.38-9) and "The Straight-horned Bull of Khethomthandayo, / He doesn't stab he pierces with both his horns" (ls.122-3).

Isaiah Shembe's izibongo (A 2) also contain many cattle metaphors and he too is praised as "Calf" and "Bull". His praises, however, are cumulatively more aggressive in tone and content than are the King's; they chronicle his energetic and difficult career as founder of the Nazareth Church. Shembe is "Our Calf at the Place of the Lover of Wizards" (l.33), "(Our Calf)...of black, white and red, Graceful Mover of the Place of the Lover of Wizards" (l.82), "Our Bull which they stabbed...", "Our Bull which they bound..." and "Our Tall Bull which gores the others in the flank" (l.138).

The range of associations which cattle imagery commands means that the composer can set a cattle metaphor in a context of his own choice and can also select from within the wide range of words used for cattle. A composer may therefore choose to emphasise the aggressive and beleaguered aspects of a man's career through his setting of the metaphors. Thus in Selby Xaba's izibongo for Chief Buthelezi the bull imagery adds significantly to the general sense of aggression and counter-aggression in the izibongo as a whole (A 7). In this way the

interplay between the composer's skill and the choice offered by the poetic tradition is much in evidence. Often formulas - and some cattle metaphors such as "The Cow milked by a band of men" are set in formulas - are selected because of their utility and appropriateness. In the following examples, the range of associations and in some cases the complex of associations, triggered by the cattle imagery is evident. In some cases the cattle metaphor introduces the praise and is followed by a relative clause; in others it merely forms part of a phrase. In most cases the narrative element in the cattle metaphor is compressed into a single, explanatory sentence, but in some cases it forms the starting point for a longer narrative section. This occurs in Example 66 where the connotations of war and honour are evoked by the "crossing the river" motif, and also present are the associations of "worth and beauty" of the calf metaphor.

Bull metaphors

Example 57

INkunzi abayibambe ngamasende khona ekhaya kwaDliwa-inyama.

Bull which they grabbed by its testicles at the Where-meat-is-eaten homestead. (Ngoye, uncatalogued)

Example 58

INkunzi abayihlab' ophondweni

ngokwesab' ukwandulela.

Bull which they stabbed on its horn through fear of what it should set out to do. (Ngoye, uncatalogued)

Example 59

INkunzi bethi ikhonya ePitoli bebewahle ngamatshe ekhaya konina kwaKhethomthandayo. (A 7 line I)

Bull which bellowed at Pretoria as those from his mother's home at Khethomthandayo hurled stones at him.

Example 60 (metonymy)

UNomagqubu uyakwaz' ukuzala

ngoba uzala izibukubukwana.

INsik' ende ngokuphas' umsunu

ibiz' ingadiliki. (A 78)

Bull's Penis expert at procreation

because it father's the handsomest of children.

Long Pole with which to prop up the vagina

so that it stays in good trim.

Cow or beast metaphors and extended metaphorsExample 61

UNkomo zavusa emdala imizila (F)

ngoba zavusa eyaseNkonjeni

zavusa eyakwaDelesi. (A 12)

The Cattle have opened up the old tracks

because they've opened up the Nkonjeni ones

because they've opened up the ones at Delesi.

Example 62

INkomo ekhathaza umelusi wayo. (F)

Cow that exhausts the herdboys. (A 103)

Example 63

UManqindi* ezinkomo. (A 77)

The De-horned* one among the cattle.

*i.e. It has been de-horned because it is so fierce and dangerous.

Calf metaphorsExample 64 (beauty)

IThole lakithi elimhlophe eligqize ngamanqina kwaseNhlanhlayasuka.

Our White Calf that decorated its fetlocks at Nhlanhlayasuka

(Good Fortune-has-fled). (A 73b)

Example 65 (strength)

IThole elehle ngamandla kwaMpisintshaka (F)
 laze lakwehla koFabase ebaThenjeni. (A 75)
 Calf that descended fiercely at Mpisintshaka
 until it descended on Fabase of the Thenjeni people.

Example 66 (strength and courage)

Gqabula Thole zonk' izizwe sezikukakile.
 IThole elehle ngamandla egoqoba.
 Udunge umfula.
 Wadungeka bathi "Njomane kawusekho,"
 sebebona amanzi ebomvu
 akubomvu wona amanzi
 kubomvu inxeba abakugwaza lona.
 Phakathi kwezitha kwadungeka amanzi
 wawusuwelela ngale. (A 84)

Break out Calf, many foreign powers have hemmed you in.
 Calf that came down at full tilt all stiffened up.
 He stained the river.
 It was stained - they said, "Njomane you are gone",
 seeing the red water,
 (yet) the water itself was not red,
 the red was from the wounds they gave you.
 In the midst of your enemies the water was stained,
 and then you crossed to the other side.

7.2.3. Figurative language applied to royalty and those of high status

Msimang (1980:15) has suggested that bards choose appropriate images for their particular royal subject, images which mirror the

precise qualities of a particular ruler, and this is undoubtedly true. It seems entirely apt that the conquering and ferocious Shaka is praised as "Fire", "Warrior's Plume", "Buffalo" and "Axe", to name just a few of the metaphoric praise names for him which occur both in the composite Cope edition of his izibongo (1968,p.88-117) and in his izibongo recited by J.Dlamini (Tape 2). Of these though, only the axe metaphor - and this is perhaps the best known of Shaka's praise names - does not appear elsewhere in the present corpus in another praise poem. In other words, although a bard chooses a metaphor which he considers suits his subject it is not necessarily "new" in the sense that it has not been heard before. What may be new and may bear the stamp of individual composition is the praise which is built from an initial metaphor. Thus Shaka's praise, "INyathi ejame ngomkhonto phezu koMzimvubu", ("Buffalo that leans frowning on a spear above the Mzimvubu"; see p.46 and Cope, 1968, pp.94-5, ls.113-4; Dlamini,Tape 2) is widely known as his, and no other buffalo metaphor is extended in the same way except for the specific purpose of allusion (as in Chief Buthelezi's izibongo, A 6). The buffalo metaphor appears, for instance, in the Zizwezonke Mthethwa lineage izibongo, but in a different setting:

Example 67

INyathi ehamba nethole layo.	Buffalo that goes with its calf.
INyathi yakoBhokoka.	Buffalo of Bhokoka. (A 81)

There are a number of metaphors of large animals and reptiles which recur in royal izibongo or in the izibongo of those of high status and it is likely that composers select these because of their elevated associations. Large animals such as the buffalo, leopard and lion are

almost always used as metaphoric praise names in such izibongo. When a lion metaphor is used (in this corpus) for an ordinary person, however, the noun **imbube** is used instead of the usual royal-associated words, **isilo**, **ibhubhesi** or **ingonyama**. Some snake imagery (in particular that of the black mamba) also almost always carries associations of high status. The recurrence of the black mamba and the horned viper (among the most poisonous of southern Africa's snakes) in such izibongo illustrates the culture-bound nature of many metaphors (14). The image of the horned viper occurs in the izibongo of King Cetshwayo and of the present king (Tapes 1 and 2) and also in those of Chief Mathole Buthelezi and of his son Chief Gatsha Buthelezi (A 16 and A 6). In these the association is with power and danger, seen as the positive and necessary qualities of a leader. Yet in the poem "The Trek" by the white South African poet Francis Carey Slater (1876-1958), in which Dingane is seen as a villainous character "bent on treachery and murder", he is described as "black mamba-Dingaan" (1938:113 and 115) and here the intended associations are obviously entirely negative (15).

Example 68 Dinuzulu

IMamba yeVuna uMaqhamusela,
 uqhamusel' ezihlangweni nezakwabo eVukeni. (Mathambo
 Gwala, Tape 4)
 Mamba of the Vuna River, Fast Mover
 He moved fast onto his cousins' shields at the (royal)
 homestead of Vukeni.

Example 69 Mathole Buthelezi

IMamb' iyakh' izindlu phakathi kweZihlalo zozibili
 esikhulu nesincane.
 Abaleka amaMbatha (F)

abhangazela. (A 16)

The Mamba built his home between The Two Seats *
the large one and the small one.

The Mbathas ran away

they were panic-stricken. (See also A 7 ls.68,76-77;A 1 1.1)

*i.e.two hills known as "The Seats".

Celestial metaphors, in particular those of the sun and the sky are often used in the izibongo of those of status. The metaphor of the moon, though, encapsulated in the formula referred to in 6.3. is far more widely used and appears in the izibongo of royalty and ordinary people alike.

The sky metaphor is often contained within the formula, "IZulu lidume....,("The Sky thundered..."), and in some cases izulu is understood and not stated, its unspoken presence registered in the concord li-. The association is usually with martial conquest in the older izibongo and in contemporary izibongo it is associated with a successful venture in religious (A 2) or political matters (A 3). Some bards expand the formula by including the metaphor of lightning striking at a particular object. By doing so they add to the aggressive nature of the formula itself and capture in a more complete way one of the most characteristic features of the weather of the region, namely the fierce electrical storms which occur particularly in the summer months.

Example 70 Cetshwayo

IZulu elidume phezu kwaSandlwana.

UMbani lamphose Mankamane. (Dlamini, Tape 2)

Sky which thundered above Isandlwana.

The Lightning struck Mankamane.

Example 71 Dinuzulu

IZu! ' elidum' emva komuzi kwaseNkalakutaba.

Sky which thundered behind the homestead at Nkalakutaba.

(Gwala, Tape 4) See also A 3 ls.25-26; A 2 ls.129-131; A 43 l.5.

The izibongo of Solomon kaDinuzulu illustrate the way in which a bard can shift a royal metaphor such as that of the sun to supply a cryptic commentary on very different political conditions. Vilakazi (1938:107) in discussing Solomon's izibongo remarks that in the main the imagery is drawn from that of the Zulu heroic age; yet he points out how the symbolism of the sun in the following lines shows not the king's power but the whiteman's:

Example 72

ULanga lisahlule madoda!

Sesingamavikithi!

The-Sun has overpowered us, men!

We are quite worn out!

In the more optimistic and (in parts) aggressive izibongo of Isaiah Shembe, the sun quite clearly denotes the power of the prophet. It is, the praise below suggests, a force that can be both beneficial and destructive, a power both to warm and to burn:

Example 73

ULanga phuma sikothe, kanti nabalothayo liyabashisa liyabahangula.

The-Sun come out let us bask in you. Yet at times it burns and
scorches those who bask in it. (A 2 l.147)

Although bird imagery is very widely used in izibongo a few bird metaphors are usually confined to the praises of royalty or of

leaders. Firstly there the images of the hawk (ukhozi) and the bateleur eagle (ingqungqulu); Eileen Krige describes the latter as a large and striking bird which lives very largely in the air and is capable of terrific speed (16). She notes also (1968:196) that, "it is said to beat its wings and make a terrible noise like thunder". The sight of two of these great birds fighting must have been terrifying, perhaps exhilarating and certainly memorable. Samuelson includes this comment on the bateleur eagle in the entry for ingqungqulu in his 1923 dictionary: "...a very rare bird, an inhabitant of Zululand with fiery red eyes, very powerful, and utters a loud ringing call; when two fight in the air their collision sounds like a booming gun at a distance" (1923:315). The dualism evident in the sun metaphor in Example 73 is also evident in the usage of the eagle metaphor. The bird is seen as a power which can be both protective and destructive. Sundkler (1976:198) notes a reference to the bird in one of the Nazarite hymns (number 101), where the emphasis is clearly on protection and where God is addressed as "Thou winged eagle / lift thy mighty wing / we seek thy shelter / we, thy wayward creatures". The opposed yet overlapping associations that can be present when such imagery is used are pointed out by D.P.Kunene (1979:305-306) who comments that in Sotho and Zulu narratives the idea of the wings of a large bird covering in order to imprison overlaps with the idea of its covering to protect. As an example, he refers to the hawk metaphor in the praise of King Mpande, "UKhozi lukaNdaba olumaphik' abanzi ("Hawk of (royal) Ndaba with wide wings"). The image of two powerful birds battling in the sky, mentioned by Samuelson in his description of the bateleur eagle is present in more than one of the kings' praises where it is used to describe a battle between two powerful opponents. In the following example, one of Dinuzulu's bards has used the metaphor to

evoke Dinuzulu's fierce and eventually successful struggle with his uncle Zibhebhu:

Example 74

Uyajabu'l' umfazi waseBhanganomo* (F)
 owabon' izingqungqulu zibethana namaphiko,
 nekaJinindi nekaMaphitha.
 Kwath' ekaMaphitha yabhabhalala.(16)

Happy is the woman of Bhanganomo* (F)
 who saw the eagles flailing one another with their wings,
 the one of Jinindi (Cetshwayo) and the other of Maphitha.
 The one of Maphitha fell flat. (17)

*Zibhebhu's homestead

Contemporary usages of the bateleur eagle metaphor also illustrate the dual associations of the protective and destructive capacity of leadership. In the first example, from Shembe's izibongo, the protective association is emphasised; the second and third examples, from Chief Buthelezi's izibongo, contain both associations but particularly that of aggressive power:

Example 75

INgqungqulu elishay' amaphiko phezu komuzi wakithi Ekuphakameni.
 Eagle beating its wings above our own place at Ekuphakameni.

(A 2 1.9)

Example 76

INgqungqulu eshay' amaphiko
 phezu kwaseMona.
 Izincele zamadoda zadudumela. . (A 5 1s.55-57)
 The Bateleur Eagle which beat its wings

above the Mona river.

and the flesh below the buttocks of men trembled.

Example 77

INgqungqulu emnyama eshaya amaphiko phezu komuzi.

Ithe ebuya ivele ekhaya konina kwaDlamahlahla yaphakamisa
amaphiko. (A 7)

Black Eagle beating its wings above the homestead.

When it returned it came from the home of its mother's people
at Dlamahlahla, spreading its wings.

Blackness in royal izibongo

Within **izibongo** in general, (and in its use in the war songs and war chants which may accompany izibongo) black and blackness have positive associations. In royal izibongo, black and blackness as symbols of strength are particularly dominant in the praises of Cetshwayo kaMpande. There are a number of examples in J.Dlamini's rendering of Cetshwayo's izibongo. Cetshwayo's bards - and perhaps it was mainly the work of his foremost bard Mahlangeni Khumalo (see Samuelson,1932:34) - seem to have made a point of emphasising blackness in his izibongo. It appears more sparingly in the izibongo of his royal predecessors, but always with eulogistic connotations. The post-Cetshwayo izimbongi do not on the whole use black to create new praise names but refer allusively to Cetshwayo's blackness and compare their subject with this royal quality. In Chief Luthuli's izibongo a reference to the Zulu people's heroic, conquering past is made through the symbols of a black and white bull locked in combat, and the bard then sets the struggle at Sandlwana, scene of the Zulu defeat of the British in 1879. The "black bull" is clearly a reference to Cetshwayo.

The bard, Nkosinathi Yengwa, has therefore harnessed the symbols of strength and fearsomeness in his allusion to King Cetshwayo; and by extension, this allusion also refers to the Zulu people. It is noticeable that neither the izibongo of Solomon nor those of his successor, Cyprian Bhekuzulu contain such references. Yet they reappear in the praises of Zwelithini and in those of leaders such as Chief Luthuli and Chief Buthelezi (see Example 77). Their use suggests a resurgence of confidence in national identity and pride in the heroic past which the izimbongi see as relevant to the present.

Example 78 Cetshwayo

Washikizela uMashikizela omnyama

edondolozela ngenhlendla yakhe eMathatha. (Dlamini, Tape 2 and

see Cope, 1968:214-5, ls.15-16)

He moved restlessly, the Restless Black Mover,

leaning on his barbed spear at Mathatha.

Example 79

UJinindi omnyama.

Black Jinindi. (Dlamini, Tape 2; see Cope, 1968:214-5, ls.107-108)

Example 80

Iyekeni, ubumnyama bayo buyasabeka.

Leave (the beast) alone, its blackness is frightening.

(Dlamini, Tape 2; see Cope, 1968:222-3, l.135)

Example 81 Dinuzulu (an allusion to Cetshwayo)

UMamonga kabulali

uqoth' imbokodo nesisekelo.

Ufana nendlovu emnyama yakithi yasOndini.*

The Sustainer does not (merely) kill,

he destroys the grinding stone and the mortar (as well).

He resembles our black elephant of Ondini.*

(Gwala, Tape 4; see Nyembezi, 1958:104)

* Cetshwayo's last capital near present-day Ulundi and Mahlabathini

Example 82 Zwelithini (an allusion to Shaka or Dingana)

Silufanisa nendlovu emnyama yasoBhalule.*

We compare him to the Black Elephant of Bhalule.* (A 1 1.23)

*Shaka's last campaign was known as the "Bhalule (Olifants River) Campaign" ("Impi yasoBhalule").

Example 83 Chief Buthelezi (an allusion to Cetshwayo)

AmaShenge...

abon' ubumnyama bayo besabeka

Bufana nobeNdlovu emnyama yasoNdini.

The people of Shenge (ie.the Buthelezi people)

saw his fearful blackness

Like that of the black Elephant of Ondini. (Myeni,1969:4-5)

7.2.4. Other widely used images in the izibongo of royalty
and of ordinary people

Many of the metaphors associated with royalty have associations of dignity, power and fearfulness. Those used by ordinary people do not, in most cases, carry these associations but are drawn from a wide range of birds, animals and nature. Non-royal izibongo also make use of blackness but in their case it seems to be in contexts which emphasise that it is aesthetically pleasing rather than fearful. Red also occurs in a number of izibongo often as an antithetical balance to blackness. Another category of metaphor is that drawn from domestic life and agriculture. Whereas metaphoric use of agricultural items such as "the hoe" tend to occur in women's izibongo, men's izibongo draw more heavily on imagery relating to items used on festive and

social occasions such as the varying sizes of vessels from which beer is drunk and which are used for storage around a homestead. Some metaphors drawn from domestic and social life come from what could be called a "pool" of metaphors (Gunner,1981), as does "The Pot", ("UKhamba"), Example 84 below. Others such as "The Sparkling Bottle" may be metaphoric praise names created by their users or, if not, recent introductions to the common pool. An example of a praise of recent origin is one shared by Chief Mkhwanazi and Chief Lindelihle Mzimela, both of Ngoye; both are praised as, "The Flapping of the corrugated iron", ("USibhakuza salolukhethe"), an image drawn from the sight and sound of strong wind moving an iron roof:

Example 84

UKhamba oluhle oludlela amasoka.

The Beautiful Pot from which the bachelors feed. (Hlabisa, uncatalogued)

Example 85

UMakhab' ukhamba kuf' uphiso. (A 55)

Kicker of the pot and a bigger one breaks.

Example 86

UMkhazikhazi welibodlela. (Ngoye, uncatalogued)

The Flash and sparkle of the bottle.

Example 87

USivuvu amanz' abilayo. (Ngoye, uncatalogued)

The Burning Heat of boiling water.

Birds, insects and animals

Eileen Krige, in her article on girls' puberty songs and their relation to fertility (1968:173-198), records that the hornbill, insingizi, is, like the bateleur eagle, called "a bird of heaven".

Certainly, in Ngoye I was often told that its cry was associated with rain; the hornbill metaphor occurs both encapsulated in a formula where the rain connection is stated, and free-floating, see Examples 88-90. Other bird metaphors exemplified here are drawn from a cockerel (Example 91), and small birds (Examples 92-3). The enigmatic butterfly metaphor is set in a formula which has less verbal identity than most formulas. Although three instances of its use are in the izibongo of royalty or a chief (Example 94a-c.), the fourth is in the contemporary praises of an ordinary man (Example 94d). In its three royal uses it has no direct association with war - unless it is that the patches of colour on a butterfly's wing mirror the patches of colour on a warrior's shield - but in the contemporary izibongo the composer has linked the associations of beauty and danger: the butterfly is beautiful, the shield too is a thing of beauty and danger as it is linked with war. The buck metaphor below (Example 96), from the izibongo of the early nineteenth-century Mthethwa king, Dingiswayo, (recited by his descendant Zizwezonke Mthethwa), illustrates how a metaphor can be used as a praise name at the beginning of lines with a strong narrative emphasis. The extended metaphor and the inclusion of an elevated, bardic formula often used in royal izibongo, ("akwabandaba zalutho"), combine to give the utterance the kind of poetic foregrounding which marks off the language of izibongo from that of ordinary speech. Coupled to this is the effect of allusion. It is generally accepted that Dingiswayo was treacherously attacked by members of his family and escaped with an assegai blade in his back (see Stuart, 1924b:41-42). The extended metaphor contains the allusion to this event and this too gives it added force. Similarly the ant-eater metaphor (Example 99) in the izibongo of Isaiah Shembe, set in a formula, serves as an introduction

for a long extended metaphor with a strong narrative content.

Birds

Example 88

UPhaphelwensingizi olubik' izulu ukuduma. (F)(Ngoye, uncatalogued)

Feather of the hornbill which announces the thunder in the sky.

Example 89

UPhaphelwensingizi oluphezu kwendlu kaKoto.

Feather of the hornbill that is above the hut of Koto. (A 73c)

Example 90

INsingizi emnyama ekhalela abantwana. (Ngoye, uncatalogued)

Black Hornbill which cries for its children.

Example 91

UQhude oweq' indlela wafa. (F) (Ngoye, uncatalogued)

Cockere1 which crossed the road and died.

Example 92

UNomasikisiki inyoni esindwa sisila.

Cutter-into-little-bits bird weighed down by its tail. (A 112 a)

Example 93

UMahlokohloko uyofa kusasa.

Izintaka ziyofa ntambama.

The Yellow Weaverbird will die tomorrow.

The finches will die this afternoon. (A 85)

Insects

Example 94

a. Shaka

UVemvane lukaPhunga

Lumabal' azizinge sengath' abekiwe.

Butterfly of Phunga

With colours in circles as though they had been painted on.

(Cope:1968:98-9, 1.146)

b. Matiwane

UVemvane lwakithi olumabala zibhaxa

Ngibalubheke lahwaqabala.

Our Butterfly with the scattered patches of colour

When I look at it, quickly it folds up its wings.

(Van Warmelo, 1936:64-5)

c. Dingana

UVemvane lukaPhunga noMageba

UVemvane olumabha' azibhade,

Ngibe ngiyaluthinta lwahwaqabala.

(Rycroft and Ngcobo, Eulogies)

d. Mr Mthethwa, Ngoye

UVemvane olunamabalabala

oluhlala eyihlangeni yamadoda.

Butterfly of many colours

which alights on the shields of men.

Example 95 The late Chief Nikiza Mkhwanazi

UNtotoviyane onukela abakwaMkhwanazi. (A 46)

The Green and Yellow Striped Locust that stinks at the Mkhwanazis.

Animals

Example 96

IMpunzi iyemuke nomkhonto emahlombe.

Yagxumela ezibayeni akwabandaba zalutho. (A 74; see Cope, 1968:122-

3, 1.20)

The Grey Buck that received a spear between its shoulders.

It leapt over the cattle kraals of the wizards and (their charms)

were of no avail.

Example 97

UNkonka lomancusha. (Ngoye, uncatalogued)

Buck with the sharp horns.

Example 98

UChakid' egijima nogoqo. (F) (Ngoye, uncatalogued)

Mongoose which runs with a gatepole (i.e.its tail).

Example 99 Isaiah Shembe

ISambane esimb' umgodu kasabesawolala. (F)

Kwasale kwalal' abantwana,

kanti sona sishone besethemba amagquma ne'ntaba zabo.

Uthe, "Abanta bami salani lapha."

Uthe, "Ngisahamba ngisakulandela abanye."

Uthe, "NakwaMzilikazi nakwaMashobane ngowangifika."

Ant-eater which digs a hole, never for itself to lie in.

Its young stayed behind and slept there,

whereas it set out for the hillocks and mountans where its children

live.

He said, "My people remain here."

He said," I am still on the move, I still have others to fetch."

He said,"I have still to reach the territory of Mzilikazi of

Mashobane." (A 2, 1s.44-49)

Colours

Although the aura of dignity and fearsomeness with which black is associated in royal praises is not present in the izibongo of ordinary people, blackness is still seen as something strong and aesthetically pleasing, as in Examples 100-1 below. Red is in some lines identified with the skin colour of those belonging to an outside group. Another and quite different use of red is in association with blood and

therefore with courage, honour and war as in the last example below:

Example 100

UMnyama Nomathiyela. (F)

Black One, The Tarred Road.

Example 101 Mashekelela Dindi, Ngoye

Sobesimnyama isilwane amnyama amathunzi e'ntaba. (A 119)*

Black will the wild animal be, black are the shadows of the
hills.

* This praise was called out as the bearer "giya'd" although he did not include it in his own version of his praises.

Example 102

UQom' omyama odlela amaBhunu namaShangane. (Hlabisa, uncatalogued)

The Black Barrel from which the Boers and the Shangaans eat.

Example 103

Libomvu iBhunu libomvu iKhaladi,

Simnyama 'silwane simnyama ngamehlo.

Red is the Afrikaner, red the Coloured man,

Black is the wild animal, black its eyes. (Hlabisa, uncatalogued)

Example 104 Shaka, Isaiah Shembe, Zwelithini kaBhekuzulu

UGax' elibomvu ngasekuphathweni. (F)

Spear red even to its haft.

Natural objects

Although the most majestic and aggressive imagery such as "the thundering sky" is reserved for the royal house and for leaders, a wide range of imagery in all izibongo is drawn from nature. The examples below show trees, grass, shade and sheet lightning (rather than the aggressive forked lightning) used as metaphors. Both the log metaphors below suggest strength and, more specifically in the first

example, the kind of expansive generosity traditionally associated with a chief:

Example 105 Chief Zwelibanzi Nzuza

UGodo olulale amankankane lwaze lwayolala izikhova. (uncatalogued)
Log on which the ibis sat and eventually the owls came to sleep
there.

Example 106

Kusho mina uSigodo somnqawe uMasinya kome. (A 105)
So say I the Stump of the thorn tree, He Drips and Dries.

Example 107

UMthunzi othamel' amaledi. (A 114)
Shade for the ladies to bask in.

Example 108

UMabathubathu labaneka. (A 115)
The Dappling of clouds as lightning flickers.

7.2.5. The use of similes

Similes are far less widely used than metaphors perhaps because their effect is less immediate. Nevertheless, as the following examples show, composers do introduce them. Each of the examples below touches on a familiar subject area namely resilience, (Example 109), aggression (Example 110), strength and beauty (Examples 111 and 112) and courage (Example 113):

Example 109 Dingiswayo Mthethwa* and MaHlabisa

UMafavuke njengedabane. (F)
He/She Dies and Rises like the dabane plant.

* See Cope, 1968, p.123 l.1; the praise is not in A 74.

Example 110

UMshishizelwa unjenganja beziy' enqineni. (A 77)

He Who is Urged on to fight like dogs in the hunt.

Example 111

UMhlez' ebukwa njeng'ilanga. (A 112)

The Constantly Gazed at One, like the sun.

Example 112

UGqamu njengeLangabi. (F?) (A 73c)

Sudden Appearer like a flame.

Example 113

UMzimba uneyikhala njengengubo.

Body with rents in it like a garment. (A 88)

7.2.6. Innovation in figurative language in izibongo

In view of the protean nature of imagery in izibongo it is difficult to accept Mazisi Kunene's view (1962:50-139) that Shakan praise poetry is dominated by heavy animal imagery, pre-Shakan by the imagery of smaller, lesser animals and the latter by a degenerate and largely imitative mixture of the two. The Kunene thesis does, though, indicate the way in which the royal praises in particular are influenced by the mood and the social and political circumstances of the time. Yet it links the imagery too closely to social change and overlooks the formulaic nature of the poetry. Thus what Kunene sees as imitation and lack of originality is better interpreted as the continued use and creative re-application of formulas. What his interpretation does achieve, though, is to signal a welcome shift away from any tendency to see the poetry as existing in a timeless unchanging present, a view which also emphasises the anonymous, communal nature of oral poetry. The royal praises are in part formulaic, and draw also on known metaphors with strong associations, yet they are intensely individual. Thus the tremendous confidence of Shaka's time and the

havoc wrought by his conquests are reflected to some extent in the images of movement and vitality which are frequent in his praises (see Msimang,1980; White,1982) and the formulas of flight such as "babale-ka babhangazela" may have originated in that period. In contrast to these are the feelings of isolation, internal division and external pressure which are present in Dinuzulu's izibongo and which are to some extent articulated through the metonymical praise names his bards chose for him such as, "The Single Mouth", "The Eye Full of Pain", "The Chest Heavy with Secrets" (Gwala, Tape 4).

Innovation in the tradition occurs in a number of ways: it occurs in the adaptation of the major themes outlined in the first part of this chapter. Martial praises such as "The Spear red at the haft" are re-applied and given new vitality in the context of Shembe's syncretist Christian Church which is able to graft the heroic vision and the language of royal izibongo onto its own self-image expressed in the praises of its own leader. Here too new metaphors acceptable to listeners but not previously exploited in izibongo are introduced. The metaphor of the gate, for instance, suggesting entry into a new life, is exploited in Isaiah Shembe's izibongo and may have been introduced initially by Dladla, the first and best known of Shembe's bards. The gateway of a homestead is where one calls out one's greetings to the household head and where one praises the individual or the lineage members, here "one either enters in and receives hospitality and refreshment or stays outside in the wilderness" (18). It is therefore a powerful symbol in Zulu thought-patterns as well as a long-standing symbol in the Christian tradition. Shembe's bard uses the gate image to suggest the near sacred nature of Ekuphakameni (The Exalted Place, the Nazarite Jerusalem), and uses the image to suggest the desirability of conversion to the Nazareth Church, the entry into a new, exalted

mode of existence (see Gunner,1982:105-106), which is both intensely Zulu and Christian.

Other imagery that is innovative in the Shembe izibongo also comes from a Christian source. Shembe is described as "Star which brought light to the darkness / It enlightened all nations beneath the sun" (A 2 Is.135-136). The image of the morning star, "isilimela", is used extensively in S.E.K.Mqhayi's izibongo to the Ndlambe chief, Silimela (Opland,1977:42-50), izibongo that were perhaps written rather than orally composed. Yet imagery of the stars seems to have been used very little by Zulu izibongi until its introduction into Shembe's izibongo. Another use of Christian imagery comes in the izibongo of headman Sokhesekile Seme of Ngoye (see p.174). Seme introduces a reference to Jerusalem as a metaphor for all that is best and finest in order to give a final, self-assertive thrust to his praises:

Example 114

NgiwuNkani zamadoda amadala.	I am The Perversity of old men.
NgiwuMphohloza kaphohlo.	I am The Smasher of smashers.
NgiyiJerusalema!	I am Jerusalem! (A 118)

Praises using new metaphors also arise from work situations. Hence the use by one man of "the sugar cane truck which pushes itself" to suggest an individual's energy and independence, and the use of the tool image to suggest strength (Example 115). This is perhaps a metaphor which is drawn more quickly into general use because it incorporates the familiar and dominant idea of victory:

Example 115

Ujimkiloni insimbi iyehlula ezinye.
Heavy Spanner, tool that defeats the others.

(Azariah Mthiyane, imbongi, uncatalogued)

Another introduction of the experience of work comes from a praise where the bearer compares himself to the heavy iron weights he lifts at work. Here too the letter "t" is exploited as if it exists as an object in its own right and a loan word from "timber" is easily introduced:

Example 116

UThimba-T iyasinda lensimbi.

Ah the T of timber ah the weight of the rail iron! (A 109)

Another method of innovation which can involve new metaphors is when composers model a new praise on an established formula. Mashekelela Dindi's self-composed praise below, beginning "Tearer of Petticoats", was received with delight when he called it out during a performance at the Dindi homestead (Feb.1976). It was in fact both new and familiar, as it echoed in its idea (of breaking and repairing), its rhythm and its structure, a formula beginning, "Breaker of the kraal wall". Clearly the established formula contains the ability to generate new praises and new formulas but only a composer skilled in the tradition would be able to do this successfully and to innovate well. The "new" praise is both different from yet clearly related to the "old" one: the syntactic structure in each is the same and the key verb "bosala" ("they will remain") is repeated in the same position; also, in each praise the balanced, antithetical notion of breaking down and then repairing is central. In the formula the bearer (of the praise) breaks a kraal wall and others repair it. In the new praise the bearer tears petticoats and others repair them! There are also differences between the older model and the innovatory praise: the formula emphasises strength and perhaps refers indirectly to success in forays on enemy cattle. The new praise still stresses

action and strength but is explicitly sexual in its reference to petticoats (this was the translation of *izidwedwe* given by the composer). The new praise also makes more use of alliteration and assonance than does its model and in its expansion it uses a modern loan word *inalithi* from the Afrikaans *naald*, needle, (substituting *y* for *l* for dialectal reasons):

Example 117

USifohla thangwana **bosala** belubiya. (F)

UMdabula 'dwedwe **bosala** beyithunga - abapheth' inayithi. (A 119)

Breaker of the little kraal wall they will remain repairing it. (F)

Tearer of petticoats they will remain sewing them up - those who
have needles.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined two further aspects of the poetic tradition of *izibongo*: namely the major themes of the poetry and the use of figurative language, in particular metaphors, as a striking feature of the poetry. The interplay between stability and innovation is evident, firstly in the dominant themes, and secondly in composers' use of pool metaphors and of original ones, which may in turn become established, if others appreciate them and wish to feed them into their compositions. This chapter and the previous one have also touched on the part played by composers and performers in introducing new material while working within the constraints imposed by the art form. The following and final chapter will focus on the interplay between tradition and individual creativity and draw on the evidence offered by the contributions of particular composers and performers.

Notes

1

C.B.S.Ntuli (see Chapter 6) recited izibongo of Chief Buthelezi at the Mahlabathini celebration which I attended in July 1976. The section of his audience (mainly izinduna) who were well-versed in performed izibongo appeared to find the performance interesting but lacking in the expected performance markers and they showed this by their uncertain response to Mr Ntuli's concluding "Shenge!". The izibongo are well-thought of, however: Mathambo Gwala told me that he had taken praises from these izibongo for his own version of Chief Buthelezi's izibongo! (Interview, October 1975) Chief Buthelezi himself also holds them in high regard. (Interview, Feb. 1976)

2

I am most grateful to David Rycroft for providing me with a copy of the manuscript.

3

I have kept to the line divisions of the original which often hide the quite extensive use of typical syntax patterns and expected breath groups. In a personal communication to M.B.Yengwa in June 1975, Chief Buthelezi noted that these praises "attributed to Sophandase were actually an amalgam of contributions by various people which a cousin of mine, Abel Madide, compiled. Sophandase, alias Msenteleli Buthelezi, son of Khehla, son of Mnyamana, was my uncle who was very close to me and travelled with me all over South Africa when he was still alive". The translation - with the exception of a few small alterations by myself - is by M.B.Yengwa and was made in May 1975. Notes on the izibongo were sent to Mr Yengwa by Chief Buthelezi; Mr Yengwa kindly passed them on to me and they were most useful.

4

The King's bard is both conservative and innovative (see Chapters 6.4. and 8. I have no transcription of the izibongo of Chief Buthelezi composed by Dlamini (and recited at the University of Zululand in May 1976) and neither recording nor transcription of Gwala's composition. Doubtless both would show evidence of stability, innovation and individuality in form and content.

5

Stuart, Notebook 77, file 96, James Stuart Archives, K.C.A.L. Stuart tends to play down the biographical and defining element in the praises of ordinary people and stresses the martial element in his chapter on izibongo in uKulumetule, 1925, pp.93-114.

6

Stuart, Notebook 77, p.94, James Stuart Archives, K.C.A.L. Stuart's private writing in his notes is sometimes more illuminating and more truthful than his public formulations, whether for a white readership, as in The History of the Zulu Rebellion, (1913) or for Zulu readers as in his school texts (1923-25).

7

B.W.Vilakazi, The Oral and Written Literature in Nguni (D.Litt. thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1945), p.101, referring to Rubusana, ed., Zemk' Izinkomo Magwalandini (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1906).

8

Buthelezi lineage izibongo no.14; also Godide kaNdlela Ntuli and Maphitha kaSojijisa, father of Zibhebhu, in Stuart, Notebook 76, p.50.

9

The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, ed. C.T.Onions, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), Vol.1, p.1244.

10

Stuart, uKulumetule, (London: Longman, 1925), pp.108 and 96-98; see also Callaway, Nursery Tales, Traditions and Histories of the Zulus, (London: Trubner, 1868, republ. London: Frank Cass, 1970), p.5 n.7). See also Mafika Gwala's poem "UPhondo" / "The Horn" where he draws on these associations in a very specific way: No More Lullabies, (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1982), p.73. I discuss the poem in Chapter 8.

11

See F.M.Deng, The Dinka and their Songs, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973); H.F.Morris, The Heroic Recitations of the Bahima of Ankole, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964); E.Evans-Pritchard, The Nuer, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940).

12

See for instance, Archie Mafeje, "A Chief Visits Town", Journal of Local Administration Overseas Vol.2 (1963), p.91. The imbongi refers to an exiled chief as "The dark bull that is visible by its shiny horns..."; see also D.Kunene, Heroic Poetry of the Basotho (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971); I.Schäperä, Praise Poetry of Tswana Chiefs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965); T.Cope, Izibongo.

13

See Tim Couzens, "The New African": Herbert Dhlomo and Black South African writing in English 1857-1956 (Ph.D. thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1980). Couzens (p.603) mentions Dhlomo's research into Zulu traditions, his reading of Krige's Social System of the Zulus and his use of what was then Killie Campbell's private library of Africana. He points to Dhlomo's attempts to spell out the symbolic and varied importance of cattle for the Zulu in his articles, "Three Essays in Tribal Culture: Inkomo in Zulu Life", Ilanga laseNatal, 6th and 13th Dec. 1947 (Couzens, pp.605-6).

14

"Indlondlo" ("The Horned Viper") is also used in some izibongo and in war chants to refer to men or a man, regardless of status.

15

Tim Couzens (op.cit) refers to the Carey-Slater poem on p.635.

16

The ingqungqulu image also occurs in four versions of one of the girls' puberty songs recorded by Eileen Krige. In these it seems to denote male sexuality and male power and is linked to the wider symbolism of fertility and procreation. Krige, "Girls' Puberty Songs and their Relation to Fertility, Health, Morality and Religion among the Zulu", Africa XXXV111, No.2 (April 1968) p.196.

17

The quotation is from the Stuart-McMalcolm typescript of the izibongo of Dinuzulu, p.12, James Stuart Archives, K.C.A.L. There is no mention of it in the Gwala recording of Dinuzulu's izibongo.

18

Trevor Cope, personal communication, October 1982.

CHAPTER 8

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE TRADITION

8.0. Introduction

It is the performers and composers within an oral poetic tradition who articulate it and give the tradition its sense of contemporary vitality. In this sense Nketia's remarks on Akan poets apply with equal strength to izibongo:

The function of the individual is not merely to act as a carrier of tradition. He has also to maintain it by using it, by re-creating it, for each time he performs...he is in a sense giving the poetry of his people a new life.

(Nketia, "Akan Poetry", Black Orpheus, 3, 1958, p.22)

Lord (1960:99) has also stressed "the creative role of the singer in carrying forward the tradition". He too, usefully, reminds us that the complex of skills and techniques which constitute a particular oral genre are not only realised through the work of the most gifted poets but through a range of individuals, some with no great talent: "There are more Petar Vidic's in any tradition than there are Homers" (1960:113). The latter point is clearly true of praising and praises - it is a poetic tradition which is used by some practitioners of great talent and by others of less ability. Both kinds of performer and composer are necessary to its existence. Both these above points: the creative role of each performer and the need for a wide range of composers and performers in such a poetic tradition, emphasise the contribution of the individual to the tradition. Thus praise poetry, izibongo, is not a communal, anonymous art form passed mindlessly

down from one generation of "handlers" to the next. It is constantly given new expression through specialist and non-specialist practitioners.

This chapter will firstly discuss transmission and composition, demonstrating the range of interplay between memory and creativity which is possible within the tradition and which occurs with different individuals. Secondly it will discuss the various ways in which individuals, both specialists and non-specialists, compose. Thirdly the relationship of oral and written izibongo will be examined and Lord's assumption that the transition from a oral to a written mode is well nigh impossible will be queried. The link in form and spirit between izibongo and some of the work of the new generation of Black Consciousness poets will also be briefly explored.

8.1. Memory and Creativity

I have referred earlier to the memorial strain in Zulu izibongo and the way in which the Zulu aesthetic of praising demands (in some instances) an emphasis on recreation and memorisation. There is, however, a great deal of flexibility within the emphasis on memorisation, as I shall demonstrate. Placing value on a memorial tradition does not mean placing an embargo on new composition. Thus statements such as Opland's that "Zulu izimbongi propagate memorised izibongo" (1974:27) is partially true but by no means wholly so. As previous examples have shown, there is ample evidence that audiences appreciate new izibongo that exploit the memorial aspect of the tradition, through the allusive use of praise names, and through including new material relating to the exploits of the individual who is being praised (see for example, A 7, the izibongo of Chief

Luthuli, and A l the izibongo of Zwelithini kaBhekuzulu). A memorial tradition, therefore, is not necessarily inert, static, constantly subject to the corrosive inroads of time and unreceptive to new material. Certainly the Zulu tradition, while on the one hand encouraging stability through its memorial emphasis, allows ample opportunity for the creation of new material when it is appropriate. What I have said so far pertains in the main to the specialist tradition of praising. In the following exploration of the links between memory and creativity, one thing that will emerge is the importance bards place on the composing of ordinary people. Indeed, in some instances, non-specialists are seen as the coiners and composers of new izibongo, and bards as the receivers. This relationship between the imbongi and the ordinary composer is very different from the Xhosa model as described by Opland (1975). In the Xhosa instance the categorisation into memorisers and improvisers (i.e. non-specialists and bards) is quite a rigid one and there is no suggestion that bards are in any way dependent on non-specialist composers and performers. Indeed in the Zulu case the overall vitality of the tradition is inextricably bound up with the range of skills represented by both the ordinary composer and the imbongi.

Bards as memorisers, collaters and creators

Cope (1968:27) has remarked that the degree of specialisation required of a bard "is more in the performance [of izibongo] than in the composition, for the composition of a praise poem is a matter of collection and perfection rather than of creation". Certainly some bards (and others) whom I questioned on the point of composition stressed "collection" in the sense that they saw it as their role to collect the praises of an individual as they were spoken by the man

himself, rather than to compose izibongo themselves. The Hlabisa bards, Mnyezane Mthembu and Sunduzabanye Hlabisa, saw themselves almost wholly as memorisers rather than composers. In stressing their own role as receivers they were indirectly underlining the composing role of ordinary non-specialists. While I was recording the Hlabisa lineage izibongo at Chief Jeremiah Hlabisa's homestead I asked whether the praises which were being recited had been composed by an imbongi. Sunduzabanye, who was reciting at the time, answered as follows:

S.Hlabisa: All these composed their izibongo. People compose their own izibongo.

E.G.: I thought they had been composed by an imbongi.

S.Hlabisa: No! (M.Mthembu: No!) An imbongi doesn't compose for a person, he receives whatever comes out of his mouth.

E.G.: I didn't quite understand that?

Hlabisa: I'm saying - he receives. If I say I'm "So-and-so and So-and-so" and these are my izibongo the imbongi listens, he hears and it enters his understanding, (Mthembu: Yes!), yes.

E.G. (disappointed) But he doesn't compose? The imbongi doesn't compose?

Mthembu: No!

Hlabisa: No, an imbongi doesn't compose for a person. Izibongo originate from the person himself. The imbongi takes the izibongo which that person has spoken -

Mthembu: And then praises him.

Both izimbongi were sceptical when I said that I had read in a book of the imbongi Magolwana who had composed Mpande's izibongo. They accepted very reluctantly - after an interruption from a younger man present who insisted that bards did add on bits ("-thasisela") and who

wanted to say his own praises - that an *imbongi* might "add on a bit" if he saw an individual had rather poor praises. Mthembu also mentioned that people added to their *izibongo* according to what happened to them and that an *imbongi* would have to take this as well. In a conversation some three months later when I was checking with the two *izimbongi* the meanings behind some of the cryptic and allusive Hlabisa *izibongo* (A 17-42), both bards again stressed the listening aspect that being an *imbongi* involves one in. Mthembu stated in answer to one of my questions that they did not know the allusions behind particular *izibongo*. "We heard as the praising was done. We listened and wrote the words in our heads", he remarked. Shortly after that we returned to the discussion of whether or not an *imbongi* composed:

Hlabisa: The *imbongi* takes, he takes just like you're taking [with the tape recorder].

Mthembu: Yes, yes, young lady, just like you're taking here from me. An *imbongi* takes like that. Just as we're taking now. An *imbongi* takes it and says he is "So-and-so and So-and-so and So-and-so and So-and-so...on and on and on.

E.G.: I see.

The Hlabisa bards, therefore, were most aware of themselves as memorisers and repositories of the store of *izibongo* of many people composed through a number of generations, including their own. They were perfectly capable of composing, as they demonstrated, by reciting their own *izibongo* (composed by themselves and others) but they simply did not regard it as part of their role as *izimbongi* to compose. The way in which they kept very closely to the same versions when praising a person for the second time (as they sometimes did when I asked the meaning of a word or phrase), again pointed up their notion of

fidelity to what others had composed and their notion that a man's praises defined him and in a sense embodied his presence in a final way. To the extent that they re-ordered and even slightly reworded praises they could be said to compose but only in this very limited sense.

Another closely related view of how a bard gathers together material and reproduces it was given by Zizwezonke Mthethwa, the doctor and diviner (*inyanga*) from Mbongolwane. Although he did not call himself an *imbongi*, it was he who would perform the *izibongo* of the old and distinguished Mthethwa lineage for the February first-fruits ceremony held annually at his homestead. These he had learnt by listening to an elderly relative as a boy (see Chapter 3) and so he, like the Hlabisa bards, was primarily a memoriser. He had also, though, composed many parts of his own *izibongo* (A 79) and in describing his own performance at the February *umswela* ceremony he pointed to the other, collating role of an *imbongi*, who must collect together the scattered praises from the mouths of others:

I do the praising on that day. I praise all our lineage and then they [the onlookers], when I'm *giya-ing*, they all praise me as I've finished [praising]. Everybody who has come here as spectators, they all praise me, all together. And then the *imbongi* listens, does the *imbongi*, so that when I am dead he can put it into some order through his skill (*ngobugagu bakhe*)."

Zizwezonke, in his acknowledgement of the unnamed "*imbongi*" who would have the skill to set all the various praises into a single (though flexible) sequence, points, therefore, to another aspect of what an *imbongi* may do; and here the ability of the *imbongi* to bring together praises heard from a number of different sources is highlighted as well as his memorial role. In addition, like the Hlabisa bards, he points to the role of ordinary people not, in this case, primarily as

self-composers but as composers and performers of the praises of others.

Yet another aspect of the bard as collater, and creator, is shown in the remarks made by the imbongi of the Nazarite leader Isaiah Shembe, Azariah Mthiyane and by Mthiyane's brother. In a session (in June 1976) when I was checking my transcription of Shembe's izibongo, Azariah Mthiyane mentioned his own position in the line of Shembe's bards. His account suggests the importance of the notion of a single (although expanding) set of praises which are not radically altered. He also makes a case for the interdependence of bards while stressing the supremacy of any one bard at a particular time. He too, though, mentions that other people besides the bard praise (although he refers to the act of praising rather than to the composition of new praises). Mthiyane saw himself as fifth in the line of Shembe izimbongi:

Mthiyane: The early izimbongi were Dladla, the second was Shando. After his death came Josephat Mkhwanyane from Ndulinde, then came Mbuthu from Mgungundlovu and Emdlalane; these were the first four, then myself as the fifth.

E.G.: So was it you who composed these izibongo?

Mthiyane: (surprised and a little irritated) Which ones? For the whole thing, that imbongi takes from that imbongi, that imbongi takes from that imbongi.

E.G.: Then you put them all together?

Mthiyane: Yes.

E.G.: Do you still add?

Mthiyane: We still continue*, we continue with the preaching. There are many who praise but they don't really know the praises. Whenever [J.G.] Shembe says, "Go and call the izimbongi", it is

we who are called. Nowadays many people praise because to do so is to praise God - the praises are really a gospel. But the imbongi, when there is going to be a celebration at Ekuphakameni, it is I, I am the one who is called. I am going there soon.**

* He was in fact one of three Shembe bards; the other two were Khumalo and Mngema, whom I did not meet. They were away with J.G. Shembe in Eshowe on the occasion of my first visit to Emkayideni in May 1976.

** We were talking in June. The Ekuphakameni festival is in late July.

Whereas Azariah Mthiyane did not assign the special role of composer to any one of the line of bards, his brother, whom I spoke to at Emkayideni in August when Azariah was away, was quite definite as to the key composing role of the first imbongi, Dladla. He was able to point to specific praises from the Shembe izibongo (as recited by Azariah) which were "Dladla's" and he remarked, "He composed many izibongo, did Dladla, who came from beyond the Msingazi River", ("Waqopha izibongo eziningi uDladla osuke phesheya koMsingazi"). So it would seem that the beautiful, stately and "royal" izibongo of Shembe (Gunner, 1982), may be largely the composition of the first Shembe bard, Dladla, with successive bards adding small parts of their own composition but concentrating in the main on reproducing the izibongo and certainly not creating a totally new set of izibongo when they took over.

What we have so far is a fairly complex picture of the process of composition, transmission and re-production (memorisation). Firstly there is a strong emphasis on collation and memorisation and, in the case of the first two speakers above, a recognition of the importance of ordinary people in the composing process. Secondly, composition by an imbongi emerges as a crucial part of the way some bards operate although here too, collation and memorisation play an important part.

A picture emerges not so much of the bard either solely as memoriser or solely as composer but as expounder, involved in a complex operation in which original composition, collation and memorisation may all be involved. Also it is quite clear that there is more than one type of bard.

If we turn to John Dlamini, who is probably the best known of contemporary Zulu izimbongi, the balance may be a little different but the three basic components are all present. When he took over from Amos Gwala as imbongi for the young Zwelithini (in 1969) he used very little of the izibongo which Gwala had already begun to compose. When I questioned Gwala on this point, he referred to the following praise as his own composition (Interview, Durban, October 1975):

IBhubesi elimthende likaNdaba elidlule lishishiliza e'ntabeni
zimbili iMaselo neMasilonyana kwelaseVrystaat.

The Striped Lion of Ndaba passed slithering over the two hills
Maselo and Little Maselo in the Free State.

(A 1 1.81)

The rest of Zwelithini's praises, it seems, are the work of Dlamini. So in the present king's izibongo there is a great deal of original composition, a little collation (the passage from Gwala above) and evidence from a comparison of recordings that Dlamini prefers to recite the izibongo in the same way with only minor alterations (such as changes of sequence). He does, however sometimes shorten them if he is not on form or if time is running out (1). In other words, memory is an important factor here too and composition takes place prior to performance (2). Moreover, in his comments about composing the King's izibongo Dlamini emphasises stability. He mentions the importance of passing on to his apprentice (Mdletshe) the

explanation behind praises ("For everything I construct has its meaning") so that the schoolchildren who will be taught them will understand them. The emphasis Dlamini places on the stability of the izibongo of Zwelithini is borne out (as I have mentioned) in the version recited to me by his apprentice some nine months after I had first recorded Dlamini. A close comparison revealed only the most minute of changes: the substitution of a few words and very minor grammatical changes. Otherwise the verbal fidelity of the apprentice to his mentor's version is complete.

Evidence from Dlamini, therefore, confirms and strengthens the notion of the imbongi as composer, confirms the possibility of collation and underlines the importance of memory for the Zulu imbongi. What we have, it seems, is not a rigid straitjacket definition of one type of imbongi, but more of a continuum which allows for the possibility of different kinds of bard, some emphasising the memorial aspect of the tradition at the expense of the creative and others demonstrating both. Whereas the former can be seen as "passive bearers" of a poetic tradition (Abrahams, 1970:9; Finnegan, 1977:87), the latter are "active bearers" in the sense that they too carry forward the tradition but add to it, and in however imperceptible a way, shape it. It must be emphasised that "passive bearers" are not necessarily any less highly regarded than those, such as Dlamini, who are also composers. A bard may be a memoriser and still be a compelling performer, and this would seem to be the case with izimbongi such as Mgezeni Ndlela, imbongi of Chief Buthelezi. Even with an imbongi such as Mgezeni who is primarily a memoriser, he may impose his own pattern on the praises he recites by choosing certain syntactic structures for rhetorical effect (compare, for example the rather different treatment of the "Bush" praise by Mgezeni

and Nkomiyaphi in Mnyamana's izibongo, A 10 ls.17-27 and A 10a ls.22-29).

8.1.1. James Stuart's methods and his evidence

What precisely is meant by memorisation needs to be explored, but before I do so the question must be asked, what light does the evidence of James Stuart throw on the subject of composition and transmission by Zulu bards? (3). Stuart seems to have collected izibongo and spoken to bards from about 1890 until 1922 when he left Natal to settle in England. At one point in his Notebooks he lists 70 bards whom he has interviewed over the years. He seems to have concentrated almost entirely on the memorial aspect of the tradition, an aspect which the bards themselves must have stressed, and was on the whole unconcerned with the questions of composition and transmission. Thus although he was very interested in the biographical and genealogical details of the bards he met and sought out, he seems to have enquired very little about composing by particular bards; apart from the vital sections on Magolwana in his school textbook uKulumetule (1925) he offers little information on the subject. His period of active work in collecting praises covered the "reigns" of Cetshwayo's son and successor Dinuzulu, and Solomon, heir to Dinuzulu, but there is no mention in his three Books of Eulogies of who composed their praises (4). Perhaps, to most izimbongi the praises themselves mattered more than who had composed them, and Stuart took his cue from them. He merely notes down versions from the izimbongi he worked with and one of his criteria for whether or not an imbongi was "good" seems to have been whether or not the man in question knew the allusions behind the izibongo he recited (5). Only rarely, and tantalisingly, does he mention having seen an imbongi perform in public: he notes

that the imbongi Sende, bard of the Zondi, performed at the drill ground at Eshowe in 1919 before a crowd of over two thousand Zulus and Europeans as part of a ceremony to raise money for the relatives of those Zulu soldiers who sank on the "Mendi" in 1917. He was (like many of the bards themselves) an uninhibited collater. So, for instance, in a case where the izibongo of Ndlela (Dingane's general) are noted (Notebook 76, pp.47-48), Stuart has lines added over a period of time from a number of different izimbongi. He also left out sections of izibongo from a particular bard - if he felt he already had the praises in question. In one case (Notebook 76, p.94) Stuart has five lines of the izibongo of Shaka from an imbongi named Ndabazezwe and he notes: "This man gave other well-known lines of Tshaka, say 10 or 15, so I selected what I had not already got". He seems to have been interested in assembling one definitive version for each of the Zulu Kings (although this did not prevent him from continually expanding his collated versions as new material came to hand) (6). He was apparently, therefore, not primarily interested in ascribing the various contributions to particular individual bards (7). Only rarely does he note that an imbongi might recite izibongo differently on different occasions. He does note it though, with Mtshapi, with whom he seems to have worked over a longer period of time than he did with most of his informants. After taking down Mtshapi's recitation of the izibongo of Cetshwayo (Notebook 75, p.170) Stuart notes, "This version of izibongo by Mtshapi to be compared with better one by same man p.4 Book of Eulogies Vol. ii". His concern with establishing a definitive version, although broadly true to the underlying notion of stability subscribed to by the bards, sometimes led him (and the bards) into direct conflict with the evidence. Hence in the three Notebooks there are occasional comments next to a line such as "wrong", "incorrect" or "X

it to mean that Mshayankomo knew that there were more of Cetshwayo's praises which he needed to be reminded of through meeting with other bards (Notebook 77, inside cover, dated 15.1.22).

8.1.2. Cetshwayo's izibongo: some comparisons

It has been said (Cope, 1968; Opland, 1971) that Zulu izibongi may change the order of an individual's izibongo without making other radical changes. The following textual comparisons have been made to test a number of questions. How similar are a number of contemporary bards' versions of izibongo for the same individual from whom they are separated by less than forty years? How close is the verbal similarity of praises for the same individual between bards separated by fifty to eighty years? From a fairly random sample from the Stuart Notebooks I took three versions of the izibongo of Cetshwayo (d.1883); one version was from an imbongi very conversant with the royal praises (Mgidlana kaMpande from Ngoye), one from an imbongi with whom Stuart seems to have been in contact over many years (Mtshapi) and one from an imbongi who is infrequently used by Stuart. I also took two versions of Dlamini's izibongo of Cetshwayo: a performance version (D 2) recorded on Shaka's Day, September 1975 and the other recorded in a spoken version the following day (D 1) (8). In order to make the comparison I selected a number of praises or praise-segments (twenty-two in all) from the four versions and then looked for them in each version and noted their occurrence (Table 1). I also noted the sequence of these praises in each izibongo (Table 2) and I compared the wording of specific praises in versions from the different bards (Table 3). Lastly I compared the wording of specific praises in the two separate recitations of the same individual's izibongo by a single bard, namely Dlamini (Table 4).

TABLE 1

This shows the distribution of 22 praises or identifiable units in the izibongo of Cetshwayo recited by four different izimbongi A,B,C and D.

No.	Praise or identifiable unit	A Mgidlana J.S.77: 69-71n.d.	B Khamisile J.S.77:95 1921	C Mtshapi J.S.75: 170 1918	D Dla. 1975 (1&2) E.G.
1	UHlamvana	/	/		/
2	UMthunduluk'		/		/
3	UmJinind' omnyama	/	/	/	/
4	USala kutsheIwa		/		
5	Mshisi wesikhotha esiseDlebe		/		
6	UbeZitho zimagwegwe	/	/		/ (x2)
7	Msind' obangwe ngabafana	/	/ (+No.9)	/ (+9)	/ (+9)
8	Uyajabula mfazi wakwaNgqangoza		/		
9	Xokozelel' indlondlo	/	/ (+7)	/ (+7)	/ (+7)
10	Thambekeka wen' owaliwayo	/			/
11	odl' uMehlo ("Ndondakusuka" run)	/			/ (x2)
12	Iala kwaNgxangaza	/ (+10)		/	/ (+10)
13	INyathi zimapondo zimakenkenene	/		/	
14	IHLath' elimnyama	/		/	
15	IGwalagwala	/			/
16	UGaqa libomvu likaBathonyile	/			/ 2nd vrn. only, +21

Table 1 (continued)

No.	Praise or identifiable unit	A	B	C	D
		Mgidlana J.S.77: 69-71n.d.	Khamisile J.S.77:95 1921	Mtshapi J.S.75: 170 1918	Dla. 1975 (1&2) E.G.
17	iZul' elidum' eNdulinde phezulu	/			substits. eSandlwana for eNdul.
18	iKhab' elimile lodwa	/		/	
19	Wadondolozela			/	/
					(x2 with variation 2nd x)
20				/	/
21	Ningayihlabi leyondlovu	/			/
					2nd vern. only
22	sikhangel' abantu	/			/

Table 1 shows that although a number of the "same" praises occur in the izibongo of Cetshwayo performed by different bards, the izibongo by no means contain the same number of praises. Even versions by bards (B and C) who may not be very proficient in the particular izibongo vary as to the praises they include. So it would seem that even in the second and third generation after an individual's death there is not total uniformity of content but selection of a range of possible praises depending on with whom a particular bard has been in contact and secondly on his own talent. Table 1 also shows the way in which two praises, for example 7 and 9, or 16 and 21, may in some cases be run together but when recited by another bard may be kept quite separate. This again suggests that there is an element of individual choice in the way bards string the praises together.

Table 2 confirms the frequently made observation that there is no set order for the sequence of praises within a particular individual's izibongo and apart from the fact that three versions begin with the same praise (umJinind' omnyama - one of the best known of Cetshwayo's praises) there is infinite flexibility in the order. On the evidence of D 1 and D 2, though, a bard will tend to keep to the same sequence for a particular izibongo and this suggests that, as in the case of the two Gambian griots, Banna Kanute and Dembo Kanute, with whom Innes worked (1973), an imbongi will tend to keep to the same sequence for a particular set of izibongo (9).

TABLE 2

This shows the order of the numbered units in Table 1, in the five versions of Cetshwayo's izibongo, A, B, C, D(1 & 2).

A	B	C	D(1 & 2)
1	1	3	1
7	2	14	15
18	3	7	6
9	5	9	10
10	6	13	12
12	7	19	7
13	9	12	9
21	8	20	22 (D 2)
22		18	2
6			11
3			20
4			19
15			11
16			3
17			19
11			6
			16 (D 2)
			21 (D 2)

Table 3 points both to the verbal range that may still exist with the use of a particular, identifiable praise in some cases and to the almost total verbal identity that exists in other cases. This flexibility again shows that much depends on the individual bard, partly on his memory but also on his ability to keep the coherence of a praise if it is expanded. Most of the expansions occur in the versions of A (Mgidlana) and D (Dlamini, 1975) who appear to be the more competent izimbongi because of their ability to handle expansions and because of the length of their izibongo for Cetshwayo. In fact in a number of instances (10,15,21) specific praises used by A and D are remarkably similar; this again testifies to the strength of the memorial tradition in Zulu izibongo. Even where specific praises are remarkably similar there are small pointers to individual style and the predilection of a particular bard. Thus in 21, Mgidlana (A) ends with the single "ngoyihlo", "by your father" and Dlamini (D) with the phrase "oyise noyisemkhulu" ("his fathers and his grandfathers"), a phrase which he seems to like and which may serve as a personal formula because he introduces it into his composition for Zwelithini (Appendix A 1, 1.26). Moyo, working with Zambian Ngoni izibongo also points to a similar small-scale operation of individual style within the constraints of a memorial tradition (1978:48-59). Also, in praise 21, Mgidlana (A) and Dlamini (D) move into the praise by linking it in with a different one, a further indication of individual choice and skill in weaving together the praises of a single individual. Praise 6 in Table 3 illustrates the fidelity to a single version that exists over a long period and the slips of hearing that can result in significant semantic changes. It shows too how a bard (Dlamini in this case) can impose his own pattern and style on a praise and give it an individual and novel feel yet keep it close enough in its key

"triggering" features for it to pass as the "same". In praise 22 a similar flexibility combined with stability shows itself. Dlamini uses the praise differently in his two performances. Whereas D 2 is very close to A, D 1 is expanded, suggesting as does 6 that when he wants to, Dlamini can impose his own structure on a praise and yet keep it within the bounds of recognisability.

Comparison of the "same" praises in Table 3, therefore, reveals a range of stability and flexibility between the three bards of roughly the same time (c.1914-1920) and a bard operating fifty or so years later.

TABLE 3

This table compares the versions of the "same" praise or unit in A, B, C, D(1 & 2). The numbers used refer to the numbers in Table 1.

1

- A UHlamvana 'bhul' umlilo
 ubaswe uMantshonga noNgqelemana.
- B Hlamvana 'bhul' umlilo
 ubaswe uMantshonga benoGqelemana.
- D UHlamvu ubaswe uMantshongo benoNgqelebana.

3

- A uJinind' omnyama ongabende bengonyama
 onganga mabuya eziziba zolwandle noThukela.
- B umJinind' omnyama
 ongabubende ngobezingwe nezingonyama.
- C uJinind' omnyama
 ongabubende bengonyama.
- D uJinind' omnyama
 ongabubende bezingwe nezingonyama.

6

- A UZitho zimagwegwe
 ngokugwegw' amapoyisa.
- B Ubezitho zimagwegwe
 ngob' egwegw' abakayise.
- D(1) Uyitho uMagwegwe ngokugwegw' abakayise.

D(2) Nani bafana basesiGwegweni
 khawulani ukuthi intaba iSigwegwe
 ngob' iSigwegwe sekuyiNgonyama
 egwegwe abakayise.

10 (+12)

- A Thambekeka wen' owaliwayo
 Thambekeka we-rus (?) Ntambanana
 mhla eyakudabula ngekwaNgxangaza;
 umfazi wakwa Ngxangaza
 Uzola! esibayeni njengamathole,
 kaz' amathol' azolalaphi na?
- D Thambekeka wen' owaliwayo
 uthambekeke nangesithambanana
 namhl' uyadabula kwaNxangaza
 abakwazala kwaNgxangaza
 bazola! esibayeni njengamathole
 kaz' amathol' azolalaphi?

19(+12)

- C Wadondolozela ngenhlendhla umntakaNdaba
 Eyolala kwaNgxangaza
 kaz' abafazi bakaNgxangaza bazolalaphi na?
 Bayola! esibayeni njengamathole.

14

- A Ohlathi limnyama nemizi yalo
 ebelinjengebelila! izindlovu
 EzikuMakehle.
- C iHlath' elimnyama nemizi yalo.

15

- A iGwalagwala likaMenzi,
Elisuk' eNtumeni kwabhej' iShowe
kwaze kwayabhej' uThukela.
- D IGwalagwala lika Menzi
ebhej' eNtumeni wabhej' iShowe
wabhej' uThukela.
-

16

- A Ugaqa libomvu laoBathonyile
- 16 (+21)
- D(2) UGaq' elibomvu uBathonyile
elimenezwa uZulu wazalwa uSiniswayo.
Wathi maZulu ningayihlabi londlovu,
ningayihlaba nobeniyibangile,
iyovus' umaIndo emdala
esenzwa ngoyise noyisomkhulu.

21

(iSilo esimaduna sakokaTshana)

Esimenyezwe uMzwili ezalwa uSiniswayo,
wathi, "Ningayihlabi leyondlovu,
Ningayihlaba, nobeniyibangile;
Iyavus' imland' emdala
Eyayenziwa ngoyihlo.

22

- A Esikhangele abantu baduka nolwandle
nanamuhla basadukile.

D(1) ISikhenyane esikaMpande
sikheny' abantu sakheny' izinkomo
sabathabath' abantu
sabaphos' olwandle
yebo baduka
nananamhlanjena basaduki-i-ile.

D(2) ISikhenyane esikaMpande
sikhangel' abantu
baduka olwandle
nanamhlanje basadukile.

Table 4 shows comparisons of the "same" praise from two versions by Dlamini (D 1 and D 2). In praise 11, (the "Ndondakasuka" victory catalogue) he substitutes one bardic formula for another, which suggests that each one is equally available to him and that he can use either in sequence, without losing his grip on the development of the izibongo of the whole. So, in D 1 (the spoken version) he uses "wamshaya phansi kwa'ndaba zalutho", "he threw him down and it was a thing of no consequence", and in D 2 (the performed version) he has, "wamshaya phansi esiqungweni", "he threw him down in the long grass" adding at the beginning and close of his run the heroic formula "koludumayo", "where the battle raged" (10). Here we have the imbongi doing something that looks very like composition in performance and it seems fair to conclude that to this limited extent some Zulu izimbongi can be said to compose in performance (11). Dlamini therefore, within limits, forms the izibongo according to his own style and is able to change it from one performance to another without going beyond the bounds of that recognisability so vital to the canonical and liturgical element in Zulu izibongo. This is an element which is perhaps of most importance in the royal izibongo.

TABLE 4

This table compares Dlamini's handling of the "same" praises from the izibongo of Cetshwayo recited on two separate occasions (D1 and D2).

22 leading into 11

D1	UMthunduluka ovuthw' eNdulinde i'Gqoza zawulabalabela ngob' udl' uGabangaye kwabasema- Chunwini wamshaya phansi kwabandaba zalutho wadl' iSikhotha kwabakwaZulu wamshaya phansi kwa'ndaba zalutho amakhubalo adliwa uCetshwayo kwabakaMpande.	D2	UMthunduluka ovuthw' eNdulinde i'Gqoza zawulabalabalela ngob' udl' uGabangaye kwabasema- Chunwini wamshaya phansi esiqungweni ngoludumayo amakhubalo adliwa uCetshwayo kwabakaMpande.
----	--	----	--

19

D1	(Washikizel' uMashikizel' omnyama) edondolozela ngenhlehle yakhe eMathatha Wadl' uMbuyazwe kwabakwaMpande wamshaya phansi kwa'ndaba zalutho. Wadl' uMantantashiya obezalwa uMpande wamshaya phansi kwa'ndaba zalutho. Wadl' iSikhotha emaQadini wamshaya phansi kwa'ndaba zalutho.	D2	(Washikizel' uMashikizel' omnyama) edondolozela ngenhlehle yakhe eMathatha (+2 inaudible lines) Wadl' uMbuyazwe ezalwa uMpande wamshaya phansi esiqungweni ngoludumayo. UMantantashiya ezalwa uMpande wamshaya phansi esiqungweni. UDabulesinye ezalwa uMpande wamshaya phansi esiqungweni. UNapoleoni kwabaseFulansi
----	--	----	---

UNapoleoni kwabaseFilidi

wamshaya phansi

kwa'ndaba zalutho.

Wadl' uMankunkunku emaphoyiseni

wamshaya phansi

kwa'ndaba zalutho.

Wadl' uJantoni kubafundisi

wamshaya phansi

kwa'ndaba zalu-u-tho!

wamshaya phansi

ngoludumayo.

Wadl' uMankunku emaphoyiseni

wamshaya phansi

esiqungweni

ngoludumayo

kwabandaba zalutho.

There are other ways in which Dlamini adds his own mark to the "received" royal izibongo which as royal bard he must frequently perform. Early in his versions of Cetshwayo's izibongo comes a reference in a royal formula to Sandlwana (there is no such reference in Cetshwayo's izibongo in Cope, 1968, pp.214-229):

IZulu liduma phezu kweSandlwana The Sky thundered above Sandlwana.

The death of the Prince Imperial, Louis Napoleon, during the Zulu war of 1879-80 is probably a fact that Dlamini learnt about during his years at primary school, or perhaps he learnt of it from oral accounts of the war. Be that as it may, Dlamini includes in his Ndongakasuka victory catalogue, the hapless "Napoleoni wabaseFulansi", "Napoleon of the French", as one of Cetshwayo's victims! At another point he includes a reference to "Pitoli", "Pretoria" as part of the praise which begins "Wadondolozela ngobhoko lwakho", "You leant upon your fighting-stick"; in D 2 he has the expansion "waqonda ngobhoko kwabamhlophe ePitoli", "you pointed your fighting-stick at the whites in Pretoria". Cetshwayo did no such thing, so the line is not historically accurate, but it is symbolically true in its summing up of the King as a man who strove to preserve the nation against all odds; also, here Dlamini is not really introducing anything new, he is fitting it in within the known "wadondolozela" praise (see Cope, 1968, pp.214-5, ls.17 and 24 and Table 1 praise 19).

It seems, therefore, that some bards do initiate change within limits, even in received izibongo where the notion of "sameness" operates very strongly. However, as I have pointed out, much of the unifying and nationalistic power of the royal praises is achieved through the exploitation of expected and known praise names for a particular monarch, and the religious element also plays an important

part in their stability (12). Most bards would make no more than small adjustments, as Dlamini does, in introducing new names such as "Napoleoni", "iSandlwana" and "Pitoli", and in weaving together various formulas as he does in his Ndongakasuka catalogue. Sometimes though, as Landeg White has pointed out (13), it is clear that the praises of an early figure are added to by later bards who may add an up-dating comment of some kind. Indeed, Dlamini's inclusion of "Pitoli" is itself a kind of contemporary comment acknowledging Pretoria as the seat of power (14). As Herzog (1965:172) has pointed out too, there are various levels of flexibility in a text which is basically stable, and slighter changes which may occur are usually unnoticed by practitioners and audiences, and are even denied.

Finnegan (1977:152) has remarked that there is no single process of "oral transmission", and the evidence on which I have drawn suggests that even within a single poetic and performing tradition there may be a number of slightly different processes at work, depending on a number of factors such as the skill and temperament of the bards and the expectations of the audience. The Hlabisa izimbongi with their categorical emphasis on listening, remembering and reproducing (an emphasis which was largely borne out in later checking sessions) represent one kind of transmission, that is closest perhaps to unalloyed memorisation of the kind found in some types of Somali poetry (Andrzejewski, 1981). The bard's role as collater or synthesiser as well as memoriser is evident from the remarks of Zizwezonke Mthethwa; the remarks and practice of the Nazarite imbongi, Azariah Mthiyane, point to a process different still, namely to a process of memorisation combined with new composition as the praises passed from one bard to the next. Lastly, the evidence of comparison of versions of the same king's izibongo by different bards over a

period of sixty years points to both a high degree of stability and to flexibility within limits. Certainly there is no evidence of memorisation inevitably causing a steady erosion of the material (although this may happen to some extent with the Hlabisa izibongi); in the hands of an imbongi such as Dlamini, memorisation combines with a process of re-creation when he is working with the izibongo of the past kings. In his own, new composition he is able to create more freely, yet he constantly turns to the store of formulas, imagery and themes available to him and, as his composition evolves and is repeated on numerous occasions, it is clear that memory too plays an important part in it.

Ordinary composers and performers do know snatches of the izibongo of their lineage ancestors and in cases where no talented imbongi is available they have to recite them. Here they exploit the memorial aspect of the tradition. This they do too in their praising of those who "giya" and in "knowing" the izibongo of their peers, living relatives and people of note (15). In their self-compositions and in praises composed for others they, like Dlamini, are free to take from the store of formulas, themes, imagery and the syntactic and phonological patterns which mark the language of izibongo. As they are less constricted by the memorial tradition than are many izibongi, ordinary composers often introduce neologisms, define an individual or themselves in a particularly apt and sharp way, and thereby introduce a vitality which strengthens the whole tradition. It needs to be remembered that Ndlela, the Hlabisa bards, Zizwezonke Mthethwa and Masoswidi Mkhwanazi all stress this essentially creative role of the ordinary composer and performer in their emphasis on the importance of how a man is praised as he performs "ukugiya" and on the imbongi receiving what others say.

8.2. Individual Composers and the Poetic Tradition: Some Examples

In this section I shall look a little more closely at the creativity of the individual within the bounds of his tradition, a tradition in which memory and creativity, conformity and innovation all operate. First of all I shall discuss John Dlamini as a composer and secondly I shall turn to a few non-specialists who have largely composed their own *izibongo*.

The imbongi and the tradition: John Dlamini

In his article on creativity, individuality and the traditional singer, Roger Abrahams (1970:5-6) reminds the reader of the folly of searching for an element such as creativity which may be of importance in western aesthetics but which may not be central to other traditions, and if it is present may operate rather differently. In his study of the American ballad singer, Almena Riddle, Abrahams shows how creativity within the ballad tradition may be gauged in terms of the criteria for selection of material which a singer uses and her control over her material; he demonstrates how a singer such as Almena tends to remember and use details in which she is particularly interested, and to ignore others. Thus he is pointing out that a particular artistic tradition generates its own aesthetic criteria and the idea of "creativity" needs to be handled with care. Dlamini does, all the same, appear to be among those artists who is at one and the same time the servant and the master of the tradition in which he works. In this respect he may be likened to other Zulu *izibongi* whose names are remembered, men such as Shaka's *imbongi*, Mshongweni, (Ngubane, 1951), Cetshwayo's *imbongi*, Mahlangeni Khumalo, (Msimang, 1980) and the towering figure of Magolwana Jiyana, *imbongi* to Dingana

and Mpande and, according to Stuart's informant, composer of some of Cetshwayo's izibongo as well (Stuart,1925:107-8;Gunner,1976:79-80) (16). The degree to which any of the above actually changed or reshaped the Zulu izibongo tradition is hard to prove and, because of the way the Zulu praising tradition encompasses both memorisation and fresh composition, it seems quite possible that a bard could gain a great reputation with or without any fundamental reshaping of form, content or presentation. Nevertheless the poetic and performing tradition is quite flexible enough to allow for particular poets to bring in quite far-reaching innovations, as may have occurred with Shaka's izibongo. Other forms of oral poetry sometimes demonstrate a range of usage between innovation and strict adherence to the accepted norms on the part of practising poets. George Awoonor's study of three Ghanaian Ewe poets' handling of the Ewe funeral dirge shows such a range between innovation and the lack of it in the work of the poets in question. The innovator, Akpalu,

Was able to extend the range of the funeral poem through his own ability as an inventive poet. He made death personal and brought to the fore man's ultimate loneliness and his need for support... Today the Ewe dirge of Akpalu, created within the Aulo tradition is heard throughout the whole of Ewe country and well beyond it...His style is growing and being expanded upon by other imaginative poets throughout the land.

(Awoonor, Guardians of the Sacred Word, 1974,p.12)

Dlamini is not an innovator on the scale of an Akpalu but he displays at times a startling blend of continuity and contemporaneity and his popularity with a broad cross-section of Zulu-speakers is undisputed.

I have referred already (Chapter 6) to Dlamini's use of allusion. Firstly he adapts, to Zwelithini, praise names associated with earlier kings: for example "uMthunduluka", "The Wild-Plumtree", the praise associated with Cetshwayo's Ndongakusuka victory, and also found in

Dingane's izibongo (Cope, 1968:216-7, 1.50; Rycroft and Ngcobo ms, 1.348), is used together with a reference to the regiment formed at Zwelithini's installation (see A 1, 1.44). In this way Dlamini brings the glorious resonance of the past to his izibongo for Zwelithini. He also uses private, personal allusion such as the mention of "the beautiful treasure" ("igugu elihle"), in A 1, 1.84, a reference to the car given to the king by a wealthy businessman, Mr Kekana. These personal allusions have the effect of binding the izibongo to Zwelithini himself, the individual rather than the public symbol. Many of them convey vividly the flavour of life for a figure such as Zwelithini who is both a symbol of past power and glory and a modern black South African, visiting black townships such as Mamelodi, outside Pretoria, and not being entirely free from the restrictions of the "pass and passport" when he and his entourage cross to Swaziland (A 1, 1.91).

Some of Dlamini's cryptic references also relate to the King's public activities some of which have been controversial. In a masterly way he uses a royal praise name (Ndaba) and a formula found in both royal and popular praises ("iZulu elibhul' umlilo", "Sky that puts out the fire") as part of his reference to the King's brief involvement in the turbulent strikes by Zulu workers in Durban in 1973. The King was asked to address striking workers at the Coronation Brick Factory ("Madilamini" and "Magengqe") and to persuade them to return to work. The ambivalence of the young King's position and his own conflicting feelings about his role as peacemaker are shrewdly summed up in Dlamini's ambiguous praise,

UNdaba omuhle kakhulu onenyembezi zophele ngaphakathi mhla
eyokhalela isizwe eThekwini eMadilamini,/

Ndaba, most beautiful, whose tears flowed inwardly the day he wept for the nation at the Brick factory in Durban. (A 1, 1.71)

The inference is that the King sympathised far more deeply with the strikers than he appeared to. Dlamini suggests also that the King was successful in his mediation whereas others only succeeded in increasing the tensions (A 1, 1.74). He scornfully dismisses those who criticised the King for his involvement, calling them "flies", and slips in a scathing reference to the unfavourable press coverage the King seems to have received at the time (implying that the King, like a strong bull, whisked away the irritating flies):

Yini lena eyenzeka eThekwini Ndaba?

Wabakhuza lezimpukane zakho ezinqaphe zakukhipha ephepheni.

What happened in Durban Ndaba?

You kept at bay those flies of yours, the ones buzzing around which put you in the newspapers. (A 1, 1s.75-6)

Again, after describing the King's visit to Swaziland in search of a bride he mocks those who are misled by false reports printed in the press. As with the Coronation Brick Factory incident, Dlamini includes as vital leavening a variation of an established formula, "Uyajabula...owabona/funda/ezwa..." (see its use in A 16 1s.4-5, the *izibongo* of Chief Mathole Buthelezi) and this time attacks in vulgar and mocking terms, the Mr Shabalala whom he regarded as responsible for the unfavourable publicity to which the King was subjected at the time:

uShabalala waxhaphazel' isisu wazihudela wabhal' ubunwayinwayi.

Uyajabula mfundi wephepha

wena owezw' amanga asephepheni.

Shabalala's stomach spluttered he had diarrhoea and wrote scratchy letters.

Happy are you, reader of the newspapers,

you who take in the lies of the press. (A 1, 1s.98-100)

This highly contemporary quality of the izibongo co-exists with the epic, expansive element achieved through the ancient royal praise names such as "Ndaba" and "Menzi"; references to the land are also made through praise names, and have associations quite different from the meaning of the official term "KwaZulu". Early in the izibongo there is mention of "kwaMalandela", "the land of Mandela" (A 1, 1.5). The anxiety of Zwelithini's "fathers and grandfathers" over his decision to marry a Swazi princess is expressed in terms of the fear that they will lose their ancient inheritance, their land, bequeathed to them by Senzangakhona, father of Shaka:

Bethi, "Ndab' ungaluweli oPhongolo uyodayisa ngezwe likaSenzangakhona
kwelakwaNgwane.

They said, "Ndaba don't cross the Phongolo River, you will be selling
the land of Senzangakhona to Ngwane. (A 1, 1.95)

Two of the dominant motifs of the izibongo are the struggle for the kingship and the travel motif. The sense of movement and turbulent energy that Dlamini injects into the izibongo comes to some extent from his vocal presentation. Also of importance, though, is the exploitation of these motifs. Thus the early praise,

MntakaNdaba bemthuka bemgokofula /

They insulted the Child of Ndaba they pecked at him (A 1, 1.7),

with its echoes of the Shakan struggle-for-kingship praise,

UTeku lwabafazi bakwaNomgabhi /

The Joke of the women of Nomgabhi (see Cope, 1968, pp.90-1, 1.37), is only one instance of the use of this motif by Dlamini. The night journey to his sister Nonhlanhla and the Transvaal Ndebele (A 1, 1.16) is presented as a dramatic call for support to which men respond (A 1 1.18) and the rivers too, the Thukela and the Mkhuze, are "full to the brim" thus suggesting the powerful unleashing of natural forces which are involved in Zwelithini's struggle. The use of the heraldic royal formulas, "Gijimani ngendlela..." and "lukhulu luyeza" (A 1, 1s.21-2) are again presented as part of the struggle for official recognition as King. Also the widely quoted and popular "Rhinceros" praise (A 1, 1.30) is presented in terms of dynamic movement and escape for Zwelithini. Like a rhinceros breaking out of the fenced-in (Hluluwe) game reserve so Zwelithini must break loose from the oppressive restriction of his older relations who are seen as blocking his attempts to become King and blocking his attempts at greater independence from them. Yet Dlamini does not only present the struggle for kingship in terms which are heroic and elevating. He also uses humour and turns into a comic episode the attempts of some of his senior relatives to influence "Pretoria" against him. Here too there is a journey but it is one that goes badly wrong. Dlamini describes in highly condensed and realistic terms the journey that misfired. In this praise he makes great use of alliteration, assonance and stem reduplication not to inspire but to give a comic sense of unco-ordinated and fruitless activity:

Umbud' obomvu obheke kwaNongoma indlunkulu iyehla yenyukayenyuka
 ngebhasi kaMatimatikazazi neladukaladuka
 iyogingq' ithupha bethi, "Ngek' ubusa Ndaba awukaq-i-ni!"/

The worn red road that pointed to Nongoma, the royal household
 went this way and that
 in Matimatikazazi's bus and got thoroughly lost,
 they were going to swear by their thumbmarks saying, "You should
 not rule Ndaba, you are not yet str-o-ong!" (A 1, 1s.35-7)

Later in the *izibongo* Dlamini deploys the struggle for kingship motif again. This time he turns to its successful conclusion. The passage is underpinned with bardic formulas ("Indaba yenziwa...", "kwaze kwasa...esebikelana") which give a sense of action and excitement; also used is the formula containing the metaphor of the gatepole, a metaphor connected with cattle. Here it is used to indicate the opening of the gateway of opportunity and hence the lifting of the irksome restrictions on Zwelithini. Dlamini sees the Commissioner General of the Zulus as the man responsible for Zwelithini's achieving his desire to be given his rightful position. He names those whom he considers to have hindered Zwelithini's ambitions (i.e. those other than the royal family whose names etiquette forbids him to use) and those who supported him:

Indaba yenziwa nguTorlage lapha kwabamhlophe,
 wavul' imigoq' ivaliwe ngamadod' amabili
 bekuvale uOtte uZul' omhlophe benoJ.J.Boshoff uMehlomane
 kwaze kwasa amakhosazana esebikelana,
 iwuhlabe yawulawula iNkosazana yenkosi Nkayishana,* uGiletha
 ogane kwaShamase
 yalala ingalele ekaBhusha** emaNdebeleni. (A 1, 1s.63-68)

The business was brought about by Torlage among the White people, he opened the wooden gates closed by the two men, closed by Otte, the White Zulu and by J.J.Boshoff, Four-Eyes.

The Princesses reported back to each other all night,
 the Princess, daughter of Nkayishana*, Giletha married to Shamase,
 and the daughter of Bushknife** living with the Ndebele, she too had
 no sleep.

*Nkayishana is a praise name for Solomon Maphumzana kaDinuzulu, grand-
 father of Zwelithini.

**Bushknife, "Bhusha", is a praise name for Cyprian Bhekuzulu
 kaSolomon, father of Zwelithini.

Yet again, in the praise describing Zwelithini's visits to Swaziland
 and their consequences (A 1, ls.87-99), Dlamini exploits the journey
 motif, combining it with the notion of escape from the oppressive
 restriction of his "fathers and grandfathers". Here too he uses a
 number of techniques. He combines royal praise names and emotive
 references to the earlier kings' exploits (ls.87-95) with a popular
 formulaic praise which is also a war chant (l.94). He also introduces
 humour through the reference to the King's future bride as his
 "pillow" (l.93). Finally, the mention of Shabalala and the press,
 together with that of the unnamed member of the royal family who
 managed to cross the border checkpoint "without a pass or passport"
 (l.91) give the section a strongly topical flavour and root it in the
 contemporary world of southern Africa, as do the references to
 "eSwazini", (Swaziland), Lobamba (the Swazi queen mother's residence),
 and Mbabane, the capital of Swaziland.

Dlamini has therefore taken two motifs often found in royal
 izibongo and invested them with a particularity, a precise, personal
 quality which marks them as incontrovertibly those belonging to
 Zwelithini. At the same time he has incorporated praise names and
 formulas which show his reliance both on the more specialised bardic
 repertoire and on the wider izibongo tradition. Also, his particular
 liking for comic situations and humour (consider, for instance the

"short arms" reference in lines 31-2) is very evident and this links his style in an important way with that of the non-specialist composer of izibongo. Also, like non-specialist composers he is very open to the use of loan words if they seem most apt for his purposes. These are the words which often contribute strongly to the topical flavour of a praise. In the line referring to the King's visit to Pretoria accompanied by "Mr Sontag", Dlamini borrows an Afrikaans word "draai", ("turn") and uses it as "dilaya" to mean "cruise or travel around" the hills of Pretoria (1.83). He uses a Zulu form of the English "gates", "amageda" to refer to the boundary gates between Swaziland and South Africa at Mahamba (1.90) and in the only praise which contains a slight hint of criticism of his patron (the imbongi was critical of the King for an unnecessary dismissal of a headman) he gives a deliberately ridiculous picture of petty, needless change. Here he uses loan words ("shintsha", "ibhulakufesi", "idina") which are quite bare of any elevated connotations - the repetitive but ever resonant "Ndaba" softens the blow perhaps!:

Shi-intSHA! Ndaba ushintshe ubulakufesi mntakaNdaba walenz' idina.
 Cha-aNGE! Ndaba you changed breakfast child of Ndaba, you turned
 it into dinner. (A 1,1.120)

It may be thought that Dlamini, with his humour, his loan words, and the topical up-to-date quality of the izibongo, is not careful enough with the royal bardic tradition of which he is now the main exponent. Yet the royal and heraldic formulas, the general formulas, allusive praise names and the motifs which he uses should indicate that he is a superb artist of his time. He combines the inherited skills of the poetic tradition with his own particular insights, precise observations and his instinct for what is apt and memorable. It could be said

of him as an original and perceptive composer, as it was of Magolwana, "This he would pass by and this he would select" (Stuart, 1925:107).

There are, though, a few more signs of the way in which Dlamini has learnt from the models provided by his predecessors and perhaps particularly from his immediate predecessor, Amos Gwala. A few of his izibongo for the King echo praises in Gwala's rendering of the izibongo of Dinuzulu kaCetshwayo (Gwala appears to have gained a particular reputation for his rendering of Dinuzulu's izibongo). Zwelithini, like Dinuzulu, was left fatherless at an early age. Both Dinuzulu and Zwelithini share the formulaic praise,

UMthente uhlab' usamila /

The Silverspike grass stabs whilst still young (A 1, 1.54)

but there are other similarities. Dinuzulu is compared, allusively to his father Cetshwayo through the metaphoric praise name of "the Black Elephant of Ondini", the place name showing that the allusion is to Cetshwayo (Gwala, Tape 5); Zwelithini is compared to "the Black Elephant of Bhalule", the place name indicating that the comparison is with Shaka, or Dingana, as the armies of both kings fought campaigns there. The wording of the praises is strikingly similar. So in addition to the heraldic royal formulas, ("Listen to the person who is shouting" and "Run ye along all the roads") it seems that Dlamini has taken over other praises from earlier royalty which he regards as apt for his royal subject. Even the reference to "burning the long grass of Nongoma" (A 1, 1.24) which Dlamini incorporates into a defiant call to all those opposed to Zwelithini's installation as King (A 1, 1s.20-4) is underpinned and validated by earlier use (17). It appears in some versions of Cetshwayo's izibongo as "The Burner of the long grass at Dlebe [i.e.Paulpietersburg]", (18) (see Table 1 praise 5) and in

Solomon kaDinuzulu's, as "Burner of the long grass of Nduyeni up above" (George Ngobese, Tape 8). It is clear, therefore, that an *imbongi* such as Dlamini is so at ease with the tradition that he may use the models of the earlier praises; he is able to call on a whole range of formulas which he may adapt and weave together to create *izibongo* which are both familiar and distinctive.

There is a further point to consider, and this relates to the interpretation of the overall effect of these latest royal *izibongo* which, it must be remembered, are usually performed along with other royal *izibongo* on Dlamini's various and numerous public engagements. The *izibongo* of the various Zulu kings are (as I have pointed out in Chapter 2) extremely nationalistic. They provide Zulu speakers and possibly those of other ethnic groups with a focal point for national pride and inspiration in the face of an oppressive political system. The *izibongo* are both elevated and inspirational in their delivery and in their language but a close consideration of part of the content of the praises reveals what seems at first sight a contradiction. In his fidelity to his role as chronicler and close observer of his patron, Dlamini has noted (selectively of course) the people with whom he interacted. The picture that emerges shows the young king dependent, confined, struggling - before his installation - against the repressive authority of some of his senior relatives and helped only by Chief Buthelezi (1.6). He is also held in check by the authority of officials such as "Otte the White Zulu", the senior magistrate at Nongoma and "J.J.Boshoff, Four-Eyes", a former Commissioner General of the Zulus (A 1, 1.64). Not only do government officials hold him back but government officials also decide when he may be "released". A.E.Torlage who succeeded J.J.Boshoff as Commissioner General of the Zulus is seen as the man who "Opened the gate-pole which was closed"

(A 1, 1s.63-4). In mocking the senior relatives who were unsuccessful in their blocking attempts, the imbongi congratulates the King on his long arm, "so long that it touched Vorster in Pretoria", implying that the then Prime Minister in Pretoria had the ultimate say in what was to happen to Zwelithini's claims. Even at points where Dlamini is recording topical and controversial events such as the King's addressing the striking Brick factory workers, the presence of "the White Mother, the She-Elephant, the sister of J.J.Boshoff" is noted (A 1, 1.72). Here again, in an indirect and unconscious way the protective hand of the central government authority is recorded and the King's role as mediator loses any semblance of independence.

There is, therefore, within Zwelithini's izibongo a certain contradiction: on the one hand, in an era of heightened black consciousness, the King is presented as the contemporary heir to the glorious achievements of Shaka, Dingana, Mpande and their less happy successors. On the other hand he is presented as a monarch subject to the authority of White, mainly Afrikaner, government officials. Instead of viewing this as a contradiction, however, it may be more fruitful to see it as a faithful representation of the ambiguity of the present king's position. The "contradiction" within the praises may be an expression of what Shula Marks (1982) in her study of Solomon kaDinuzulu, John Dube and George Champion has called "the ambiguities of dependence". The truth may be that the King is both heir to, and captive to, two profoundly opposed political traditions. The complex (verbal and performing) art of the royal praise poem is able both to express yet contain the tensions of this deeply ambiguous position. (19)

The ordinary composer and the tradition

The creativity and the vital contribution of the ordinary composer is something to which the izibongi themselves testify. The comments of Zizwezonke Mthethwa and the Hlabisa bards have already been mentioned; the imbongi Masoswidi Mkhwanazi also stressed the importance of the principle of self-composition and of the performance of praises in ukugiya. For ordinary people, self-composition can lead to izibongo of varying length and artistry; also they cannot escape the praises given to them by others which may, as I have mentioned (Chapter 7), often be far from complimentary.

The non-specialist composer is faced primarily not with the task of "taking-in" material (although he must do that too) but of expressing himself in the most apt and memorable way possible. Also, using the range of poetic language which the art offers him, he can be as inventive and as fresh as he wishes. He may work with formulas and in some cases give them his own stamp through adding the names of people and places connected with his own life. Ordinary composers tend also to use a limited number of stylistic techniques. Nyonyovu Mdletshe, for instance, in his own izibongo (A 115) shows a particular liking for assonance and alliteration (ls.1,3,4,6-7), a liking which perhaps attracted him to the formulaic praise, "The Deep Black Pool", one of the best known of Dingana's praises (although Nyonyovu did not know it as Dingana's).

Four composers and their izibongo

1. Mashekelela Dindi

Mashekelela Dindi's izibongo (A 119 and 120) were recorded with an interval of two months between the two versions. In A 119, besides using a standard cattle name for himself (1.1) he takes the images of

a crocodile and a crab and develops the latter into an extended praise in which he states allusively how he has followed his own desires in spite of dire warnings of the consequences. His great susceptibility to women and his appeal to them are also stated, firstly through the half-humorous formula,

I'ntombi zimnik' ukhisi nangamuhla engasafuni /

Girls give him a kiss even on the day he no longer desires one,

and through the adapted formula introduced by the mock-ferocious, alliterative praise, "UMdabula 'zidwedwe", "Tearer of petticoats".

One of the disappointments of Mashekelela's life was that (some years ago) he was appointed and then very quickly dismissed as "head-man of the youths". (This position involved seeing to the attendance and the dancing and singing performance of the young men in the Qway-induku ward at weddings and other festivities). This incident is recorded in both versions of his izibongo. It comes in an expanded form in the performance version (A 119, ls.14-17) and as a cryptic, balanced statement in his spoken version (A 120, l.23). When I first met him Mashekelela was without a job and very short of money and his worry about work and money is recorded in his performance version in a neatly structured praise phrased as a question:

Namali ujamekile usebenzaphi?

Ngisebenza kwenkosi.

.. You are hard up for money where do you work?

I work at the chief's place. (A 119, ls.4-5)

Thus in his izibongo which were perhaps best known by himself but which were also - in parts at least - on the lips of many men of his own and the surrounding wards, Mashekelela was able to stamp his own

identity. Also, possibly, as the following praise shows, he was duty bound to include in his izibongo the humorous if uncomplimentary comment probably given by someone else: (20)

UBhamuza ngamlomo

uMlomo owabonwa zingane zawubalekela.

The Big Talker

Mouth seen by the children and they ran away from it.

(A 119, 1s.11-12),

2. Shishiliza Dube

Shishiliza Dube's izibongo (A 106) are dominated by his sense of having to be constantly on guard because of the hostility of men from the neighbouring ward towards him. When I first met him in January 1976 he had only recently recovered from an attempt on his life: whilst working on a sugar estate at Matikhulu, the hut in which he was sleeping had been set alight with paraffin. He was lucky to escape with his life but his face and body were terribly scarred. The feeling of persecution and of being on the alert, although dominant in the izibongo, is expressed in a fairly humorous way. Shishiliza (whose "name" is taken from his izibongo) uses an opening praise and then expands a formula which conveys involvement in violence and trouble of some kind (A 106, 1s.1-2). He then moves through final and initial linking to a second praise, again connected with the idea of hostility and persecution although it is expressed humorously (lines 3-4). Lines 5-6 express in a very realistic way the actions of a man who is in a hurry in case he is caught unawares by his enemy. He is even too afraid to complete his wash at the river in case those who have an old score to settle suddenly appear:

Ubhucu 'kagezanga kwelenhlangana

ngoba wesaba umlando uwenza/

He flicks off (the soap) before he's washed at the riverside
because he's afraid of the consequences of his past deeds.

Shishiliza did in fact fear such attacks, and once when I gave him a lift, insisted that he could not get out of the car in the hostile (Matholanjeni) ward as he might meet trouble if he did. What follows in his izibongo is a sequence of typically disjunctive and self-contained praises which in Mode B performance would be called out in any order (and perhaps expanded) by those who praised him and even by himself. In these, his exuberant sense of humour comes to the fore; also in one praise his observation of bad farming practices is expressed and in another he records the "fame" of the soldiers who were heading for England. Shishiliza uses a number of stylistic devices and these together with his bold and clear delivery must have played an important part in the popularity of his izibongo. He includes and in one instance expands on formulas (lines 1,2, and 4). He twice uses ideophones ("wa" and "bhucu") which add a dramatic immediacy to the praises in question; he uses semantic parallelism in the negative to positive device in line 7; later he combines direct address and lexical parallelism (lines 12-13) and ends with a metaphoric praise evocative of energy and ingenuity (these being the qualities associated by Zulu speakers with "imfene", "the baboon"), a praise which, in its reference to Ngoye is one that is firmly rooted in the local environment:

UMjahaza-khathale iMfene yasoNgoye.

Hurrying-one-who-tires-himself-out Baboon of Ngoye (forest).

Shishiliza's izibongo contain more stylistic devices than those of many ordinary people; this, along with the verve of his delivery, may have been one reason why they were so well-liked, yet their humour must also have contributed to their popularity. He has in his izibongo a teasing reference to his mother-in-law and a mocking question for the "wandering" young bride and both these raised appreciative laughter when he "spoke" his izibongo for me.

3. Elias Mjadu

Elias Mjadu of Mpembeni, Richards Bay, who was a younger man than the previous three whom I have mentioned, seemed equally at home both as an imbongi and as a non-specialist composer and performer. He said he found it very easy to retain the izibongo of a person "in my head" once he had heard them, "and then I 'say' [i.e.praise] him as well". As was the case with Shishiliza, his izibongo were probably more highly structured than those of many ordinary composers. In fact they displayed a highly skilful weaving together of devices. Firstly he uses a formulaic praise for himself such as,

UMhlezi' ebukwa njeng' ilanga/

Constantly Gazed at One like the sun, (A 112, 1.4)

and secondly he uses the formula with its final name or place slot,

USibambana-nkuzana abayesaba abakwaNtenga,

Little Wrestler with the little bull which frightens off the Ntengas.

(1.9)

At another point, he runs together two formulas and uses the final half-line formula as a launching point for an expansion (1.12). Whereas Shishiliza Dube's izibongo are concerned in the main with his fights, Mjadu's like Mashekelela Dindi's have a great deal - in fact more - to say about women. He is, he implies, very good-looking

and thus very attractive to women:

The Constantly Gazed at One like the sun.

In a praise which may have been given to him rather than self-composed he is teased for attending and enjoying the weddings of others yet avoiding marriage himself (A 112, 1s.1-2). He tells us that he courted one girl until someone even better came along (1.5). Like the izibongo of many men Mjadu's contains a scornful reference to the mothers of young girls. They are regarded as trouble-makers and interferers (1.6). The final praise (neatly linked over two lines by the repetition of "umnewabo", "his brother") refers in an acceptably bawdy and humorous manner to his own licentiousness and the even greater and wide-ranging sexual appetite of the girl in question.

The three izibongo of his friends which Elias Mjadu recited after he had recited his own (A 112a, A 113, A 114) are less polished than his. Like those of Elias, however, they are full of coarse, bawdy humour expressed in a manner that manages to be both elliptical and explicit (for example, A 114, line 11). References to the opposite sex are not always expressed in such a way, however: the metaphoric praise,

UMthunzi othamel' amaledi,

Shade for the ladies to bask in, (A 114, 1.10)

suggests an attractiveness based on courtly generosity and refinement, a refinement underlined, perhaps, by the use of the loan word "amaledi"! Also, at two points in his friends' praises sexual and social comment combine (A 112a, 1s.7-8 and A 114, 1s.3-5).

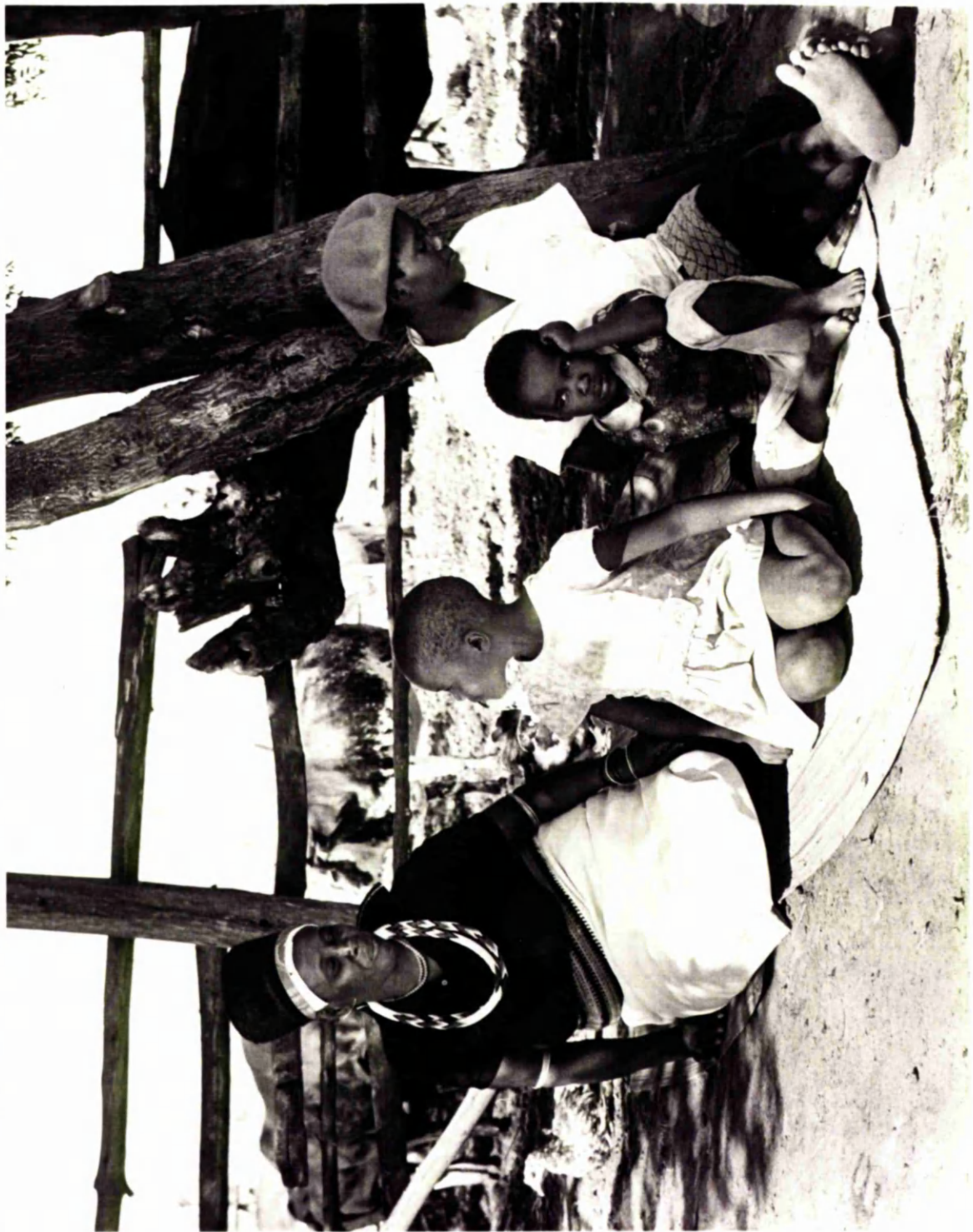
4. Mcasule Dube

Mcasule Dube's izibongo, which she recited in the company of her grown-up son, a woman friend and myself in the privacy of her hut when

I visited the Dube homestead in March 1976, provide a further example of the individual's use of the poetic tradition (21). Mcasule told me that her *izibongo* consisted both of praises she had composed and used before marriage and those she had added after marriage. Like Shishiliza Dube she introduces various parts of her *izibongo* with "Ng'u-" i.e. an abbreviated form of "Ngingu-", "I am", thereby underlining the personal and individual element in her praises and emphasising her sense of ownership of the praises. Her opening praise is in part very similar to one of Shaka's praises, "uSidlukula-dlwedlwe", "The Wild Staff-shaker" (see Cope, 1968:108-9; Vilakazi, 1938:105). Like many opening praises in men's and women's *izibongo* it is highly alliterative. It is also striking in its boldimagery of personal strength. She then follows this with a reference to a familiar theme in women's *izibongo*, that of slander. As she states in the neatly balanced line 2, the abuse by "women and men", "abafazi namadoda" is directed at her sexual morals. She, in turn, attacks those who according to her do flout the rigid sexual codes which operate as a norm for women, and then in typical oblique but vitriolic fashion she hits out at the unnamed woman or young girl with whom she is particularly angry. She turns then to a young man who, she claims, has tried to compromise her good name and she addresses him directly,

Nawe wena nsizwa.../ And as for you young man..., (A 129, 1.8)

warning him not to undermine her virtue. To express her single-minded stance she sets as contrasts (in a neatly balanced negative-to-positive line) the broad road and the narrow path; the one is used by many and the other is more private and solitary. She implies (line 14) that her affections are kept for one person and not spread indiscriminately among many!



6. Mcasule Dube and her daughter at the Dube homestead, Sihuzu, Ngoye, March 1976.

Kangilali emgwaqweni ngilala ngapha kwendlela.

I don't sleep on the high road I sleep by the small path.

After she had paused and spoken briefly of when women's *izibongo* are used, Mcasule continued "speaking" her *izibongo*. In these, she seems to turn from the praises of her time as a young girl, the time of courtship with its tensions and jealousies, to that of marriage. Unlike some women's *izibongo* which are dominated by the composer's experience of the internal feuds of a polygynous household, or which register sorrow because of desertion, Mcasule's *izibongo* speak of her love for her husband (22). The two domestic images she uses suggest peace and harmony. She first of all takes the image of a typical homestead scene where the cats of the family have sneaked off into the vegetable garden and are contentedly having a bite of the green leaves (line 15). Then she commemorates the time when she declared her love for her husband. The only spectators are the applauding hens of her lover's family homestead. In condensed yet eloquent words Mcasule describes her gestures and her words of love and commitment at the moment of her proposal:

UNKuku zishaya ihlombe khona emzini

lapha ngiqome khona.

Ngaguqa, ngathandaza,

ngathi, "Suka mfana ngiyakuthanda,

ngeke luphele olwami uthando nami nawe". (A 129, 1s.16-20)

The Chickens flap their wings (in applause) there at the homestead where I made my proposal.

I knelt down, I begged (him),

I said, "Truly boy, I love you,

may the love between you and me never end".

Indeed Mcasule's marriage seemed a very happy one in spite of the difficulties of long periods of separation from her husband who worked in Hammarsdale (23). Her izibongo are extremely personal and yet they deal as well with the widely used theme in women's praises of slander and counter insult. In her case, the inward-looking, confessional element often found in izibongo composed by women (Gunner,1979) focuses on the enduring relationship between herself and her husband (she was the only wife) and the words composed many years before remained as a testimony of this commitment.

The above discussion has included izibongo composed by individuals with a range of talent, from the imbongi John Dlamini to ordinary composers and performers such as Nyonyovu Mdletshe, Shishiliza Dube and Mcasule Dube. In one sense Milman Parry's remarks on the Homeric poet's containment within the oral poetic tradition are true also of the Zulu poets, both specialists and non-specialists: "For the style which he uses is not his at all: it is the creation of a long line of poets or even of an entire people" (Parry,1930:78). Yet to interpret oral poetry, as Ong appears to (1982:42) as a kind of closed system where poets shuffle around formulas, themes and devices yet never break out into new ground, is to misapprehend - or ignore - the possibilities for growth and change within some forms of oral poetry. Dlamini has created a detailed, chronicle-like picture of aspects of the King's life and personality in his izibongo. He has stamped his own style on the izibongo in his blending of royal and popular formulas, his combination of distinctive and familiar metaphoric praise names for the King, his easy use of loan words and his inclusion of contemporary events. He seems moreover (in part, at any

rate) to have moved away from the heroic tone of the earlier royal izibongo by eschewing the "runs" or catalogues which list the victims vanquished in a particular campaign or event. He has moved to a tone closer to that of commentator and biographer rather than mythmaker. In this respect he seems very much an imbongi of the present time. The ordinary composers whose izibongo I have discussed have each shown some facility with handling the devices by which their compositions are recognised by and communicated to others. Their izibongo also show the imprint of the circumstances of their own life and their own personality. In other words, each stands as a unique and individual statement, as well as representing a part of the poetic tradition. Their izibongo demonstrate the variety and originality found in the compositions of non-specialists, a richness that, as Finnegan remarks (1977:198-200), occurs in poetry from a number of cultures.

8.3. Oral and Written Izibongo

Lord's statement as to the impossibility of any really fruitful continuity or interaction between the oral and written style is quite definite. He reminds us quite rightly of the arrogance of assuming that written style is always superior to oral style even from the very beginning, but then he goes on to make his categorical distinction between the two:

When a tradition or an individual goes from oral to written, he, or it, goes from an adult, mature style of one kind to a faltering and embryonic style of another sort.
(Lord, Singer of Tales, 1960:134)

There is very little evidence in Zulu izibongo of this sharp discontinuity between oral and written style. Instead there is evidence (some of which I have already referred to in my discussion of

Myeni's izibongo for Chief Buthelezi in Chapter 7) of the constant interaction of oral and written izibongo particularly in the case of those of leaders. Many Zulu speakers, both those who have had many years of education and those who have had only a few years in primary school, have come to the royal izibongo and those of other leaders such as Mnyamana Buthelezi through Stuart's textbooks and those that followed and of course through R.R.R.Dhlomo's novels on the Zulu kings. In some cases these learnt izibongo are recited orally (and possibly changed a little) and circulate again in the oral tradition. Also, as we have seen with Chief Buthelezi's various izibongo (Chapter 2 and Chapter 7) he is a contemporary leader who has inspired both written and oral izibongo with in some cases links between the oral and written izibongo. The izibongo by the imbongi Sophandase, written down and added to by Abel Madide are themselves more orderly and sequential than is the norm with orally composed izibongo. Yet some of the praises from there are also in Hezekiah Buthelezi's oral izibongo to the Chief (see A 5 ls.28-38 and 43-51), so the two bards seem at one time to have worked together, and the one must have taken from the other. Amos Gwala's izibongo for Chief Buthelezi have incorporated a praise from those written and read aloud in public by C.B.S.Ntuli. M.B.Yengwa remembers having composed, jointly with Selborne Maponya, izibongo for Chief Luthuli, to mark the Clermont celebration of his receiving the Nobel Peace Prize. On that occasion he read from his script, but on a second occasion he "sang Luthuli's praises from memory at his daughter Hilda's wedding" (24). The izibongo to J.A.W.Nxumalo written by Mr Mathabela and then performed by him in place of the usual headmaster's speech of welcome (Mathabela and Cope,1976) also represent an interesting example of written and oral interaction.

Besides these varieties of oral and written genesis for performed izibongo there are also izibongo in the popular press. One of the earliest izibongo that found its way into the Zulu newspaper, Ilanga laseNatal must have been Alice Werner's translation of the izibongo to Harriet Colenso by the Hlubi bard, Mboza (Ilanga, May, 1907) but there have been many more. Men like John Dube and A.W.G.Champion have at their decease been mourned and commemorated with izibongo in Ilanga (25) (and see Chapter 2). Poets, such as B.W.Vilakazi in his later work in Amal'ezulu, and J.Dlamini in Inzululwane have emulated the form and spirit of izibongo in written poetry (Cope,1981). This range of use which encompasses different kinds of oral and written interaction and independence for a single art form suggests a healthy diversity rather than a movement from a fully developed oral form to a struggling written one.

Izibongo and the poetry of Black Consciousness

A further area of interest in assessing the contemporary influence and vitality of praise poetry in its oral and written forms is the relation of izibongo to contemporary, largely urban based, black poetry written in English. Mzamane (1981) has remarked that the poets of the Black Consciousness Movement are very aware of the inspirational value of the past. It is true that while these poets are unable to utilise the heroic ethic in the ready-made way that izibongo can (through the extensive use of allusive and affective praise names and the command of an established style), there is frequent reference in their work to heroes of the past and to the ancestors. The references are at times specific and in other instances general and all-embracing. The Soweto poet, Ingoapele Madingoane, in his lengthy and frequently performed poem, "black trial", addresses the "ancestors

of africa" in a tone which is both respectful and hectoring. He eschews the normal rules of punctuation, perhaps in order to emphasise to readers that the poem is intended primarily for performance and is therefore part of the long tradition of African oral poetry:

ancestors of africa oh hear our cries...
 while you went to ask
 for permit
 tarzan is trekking our bases
 ancestors of africa your black gold has gone
 colourful ancestors of africa
 ancestors of africa oh hear our cries.

(from, "black trial" in africa my beginning, 1979, p.24)

Later he turns from a general address to the ancestors, those powerful shades of earlier generations, to heroes of the southern African past; he addresses the "mountains of africa" and then invokes the great names from the past, associating them with the strength and the enduring nature of the mountains:

strong rocks mountains of africa...
 towering high over horizons so silent
 beneath you lie badimo beso * giants
 shaka africa's warrior
 martyrs
 moshoeshoe from the mountain kingdom
 christians of africa
 khama the great...

(from "black trial", africa my beginning, pp.30-31)

* Sotho for "our gods".

The poet Mafika Gwala, from Hammarsdale in Natal, is acknowledged as one of the pioneer voices of the Black Consciousness Movement. He too, deliberately draws the figures and symbols of the heroic past into his poetry, particularly in poems where the intention is to spur his readers (listeners) on, and inspire them. One of his poems is addressed to a friend who must at one time have been a political prisoner on Robben Island, off Cape Town. In "A Reminder, For Mazane", he refers to Robben Island by its older, Xhosa name, "the Isle of Makhanda" (so called because the early nineteenth-century Xhosa diviner and war leader was imprisoned there (Wilson and Thompson, 1969, Vol.1, p.256)) and the name serves as an allusive, symbolic reference to past and continued resistance. In his attempt to create a new, contemporary poetic diction for the poetry of Black Consciousness, the allusive, backward-glancing praise and patronymic referring to Shaka, son of Senzangakhona, is included along with the colloquialisms of black English-speakers:

Do you still remember
 Norman, mfo kaDubazane*
 when you shouted:
 'SiyuDiliz' iintaba nabo nyana boMgijima! '**
 whilst Strin'ing beans on the Isle of Makhanda;
 For us to say thank you:
 Sibongile, ngokwenazakwakhe okaSenzangakhona ***
 iNhlanhla [Good luck] of the ancestors is on our side,
 making Black Trix
 to keep us on.

(from, No More Lullabies, 1982, p.63)

* Zulu for "Son of Dubazane".

** Zulu for "We, together with the offspring of Mgijima, will bring low mountains!" Enoch Mgijima was the Xhosa leader of the 'Israelites', 163 of whom were killed in the Bulhoek shootings of 1921 (Wilson and Thompson, Vol.11, pp.82-3). The use of his name is clearly intentionally allusive as it holds strong associations of past resistance.

*** Zulu for "We thank him/praise him for his Achievement, the son of Senzangakhona".

It is debatable whether (in this poem at any rate) such a contrived mingling of tongues and styles works to achieve the kind of highly charged communication which Gwala intends. What is of primary interest here, though, is the very fact that Gwala strives to create such a diction, which not only embraces Zulu but also contains echoes of the allusive and eulogistic style of royal izibongo. The inspirational intention of the poem is also close to the spirit of the royal izibongo. Just as the latter effortlessly present an image of the heroic past to contemporary audiences, so too a poet such as Gwala attempts to forge a new poetic idiom which draws on the strengths of the older Zulu poetic tradition, and in particular on its ability to make the past relevant to the present "angst". Gwala's preoccupation with the great figures of the past and their relevance to the present shows itself in another poem in the same collection (1982). This time the poem is written first in Zulu, entitled "UPhondo" and then in English and entitled "The Horn". As in the earlier poem, Gwala uses direct address (itself another link with one aspect of the style of izibongo), and he addresses the poem (in both its English and Zulu parts) to "Dlothovu", a praise name for Dinuzulu kaCetshwayo which would be known to many of his Zulu-speaking readers. He asks Dlothovu ("The Hairy One") whether it is not better to leave aside any attempts to make peace and prepare, rather, for an armed struggle, drawing strength from past tribulations and bravery. He ends the poem by referring to Bhambatha, leader of the doomed and bloody 1906 Zulu

rebellion, and his companion-in-arms, Chakijane, both of whom, he says, would applaud such action. Not only does Gwala use a praise name from Dinuzulu's *izibongo* and address him (as an *imbongi* might) in his poem, he also draws on the familiar *izibongo* motif of "crossing rivers", a motif which is closely associated with bravery in battle (see Chapter 7). Besides these relatively slight similarities of form and content, the overall tone of the poem emphasises an acceptance of the old military ethic in a new context, and stresses the links between past and present experience, between the struggles of the ancestors and those of the present generation:

Okhokho bethu balubeletha lolusizi;
NoChakijane, noBhambatha kaMancinza
bayonanela.

Gwala sets this in the English, in a rather free translation, as:

Our forefathers long ago won fortitude
against this misery;
Even Chakijane and Bhambatha son of Mancinza
will resonate bravo.

(from, No More Lullabies, pp.73-4)

Gwala's attempt to exploit the resources of the older Zulu poetic tradition of *izibongo*, and to speak with a bi-lingual voice raises interesting questions as regards style, translation and audience communication which I cannot explore here. What is clear is that a poet such as Gwala is - in some of his poems - searching for continuity with the older art form in his attempt to forge a suitable mode of expression for his Black Consciousness poetry.

Wally Mongane Serote is another poet of the Black Consciousness

school who, in some of his work, attempts to blend Western influences with aspects of the style and content of oral poetry. In his discussion of Serote's work, Mbulelo Mzamane (1981) points to Serote's awareness of the link in the role between the urban black, performing poet and the *imbongi*. Mzamane tends to set the *imbongi* in a somewhat timeless idealised past and perhaps overstates the role of the *imbongi* (at least the Zulu *imbongi*) as the voice of the people. Nevertheless he makes an important statement about continuity within a broad poetic tradition, a continuum which includes *izibongo* and the poetry of the Black Consciousness school. One of the poems to which Mzamane refers in support of his claim for continuity, is Serote's "City Johannesburg". Here Serote, like Gwala and Madingoane in the poems to which I have referred, uses direct address and salutes the city as if it were a person. He then expands on his experience as a black man who knows Johannesburg only as a worker; his words are intended to embody the experience of the innumerable men and women who pour in and out of the city daily but who do not live there. Like many *izibongo* his words define rather than eulogise the object or individual in question. The opening salutation and the continued addresses to the City give the impression of a poet speaking rather than writing:

This way I salute you;
 My hand pulses to my back trouser pocket
 Or into my back trouser pocket
 For my pass, my life,
 Jo'burg City.

(from Black Poets in South Africa, ed. Royston, 1974, p.20)

The rhetorical, declamatory impression of the opening lines is heightened in the second part of the poem where Serote makes use of lexical

and syntactic parallelism. The poet, whose words convey the experience, the voice, of the ordinary man, arrives to work in the glamorous yet sterile city before daylight and leaves at dusk:

That is the time when I come to you,
 When your neon flowers flaunt from your electrical wind,
 That is the time when I leave you,
 When your neon flowers flaunt their way through the falling
 darkness
 On your cement trees.

Lines such as the following, with their varieties of parallelism, again call to mind the rhetorical techniques of izibongo as found in specialist and non-specialist praising:

And as I go back to my love,
 My dongas, my dust, my people, my death,
 Where death lurks in the dark like a blade in the flesh,
 I can feel your roots, anchoring your might, my feebleness
 In my flesh, in my mind, in my blood...

(Black Poets, ed. Royston, p.21)

Another link between the established poetic tradition of izibongo and much of the poetry of writers from Oswald Mbuyiseni Mtshali in the late 1960s through to poets such as Madingoane and Serote is the strong emphasis on performance in contemporary black poetry written (mainly) in English. Xihoshi (1981:17), in a short article on black South African political poetry, notes in his discussion of the poetry revival from the late nineteen sixties on, that, "much of the poetry produced in South Africa initially was made public at meetings, at

poetry readings, at mass gatherings of all kinds". As if to underline the continuity in the minds of these poets between the spoken, and written word, Xihoshi mentions that Oswald Mtshali's Sounds of a Cow-hide Drum, first published in South Africa in 1971, sold 10,000 copies in the first year of availability. Mbulelo Mzamane also emphasises the importance of performance in contemporary black urban poetry and specifically points to the connection with praise poetry, not only Zulu and Xhosa izibongo but Sotho lithoko as well:

Poetry in South Africa today has moved from the page to the stage. It is recited on public occasions, during commemorative gatherings and funeral services and get-togethers of all sorts. It is infused with the traditional spirit of izibongo or lithoko. (Mzamane, "The Use of Traditional Oral Forms in Black South African Literature", 1981, p.23.)

It would be wrong, though, to see this role as inspirer of, and storehouse for, other poetry as the greatest contribution of izibongo at the present time. It is a far stronger, living art form than has been recognised even by writers such as Mzamane who are at pains to point out the influence of praises and praising on the contemporary Black Consciousness school of poets. As an art form it is not residual, but rather, resilient. It both combats and accepts change. In its written and oral forms, but perhaps particularly in the latter, it offers a forceful and contemporary poetic challenge to a social order which allows little place for the dignity of the Zulu (or the Black) past and ignores present aspirations. Perhaps most significant of all is the contribution of personal izibongo in providing a vehicle for artistic self-expression and for artistic recognition of others, in a wider society which denies the expression of such identity. In this way the poetry provides a means of creating an image which offers a fundamentally more truthful picture of the individual, his society and his past than does much everyday experience.

Notes

1

Versions of Dlamini praising Zwelithini kaBhekuzulu kaSolomon are on Tapes 1, 2, 3 and 5.

2

The Xhosa imbongi, Nelson Mabunu, also mentions that izibongo tend to stabilise if an imbongi praises the same chief over and over again. See Opland's "Praise Poems as Historical Sources" in C.Saunders and R.Derricourt (eds.), Beyond the Cape Frontier, (Capetown: Oxford University Press 1974), p.9. Lord also mentions stability: "Once a singer learns a song it attains a kind of thematic stability", Singer of Tales, p.115.

3

Most of the remarks on Stuart are from his handwritten collections of izibongo and conversations with bards contained in his three large hard-covered notebooks which he entitled "Book of Eulogies, 1,2 and 3". They are numbered Notebook 75, 76 and 77 in the James Stuart Archives Collection and I refer to them as such.

4

B.W.Vilakazi in his "The Conception and Development of Poetry in Zulu", Bantu Studies X11, (1938), p.108, mentions that Solomon's bard, "is still living and has composed in the same vein as the bards of the nineteenth century. The only difference is that the symbols used involve some modern concepts of life and western conditions...". Vilakazi does not say who the bard is. He was probably Hoye, father of Mgezeni Ndlela.

5

For instance he mentions an imbongi called Hlomane: "Heard him bonga at City Meat Supply [Pietermaritzburg] and I invited him to come up". After the texts of the izibongo of Bhambatha, Sobhuza and one other chief he adds this note: "I would not call Hlomane a good imbongi. He is not very sure of his ground; however he is full of the imbongi 'afflatus'". Notebook 76, p.52.

6

As noted by David Rycroft (1974, p.64, note 22), it is possible to trace from Stuart's marginal notes to his handwritten mss (compiled from his "Notebooks"), the sources from which he derived each of the various lines which he incorporated into his collated versions; but this information was not included in Stuart's published versions (Stuart, 1923-6) nor in Cope (1968).

7

David Rycroft has pointed out (p.comm. Oct.1983) that Stuart's Zonophone versions, and also Cope's (1968) izibongo of Shaka and Cetshwayo, differ from the former's 1923-6 versions. My own feeling is that in making his expansions and collations, Stuart did not always recognise the "same" praises produced by various bards in slightly different ways. Hence his izibongo of Dinuzulu (judging from Malcolm's typescript, James Stuart Archives) contain what seem to me repetitions that would not occur in the rendering of a single bard.

8

Both recordings were made available by Ernie Hilder of SABC, Durban, and I am very grateful to him.

9

It is in some ways hard to reconcile Lord's mention of "stability" (see Singer of Tales, p.115) with his insistence on composition in

performance.

10

For the Ndondakusuka victory catalogue or "run" where his defeat of his brother Mbuyazi is celebrated see the (collated) version of Cetshwayo's izibongo in Cope, (1968, pp.216-7, ls.52-66 and pp.220-1, ls.90-99). "Where the battle raged" is from Cope's translation.

11

Lord views composition and performance as inextricably connected, op.cit. p.101, but this seems not always to be the case in oral poetry and to a large extent is not true of Zulu izibongo.

12

See J.D.Smith's "'The Singer or the Song'. A Reassessment of Lord's 'oral theory'", Man Vol.12, (1977), pp.141-153. Smith thinks Pabuji epic has a liturgical hence religious role and this may account for the fixity of the text.

13

See Landeg White's "Power and the Praise Poem", Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol.9, no.1, (October 1982). White notes that part of the izibongo of Ndaba (Cope, 1968, pp.72-3) must have been added at a later date than the rest.

14

The imbongi Mvingana who recited for Grant also shows individual variation in his versions of the izibongo of Dinuzulu and of Cetshwayo. See E.W.Grant, "The Izibongo of the Zulu Chiefs", Bantu Studies Vol.3, No.3, (1929), pp.203-244.

15

"Knowing" someone's izibongo often means that an individual has his version of the izibongo which may come from the owner and from other sources. Compare, for instance, A 103, the izibongo of Masofeyisi Mthethwa by himself and A 98, his izibongo as recited by his elder brother. The key praise "Mkhongikhongi" is recognisable in each but A 98 is much briefer than A 103.

16

Ngubane regards Mshongweni, Shaka's bard as a great innovator, see his "An Examination of Zulu Tribal Poetry", Native Teachers Journal 31, (1951), pp.3-6.

17

Perhaps these are further examples of royal formulas?

18

Dlebe is the Zulu name for Paulpietersburg in the Southern Transvaal. Dlebe was part of the disputed territory which the Boers claimed as part of their reward for assisting the uSuthu against Zibhebhu at the battle of Tshaneni in 1884.

19

What could be called "the Pretoria theme" in the royal praises first appears in a direct way in the izibongo of Solomon. There is no such theme in the izibongo of Isaiah Shembe.

20

I was given the same formulaic praise shortly before I left Ngoye. I am, "UMhlolo owabonwa zingane ziyawubalekela", "The Amazing Sight seen by the children and they run away from it".

21

Mcasule preferred to use her husband's isibongo rather than her own clan name which is Mhlongo, "abaseLangeni", "the people from where the Sun is". This was also the clan to which Nandi, Shaka's mother, belonged.

22

According to custom girls propose marriage to the young men of their

choice. See Laretta Ngcobo's Cross of Gold, (London: Longman Drumbeat 25, 1981), Chapters 8 and 9, for a novelists account of contemporary Zulu courtship in the rural district of Melmoth.

23

The ceremony for the ancestors which I describe in Chapter 2 was at this homestead.

24

Letter from M.B.Yengwa, May, 1975.

25

The izibongo for John Dube composed by Zika Msimbithi, "Induku Engaphukiyo" ("The Unbreakable Stick"), were printed in Ilanga on February 23 1946. They were headed not "izibongo", but "isililo" ("a lament"), and appear in the same issue as the account of Dube's funeral, thus underlining the memorial, commemorative aspect of izibongo. A.W.G.Champion's izibongo appeared in Ilanga on Saturday October 22 1975, shortly after the announcement of his death. Here too, the izibongo are clearly elegiac and commemorative. They are headed "Hamba Kahle A.W.G.Champion" ("Go Well A.W.G.Champion") and are by B.N.S.Mkhonza of Nongoma.

CONCLUSION

It should be clear from the examples of izibongo which I have cited in previous chapters that the art of praising, both in the hands of bards and of non-specialists, exists as a vital component of contemporary black South African experience. In their distinctive ways this is shown in the praise poems of the various leaders included in my commentary and in the smaller, but often very vivid izibongo of ordinary people. The ability of praise poems to comment upon current events is shown in the izibongo of Chief Buthelezi, particularly those praise poems of his which deal with his political activities. The izibongo of Chief Luthuli, with their celebration of his political struggles and their positive interpretation of his achievements, also relate very much to contemporary realities viewed in the light of a heroic past. The majestic izibongo of Isaiah Shembe, with their celebration of a spiritual leader who offered his followers a new sense of pride and dignity both as Christians and as Zulus, are also a contemporary statement. They express the great desire for self-assertion on the part of individuals who felt cut off from their past and deprived of the regenerative power of their own cultural symbols. The current royal izibongo, those of Zwelithini kaBhekuzulu, chronicle and comment upon the activities of Shaka's heir in a "kingdom" very different from that of his illustrious ancestor. Similarly, the izibongo of ordinary individuals reflect and provide a medium for comment upon the circumstances of their own lives and their own experience.

The "contemporary" quality of izibongo, it needs to be emphasised, is far more than a mere "reflection" of the present. The praises are a medium for expressing values which are not present in the dominant and largely alien wider culture. Through their effortless present-

ation of the past they provide a certain rich continuity of experience which contrasts with the disjunctive and frequently bewildering present and its devaluation of personal and social life. Izibongo can, therefore, be a means of creating an image of self and of others and of society, which operates according to rules and perceptions generated from within the group. Such an image is not one which is externally demanded, governed by external operators and external perceptions. In the former situation continuity and innovation are regulated by the users of the art form and there is abundant evidence of both continuity and innovation in the izibongo cited in earlier pages or present in the Appendix of this dissertation.

To conclude, in this study I have tried to present ukubonga nezibongo, praising and praises, as a dynamic rather than a static art form. As poetry, izibongo is expressive of both stability and change, as an art form, praising is richly celebratory of the individual and the group, and it is an art form that is enjoyed and held in high regard by a broad spectrum of Zulu speakers.

ADDENDUM

A Note on the System of Reference Used in the Thesis

My main guide for presentation of bibliographic material has been A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations, Kate L. Turabian, 1st British edition prepared by J.E. Spink, Heinemann: London, 1982. In the main, books and articles are referred to in full in the footnotes and in the bibliography. I have also, however, in order to reduce the number of footnotes, in some cases used the Harvard system of citing author, year of publication and where relevant page references, in the text. All publications referred to in this way are given in full in the Bibliography or the Bibliography Addendum. The books and articles I consider basic and essential to my study occur in the bibliography or the bibliography addendum; in a few cases where a book or article has been referred to but is not considered basic or essential it is listed only in the footnotes.

Quotations in the text are in the main followed by author, title of work, year of publication and page reference; in a few instances quotations are followed by a footnote number and publication details are in the footnotes.

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UKUBONGA NEZIBONGO: ZULU PRAISING AND PRAISES

VOLUME 2

APPENDIX OF IZIBONGO AND IZIGIYO

Elizabeth Anne Wynne Gunner

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1. "Forgotten Men: Zulu Bards and Praising at the Time of the Zulu Kings", African Languages/Langues Africaines 2 (1976), pp.71-90.
2. "Songs of Innocence and Experience: Women as Composers and Performers of Izibongo, Zulu Praise Poetry", Research in African Literatures Vol.10, No.2, (1979), pp.239-267.
3. "New Wine in Old Bottles: Imagery in the Izibongo of the Zulu Zionist Prophet, Isaiah Shembe", Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford Vol.X111, (1982), pp.99-108.

Section A

Izibongo of national figures

1. Zwelithini kaCyprian Bhekuzulu kaSolomon kaDinuzulu

Occasion: On request, at Bhekuzulu College, Nongoma, after the opening session of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, October 16th 1975.

Audience: E.G. and Simon Mbokazi.

Delivery: Low voice. Generally very fast pace after a slower start.

- 1 INdlondlo enophaph' ekhanda kaMenzi¹
 Ndaba awulalele lomuntu omemezayo,
 sengathi uyakhala uyalila uthi-i,
 "Igula likaJama² lichithekile,
 5 lichithwa yingqwel' endala yakithi kwaMalandela"³⁴.
⁵ Unesibindi Buthelezi ngokukhuthazela.
 MntakaNdaba bemthuka bemgokofula,
 bethi, "UZwelithini kayikubusa kayokuba inkosi",
 kanti bangcoba ngamafuth' emphepho.
- 10 Eyakithi kwaMalandela uSodidase,
 INkonyane encane kaNdaba edid' im'bala.⁶
 UMphikeleli wensizwa
 ngoba ephikelela amadod' akwaZulu esephelelwa ngamandla
 UMaphokophela obengayinsizwa esinikinikana⁷
- 15 engabubende bezingwe nezingonyama,
 ogijime ngandlela-nde ngaluvivi eyakwadadewabo uNonhlanhla.⁸
 Nani maNdebele seniyoguga nidelile
 enike nabona izinyane leSilo sikaNdaba ohlambe izandla amakhanda
 amadoda ethi yiwona ayokumhlabanela,
 kwaye kwagcwal' i'mfunda zemfula ezinye zoMkhuze ezinye zoThukela.

- 20 Nani magundwane ahlala eyikhotheni kwaNongoma,
 gijimani nge'ndlela zonkana niyobikela abangake-e-ZWA-A!
 Nithi lukhulu luyeza luyanyelela,
 silufanisa nendlovu emnyama yasoBhalule⁹
 luzoshis' i'khotha zakwaNongoma.
- 25 INkonyan' encane kaNdaba ekhwela phezu kwendlu eGazini,
 bathi oyise noyisemkhulu, "Hawu ngasitha Ndaba", bethi,
 "Usuyahlola",
 kanti yibona abahlolayo.
 INTul' ebande ngodonga kwaBhekuzulu.
 IMvukuzane evukuz' ubusuku uyabonwa uMame wasemaNdebeleni.⁸
- 30 UBhejane odl' abakayise ph-u-u-m' esiqiwani kade bekuvalele.
 UNGalo-nde kagabela ayingange zawoyise iziqunswana zona
 ngisho bethi bayakwelula uphelel' ezinqulwini
 eyakh' inde yashaya kuVorster ePitoli.¹⁰
 Kwayekwamazama u-M.C.Botha, iNdlovu enebatha.¹¹
- 35 Umbud' obomvu obheke kwaNongoma indlunkulu iyehla yenyukayenyuka
 ngebhasi kaMatimatikazazi neladuka-laduka
 iyogingq' ithupha bethi, "Ngek' ubusa Ndaba awukaq-i-ni!"
 UQasa-likawasa, iNkomo esengwa iviyo
 Inhlohlonga (?) iNkom' ethandwa zibawu.
- 40 Suka eduze kom'ntu wami ngiyagulelwa.
 Ukhulumise uThwethwe laph' kumaBhunu wazond' uBotha benoKwashakwasha.¹²
 Ziyeke lezonkomo obuzikhiphe amakhalane aziseluswe nguwe
 zeluswa yindlondlo yakithi kwaKhethomthandayo.¹³
 UMthunduluk' ovuthwe ngeNala ngowakwaThayiza.
- 45 UMDlokombane (?) vuk' ume ngentaba.
 UMIlandeli webhodwe eliconsayo¹⁴

- 15
uSocijile ezalwa kwaMagwaza.
- Impi eqhathwe uMathangalitshitshi ozalwa uMaswabhula
16
lapha kwaMgilitsha eMahashini,
- 50 wayiqhatha ngesinqe esab' ukungena ethwel' idlokolo endlunkulu.
17
USihlangu simagqabha sinamanxeba sigudl' iVuna,
ngiyesaba Ndaba ukubiza ngegama unguNtabankulu uLangakazi.
INkosi yakithi eNaleni eshawodwe nguChampion uMahlathi
18
kwazamaphephandaba.
- UMthente kaJama ohlab' usamila,
19
55 usekelwe indlunkulu ngeyakwaDlashiye.
Mwelela kweliphesheya, Mzaca weyikhomb' amaNguni
Nang' esejamile uMame waphesheya uBhejane
Usisiz' usiqoqel' onkone kaNdaba.
INdidandidane edid' izinsuku,
- 60 namuhla okaNdaba eyawabuya phesheya
uZulu nendlunkulu babheke ngakusasa
kant' iNkosi ifike ngayizolo.
20
Indaba yenziwe nguTorlage lapha kwabaMhlophe,
wavul' imigoq' ivaliwe ngamadod' amabili
21
65 bekuvale uOtte uZul' omhlophe benoJ.J.Boshoff uMehlomane
kwaze kwasa amakhosazana esebikelana,
22
iwuhlabe yawulawula iNkosazana yenkosi Nkayishana ogane kwaShamase
23
yalala ingalele ekaBhusha emaNdebeleni.
INyathi kaNdaba enempondo zimakopelela ebhansele nguManyasa
ezalwa nguMadwala
- 70 lapha kwaDukuza kwesikaShaka.
UNdaba omuhle kakhulu one'nyembezi zophele ngaphakathi mhlala
24
eyokhalela isizwe eThekwini eMadilamini,

kwaye kwagxumagxuma uMam'hlophe uMandlovu udadewabo kaJ.J.Boshoff
²⁵
 kwabamhloph' abeLungu.

IZul' elibhule umlilo ngama-azwi
 abanye Ndaba bebewubhula ngamahlahla ubaswe yinxokoxoko
 ngeyakwaMagengqe.

75 Yini lena eyenzeka eThekwini Ndaba,
 wabakhuza lezimpukane zakho ezingaphe zakukhipha ephepheni.
²⁷
 UShishiliza kwelimaholo limhlabe limbhedule
 uNzuza benoNhleko ezikanekisweni
 uGwajumbe benoMazibuko ezinyangeni zasoSotho

80 seziyababhule 'mhlamhla Ndaba zibanuke.
 IBhubesi elimthende likaNdaba elidlule lishishiliza e'ntabeni
²⁸
 zimbili iMaselo neMasilonyana kwelaseVrystaat
²⁹
 kwayekwagxumagxuma uKlenyeklenye ezalwa kwaCebekhulu
 ngelakithi iBhubesi eMahashini lidilaya i'ntaba zePitoli
 ibiphelekezelwa nguMister Sontag.

Igugu elihle likaKekana ad' ehamba ezibhuka ngalo ebhek'
³⁰
 eMamelodi.

85 Udaxewadaxa mntakaNdaba Simomo vuka 'ntambama.
³¹
 Ubhaxabule 'khukhu wakho ekuphekelela.
³²
 UMhlahlandlela ngowamakhosi ngowawoCetshwayo ngowawoMpande.
 ONyawo-zinhle ezikaNdaba ezingakhethi 'mabala
 ziyezagxoba zanyathela oyise noyisemkhulu.

90 Ibheke amaged' avuleka nangakwaMahamba
³³
 nowayengenapasi napasothi simethuke eseSwazini
 yakhethelwa zingane zakwaLobamba,
³⁴
 bathi, "Thatha Ndaba nank' umqamelo wakho uyoqamela ngawo eNaleni".
 U-U-UNompunyumpu iNkunzi abayibambe ngandleb' e'nde yaphunyula
 oyise beyivalela ngesihlahla,

- 95 bethi, "Ndab' ungaluweli uPongolo uyodayisa ngezwe likaSenzangakhona
 35
 kwelakwaNgwane.
- INKunzi ekhwele phezu kwezintaba zaseMbabane,
 36
 amaBombo ejikijel' eyiTheni
 uShabalala waxhaphazel' isisu wazihudela wabhala ubunwayinwayi.
 Uyajabula mfundi wephepha
- 100 wena owezwa amanga asephepheni.
 37
 INkosi ethombel' ehlathini amanye athombel' ezindlini
 ekhiphe izinkomo zehla ngohologo
 zibheke kwaMshanyele, wagijima uQholobane ezalwa eMankwanyeni
 wayobikela uMzweni, uMzweni wehle wenyuke.
- 105 UMfula kaNdaba ongenise kabi uMageba
 wangenisa wenyukela.
 USibambana-nkunzi beyesaba eMbumbumbulu,
 39
 ubambe uHlengwa uqede kwephuka 'Mkhonto kaShaka.
 UMgoqo ovalel' i'nkomo zaseSusweni
- 110 athule nje amaThembu angasho lutho.
 UNogwaja ozikhundlakhundla,
 uyalala kwesinye uyaphumula.
 40
 Ukhulumise uMkhwintshi mntakaNdaba oSilevu-simhlophe
 kwezinde kanyangantathu,
- 115 wamjika phansi wavuka sesibomvana.
 Indaba yenziwe nguMadondo,
 wathatha i'nkomo zakwaManqele wazidibana nezinkomo zenkosi,
 41
 madoda aseDumbe nithule nje nithini?
 42
 'Ntaba 'zimbili zakhelene kodwa nintula ngisho ukuxhawulana.
- 120 Shintsha! Ndaba ushintshe ubhulakufesi mntakaNdaba walenz' idina
 UVava Iwenkunzi yakithi kwaKhethomthandayo

44

ayigwebi ichoma ngazo zimbi-ili.
Uyibinda wena kaBhush' obukhali.

Izibongo zenkosi Zwelithini zibongwe uDlamini.

- 1 The Viper with the Feathered Head, descendant of Menzi.¹
Ndaba listen to the person shouting,
it is as if he is weeping and mourning, he says,
"The gourd of Jama is spilt,²
5 it is spilt by our very own elderly chief herdboys³ of Zululand".⁴
Buthelezi⁵ was brave in his encouragement,
they insulted the child of Ndaba, they pecked at him,
saying, "Zwelithini will never rule, will never be king",
whereas people anointed him with oil from the (sacred) imphepho
plant.
- 10 Our own Father of Confusion of Zululand,
Small Calf of Ndaba who hides his intentions,⁶
Persistent young man
because he persisted with the men of Zululand when his strength
was finished.
- Determined One who was like a young man in rags⁷
- 15 One who was like the clotted blood of leopards and lions,
who ran down the long road at dawn to his sister Nonhlanhla.⁸
And you, Ndebele, may you grow old and be happy,
you who have seen the leopard cub of Ndaba
who washed his hands on the heads of men saying it was they who
would fight for him,
and the banks of the Mkhuze and the Thukela rivers were full to
the brim.

- 20 And as for you, you rats who live in the long grass at Nongoma,
run along all the paths, announce to all who have not HE-A-ARD!
say, "It is great, it is coming, it is gliding along.
We compare him to the Black Elephant of Bhalule,⁹
he will burn the long grass of Nongoma".
- 25 The Small Calf of Ndaba which climbs on top of the house at Gazini
his fathers and grandfathers said, "Royal One ? ". They
said you were acting outrageously but it was they who were.
The Lizard flat against the wall at Bhekuzulu,
the Mole which tunnelled underground at night and was seen by the⁸
Ndebele matron.
- 30 Rhinoceros which overcomes its brothers, br-e-e-ak out of the game
reserve where they've locked you up!
Your arm is long indeed not like your fathers' short little arms,
I say that even if they stretched theirs they would not end at
your thighs
yours is so long that it touched Vorster in Pretoria.
M.C.Botha the Duck-footed Elephant shivered and shook.
- 35 The worn red road that pointed to Nongoma, the royal household
went this way and that
in Matimatikazazi's bus and got thoroughly lost,
they were going to swear by their thumbmarks saying "You should not
rule Ndaba, you are not yet str-o-ong!"
? , Cow milked by the band of men,
? , Cow beloved of flies,
- 40 Move away from me, one of my family is ill.
He spoke to Tall-and-Skinny among the Afrikaners, he hated Botha¹²
and Kwashakwasha.

Get away from those cattle from which you are pulling ticks,
 they're not yours to herd,
 they should be herded by our Horned Viper of Khethomthandayo.¹³
 The Wild Plum ripened by the Nala regiment, off-spring of Thayiza.

45 UMDlokombana arise stand like a mountain.
 Follower of the Dripping Pot,¹⁴
 the Sharp One of Magwaza.¹⁵

The fight started by Thigh-of-a-Young-Girl, son of Maswabhula
 here at Mgilitsha's¹⁶ at Mahashini.

50 He started it buttocks first, afraid to enter the royal house
 adorned with headplumes.

The Shield spattered with blood and the marks of battle skirts
 the Vuna River.

I am frightened Ndaba, to mention names, he is the Great
 Mountain, the Enormous Sun.

Our King of the Naleni regiment whom Champion, the Forest, wrote
 about in the papers.¹⁸

The Silverspike Grass of Jama it stabs whilst still young.¹⁹

55 He was supported by the royal house of Dlashiye.

Traveller overseas, Fighting Stick at which the Nguni point.
 There he is, matron from overseas, the Rhinoceros, staring fiercely
 Help us and collect for us O White-spotted One of Ndaba.

The Mixer-up who mixes up the days.

60 The child of Ndaba returned from overseas today,
 the Zulu nation and the royal house were expecting him the
 following day
 whereas he arrived the day before.

The business was brought about by Torlage among the White people,²⁰

he opened the wooden gates closed by the two men,
 65 closed by Otte, the white Zulu and by J.J.Boshoff, Four-Eyes.²¹
 The Princesses reported back to each other all night,
 the Princess, daughter of Nkayishana,²² Giletha, married to Shamase,
 and the daughter of Bushknife²³ living with the Ndebele, she too had
 no sleep.
 Buffalo of Ndaba with the inward-curving horns who gave the bonus
 to Manyasa born of Madwala
 70 here at Shaka's place of Dukuza.
 Ndaba, most beautiful, whose tears flowed inwardly the day he
 wept for the nation at the Brick factory²⁴ in Durban.
 She was so agitated, the White matron, the She-Elephant, sister
 of J.J.Boshoff among the White people.²⁵
 Sky which put out a fire with words,
 others, Ndaba, were beating it out with branches, the fire
 kindled by the commotion at the Brick factory.
 75 What happened in Durban, Ndaba?
 You kept at bay those flies of yours, the ones buzzing around
 which put you in the newspapers.
 Slider on his buttocks over the rough rock, it cut and grazed him
 as for Nzuzza and Nhleko from the (high) beacons,
 Gwajumbe and Mazibuko, the Sotho doctors
 80 are divining, they are smelling them out.
 Striped Lion of Ndaba which passed bumping over the two mountains
 Maselo and Little Maselo in the Free State.
 Klenyeklenye, son of Cebekhulu²⁹ jumped about in agitation.
 Our own Lion of Mahashini cruises around the hills of Pretoria
 with Mr Sontag,
 the beautiful treasure of Kekana which he went in, looking at his

own reflection all the time as he headed towards Mamelodi.³⁰

85 Sloucher, child of (Royal) Ndaba, the Handsome One, you wake in
the afternoon.

You give your cook a hiding.³¹

Pioneer of the kings' roads, those of Cetshwayo and of Mpande,³²
Beautiful Feet of Ndaba which do not choose where they tread,
they trod and trampled on his fathers and grandfathers.

90 He made for the open gates at Mahamba together with the one who
had no pass or passport.

We found him in Swaziland

being vied for by the children at Nobamba.

They said, "Here, Ndaba, take your pillow, to rest your head on
when you are with the Nala regiment."³⁴

I-i-intractable Bull which they grabbed by its long ears although its
fathers barred its way with a lopped-off branch,

95 they said, "Ndaba don't cross the Pongolo River, you will be
selling the land of Senzangakhona to Ngwane."³⁵

Bull that climbed to the top of the hills of Mbabane³⁶
and the Bombo mountains hurled missiles at his enemies.

Shabalala's stomach spluttered, he had diarrhoea and wrote
scratchy letters.

Happy are you, reader of the newspapers,
100 you who take in the lies of the press.³⁷

King who reached puberty in the forest while others reached
puberty at home;

he took the cattle out, heading down the rough slope,
they headed for Mshanyele's and Qholobane of the Mkhwanyanes ran off.
He went to tell Mzweni, Mzweni paced this way and that.

105 River of Ndaba which one enters with difficulty, Mageba!

38

It rose in flood and was high indeed.

Grappler with the bull which people were afraid of, at Mbumbulu,
he grappled with Hlengwa and immediately the Spear of Shaka Party

39

broke.

Barrier keeping in the cattle of Susweni,

110 the Thembus were quiet, not saying a word.

Rabbit with many resting places,

one for sleeping in and one to rest in.

40

The Child of Ndaba forced Mkhwintshi of the white beard to speak out
at the court session.

115 He hurled him down and when he came to, his beard was a reddish
colour.

The affair started by Madondo,

he took the Mangele cattle and mixed them with the King's.

You men of Paulpietersburg you are silent, what are you thinking
41
about?

The two mountains adjoin each other but I say they do not even
42
shake hands.

120 Cha-a-NGE! Ndaba, you changed breakfast Child of Ndaba

43

you turned it into dinner.

Our Straight-Horned Bull of Khethomthandayo,
44
he doesn't stab he pierces with them bo-o-th.

You choke me, son of the Sharp Bushknife.

The izibongo of King Zwelithini uttered by Dlamini.

Notes

1

Menzi was an early Zulu ancestor; his name is an evocative and allusive praise name for Zulu royalty. "INDlondlo" - "The Horned Viper", evokes the awesome and dangerous power of royalty.

2

Jama was the father of Senzangakhona, father of Shaka; his name is also widely used for Zulu royalty.

3

An allusion to the senior member of the Zulu royal family who acted as regent before Zwelithini became king.

4

Malandela was the father of Zulu, the founder of the original Zulu clan. The term, "kwaMalandela" is often used to refer to Zululand, "the land of Malandela".

5

Chief Buthelezi supported the young Zwelithini's claim to be installed as King. The izibongo from lines 2-37 focus on the opposition Zwelithini encountered, in many cases from members of the royal family, in his attempts to become King.

6

A reference to the young prince's request that he be supplied with cattle for the purpose of lobola, the bride price, as he wished to marry. The imbongi claims that he did this knowing that he would never be allowed to become King until he was married. Thus he hid his real intentions.

7

In his kingless state, his poverty of authority and real status make him like "a young man in rags" who has only his persistence and courage to support him.

8

Zwelithini's sister, Nonhlanhla, married a member of the Ndebele people of the Southern Transvaal. Zwelithini left Bhekuzulu College, where he was a student, secretly because of rumours that there was a plot to assassinate him and went to his sister, Nonhlanhla.

Line 29 is another reference to his stealthy departure from Bhekuzulu College in Nongoma to the amaNdebele. The images of the lizard and the mole which describe his escape contrast with that of the rhinoceros, suggesting that by his escape he not only left school behind but also the oppressive authority of his senior relatives.

9

Gibson, (1903, p.26) mentions that the last of Shaka's campaigns was known to the Zulus as "impi yoBhalule", the latter being the Zulu name for the Olifants river. The allusion here could be to Shaka, or possibly Dingana as "oBhalule" occurs twice in the Rycroft-Ngcobo Izibongo zikaDingana. I did not check the allusion with Dlamini.

10

Zwelithini is said to have visited the then Prime Minister, the late Dr B.J.Vorster, to ask if the South African authorities would support his claim. Those opposed to this also went to Pretoria but their bus broke down on the way and they arrived too late to be heard. The breakdown of the bus and the implied race to get there first is probably a telescoping of events but it adds dramatic effectiveness to the narrative.

11

M.C.Botha was also against Zwelithini's bid for office.

12

Perhaps people in authority who also refused to support his claim.

13

A reference to a senior member of the royal house who misappropriated royal funds.

14

A reference to the senior member of the royal house who was Regent in Zwelithini's minority.

15

A headman who curried favour with the above by passing on information to him.

16

Mgilitsha was a headman of the late King Cyprian Bhekuzulu. EMahashini was Cyprian's homestead.

17

An allusion to an occasion when a senior member of the royal family took the King's shield instead of his own during a celebration. This comical domestic incident is treated with mock heroic seriousness by the imbongi who also, ironically perhaps, hails the anonymous royal person as "Great Mountain, Enormous Sun".

18

The late A.W.G.Champion, early Zulu trade-unionist and latterday Establishment figure (see Marks,1982), wrote disparagingly about Zwelithini in the Zulu press. He opposed Zwelithini's getting married and leaving school and made this clear in his column in Ilanga. For Champion's later career, and translations of his column, see M.W.Swanson (ed.), The Voice of Mahlathi, Pietermaritzburg, 1983.

19

A reference to Prince Clement kaSolomon Nkayishana, a junior uncle of the King who supported him in his struggle for recognition as king.

20

The new Commissioner General of the Zulus, A.E.Torlage, was more sympathetic to Zwelithini's claims.

21

The senior magistrate at Nongoma and an excellent Zulu linguist, hence the compliment paid him! He together with J.J.Boshoff, a past Commissioner General, did not support the King's claims.

22

Nkayishana - Fearless One, a praise name for Solomon kaDinuzulu, the King's grandfather.

23

Bhusha - Bushknife, a praise name for the King's father, Cyprian Bhekuzulu kaSolomon.

24

The King addressed striking Zulu workers at the Coronation Brick Factory in Durban during the 1973 industrial unrest. The lines that follow (72-3) refer to this occasion and suggest that the King felt deeply for the men he was addressing. Among those who criticised him for his involvement was Chief Buthelezi. The latter piece of information is contained in the Champion-Buthelezi Correspondence which is housed at the University of South Africa. p.comm. S.Marks.

25

J.J.Boshoff's sister is said to have stepped forward on the above occasion to shake the King's hand, saying, "Wena weNdllovu", "You, the Elephant", to which the King replied, "UMaNdlovu nawe", "And you are the She-Elephant". This exchange of compliments outside official protocol so impressed Dlamini that he ear-marked it for inclusion in

the izibongo.

26

The King's rather turbulent relationship with the Zulu press is suggested by this line, also line 53 and lines 99-100. After he had addressed the striking workers he was criticised for involving himself in politics. The critics of his action may be the "flies" referred to here.

27

A reference to malevolence and witchcraft. The King had to dismiss those found to be responsible.

28

A reference to a tour of the Orange Free State and Lesotho by Zwelithini. This praise was composed for Zwelithini by Amos Gwala, imbongi to Cyprian kaSolomon, and retained by Dlamini.

29

Klenyeklenye, the headman in charge of the regiments and a great supporter of the King. Possibly this is a reference to the King's installation in April 1972, a time of great importance for the regiments.

30

A reference to a car which was a gift from Mr Kekana. Mamelodi is a township near Pretoria.

31

The King's cook, Mhlangu, gossiped about a closely guarded royal secret. He was punished by the King who came to his hut in disguise one night, armed with a sjambok. Mhlangu only found out who his assailant was when, shortly afterwards, he heard the new praises in the King's izibongo.

32

Lines 90-98 refer to the King's visits to Swaziland both before and after his installation: for the Independence celebrations in September 1968, to participate in the opening of the University of Swaziland in 1973 and to choose a royal bride from among the many daughters of King Sobhuza II.

33

This refers to a great-uncle of the King, Prince Qhebe kaSolomon. He managed to enter Swaziland with a party of people accompanying the King, without showing a "pass or passport". According to Dlamini, Prince Qhebe had never had a pass and had all his life refused to pay poll tax. He added that this line was a very popular one. The brazen cheek of crossing checkpoints at national boundaries and so outwitting bureaucratic procedure must have appealed to his audiences.

34

During a visit to Swaziland, Zwelithini chose his future senior wife, Princess Mantombi, daughter of King Sobhuza II.

35

It seems that some of the royal family were opposed to his decision to marry a Swazi princess.

36

Mbabane is the capital of Swaziland.

37

Another reference to unfavourable press coverage. Shabalala, the Zulu business tycoon and others attacked the King in the press. The reasons why are, typically, not mentioned.

38

The King's unpredictable and rather enigmatic nature is here compared to a river entered with difficulty because of its steep protective

banks. The river image is used rather differently, to suggest unstoppable power, in the *izibongo* of Shembe see A2 1.69.

39

Chief Hlengwa, at one time Chairman of the Zulu Territorial Tribal Authorities, started a political party which he named The Spear of Shaka. The King, according to the *imbongi*, disapproved of Shaka's name being dragged into party politics and the party was short-lived. By using the widely-used formula, "USibambana-nkunzi", "Grappler with the bull", the *imbongi* suggests that the King was instrumental in breaking up the party. This may or may not be poetic licence!

40

An allusion to a small incident which reflects the once bitter rivalry between the uSuthu and Mandlakazi sections of the Zulu royal family. The King requested some land for cultivation in Mandlakazi territory, north of Nongoma. In response to the request, the senior headman of Chief Mpumanyovu kaZibhebhu, Mkhwintshi, said that never would he allow a member of the uSuthu faction to lay his hands on Mandlakazi land. He was subsequently summoned before the court and fined, to Dlamini's obvious satisfaction.

41

A man masquerading as the King, in Paulpietersburg, was shown up as an imposter by Madondo. The latter "took the Manqele cattle and mixed them with the King's", because his action meant that the gifts given in ignorance to the imposter Manqele reached the right man in the end.

42

An allusion to members of the royal family who although living very near to each other were not at all friendly.

43

The implication here is that it is rather silly to make this sort of unnecessary change.

44

The line was composed to suggest the impulsive, unpredictable nature of the King. Like a bull with straight, needle-sharp horns he can be dangerous.

45

The information in the above notes comes from my interview with John Dlamini at Nongoma at the time of the recording of which this version is a transcription; also from notes made when I listened to a tape recording of an interview Ernie Hilder of the S.A.B.C. had with the *imbongi* in September 1975 and thirdly much valuable background information was given to me by Prince Senzu kaSolomon and I am very grateful to him. The interpretative points are sometimes my own.

2. Isaiah Shembe, founder of the Nazareth Church

Occasion: On request, at Emkayideni, Richards Bay, on the evening of
May 1976.

Audience: E.G. and family and about twenty Nazarites who gathered around as they heard the *imbongi*, two trucks carrying worshippers away

from eMkayideni also stopped to listen.

Delivery: Low voice becoming at times impassioned and intense. Very clear delivery, never any hesitation and clear pauses usually with lengthening of penultimate syllable. Becomes faster over last twenty-five lines.

- 1 Uyasabeka,
 uyasabeka uGuqabadele omuhle wakithi Ekuphakameni.¹
 UMhawu 'phalala usinde abasengozini.
 UMagqalabanzi kadinwa ukuthwala izono zethu.
- 5 UMgangathi we'ndlela eziyekhaya,
 USiba-gojela ngapha kwentaba,
 UMthomb' osela abalungileyo,
 UZandla zinemisebe njengelanga,
 INgqungqulu elishay' amaphiko phezu komuzi wakithi Ekuphakameni,
- 10 USambula-nkwezane kuvel' ukukhanya,
 UMnqandi we'ndwendwe ungayeka ziyesihogweni,
 Umlamula-nkunzi ungayeka zibulalane.
 UNdaba zehl' eSinothi,²
 zayezathint' eNtabazwe,³
- 15 zazewel' emzini wenkosi eMthandeni kwaMaphumulo.⁴
 Kwaxangazel' amadod' akhona 'thath' izinyawo ayamangala.
 Amahala kumntan' umlungu uSayitsheni uMaqayi,⁵
 wagax' umgaxo waphambanisa.
 Wahloma.
- 20 Kwahlangana amehlo wavuma wathi, "I'ndaba zimnandi zivele ekithi
 Ekuphakameni.
 UHlamuka simuke siye kithi kwelakwaZulu,
 ngoba uhlamuke nevangeli.

- IVangeli silibone elisha selishis' intaba,
 kwathi abafundisi nabashumayeli baliphika.
- 25 Bathi akuseliyona ivangeli ekade silishumayela,
 baphenya amaDastamente namaBhayibheli abavumela,
 athi, "Kubhaliwe kanjalo!"
 UHlamuka simuke siye kithi kwelakwaZulu,
 ngob' uhlamuke nevangeli,
- 30 ivangeli silibone eliza namakhosi akithi ohlanga
 esesevunule ngamagwalagwala,⁶
 kunikizel' amashoba efak' izihlohlo.⁷
 IThole lakithi kwaNontandabathakathi
 elayichith' imval' okuvaliwe
- 35 ngoba 'londele ubomi.
 UMomel' othini njeng' intethe
 ngob' obomele isizwe sobomi.
 IMpukane ijing' isilonda
 wobujing' abohlanga lwendlu eSenzangakhona.⁸
- 40 USihlanguhlangu-gobongwane,
 uMbayimbayi wethu siwucuphile siwulindile.⁹
 UManxeba akalingana nakayise uMsasela,
 uSokhabuzela onjeng' amashoba e'nkomo zeZulu.
 ISambane esimb' umgodu kasabesawolala,
- 45 kwasale kwalal' abantwana,
 kanti sona sishone besethamba amagquma ne'ntaba zabo.
 Uthe, "Abant' abami salani lapha".
 Uthe, "Ngisahamba ngisakulandela abanye".
 Uthe, "NakwaMzilikazi nakwaMashobane ngowangifike".¹⁰
- 50 UMLilo ovuthe phezulu kwentaba eNdulinde
 kawabe usacima.

Usho ubuhanguhangu,
 ukhwezelwe wuShando wabaseNdulinde. ¹¹

UGaq' elibomvu ngasekuphathweni,
 55 kuhlasele ngalo kuMpukunyoni
 ngoba kuhlasele ngevangeli.
 UMlethi kanomadinana,
 uthi zonk' iziwe ziyakumletha.
 USwazi TukaMaphamba,
 Tuyelwaphamba Nombece, ¹²
 Twaphamba noMtshaba,
 Twayelwaphamba' uBuloze,
 Twaphamb' uJelemiah ezalwa Mashawuzane.
 Kwayekwanyakaza uSheyi, kwabezintshebe umfo kaMadonsela. ¹³

65 Uyabatshazwa uMvelemu umfo kaMpatsha kwelaseMhlahlane,
 uthu, "MntakaNhliziyo", wathi, "Nginovalo!" ¹⁴
 Wathi, "Umzimba wami usuyadudumela!"
 INTendele isibindwe emlonyeni. ¹⁵

UNogobhoza enjeng' oThukela ongenakuvinjelwa. ¹⁶

70 ISihlahla esihle somdlebe engasihlalwa i'nyoni,
 siyasehlalwa 'zinyoni zeZulu. [Musho!] ¹⁶
 Uyabatshazwa ngoDuyeya obezalwa ngoQhwizana. [Musho!] ¹⁷
 Bathe, "Nang' uMbombela isitimela samaMpondo". [Musho!] ¹⁷
 Kwayekwamazama kwabe'levu eyikhulu ebukhosini, ¹⁸

75 bathi, "MntakaNgema ngen' emangeni!" - wavuma. ¹⁸
 Wafakaz' amanga. ¹⁹
 Wasedinwa uDladla uth' udinwa wathath' izinyawo,
 esebheke lapha lilikhulu khona,
 eseyomangala. ¹⁹

- 80 Uthe ebuya uDladla ebesethokoza
 ngoba laselimthethe iThole lakithi,
 eliwaba elihle ngokutshekula kwaNontandabathakathi. [Musho!]
 I'ndaba zehl' eSinothi zayazathint' Inosithemba.²⁰
 Kwanyakaz' abefundisi bashayana ngemjiva e'ngubo eziluhlaza.
 [Khumama!]
- 85 Kwabonakala uNiniva esejamele phansi komqokolo ngebawothi.²¹
 Kwamazama Inhlalisuthi ngaphakathi kwamasango soKuphakameni²²
 kwamazama iyahloma.
 UKuphakama kwayenumvungu kwabikelana kwavungazela.
 Kwayekwamazama uJamengweni,²³
 washayana ngamakhanda,
- 90 ukuphakama kwabikelana kwanemvungu wavungazela,²⁴
 kwayekwamazama uTwentifaiv Intabayepheza
 iyashayana ngamakhanda,
 uKuphakama kwabikelana kwanemvungu kwavungazela.
 UMbambi wem'khonto nemicibisholo.
- 95 UDum' oluncokazi luyeduma phakathi kwamasango esEkuphakameni.²⁵
 INkunzi yakithi abagwaze ngaphansi kweMkomozone,²⁶
 izeya ngokushoshela kwezikaMandlane.
 INduku yethusi edondolozel' amakhos' akithi ohlanga,
 uSwazi oluncokazi
- 100 luyelwabonwa amakhos' akithi ohlanga oSwayimani bakaZiphuku.²⁷
 Bathi, "Nanti uSwazi oluncokazi lukaThixo".
 UVemvane olunamabalabala olwakithi Ekuphakameni.
 UMqhibuka njengethanga
 oqhibuka ngaphakathi kwamasango aseKuphakameni.
- 105 INyanga bath' ifile kanti basho nje iduk' emafini.²⁸
 Ugudlagudla i'ntaba zoMkhambathi, [Musho!]

- 29
- uthe ngimbona eshona ngaleziya 'zintaba zakwaMadlala.
 Uthi namhlanje unempilo eside simbona. [Musho!]
 Waseqhamuka esekhazimula esexhophha ngaphakathi kwamasango
 asEkuphakameni.
- 110 Mvunywa bamvumile
 ngoba uyavunywa abefundisi,
 uvunywe uShozi benoMbatha. ³⁰
 Bath' "I'ndaba zimnandi zivel' eKuphakameni". [eKuphakameni!]
 IThole lakithi kwaNontandabathakathi
- 115 elifihle ngamahlahla enhla komuzi kaJan Dube,
 lithe eliqhamuka laselim'bal' imithathu.
 INkonjan' edukel' emafini ekeyekaNhliziyo (?). [Hawu! Musho!]
 IMnyov' iyaveva kwezikaNyathikazi. ³² [Musho!]
 [I'ndaba zimnandi!]
- UNdaba zivela kwaJan Dube umfo wakwaNgcobo kwelaseNanda. ³³
- 120 ISihlahla sothathawe siyesambamba uMabhungane ezansi komuzi
 eKuphakameni,
 nanamhlanje enisembabile. ³⁴
 Ukha 'bumbana phansi kwe'ntaba zoMzumbe,
 ngoba ethe esimba kwaqum' i'phethu kwavel' amanzi. ³⁵
- 125 INkunzi yakithi abayibambe abaphumula kwaPhumula,
 kwaze kwasa bebikelana abaThembu bengalele.
 UMpangalala lingakaphumi,
 uyowaphangalala phezu kwentaba eMhlangano. ³⁶
 Lidumela liphos' imbane phezu kwentaba eNhlangakazi. ³⁷
- 130 Lamthath' uGwabhaza kwabakaShangase, [Hawu! Musho!]
 lamshaya ngamasango asEkuphakameni. [Musho!]
 (Faster)

INgidangidane kade behlezi beyigidisa abafundisi abamhlophe
 nabansundu. ³⁸ [Yes!]

UPhuhlu njeng' ikhowe emasangweni wasEkuphakameni.

INyanga bath' ifile kanti basho nje iduk' emafini.

135 INkanyezi ekhanyise emnyameni.

Yakhanyisela zonke izizwe phansi komthunzi welanga.

Usehla ngendawo 'akhe yedwana. [Musho!]

INKunzi yakithi emdwayidwa egweb' ezinye emantshwebeni,

iNohlasela ngevangeli kwaMpukunyoni.

140 UMehlo 'kahlangana nakaSayitsheni, ³⁹

ahlangana wavuma eXopho.

Indaba ungayizwa ngotokoloshe laseMzimkhulu. ⁴⁰

I'Nsingizi zakhal' esangweni kwaNduli waze wavuka. ⁴¹

UManxala aphant' esangweni koMhlakazi wazewavuka. ⁴²

145 I'Ndaba zehl' eSinothi.

UKhakhayi lwenkomo yakithi eMkayideni. ⁴³

ULanga phuma sikothe, kanti nabalothayo liyabashisa liyabahangula.

[Mu-u-usho!]

INdlovu edl' ofakazi bayo ngoba idle ekade beyilandela. [Hawu!]

IMPisi engenamukanga.

150 UNompanda bemphulula.

INdlondlo enesihawu kwabakayise.

Bethi uyasabeka,

usefanel' ukubongwa,

(Faster)

155 Usefanel' ukubongwa uGuqabadele omuhle wakithi Ekuphakameni.

Usefanel' ukubongwa kanti inhliziyo zimashumi.

Makaboongwa. Amen!

[All: Amen! General clapping]

- 1 He is awesome,
 He is awesome, Our Beautiful Kneeler-and-they-are-satisfied of
¹
 Ekuphakameni.
 One who overflows with compassion, helper of those in danger.
 Broad-shouldered one, never tired of bearing our sins.
- 5 Opener of the roads heading for home,
 Plume-disappearing over there on the mountain,
 Spring that refreshes the righteous,
 Hands that radiate like the sun,
 Eagle, beating its wings above our own place at Ekuphakameni,
- 10 Scatterer of the fog and there is light,
 Checker of the multitudes - you would not leave them on their
 journey to Hell.
 Peacemaker with the bulls instead of leaving them to kill each
 other.
- The stories came down from Sinothi,²
³
 They reached Entabazwe,
- 15 They crossed at the homestead of Chief Mthandeni at Maphumulo.⁴
 The men stood there amazed then they sped around.
 The white man Sergeant Mackay met with no success,⁵
 He strapped on his bandolier, he was ready to fight.
 He attacked.
- 20 Then their eyes met - he said that the affairs of Ekuphameni were
 "Fine indeed".
 The Breaker-away, we left and we set out for our own Zululand,
 because he broke away with his holy message.
 The New Gospel which we saw setting the mountain on fire,
 and preachers and evangelists denied it.
- 25 They denied that we had just preached the gospel.

They brandished their testaments and bibles in unison.
 They said it was written "Thus!"
 Breaker-away, let us leave and let us head for our own Zululand,
 because he broke away with the Gospel,
 30 the Gospel which we saw approaching with our own royal leaders
 adorned with (the feathers of) the red-winged lowrie.⁶
 They gave out the decorations and held the sharp staves.
 Our Calf of The Place-of-the-Lover-of-wizards⁷
 who threw down the closed door
 35 because he longed for happiness.
 Drier on the twig like a grasshopper
 because he thirsted for the happiness of the nation.
 Fly which pesters a sore
 as it pestered the royal line of Senzangakhona.⁸
 40 Swift pusher-away of bonds.
 Our Cannon, we trapped it and kept guard over it.
 Wound which is greater than that of his father, Msasela.⁹
 Brisk-mover like the tails of the cattle of the Zulu people.
 Anteater which digs a hole, never for itself to lie in.
 45 Its young stayed behind and slept there,
 whereas it set out for the hillocks and mountains where its
 children live.
 He said, "My people, remain here".
 He said, "I am still on the move, I still have others to fetch,¹⁰
 I have still to reach the territory of Mzilikazi of Mashobane".
 50 Fire which blazed at the top of Ndulinde Mountain,¹¹
 which did not die down.
 It was stoked up by Shando of Ndulinde.

Spear which is red even at the handle,
 55 you attacked with it at Mpukunyoni,
 because you attacked by means of the gospel.
 Bringer of rest to the weary,
 all nations come to him.
 Switch of trickery.
 It outwitted Mbece.¹²
 It outwitted Mtshaba.
 It outwitted Buloze.
 It outwitted Jeremiah son of Mashawuzane.
 Sheyi the bearded one, son of Madonsela, shook himself.
 65 Mvelemu, son of Mpatsha of Mhlalane, is filled with wonder.¹³
 He said, "Child of Nhliziyo I am overcome with fear".¹⁴
 He said, "My body is a-tremble!"
 The partridge is caught voiceless.
 Violent Pusher like the Thukela River which cannot be held back.¹⁵
 70 Beautiful Euphorbia Bush on which no (ordinary) birds perch,
 it is a perch for the birds of the Zulu. [Speak him!]
 Duyeya, born of Qhwizana is filled with wonder.¹⁶ [Speak him!]
 They said, "Here is Mbombela the Mpondo train".¹⁷ [Speak him!]
 The beards of those in authority shivered and shook,
 75 they said, "Child of Ngema start lying!" - and he did.¹⁸
 He gave false witness.
 Dladla was angered and set out in haste.¹⁹
 He went straight to the place where final authority lies,
 to report the bad news.
 80 Then Dladla returned and they were overjoyed
 because our Calf had given judgement in his favour,
 (Our Calf) of black, white and red, Graceful Mover of the Place-

of-the-Lover-of-wizards. [Speak him!]

Things happened at Sinothi and then they affected the Nosithemba
²⁰
 house.

The priests were in confusion, they swished against each other
 with the tips of their long green robes. [Speak on!]

85 You could see Niniva frowning heavily ready to strike with his
²¹
 staff studded with iron bolts.

²²
 The Inhlalisuthi were in confusion inside the gates of Ekuphakameni,
 there was confusion, they were on the attack.

Kuphakama was alive with rumours flying this way and that.
²³
 Jamengweni shivered and shook.

Heads knocked against each other.

90 Kuphakama was alive with rumours flying this way and that.
²⁴
 Twenty-five, Intabayepheza shivered and shook,

Heads knocked against each other,

Kuphakama was alive with rumours flying this way and that.

Gripper of spears as well as bows and arrows.

95 The fame of the Many-coloured Calf thunders inside the gates of
 Ekuphakameni.

²⁵
 Our Bull which they stabbed below Mkomozane.

²⁶
 It came dragging itself along to the cattle of Mandlane.

The Copper Staff on which our royal leaders lean.

Switch of many colours

100 which was seen by our royal leaders Swayimani and his people, the
²⁷
 children of Ziphuku.

They said, "There is the many-coloured Switch of God!"

Our own Dappled Butterfly of Ekuphakameni.

Sudden Blossomer like a pumpkin plant

which bursts into flower inside the gates of Ekuphakameni.

105 Moon which they said was gone whereas it was only wandering among
the clouds.

He skirted the mountains of Mkhambathi. ²⁸ [Speak him!]

And then I saw him disappearing in the direction of those far-off
hills of Madladla. ²⁹

Even today he is alive and we behold him constantly. [Speak him!]

He appeared shining, dazzling the eyes within the gates of
Ekuphakameni.

110 Acknowledged One and they acknowledged him
because he was acknowledged by the ministers.

He was acknowledged by Shozi and Mbatha. ³⁰

They said, "Good tidings come from Ekuphakameni". [Ekuphakameni!]

Our Calf of The Place-of-the-Lover-of-wizards

115 which hid among the lopped-off branches beyond Jan Dube's home. ³¹

Then it appeared in a trinity of colours.

Swallow which wandered among the clouds on the way to his father

Nhliziyo. [Ha! Speak him!]

The Long Black Wasp quivers among the cattle of Nyathikazi. ³²

[Speak him! The news is good!]

Events that took place in the open because they took place before
the eyes of men.

120 They took place at the home of Jan Dube, child of the Ngcobo
people of Enanda.

The Stragglng Thornbush which caught hold of The Flying Beetle ³³
below the homestead at Ekuphakameni.

Even today (some of) you still have hold of him.

He drew water from clay at the foot of the Mzumbe hills, ³⁴
because even as he dug, out gushed a stream of water.

- 125 Our Bull which they bound, those who were resting at Phumula.³⁵
 The whole night through the Thembus discussed the matter and
 had no sleep.
 Scatterer of the mist before the sun has risen.
 He was yet to scatter (the mist) on the top of Mhlangano.
 The Sky thundered and hurled down lightning above Nhlangakazi
 Mountain.³⁶
- 130 It took hold of Gwabhaza of the Shangases.³⁷ [Ha! Speak him!]
 It struck him at the gates of Ekuphakameni. [Speak him!]
 (Faster)
 Dancer, they kept forcing him to dance, the ministers, the black
 and the white.³⁸ [Yes!]
 Sudden-springer-up like a mushroom at the gates of Ekuphakameni.
 Moon which they said had gone but they only said so because it
 was wandering among the clouds.
- 135 Star which brought light to the darkness.
 It enlightened all nations beneath the sun.
 He comes down alone from his own place,
 our Tall Bull which gores the others in the flank. [Speak him!]
 Attacker with the Gospel at Mpukunyoni.³⁹
- 140 Eyes which gazed at the Sergeant.
 Their eyes met and he acquiesced at Ixopho.
 The affair which you can hear of from the goblins at Mzimkhulu.⁴⁰
 The Hornbills cried out at the gate of Nduli's place until he
 awoke.⁴¹
 Buck which pawed (the ground) at the gate of Mhlakazi's place
 until he awoke.⁴²
- 145 There was trouble at Sinothi.

43

The Tip-of-the-head of our beast at Emkayideni.

The-Sun come out let us bask in you. Yet at times it burns and
scorches those who bask in it. [Spe-eak him!]

Elephant which destroys those who give witness because it
destroys those who have lately followed it. [Ha!]

Hyena which would not go away.

150 He-who-paws-at-the-ground even as they stroke him.

Horned Viper with the compassion of his forefathers.

They say he is awesome.

He is worthy of our praise.

He is worthy of our praise, our beautiful Kneeler-and-they-are-
satisfied of Ekuphakameni.

(Faster)

155 He is worthy of our praise - great-hearted one with the heart of
ten.

May he be praised! Amen! (All: Amen! Clapping)

1

Most of the information in these notes was given by Azariah Mthiyane, the imbongi, or by his brother Alfred Mthiyane. Ekuphakameni, "The Exalted Place", is the name of the Nazareth Church centre, thirty-eight kilometres north of Durban. It is of great symbolic significance to the Nazarites as a heavenly dwelling on earth, their own Jerusalem. It figures as a "leitmotif" in the izibongo as it does in the hymns composed by Isaiah Shembe and his son J.G. Shembe. "Gugabadele" is also a praise name for Cetshwayo kaMpande; see Cope, Izibongo pp.224-5, 1.159 and pp.226-7, 1.188. See Gunner, "Old Wine in New Bottles", 1982, for a discussion of the use of royal praise names in these izibongo.

2

One of the houses at Ekuphakameni.

3

The headquarters of Shembe in Johannesburg.

4

Mthandeni was chief of the Qwabe at Maphumulo.

5

Lines 17-20 were composed by the first Shembe imbongi, Dladla. They

refer to a Sergeant Mackay who was apparently sent to arrest Shembe but who was unable to do so, after meeting him.

6

The feathers of the red-winged lowry are symbolically associated with royalty in izibongo and in dress. The links between Zulu royalty and chiefs and the Nazareth Church are stressed at a number of points, see for instance line 39 below.

7

Nontandabathakathi is the name given to one of the main houses at Ekuphakameni. Shembe "loved" wizards because he converted them, thus turning them into allies instead of enemies.

8

Another instance of the importance placed on the Zulu royal house. Sensangakhona was the father of Shaka, founder of the Zulu nation. "The house of Sensangakhona" is thus a reference to the present members of the Zulu royal house.

9

Msasela was Isaiah Shembe's grandfather.

10

Shembe travelled constantly. This line suggests that he wished to preach to the Ndebele, descendants of Mzilikazi, in Zimbabwe.

11

Shando, from Ndulinde near Eshowe, became a member and later a minister in the Nazareth Church.

12

The individuals mentioned in lines 60-66 joined Shembe's Church after initial hostility to it. The lines are a reminder that Shembe's ministry, despite its great success, was not without travail and obstacles.

13

Mvelemu, who became a member of the Church, was from Mhlahlane in Pondoland, another reminder of the extent of Shembe's travels.

14

Nhliziyo was Isaiah Shembe's father.

15

The Thukela River forms part of the old boundary between Natal and Zululand. Although sluggish in the dry season it becomes a raging torrent during the (usual) rains of November and December. The power of Shembe as preacher and spiritual leader is compared to the Thukela in full spate.

16

A reference to an Mjadu chief near Mthunzini who became a member of Shembe's Church.

17

The train from the Transkei is popularly known as "Mbombela"; David Rycroft has suggested that it is the name for the third class rail carriage associated with the Mpondo train. Here it suggests again the range of places to which he travelled and the distances from which he came.

18 and 19

Lines 74-82 were, according to Alfred Mthiyane, composed by Dladla, the first imbongi of Shembe. It appears that Mngema gave false witness against Dladla who was later vindicated.

20

Lines 83-93 were also, according to Alfred Mthiyane, composed by Dladla. They possibly refer to the conflict of 1939 when a large crowd of Nazarites stoned to death a man believed to be disloyal to the

young leader, Johannes Galilee (J.G.) Shembe (see Sundkler, Bantu Prophets, p.111). Nosithemba was the name of the young girls' house at Ekuphakameni.

21

Niniva Ngcobo was a minister in the Church.

22

Inhlalisuthi was the name of the young men's regiment formed by Shembe.

23

Jamengweni was the name of the women's regiment formed by Shembe.

24

Twentyfaiv Intabayepheza was the name of the young girls' regiment formed by Shembe.

25

Mkomazane is a hill in the Ixopo district in southern Natal, where Shembe preached.

26

Mandlane was a chief of the Thusi. Mthiyane occasionally uses the "thefula" dialect, hence "izeya", not "izela".

27

Swayimani was the Nyuswa chief whose territory would have been very near to Ekuphakameni.

28

The mountains of Mkhambathi are in the territory of the Mhlongo chief, Sihlambasimunye.

29

It seems that this was possibly the last place which Isaiah Shembe visited and where he preached, before his death. He stopped travelling in 1934 and died the following year.

30

Shozi and Mbatha both became ministers in the Nazareth Church.

31

The Zulu leader and writer, John Dube, although not himself a member of the Nazareth Church, was a great admirer of Isaiah Shembe and wrote an early biography of him (UShembe, Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1936).

32

Nyathikazi was Shembe's great-grandfather.

33

Mabhungane was the name given to a Muslim Indian who owned a store near Ekuphakameni. He gained a bad reputation among Church members for short-changing his customers.

34

Mzumbe is south of Durban. Shembe went there during a drought and is said to have pointed to a place where water would be found if they dug for it. He was correct and water was there, in abundance. The Moses parallel is clear.

35

Phumula ("Rest") is in Pondoland in the Transkei. The Thembu are a section of the Xhosa in the Transkei.

36

Nhlangakazi Mountain is in the Ndwedwe district of Natal. It is the Holy Mountain of the Nazarites and the annual January festival is held there.

37

Khwabaza Shangase was a renowned Zulu doctor from Tafamasi whom Shembe converted and who became a preacher in the Church.

38

Shembe was often, in the course of his ministry, shunned and castigated by those in the Mission Churches and possibly also by those in other Independent Churches.

39

Another reference to the Sergeant Mackay who did not carry out the intended arrest of Shembe, see ls. 17-20.

40

The Mzimkhulu River is at Port Shepstone, south of Durban.

41

Nduli became a preacher in the Nazarite Church.

42

Mhlakazi was the Biyela chief at Eshowe. He eventually became a follower of Shembe.

43

The meeting place for members of the Nazareth Church, on the outskirts of Richards Bay. There is an annual meeting there in May, lasting a week, which first began in 1925. I understand (1983) that Emkayideni has been declared part of Richards Bay and is no longer part of KwaZulu. Its Zulu inhabitants have been "removed" and presumably, therefore, Emkayideni is no longer a Nazarite meeting place.

3. Albert Luthuli

The following izibongo were recited at the funeral of Albert Luthuli¹ in Stanger on July 1967. The recording was kindly made available to me by M.B.Yengwa. The imbongi was his brother Nkosinathi Yengwa.

The recording gives a clear indication of audience presence and audience participation and I have attempted to show this by including the audience responses. What follows, therefore, in some ways resembles a dramatic script. Also included are the imbongi's use of the rallying cries of the African National Congress to introduce and conclude his performance. These clearly serve as an important means of cueing his audience, of establishing a kind of artistic frame for the performance as well as setting it in a particular ideological context.

WabaLuthuli wajama phakathi namaNgisi namaBhunu. [Musho! women
ululate]

UDlungwane kaNdaba iSikhukhula sikaNdaba esimehl' amnyama.

ISigwe esithi singagweb' indoda yase yafa.

Namuhla yambheka uOswilti Phili , wafa. ⁵ [MUSHO!]

20 Wathi wambheka uMalane, wafa. [MUSHO!]

Wathi wambheka uStrijdom, wafa. [MUSHO!]

UJuman-jumane inkonyane kaNdaba eyakhanya emkhathini yezizwe.

Waphontsha phansi abantu basEngilandi

ememeza phesheya.

25 Ladum' izidumo usinele zaduma kwelakithi eGroutvilli. ⁶

Ugaxe 'gijima kamngceleni laze lachitha kwabamhlophe. [MUSHO!]

Wathi 'ma echitheka

wakhulum' inkonyane kaNdaba

eyakhale Emthonjaneni izizwe zonke zabikelana.

30 Bathi nimzwile okaNdaba?

Nxa ebikelana bagijima abamhlophe bathengana bodwa,

bathi, kulapha siyakwenzenjani?

Bathi, icala alithethwanga

ngoba icala lalingaphakathi endlini yomthetho esembulu

35 lapha kwafela khona uVelevutha. ⁷ [MUSHO!]

Ngiyesaba ukudum' uLuthuli kwabayindoda eyaqhamuka kwelakithi
eGroutvilli,

lapha izizwe zonke zabantu abamnyama zahlangana khona.

Wath' uNdaba kangizwanga.

USifuba singungununu asingungununu ngoba

40 kanti indaba engaphakathi kuye.

Bath' uLuthuli ulungile

kanti akalungile.

- Ufihl' izindaba esingaphesheya abasEngilandi.
 Undaba nami ngayizwa ngimncane,
 45 namuhla sengize ngibona ngoba ngiphethe ipasi. [MUSHO! women
 ululate]
 UDLungwane kaNdaba odlunga emanxulumeni.
 Kwaze kwasa amanxulumana ebikelana
 bathi, "OkaNdaba uthetheni na?" [a woman ululates]
 Wathi, okaNdaba "I'nkomo e'semzileni
 50 azisezasemzileni, ezikaNdaba lezi 'zinkomo.
 Kwenzenjani madoda kwathi 'zinkomo zethu zidliwephi? " [a woman
 ululates]
 Bathi, "'Zinkomo zidliw' amaBhunu".
 AmaNgwatha namaNgisi bebhuluma ePitoli
 bethi kasazi uLuthuli sizomenzenjani?
- 8
- 55 Bathi, "Luthuli thath' imali ulahla abantu".
 Wathi uLuthuli kepha, "Ngingalahl' abantu noma ngithath' abantu
 noma ngilahl' imali?" [MUSHO!]
 Bakhuluma abanezindlebe ezimhlophe
 bekhuluma behlebana bodwa,
 60 bethi, "Singamenzenjani uLuthuli ngoba akayifun' imali
 ufun' abantwana baseAfrika.
 Kwenzenjani ube singamnika i'nto zonke kodwa
 alahle imali athathe amaAfrika?"
 Wathi Luthuli kepha,
 65 "Ngilungile uma bengilambe nabo".
 Kepha indaba sizwe nathi,
 bengikhuluma ngaphesheya iSwedisi,
 bethi, "Kungcono simbize azothatha iNobel Prize".
 Kwaba 'bamhlophe behluliwe
 ngoba bona beneKhalabayi

- 70 bekhethana amabala amnyama namaphunga namhlophe. [MUSHO!]
 Undaba ngizwe nami ngingekho.
 Ngizw' esiswini sikaMamaMngadi,
 bathi, "Lapha inkunzi 'singxameni,
 kungxamene inkunzi emhlophe nemnyama".
- 75 Babuz' ukuthi emnyama ibikuphi.
 Bathi, "Imnyama esingaphezulu,
 kwathi emhlophe - ebomvu - ibingaphansi kwamanzi".
 Babuza bathi, "We MaMngadi,
 lenkuz' emhlophe ibim' emanzini
- 80 ibilwe kanjani lenkuz' emnyama ingaphezu kwamanzi na?
 Bathi, "Ingani amaNgisi lana aqhamuka phez' kweSandlwana owabon'
 9
 uCetshwayo". [MUSHO! women ululate]

Imbongi: AMANDLA!	All: AWETHU! (X2)
AWETHU!	AMANDLA!
AMANDLA!	AWETHU!
KWATSHA!	KWATSHA! (X2)

Imbongi: A-A-A-FRICA!	All: LET IT COME! (X2)
LET IT CO-O-O-ME!	AFRICA! (X2)
FREE-DOM!	FREE-DOM! (X4)
IT IS DAWN! ²	IT IS DAWN!

A man's voice leads the strains of a slow hymn but the imbongi cuts in:

POWER!	IS OURS! (X2)
IT IS OURS!	POWER! (X2)
POWER!	IS OURS!

Again a man's voice leads the strains of the same hymn but again the imbongi cuts in:

1 Fe-e-erocious One descendant of (royal) Ndaba³
 who raged among the large villages,
 until dawn the large villages spread the news. [Speak him! (a
 single voice)]
 I am afraid to say Luthuli [Speak him!..(inaudible)who is created
 by the Kings!]

5 because on this day [Speak him! a woman ululates]
⁴
 he is spoken for in front of Verwoerd in the great court cases
 for Verwoerd has left us behind on this soil of Africa. [SPEAK
 HIM! (many voices) women ululate]

On this day I am afraid to say Luthuli [women ululate]
⁴
 because today Luthuli is in front of Malan. [women ululate]

10 If for my part I ask about your contribution
 about where you have taken us, the sons and daughters of Africa
 [SPEAK HIM! women ululate]

then I am afraid to say Luthuli because today Luthuli is in front
⁴
 of Strydom,
 that very Strydom who has left us here in this nation of Africa.
 [SPEAK HIM! women ululate]

Ferocious Rager, descendant of Ndaba, I am afraid to say
 Ferocious Rager of Ndaba, he stares threateningly at a man.

15 Calf of Ndaba which stares threateningly down at the two bulls,
 the red and the black.

That was Luthuli who stared threateningly in the midst of the
 English and the Afrikaners! [SPEAK HIM! women ululate]

Fierce Rager descendant of Ndaba, Strong One of Ndaba with the
 fierce eyes.

Red Bird which can gore a man until he dies.
⁵
 Today it glanced at Oswald Pirow and he died. [SPEAK HIM!]

20 Then it glanced at Malan and he died. [SPEAK HIM!]
 Then it glanced at Strydom and he died. [SPEAK HIM!]
 Sudden Attacker, Calf of Ndaba that shone in the midst of nations.
 It pierced through to the people of England
 calling out overseas.

25 The thunder rolled as the lightning struck at our own Groutville.⁶
 It hung across the sky, streaking to the horizon and there it
 struck amongst the white people. [SPEAK HIM! women ululate]
 And as it struck
 the Calf of Ndaba spoke
 bellowing out at Emthonjaneni - all the nations passed on the news.

30 They said, "Have you heard this one of Ndaba?"
 As he passed on the news the whites scurried about and took to
 bribery.

They said, "What are we going to do about this?"
 Others replied, "There are no grounds for this case
 because it had its origins in a fraudulent Houses of Parliament
 that very place in which Verwoerd died.⁷ [SPEAK HIM!]
 35 Luthuli's fame makes me afraid. He was the man who sprang up from
 amongst our own people at Groutville
 there where all the nations of those who are black meet together.
 Ndaba said "I have heard nothing".

The chest is secretive and silent because
 40 in fact within it is something of great importance.
 They said Luthuli was "All right", but he was not.
 He kept secret the affairs to do with overseas, to do with England.
 The important matter that I too heard of when I was a child
 45 and today I see it for myself because (I have reached manhood) I
 carry a pass. [SPEAK HIM! women ululate]

FIERCE RAGER descendant of Ndaba who rages in the large villages.
 Even at dawn the large villages call out to one another,
 they say "You of Ndaba, what is it you are holding forth about?"

[a woman ululates]

He of Ndaba answered, "Those cattle out on the open tracks
 50 they are not cattle of the open tracks, those cattle belong to
 Ndaba.

What has happened men, what cattle rustlers have gone off with our
 cattle?" [a woman ululates]

They answered, "The cattle have been rounded up by the Boers".
 The Afrikaners and the English had talks in Pretoria,
 they said, "What on earth are we going to do with Luthuli?"

8
 55 They said, "Luthuli take the money and reject the people!"

But Luthuli replied, "Shall I reject the people or take them?
 Shall I reject the money? [SPEAK HIM!]

The white-eared ones conferred
 speaking in hushed voices among themselves.

60 They said, "What on earth can we do with Luthuli because he doesn't
 want money

he wants the children of Africa!

How is it that we have offered him all these things but still
 he rejects the money and takes the children of Africa?"

65 And Luthuli spoke, saying, "It suits me if I am hungry with them".

As for the matter that we too have heard of -

I am talking about the Swedes overseas,

they said, "We must call him so that he can take the Nobel Prize".

The whites were thrown into confusion

because they have their Colour-Bar,

70 they discriminate among the colours - the black, the grey and the
white! [SPEAK HIM!]

The event that I heard about before I was in this world.

I heard of it (when I was) in the womb of Mama Mngadi,
they said, "Here is a bull fighting with another,
a white and a black bull are fighting with each other.

75 They asked where the black one was.

They said, "It is the black which is on top,
and the white - the red - one is beneath the water".

They asked and said, "Hey MaMngadi,
that white bull is standing in the water

80 and the black bull above the water - what is the fight about?"

The reply was, "As a matter of fact those are the English who
appeared above Sandlwana, those whom Cetshwayo saw!"⁹

[SPEAK HIM! women ululate]

Imbongi: POWER!

All: IS OURS! (X2)

IT IS OURS!

POWER!

POWER!

IS OURS!

IT IS DAWN!

IT IS DAWN! (X2)

1

Albert Luthuli was chief of the small Luthuli tribe at Groutville from 1936 until 1953. He was elected President of the African National Congress in 1952. The following izibongo were probably composed for Chief Luthuli's funeral and were not, like Shembe's izibongo, widely used on a variety of occasions. Nor was Nkosinathi Yengwa a semi-professional bard in the sense that the Shembe bards clearly were and are. Indeed M.B. Yengwa did not know, when he first made the recording available to me, that the **imbongi** was his brother Nkosinathi. He was told this subsequently by Chief Luthuli's widow, Nokukhanya Luthuli.

2

Ngoni for "It dawns" (the Zulu would be kwasa). The cry was used in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia during the independence struggles. p. comm. from Anthony Nazombe of Chancellor College, Malawi and Mr Mabaso of Mzuzu, Malawi. The Malawian writer Aubrey Kachingwe also refers to it in his novel about the struggle for independence in Nyasaland,

No Easy Task (London: Heinemann, 1966), p.164 :

"The Old Man stood up and said, 'It is daybreak. Kwacha!'

'Kwacha!' The crowd thundered in reply".

Another translation, however, could be "It has burnt", in which case "kwatsha" would be the older form of "kwasha".

3

Lines 1-3 are the first of many allusive uses of Shaka's izibongo, allusions which the bard's Zulu listeners would immediately recognise; the allusions serve to underline the Shaka-Luthuli connection which appears to have been in many people's minds at the time. Stanger, where the funeral was held, is built on the site of Shaka's KwaDukuza capital.

4

Dr D.F.Malan, J.G.Strydom and Dr H.F.Verwoerd were successive South African Prime Ministers from 1948- 1966 and Albert Luthuli clashed with each of them.

5

Oswald Pirow was the State Prosecutor in the Treason Trials of 1956-1960. Luthuli was a Treason Trail detainee but the charges against him were dropped at an early stage. He was, however, required to give evidence as late as 1960 (Luthuli, Let My People Go London: Fontana, 1963, pp.197-8 and M.B.Yengwa, p.comm.).

6

Luthuli's small home town, south of Stanger.

7

Dr Verwoerd was assassinated in September 1966 in the Houses of Parliament.

8

Perhaps a reference to 1953 when, a year after becoming President of the African National Congress, Luthuli was told that if he did not resign he would be deposed as chief of the Luthuli and would forfeit his chief's stipend. He was subsequently deposed. It may also be a general reference to his moral courage and integrity.

9

I think the imbongi loses his grip on this rather involved metaphor as he tries to make a comparison between the fighting black and white bulls and the black and white armies at Sandlwana. In each instance the black antagonist wins and the intention must be to end the izibongo on a strong, optimistic note. The recording suggests that the imbongi makes his point and keeps his audience control, but only just.

5. Chief Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi

Imbongi: Hezekiah Buthelezi

Occasion: These izibongo were recited during the course of the graduation ceremony at the University of Zululand, Ngoye, 8th May 1975 when Chief Buthelezi was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University. Hezekiah recited outside the main tent, at my request, as the assembled amaviyo of Chief Lindelihle Mzimela and Chief Zwelibanzi Nzuza and amaviyo from the Buthelezi territory at Mahlabathini chanted war cries and sang war songs sotto voce, as they waited for the Chief and King Zwelithini to emerge from the giant marquee where the

graduation took place. Hezekiah had praised the Chief a few minutes earlier from his vantage point next to the stage, at the very moment when the Chief received his degree. He was cheered on by a small band of uniformed women of Inkatha as he praised but the izibongo were lost in the general uproar of applause. I had also heard Hezekiah recite izibongo for the Chief at the latter's residence of KwaPhindangene in February 1976. Hezekiah was well known for his rendering of Chief Buthelezi's izibongo. Whereas these izibongo deal in intimate yet brief detail with the chiefdom affairs of Chief Buthelezi's early years as Chief of the Buthelezi, those by Phumasilwe Myeni range far more widely.

Delivery: Hezekiah's delivery in this recording was very regular and, after the opening praise, very staccato, and fast. I have attempted to show this staccato style in my line divisions.

[Background sounds of a trumpet, whistles, the ululations of women and an absolutely regular, rhythmic war chant from the assembled men which continues throughout Hezekiah's praising.]

Shenge! Sokwalisa!

1 IMbabazane kaMahaqa ehaq' amadoda kwaze kwasa engabulel' ubuthongo.¹
 INkunzi beyithibela abakwaMadakadunuse.²

Useqa umlingwana

beyilingile

5 ngoba ilingwe abaseMvathu.³

UMemezi kaZulu,

umemez' amajaji

abavel' eningizimu

nasenyakatho.

10 UMnyikizi wezintaba ezilukhuni.

Unyikiz' uGodlankomo

kwayekwamazama iNgome,

i'ntaba zodwa zobikelana.

Izinyoni ziyowashaya amahlombe

15 zithi zikhulu kwaPhindangene.⁴

Izul' e'dume kwaPhindangene

ladl' uMokomana

- ebezalwa nguNsukumbili
 lapha ngaseDengeni.
- 20 USiyahlayahla esingayim'khonto⁵
 bengoyabameli
 yawa phansi.
 Wayixosh' uNgeyengu
 ezalwa nguNiyona
- 25 kwabakaMthentezi.
 Izul' elidume phakathi kwezintaba zombili
 ngoba lidume phakathi kwaCuthebe
 benoDayeni.
- Layithatha i'hlangu zenduna.⁵
- 30 Layithatha esikaMthaku
 ezalwa baThenjeni.
 Layithatha esikaHlomendlini
 obezalwa uMthozomana.
 Layithatha esikaMpundlulu
- 35 obezalwa uSawoti.
 Layithatha esikaSibhisha
 obezalwa eShameni.
 INkonjane kaMaduka⁶
 edukela ngalaseKoloni
- 40 ith' isibuya yayisifak' iziqu
 isifakwa ngabamhlophe.
 IChib' eliphezulu⁷
 ebeliseZihlalo
 eliphuzwe ngabafana
- 45 bengabakaPhaphu.
 Laphuzwa ngoJozi

- ezalwa nguPhaphu.
 Laphuzwa nguMfuze
 ezalwa nguSideni.
- 50 Laphuzwa nguNgqatho
 ezalwa nguNgcongcozana.
 UMdabula-nkungu
 kuvel' ilanga
 laph' eMona.
- 55 INgqungqulu eshay' amaphiko [a woman ululates]
 phezu kwaseMona
 izincele zamadoda zadudumela.

Shenge! Ulibinda.

[The war songs and war chants continue and as the King is expected soon the leader breaks into a solemn royal song (ihubo lenkosi); the leader's words change but the response is constant: "Ziphi? Naziya. Ziyamqal' okaNdaba"/ "Where are they (i.e.the enemy)? They are yonder. They provoke the son of (royal) Ndaba".]

- Shenge! Sokwalisa!
- 1 Stinging Nettle Encircler that encircles men, until dawn they
 were sleepless.
- Bull which those of Madakadunuse held back.
 He leaps over the petty spell
 they cast upon him
- 5 because he was bewitched by those of Mvathu.
 Proclaimer of the Zulu people,
 he proclaimed to the judges
 who came from the south

- and from the north.
- 10 Shaker of rigid mountains.
 He shook Godlankomo
 until Ngome (mountain) quivered,
 the mountains will report to each other in amazement.
 The birds will beat their wings
- 15 saying there is greatness at Phindangene.
 The Sky rumbled at Phindangene,
 it consumed Mokomana
 born of Nsukumbili
 here around Dengeni.
- 20 The Clattering (?) which is like the sound of spears⁵
 those of the (officiating) police
 (that) fell to the ground.
 Ngeyengu picked them up,
 he who was born of Niyona
- 25 of the Mthentezi.
 The Sky thundered between the two mountains
 because it thundered between Cuthebe
 and Dayeni.
- 30 It snatched that of Mthaku⁵
 born of the Mthembu people.
 It snatched that of Hlomendlini
 who was born of Mhlozomana.
 It snatched that of Mpundlulu
- 35 who was born of Salt.
 It snatched that of Sibhisha
 who was born of the Shando people.

Swallow, The Strayer
 who strayed right over there down in the Cape,⁶
 40 then he came back wearing the badges of honour
 awarded by the whites.
 Pool which is high up⁷
 there on The Seats
 which was drunk from by the boys
 45 who are the sons of Phaphu.
 It was drunk from by Jozi
 born of Phaphu.
 It was drunk from by Mfuze
 born of Sideni.
 50 It was drunk from by Ngqatho
 born of Ngcongcozana.
 Piercer of the fog
 (and) out comes the sun
 55 here at Mona.
 The Bateleur Eagle which beat its wings
 above the Mona (River)
 and the flesh below the buttocks of men trembled.

1

These izibongo have a number of praises in common with those attributed to "Sophandase" (see Chapters 7 and 8). I have drawn on notes from the latter izibongo made by Chief Buthelezi's secretary in 1975 and sent to M.B.Yengwa. I have also drawn on information from Chief Buthelezi in an interview at KwaPhindangene on 5th February 1976. The "IMbabazane" praise is the best known of Chief Buthelezi's many praises and it is capable of various extensions and variations according to the skill of the reciter and the mood of the times. The 1965 record of Hezekiah praising Chief Buthelezi is almost identical to the above. It has a few changes of line order; lines 50-52 are not there and the following formulaic praise (an echo of a praise of Chief Mathole Buthelezi) has gone:

Uyadela yebiya Mame kwaNtombela,

wena 'wabon' ihwanqa lakithi kwaPhindangene,
 liginqika liya kwaMashonangashoni.
 Happy are you Mother of the Ntombela
 you who saw our bewhiskered one of Phindangene
 rolling on his way to Mashonangashoni (Mahlabathini).

The line over part of "ubuthongo" marks the emphasised penultimate cadence. I use it again at line 41.

2

The Chief's uncle, Maliyamakhanda Buthelezi, who acted as Regent for him, said the cattle for his marriage settlement were to come from this homestead of his father and grandfather. This was seen by many as an unfair burden on those of Madakadunuse and the decision was in the end reversed.

3

Mathu is the area of Buthelezi territory where the home of the former Regent, Maliyamakhanda, is situated.

4

Chief Buthelezi's residence at Nkonjeni, Mahlathini, until 1976.

5

A number of tribal police, who officiate at customary marriage ceremonies, were dismissed by Chief Buthelezi shortly after he took office. "The shields of the headmen" in line 29 also alludes to a dismissal of senior tribal officials by the Chief.

6

A reference to the Chief's university career at Fort Hare in the Cape Province.

7

There is a dam on the top of the mountain near Nkonjeni which is called "The Seats" ("IZihlalo"). It is used here as a metaphoric praise name for the Chief. The praise alludes to an incident when boys who were given corporal punishment shortly after Chief Buthelezi took office went and complained to Mpandlambili (Magistrate A.S. Du Plessis) at Mahlathini and to Khovane (Station Commander Pretorius). Jozi, Mfuze and Ngqatho were all sons of headmen of the Buthelezi.

6. Chief Mangosuthu Gatscha Buthelezi

The following are from the izibongo recited by Phumasilwe Myeni at Mahlathini on July 26th, 1976. The occasion was a celebration for the Chief given by the people of Mahlathini congratulating him on having received an honorary doctorate from the University of Zululand two months earlier. There was an audience of approximately 400. The imbongi's performance was marked by dramatic gesticulation and vigorous movement. His slightly hoarse voice carried well and he sometimes increased his volume at the beginnings of new praises. None

of the following section of the izibongo appears in his published praises to the Chief, entitled "UMangosuthu" (Myeni, 1969:4-8). Lines 1-64, on the other hand, are recognisably "the same" as the published version although there are the usual small changes of order and words. I have marked in audience responses as far as possible and Myeni's use of the concluding vocal cadence.

- 65 Yingabe isilwane sini?¹
 Yingabe iNyathi?
 Yingabe uBhejane?
 Yingabe uMamba?
 Nank' amadoda adidekile.
- 70 Bekuyakuba iNyathi kanjani?
 Ingani iNyathi isivul' ubuhlathi lapha phezu kweMzimbubu,²
 namaMpondo kaFaku bayesaba nokuyehlela.
 Bekuyaba uBhejane kanjani?
 Ingani uBhejane simbonile ephuma lapha esiqiweni ephikelele³
 ekithi kwaKhetomthandayo
- 75 kanti uzokozakhela (?) neNala.
 Bekuyakuba iMamba kanjani?
 Ingani iMamba iyobashaya ezithendeni bewufulathele.
 Ningebhekane amadoda ezinkunjini zamehlo.⁴
 Udideka beSuthu bakaMangope wasenyakatho [Laughter]
- 80 Wadideka ...(inaudible) uMatanzima [MUSHO! MUCH LAUGHTER]⁵
 kanti nenzalo kaPhewula uPhol udidekile
 ngoba udideka uPhol nabakwaPhewula.
 Wathath' umthwalo waqond' ezimayini.
 Wadidek' uthole lakhe lapha kithi kwaNongoma kwabakwaPhewula.

85 Wadidek' uYanseni kwabakwaPhewula.
 Wadidek' uBelema kwabakwaPhewula.
 Wadidek' uBotha abath' iNdlovu enebatha kwabakwaPhewu⁶la. [MUSHO!
 Laughter. women ululate]

Udid' uwenz' i'mbokodo
 zijikwe zinkunz' ezimbili [laughter]
 90 enye yaseMbumbulu enye eyaseMtshezi⁷ [laughter]
 bebethi bawuhlakaz' izindlela.
 MntakaMathole bakuhlab' i'ndawo zombili
 kanti izimbokodo ziyanqakwa intombi kaMageba.⁸
 Izigqamfu zisel' emfuleni zimuke ziye kwamahlathalaphi!⁹ (?)

SHENGE! All: SHENGE! also prolonged clapping, shouts
 of approval and ululations of women.

65 What kind of a wild creature is this?¹
 Is it a Buffalo?
 Is it a Rhinoceros?
 Is it a Mamba?
 Behold these (poor) confused men!
 70 How could it be a Buffalo?
 When the Buffalo has gaped with its lower jaws above the Mzimvubu²
 River?
 Even the Mpondo of Faku are frightened to come down.
 How could it be a Rinoceros?
 When we see the Rhinoceros breaking out of the game reserve and³
 heading for our very own (royal) place of Khethomthandayo
 75 where he would build a home for himself (?) with the Nala (regiment)
 Could it be a Mamba?

When the mamba hits them on the soles as they turn their backs?
 You men don't look at each other out of the corner of your eyes!
 Mangope leader of the Basotho in the north was thrown into
 4
 confusion. [Laughter]

80 Matanzima...(inaudible) was thrown into confusion. [SPEAK HIM!

Laughter and women ululate]

And Paul the off-spring of Paul was thrown into confusion
 5
 because he confused Paul the off-spring of Paul.

He picked up his bundle and headed for the mines.

His calf, the off-spring of Paul here at Nongoma was thrown into
 confusion.

85 Jansen the offspring of Paul was thrown into confusion.

Velema the offspring of Paul was thrown into confusion.

Botha the off-spring of Paul whom they call the Duck-walk
 6
 Elephant was thrown into confusion. [SPEAK HIM! Laughter and
 women ululate]

You deflected the river pebbles,

they were swung by the two bulls, [Laughter]

90 one from Mbumbulu and one from Estcourt. [Laughter]

They had intended to knock to pieces (your) bundle of spears.

Child of Mathole they stabbed you in two places

8
 but the pebbles have been caught by the young girl of Mageba.

Some pieces have remained in the river and some went off to some
 9
 forest or other!

1

Line numberings refer to the transcription of the izibongo recited on July 26 1976. M.B. Yengwa helped in the transcription and translation of these izibongo, the words of which are at some points hard to make out, partly because of the high level of audience response! I was not able to check any of the izibongo with Mr Myeni himself.

2

An allusion to Shaka through his izibongo.

3

An allusion to Zwelithini through his izibongo see A 1 1.30.

4

Chief Minister of Bophutatswana. The following line mentions the Chief Minister of the Transkei, George Matanzima.

5

Phewula is an allusion, perhaps, to Paul Kruger and thereby a coded means of referring to various Afrikaner officials.

6

Mr M.C.Botha. Myeni uses the praise also used for M.C.Botha by Dlamini and perhaps coined by the imbongi or by "people".

7

A reference to Chief Hlengwa, who attempted to start an opposition party in KwaZulu (see A 1 1s.107-8) and to a chief from the Estcourt district.

8

An allusion, through a royal praise name (itself the name of an early ancestor of the house of Zulu) to Princess Constance Magogo kaDinuzulu, Chief Buthelezi's mother.

9

This final word or phrase was very hard to hear on the recording. M.B.Yengwa and myself have to some extent guessed at what was meant!

Section B

Izibongo of chiefs and members of their lineage

What follows is a small selection from the izibongo of a number of chiefly lineages recited by various izimbongi during 1975-6 and recorded by myself. The izibongo are numbered according to the catalogue number in the larger corpus from which they are drawn. It must be remembered that each izibongo is the expression of a particular imbongi and should not be seen as in any way a definitive or final version of the izibongo of a particular living individual or ancestor.

The Buthelezi chiefly lineage

The Buthelezi chiefs have played an important role in Zulu affairs over many generations. Ngqengelele was Shaka's companion and bodyguard, his son Mnyamana was Cetshwayo's chief counsellor and his

- limshaye limbhedule.
 UMqengqe ngowakithi kwaNomahina⁶
 ongeyikufa ngamadliso oyakufa ngamaloyiso.
 INyoni kaMakhala eyakhalel' uZulu
 10 mhlamane uZulu engekulima kithi kwaBulawayo⁷
 eyolima ngensimbi edl' amadoda.
 INgcayi (?) eMatayi.
 USondli 'sembhungca
 ibuy' ibhembese,
 15 inganeno ayibhembeselayo.⁸
 Umlambo
 [UMvuthu]l' ashiye.⁹
 UNto zimneng(w)ayo.]
 UNgqengelele.
- 1 You Builder of your homestead with a spear,³
 of The River of The Buffalo,⁴
 of The Collar-bone on which tears were shed
 of The Spear that defends the vitals⁵
 5 of The Slitherer on his buttocks over the rough rock
 it hits him and grazes him.
 Our Food Platter at Nomahina⁶
 who will not die from eating poison but from curses.
 Bird of The Crying One who cries for the Zulu people
 10 on the day when there was no ploughing at our place of Bulawayo
 only ploughing with the spear that eats men.⁷
 The Bride's Shawl (?) at Matayi.
 Nourisher of the thin one
 (but) again he makes himself unpleasant

15 (whereas) the one on this side is not unpleasant. ⁸

River

One who Shakes and leaves. ⁹

One who is annoyed by things.

That is Ngqengelele

1

See Cope, Izibongo p.230; Bryant, Olden Times, pp.131-135 refers to Ngqengelele and his brother's son, Klwana and elsewhere includes other details about the Buthelezi chiefly lineage much of which is disputed by Chief Buthelezi. See also the article by Chief Buthelezi, "The Early History of the Buthelezi Clan" in J.Argyle and E.Preston-Whyte (eds.), Social System and Tradition in Southern Africa (Capetown: Oxford University Press 1978), pp.19-35. Chief Buthelezi very kindly provided me with typescript notes on the Buthelezi lineage and Otty Nxumalo checked my transcriptions shortly before I left KwaZulu. There are still a number of obscure and unintelligible words and phrases. I think that Mgezeni sometimes makes do with the unintelligible (to him) but makes sure it sounds poetic and has a rhetorical structure, see for instance line 12 below.

2

I also have a recording of Nkomiyaphi reciting the izibongo of Mnyamana kaNgqengelele which was copied for me from a commercial record, at SABC Johannesburg studios. This seems to have been made in about 1965.

3

A reference to his part in the battle against the Ndwandwe leader, Zwide at Gqokli hill. Cetshwayo also has this praise.

4

The names of famous ancestors. Here the "ka" seems to denote "descendant of", but in the three following lines it is used simply to mean "of".

5

This too is a reference to the Ndwandwe battle. Lines 4 and 5 are also the izibongo (with only a very slight difference) of one of Shaka's most illustrious warriors, Zulu kaNogandaya Zungu, see Cope, Izibongo pp.178-9. They may be praises that were shared but never found enough popularity to become established formulas.

6

This was Ngqengelele's homestead; it was also known as eNsukaze.

7

This praise is mentioned by Chief Buthelezi in Social System and Tradition, p.34. Ngqengelele was the "Bird" that cried out for the Zulu people and implored Shaka, griefstricken after his mother's death, to allow his subjects to plough their fields rather than continue "ploughing" with spears.

8

I cannot make a great deal of sense of these lines. Princess Magogo thought the general sense of lines 13-15 was that people came to

Nggengelele thin and in trouble and then, under his protection they "filled out". Stuart, UBaxoxele, p.109, has a slightly different version of this praise and interprets the lines as alluding to a cooling of the close relationship between Nggengelele and Shaka because of the latter's dislike of Nggengelele's criticism of him. He had presumably recorded the explanation given by the imbongi from whom the izibongo were recorded. I do not know who the imbongi was but it seems it was not Mgezeni's father, Hoye. Line 12 is also hard to make sense of. Ndlela understands "INGcayi" to be the bride's shawl worn out of respect but made it clear that he was only guessing and in my second interview with him in May simply said he did not know. There is a longer and rather different version of this praise in Chief Buthelezi's family book of praises and in Stuart op.cit.

9

The brackets indicate that these praises were left out of the performance version by Mgezeni in Mahlabathini in July, five months after my first recording of the izibongo. "-Vuthul'" is probably an abbreviation of "-vuthulula".

10. Mnyamana kaNggengelele

- 1 UMnguni wakithi eKushumayeleni¹
 kanjengabeNguni baseGudu²
 ebebemakhanjana zibubuhlana.
 INdlaph' edlaphun' uSomtsewu³
- 5 ezalwa nguSonzica
 kwaze kwasa engalel' ubuthongo.
 UMgasela 'qoqo lazitha
 elenziwe ngabeLungu lapha kwaSishwili.
 UMSutho ongubo zimawangu⁴
- 10 kazinjeng' abafundisi
 ebebephum' esontweni
 nangaseMgqibelweni.
 UMbhali wezincwadi
 ebezibhalwe nguMalimade⁵
- 15 kwabamhloph' abeLungu
 wedlula akwaba ndaba zalutho.

ISihlahl' esimsithi
 esisith' uMaxabana
 ezalwa nguBhambula
 20 wasibon' ukukhanya
 efun' ukusinda
 efun' ukugoduka.
 Samsith' uNoyiphungwana
 ezalwa uNyanda

25 wasibon' ukukhanya
 efun' ukusinda
 efun' ukugoduka.
 Samsith' uHemulana
 ezalwa nguMbangezeni

30 wasibon' ukukhanya
 efun' ukusinda
 efun' ukugoduka.
 UMnyamana kaNgqengelele.

1 Our Nguni of Kushumayeleni¹
 not like the Ngunis of Gudu²
 where they have small round heads.
 Fierce Shaker that shook Somtseu³
 5 born of Somzica,
 until it was dawn he had no peace.
 Stalker of a bunch of the enemy
 made up of Whites at Sishwili's place.⁴
 MSuthu with the clothes of many colours
 10 they are like the clothes of the reverends
 as they come out of church

even on Saturdays.

Writer of the letters

which were as good as those written by Malimade⁵

15 among the White people

it passed and was a matter of no consequence.

Bush which blocked a man from view,

blocked from view Maxabana

born of Bhambula.

20 He saw it shining

as he longed to recover

as he longed to head for home.

It blocked Noyiphungwana

born of Nyanda,

25 he saw it shining

as he longed to recover

as he longed to head for home.

It blocked Hemulana

born of Mbangezeni

30 he saw it shining

as he longed to recover

as he longed to head for home.

That is Mnyamana son of Ngqengelele.

1

This is a very well formed version of Mnyamana's izibongo, illustrating Mgezeni's liking for balance and clear structure. However it is much shorter than that recited by Nkomiyaphi in 1965, and differs markedly from the latter's 1965 and 1976 versions, and from another version by the Buthelezi imbongi Ndodengemuntu, which I recorded at Ceza in May 1976. The izibongo of Mnyamana are also in Stuart's UBaxoxele, pp.195-6. Ekushumayeleni is Mnyamana's homestead. Nguni, here, is intended to denote "of an ancient and honourable line".

2

A hill overlooking the Pongola river where the Ndwandwe are said to have originated from, and so an allusion to the Ndwandwe people. See Webb and Wright, The James Stuart Archive Vol.1, p.354.

3

A reference to Theophilus Shepstone and his father.

4

The word "MSuthu" figures a number of times in the Buthelezi lineage praises; it is understood by Chief Buthelezi to refer to the clan's origin from the north. See Webb and Wright, The James Stuart Archive Vol.1, p.176, where Jantshi uses the term and gives a similar explanation, relating it to the Zulu clan and then mentioning the Khumalo and Buthelezi.

5

Sir Melmoth Osborn, Resident Commissioner at Eshowe at the time of Cetshwayo's death and regarded by the Zulus as having treated their king abominably, see Binns, Dinuzulu, p.18 and passim, also J.Gibson, The Story of the Zulus (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1903). Mnyamana, as Cetshwayo's Prime Minister, would have had much to do with Osborn.

1

11. Tshanibezwe kaMnyamana

1

IMbux' esindwa lishob' ukuwela.²

UMathanga 'dabul' uKubheza.³

USandla saphatha dedengu

kwezikaGwaqaqa.

5

UMsundul' owathand' omunye

ngoba wathand' owakwaNdwandwe eSikhwishini.

UPhappe oluphezu kwendlu kwaNtombane.

UMginqika njengebhece.

INtantane enjengekaBhuqwini.

10

USisaka singumnyakanya.

UMpi kayiqomi kayinjengantombi

Ubeyayiyoqom' yayiyoqom' uHemulana kaMbangezeli.⁴

UMacash' egcekeni obenjengenayidi.

UMshab' omaniki.

15

UZihlandla zendl' embi.

UFulela wanetha.

[INyanga bath' ifile yethwasa kuManyamana
ezalwa nguMhlephuza.⁵

Yafela phezu kwaMchinsi

20 ezalwa eMambatheni.]

UTshanibezwe kaMnyamana.

1 Fat Calf weighed down by its tail when it crosses (the ford).²
Thighs that cut through Kubheza.³

Hand that carried carelessly

at those of Gwaqqa's.

5 Nape of the neck that loved another
because it loved the Ndwandwe one at Sikhwishini.

Feather above the hut of Ntombane.

Roller like a melon.

(Warrior's) Bunch of plumes like that of Bhuqwini.

10 Black Finch Feathers that ripple and shake.

War does not fall in love it is not like a girl.

If it did it would have fallen in love with Hemulana son of
Mbangezeli.⁴

Hider in the yard like a needle.

Fierce dishevelled one.

15 Grass mats of the bad houses.

Cover in case it leaks.

[They said the moon had disappeared - in fact it was new moon at

Mnyamana's,
born of Mhlephuza.⁵

And there was no moon at all at Mchinsi's

20 of the Mbatha people.]

That is Tshanibezwe son of Mnyamana.

1 Mnyamana died on July 29 1892 and was succeeded as Chief of the Buthelezi by Tshanibezwe who held the position until his death in 1906. Of the two other recordings of izibongo of Tshanibezwe which I have, the first, by Nkomiyaphi has very few praises in common with Mgezeni's and the second, by Ndongemuntu is very similar. Ndongemuntu said that he had learnt the Buthelezi izibongo through hearing Mathole praise.

2

A reference to his great size.

3

A place in uSuthu territory (i.e.the territory of the pro-Dinuzulu section of the Zulu royal house), to the north of the Buthelezi.

4

Mbangezeli was of the Sibiya clan. He is mentioned in Stuart, uKulumetule, p.104, as an imbongi.

5

Mnyamana was of the Mazibuko clan.

1

12. Mkhandumba kaMnyamana

1 UMathuph' amnyama ngokuzosela.

UNkomo zavus' emdal' imizila

ngoba zavusa eyaseNkonjeni²

zavusa eyakwaDelesi.

5 ISilo esimazipho

esidl' uSwayimane³

kwabamhloph' abeLungu.

Wabaleka

waqond' eGoloza.⁴

10 Wadl' uAndelisa

kwabamhloph' abeLungu.

Wabaleka

waqond' eGoloza.

UMlilo ovuth' i'intaba zonkana

15 obubaswe nguDumukumuka⁵

ezaIwa uFaku.

Ugoduka zizibili

esomfo nesakhe.

UMkhandumba kaMnyamana.

1 Black Thumbs from roasting for yourself.

The Cattle have opened up the old tracks

because they've opened up the Nkonjeni ones,²

they've opened up the ones at Delesi.

5 Leopard with claws

which finished off Swaaiman³

among the Whites.

He ran off

he made for Goloza.⁴

10 He finished off Andries

among the Whites.

He ran off

he made for Goloza.

Fire that sets ablaze all the mountains

15 which was kindled by Dumukumuka⁵

born of Faku.

He heads for home with two (shields)

his enemy's and his own.

That is Mkhandumba son of Mnyamana.

1

Mkhandumba was executed by the British Government. He fought in the Zulu war against the English and was present at Sandlwana in 1879. Two of his sons, Mathole and Maliyamakhanda, were given to Tshanibezwe who had no heirs.

2

The plateau on which KwaPhindangene is situated, very close to Mahlabathini.

3

I think these praises refer to the friction with Afrikaners in the disputed territory around present-day Vryheid, Utrecht and Paulpietersburg. The Afrikaner infiltration into the north-west of the Zulu kingdom, the area east of Blood River, led to many clashes between Boer and Zulu prior to the Zulu war, see Wilson and Thompson, Oxford History of South Africa Vol.2, pp.262-3. "Abamhloph' abelungu" is a poetic, redundant expression, meaning literally, "the white Whites"; it is also used by Dlamini in the King's izibongo.

4

On the north-west edge of present-day Buthelezi territory.

5

Not the prominent Mpondo chief in Shaka and Dingana's time (see A 6 1.72). Faku was of the Buthelezi clan and was a neighbour of Mkhandumba's. The diminutive suffix formative "-ana" is used for poetic reasons, to achieve a pleasing assonance within the line.

1

14. Ndulungu kaMnyamana

1 UJiji onjengojiji kaMnyangwana.

USigubhu sangqengqa

sanjengesikaGuma kaMagidi.

INzama enjengonzama kaSithuli.

5 UNozama ngenhliziyo

amandl' engenawo.

ISigoloza esimehl' abomvu

esibhek' umuntu ngathi simjamele

ngoba sibhek' uMphendu

10 ezaIwa nguMaphuthwana

ethi wazi phansi naphezulu.

Wath' eza koNhlaka kaMthentesi

2

zafa.

Zaf' ubumahlamahla,

15 esakhe sangqengqa

enhla komuz' eVukeni
 ezawoMavumengwana kaNdlela,
 zafa.

Zaf' ubumahlamahla,

20 esakhe sangqengqa

enhla kom'z' eVukeni.

INguklu kaMathwalangesitsha.

USihlangu-gudl' uMthuyisazwe.³

UMoni-moni uNkomo zabeLungu.⁴

25 UNobatshazwa obatshazwe zinduna zaseBhanganomo.⁵

UNdulungu kaMnyamana.

1 Tall One, who is like the tall one of Mnyangwana.

Gourd that rolled on its edge

like that of Guma son of Magidi.

Trier like the trier of Sithuli.

5 Trier with the spirit

when his strength is gone.

Starer with the red eyes

who looks at a person as if to challenge him

because he looked at Mphendu

10 son of Maphuthwana

thinking he knew everything.

As he came to Nhlaka son of Mthentesi

they were smashed,²

they smashed with a crash.

15 His one rolled on its edge

behind the homestead at Vukeni.

Those of Mavumengwana son of Ndlela

were smashed,

they smashed with a crash.

20 His own rolled on its edge

behind the homestead at Vukeni.

The Young Pumpkin of Mathwalangesitsha (Carrier-by-dish).

Shield that rubbed the (man of the) Mthuyisazwe regiment.³

Daisy-daisy Cows of the Whites.⁴

25 The Admired One admired by the headmen of (Zibhebhu's) Bhanganomo.⁵

That is Ndulungu son of Mnyamana.

1

Most of the information I have about Ndulungu is from Mgezeni. He was, Mgezeni said, black with very red eyes and was a great fighter, with a huge hole in his head. He fought in the uSuthu battles against the Mandlakazi and was once captured by them. Zibhebhu told his men not to kill Ndulungu but to "drive him until he came to uSuthu territory and then leave him". Ndulungu then walked until he reached eMaklozini, a homestead of Mnyamana in the part known as the place of Magolwana. Ndulungu lived in the part known as Mantungweni where Mgezeni lives now.

2

These praises are in parts very enigmatic and hard to make sense of. They are in places highly allusive and elliptical; even Mgezeni was unsure about what was "crashing"; I have hazarded "gourds" as "gourd" is mentioned in line 2; "shields" is another possibility. In any case, the parallel verses give a clear idea of Ndulungu's success in contrast to the failure of those whose "gourds" (or shields) crashed.

3

I interpret "Mthuyisazwe" as a reference to a man from the Mthulisazwe regiment formed by Mpande in 1869 (Bryant, Olden Times, p.646). The suggestion is that Ndulungu clashed with him in some way.

4

An allusion to a cattle raid, perhaps.

5

Bhanganomo was the homestead of the Mandlakazi leader, Zibhebhu. This is therefore an allusion to his prowess which is even acknowledged by his enemies.

16. Mathole kaTshanibezwe¹

1 UZimbu kanye noMzinyathi.²
 UNtaba ziyadela maShenge.
 UNodela umzimba awunike abezizwe.
 Uyajabula umfazi waseMangadini
 5 owabona uVukayibambe eyodlulu' esangweni.³
 UNxabiya zohlunguhlungu
 ziyababa ziyawumajuqula.
 IMamb' iyakh' izindlu
 phakathi kweZihlalo zozibili⁴
 10 esikhulu nesincane.
 Abaleka amaMbatha
 abhangazela.
 Umsind' ukoMsendemana.
 INdlovu edle ngombhongo
 15 kwaMashonangashoni.⁵
 INyoka enosizi yabokaNdlela.
 [Mokomane, inyoni engadliwa ikhanda.
 USiginya 'gologo negazi.
 UMqobela enkandeni lapho ukufa kukhona].⁶
 UMathole kaTshanibezwe.

1 Sudden-grower like the Buffalo River.²
 The Mountains are happy people of Shenge.
 He Who is Happy to give his body to face other nations.
 Happy is the Mngadi woman
 5 who saw the Vukayibambe warrior about to pass the gateway.³

The Roots of the "hlunguhlungu" tree
they are bitter, they are very bitter.

Mamba that built his homes
⁴
between the Two Seats,

10 the large one and the small one.

The Mbathas ran off
they were panic-stricken.

The noise is at Msendemana's.

Elephant who eats with his trunk
⁵
15 at Mashonangashoni.

Snake of grief at the Ndlelas.

[Mokomane, bird whose head cannot be eaten.

Mixer of blood and vodka.

He chops off the vital organ - there where death is].

That is Mathole son of Tshanibezwe.

1

Mathole was installed as Chief of the Buthelezi in 1920, before which time Muzimubi, a son of Mnyamana, acted as Regent. After a period when there was no close liason between the Zulu royal family and the Buthelezi leadership, King Solomon asked Chief Mathole to act as mediator in a dispute between two prominent members of the uSuthu group, Mnyaiyiza kaNdabuko and Mankulumana, once Dinuzulu's prime minister. The bond between the two houses was re-established, and in August 1926 Mathole married Solomon's sister, Princess Magogo.

2

Mathole's izibongo were obviously widely known in Buthelezi territory. At the opening of the KwaZulu Parliament in Nongoma, which I attended in October 1975, one of Chief Buthelezi's headmen leant from an upstairs balcony and called out snatches of Mathole's izibongo as the Chief entered with other dignitaries. At the Mahlabathini July ceremony to which I have referred, an unknown man on the edge of the arena tried three times to praise Mathole, beginning always in ringing tones with, "UZimbu kanye noMzinyathi, but he was always cut short by the Master of Ceremonies or by the next event on the programme! Ndodengemuntu's izibongo of Mathole are somewhat different from Mgezeni's. The impression these izibongo give is of a rather fierce and fearsome individual, not easily crossed.

3

That is, a member of the Vukayibambe regiment, the members of which

were born 1887-1893. The regiment was formed in 1912, according to Bryant, Olden Times, p.646. This is perhaps a reference to Mathole.

4

Two hills which resemble two seats and are visible from the Nkonjeni plateau near Mahlabathini.

5

The name by which Mahlabathini is better known to members of the Buthelezi people.

6

This is said to refer to Mathole's jealous nature.

The Hlabisa chiefly lineage

King Mpande's mother, Songiya, was a member of the Hlabisa chiefly house. The land in Northern Zululand to the east of Nongoma, at present occupied by the Hlabisa people, was, according to Bryant (Olden Times, p.60) given to them by Mpande when he became king. Somfula (see below) was Chief in Mpande's reign. He was a member of Mpande's Dlambedu regiment and was succeeded by Lokothwayo and then by Mtekelezi, father of Chief Jeremiah. Although the chiefly house is of minor importance at present, the Hlabisa izibongo are of interest because they register their bearers' involvement on the side of Zibhebhu and the Mandlakazi - Zulu during the internecine battles of the 1880s. The later izibongo register their bearers' experience of urban life and their contact with those of other races.

Izimbongi: Mnyezane Mthembu and Sunduzabanye Hlabisa. The former recited first; normally the most distant lineage ancestor's izibongo would be recorded first but in this case Mnyezane began with Chief Jeremiah, then his father, before giving the izibongo of Somfula. In some cases izibongo were added during a subsequent visit. I have used an asterisk [*] to indicate these. There are many obscurities in these izibongo, some of which I was able to clarify after conversation with

the izimbongi. As a set they partially share the aggressive, heroic tone of the Buthelezi izibongo but they have in addition a more humorous, almost mischievous cast.

Occasion: At a private hearing at the homestead of Chief Jeremiah Hlabisa on April 22nd 1976. Chief Jeremiah was present for a time, also a young man and woman and the two Hlabisa schoolboys who had accompanied me.

17. Jeremiah kaMtekelezi

1 ISithutha sendoda

esenyus' ibulumasa!

UNdaba yenqe - uSobhedlase. ¹

UMatshitshi niyaphuz' ukwemula!

5 ULushangashanga lwazimamba.

UNTombi gez' i'mcondo,

mab' amansense!

UMakham' duze, sondela mntakwethu!

Nansi inyakanyaka isikhona.

10 UQanda lomningi kaliphum' ebhokisini. ²

UNdaba yenqe uSobhedlase!

1 The Silly Man

who has pulled up girls' panties.

The Affair of the vulture - Fighter! ¹

Young girls you're taking too long to mature!

5 The-Darting-this-way-and-that of the mambas.

The Girls wash your skinny calves

the cracks of dirt on your heels are unsightly!

The "Come here, draw near my sweetheart!

There's a commotion over here."

The Egg of the many-headed snake does not hatch from the box.²

10 The Affair of the vulture - Fighter!

1

The "Affair of the vulture" was that Jeremiah came across a vulture in its nest and shot it, subsequently coining the praise from that incident.

2

This refers to the fact that Jeremiah believed that someone had tried to bewitch him, but it was a failure so the "thing" of great danger never emerged from "the box".

20. Zofa kaSomfula¹

1 Umpengula-jozi phakathi kweMfolozi yebo-zombi-ili.

UManxetshana azindwendwe njengasekhaya konina.

UNonkwela ngolukasekisi.

UNxanana ziyeqana enqanaweni.²

5 UBantu baphuma bebakhulu kaZulu bebhek' Engilandi

bafike Engilandi baphenduka inayinsense.

Ichith' inyama yomfokazana uGwebu bengayidli.

UMgugu weguga empini abanye begugel' emakhaya.

1 Stabber-with-your-assegai between the Mfolozi (rivers) yes both
of them.

Covered with a multitude of tiny wounds, like (the multitudes) at
your mother's place.

Climber on board on the sixth day.

The Ardent ones are jumping over each other at the stronghold.²

5 The People set out, those who were the important ones of the Zulu
people, they head for England,

they arrive in England and become little "nonsenses".

He throws away the meat of the commoner Greville, they don't touch it!

Old One ageing on the battlefield while others were growing old at home.

1

The izimbongi said that Zofa's regiment was uMthuyisazwe, i.e. the last of Mpande's regiments, for men born c.1849. If this is so, Zofa would indeed have been far older than most soldiers and his first praise most probably records his action in the uSuthu - Mandlakazi battles of the 1880s. Africans were conscripted as non-combatants in the First World War, and Zofa may have seen action in France, South West Africa or German East Africa; he would have been a member of the South African Native Labour Contingent - a rather different experience from his earlier fighting days! For an African comment of disillusion after the Second World War see H.I.E.Dhlomo's poem in Ilanga, 19 May, 1945, beginning,

Not for me the victory celebrations
Not for me
Ah! not for me.

2

This is a puzzling line held together in the imbongi's memory more, perhaps, by the web of assonance and alliteration than by semantic sense, and the translation is very tentative.

1

26. Nduluza kaSomfula

1 UNohoho woMsebe.

UNduluza kaSomfula.

UNophaphela obeyijuba.

UPhangela kobongo,

5 yebo koqhoqhoqho,

2

yebo kuMpunzwana.

UHoho woMsebe.

1 The Foam and Roar of the Msebe (River)
 Starer-this-way-and-that, son of Somfula
 High-flier who was a dove.
 He grabbed the gullet

5 yes the jumping Adam's apple
²
 yes, Mpunzwana's.
 The Foam and Roar of the Msebe.

1
 Mthembu said that Ndluluzza belonged to the Msizi regiment of Cetshwayo (better known as Falaza) and that he fought at Sandlwana. At the time of the uSuthu - Mandlakazi split, according to Mthembu, half the regiment went to Zibhebhu and half remained with Cetshwayo. According to Mthembu, Nduluzza was a great walker and went on foot to Ndulinde (near Eshowe) and then on to Mgungundlovu (Pietermaritzburg); perhaps line 3 is a reference to this!

²
 Mpunzwana was of the Mdletshe clan.

¹
 27. Mkhamfini kaSomfula

1 UNocuphe kacuphe.
 INzama enjengekaSithunga.
 Ubheka Sithunga ithung' utshwala.
 Yona ithung' amadoda.

5 UCuphe kacuphe ugwaz' uMshokobezi.²

1 Trapper of trappers.
 Trier like the son of Sithunga.
 He looks at Sithunga pailing out beer.
 As for him he impales men.
 Trapper of trappers stabs the Shokobezi.²

1

Mkhamfini fought on the Mandlakazi side at the battles of Tshaneni, Ndunu and Msebe. His regiment was given as Inyoni emhlophe, a regiment formed by Zibhebhu and the equivalent of Dinuzulu's Phefeni.

2

The "ushokobezi" was the emblem made of the white brush from the tail of an ox or cow, and worn by the uSuthu regiments loyal to Cetshwayo and Dinuzulu. So the term "uMshokobezi" is used here to denote an uSuthu supporter.

1

29. Thambolini kaSimpampa kaSomfula

1 UManyondoloza onjengekati.

UMgqobhoza woyishini eketango.

Inj' eqosheme emva komuzi wakho mfana kaSozungwana Khoza
ungayenzenjani phuma-phuma na?

Wena-ke ndunankulu wena mfo kaMabedu mfokaMahlezane,

5 wenzenjani futhiinja eqosheme emva kom'zi wakho na?

1 Stalker like a cat.

Snapper of the chain-machine.

The dog that is squatting behind your homestead child of
Sozungwana Khoza what can you do about getting out?

And as for you chief headman, you, child of Mabedu son of
Mahlezane,

5 what are you doing about the dog squatting outside your
homestead?

1

Sunduzabanye took over the recitation of izibongo at this point. Thambolini was senior headman for the chiefdom in the early years of this century. The second metaphor suggests that he had at some point left Hlabisa and worked with agricultural or industrial machinery. Lines 3-5 are a good example of an allusive, coded message in izibongo the precise meaning of which is lost with the passage of time although the impression of trouble of some kind still remains!

32. Bangamadlozi kaNgeletshana kaSomfula

1 UNkawu ziyenyusa ziyenyusa amajunjwana.

1
UHalabhu kahalabhu

uMhlathi kangoweBhunu.

UGodo abalubande balubanda

2
5 abafana baseBhanganomo,

umsukwana lwaze lwaphela

bayobanda im'sunu yabo onina yini?

UNKawu zenyusa zenyus' amajunju.

1 The Monkeys are suckling and dandling their young.

1
Halabhu kahalabhu

Forest of a beard like a Boer's.

Log which they split and split again

2
5 the boys of Bhanganomo.

The day when it it is finished

will they split their mothers' vaginas as well?

The Monkeys are suckling and dandling their young.

1
This seems to have no translatable meaning but occurred in exactly the same form in some Mdletshe chiefly lineage *izibongo* in the adjoining chiefdom. Perhaps it is a coined praise suggesting the size and bushiness of the Afrikaners' beards!

2
The homestead of Zibhebhu kaMaphitha. Here friendly rivalry with Bhanganomo is suggested in place of the fighting bonds of the earlier generation.

38. Mxoveni kaZofa kaSomfula

- 1 UMadilay' eduze
 onjengebhayisikili.
 USaku lungameva wamaduma.
 INgqongqo-shishilizi.
- 5 Umlungu omhlophe khenkewane.
 Gavuzi kadinwa izikhwili ingan' abadala sebediniwe. [Mthembu
 prompts and gives the next line:]
 UHabana bemloyisa [Hlabisa continues:]
 bethi "Uyofa nini,
 sim' sik' amahawu mntaka¹Jojeni?"
- 10 *USibamba-nkuzana abayesabayo.*

- 1 Tight circler
 just like a bicycle.
 The Saku bush with its clusters of thorns.
 Conspicuous young fighter (?)
- 5 The white man, little pale one.
 Gavuzi doesn't tire of the fighting sticks but the old men are
 tired (of them).
 Traveller and they put spells on him
 saying "When will he die,
 that we can make our shields from him, the son of Jojeni?"¹
 Grabber of the little bull which others fear.

¹ This is a joking formula. The idea is that when a beast is slaughtered its hide is used for a shield and the humorous, "When will he die..." comes in the izibongo of both cattle and men (see A 106).

1

40. Mangasendaweni kaNduluza

1 UGoma usuth' 'ini izwe lifile njena?

UGalaza bethemb' unyuwani.

UMlenz' wenkab' isidinsi.

UQhakaza bethi "Zibuyel' egesini!"

[Mthembu prompts: "Ngiyafa..." Hlabisa says, "Eya.." ("Yes..")

but does not add anything on this occasion.]

5 *UNgiyofiwa zidumo.

Izidakwa zilal' enkantini.*

1 The-Diviner how is it you are so well fed when times are so hard?

The Big Pot - they are hoping for a new one.

Leg of the plump ox.

Shiner and they say "Take yourself back into the bright light".

5 *These brawls will kill me!

The drunkards sleep at the bottle store.*

1

Mangasendaweni was still alive and would have been in his late sixties or so in 1976, approximately the same age as the two bards. The izibongo would probably have been composed in his youth, some forty years earlier. Although typically short and elliptical, Mangasendaweni's izibongo give a distinct impression of hard times. Like a number of the later Hlabisa izibongo, they include neologisms as part of the means by which new experience is drawn into the scope of izibongo.

The Mkhwanazi chiefly lineage

The Mkhwanazi chiefdom, south-east of the Ngoye hills is a minor branch of the main group which is situated at Mpukunyoni (i.e.Mtubatuba) some one hundred kilometres to the north. Bryant records (Olden Times, pp.107-8) that Phalane, son of Mdinwa was given [by Mpande?] a district on the southern banks of the Mhlathuze River.

This includes KwaDlangezwa, the site of one of Shaka's military barracks, near the site of the present University of Zululand. His son Chief Ngokwane was succeeded in 1920 by Mbuyiseni. In 1976 Muntu-engenakudla, son of Mbuyiseni, was Chief but he was a sick man and he died in 1979.

Imbongi: Masoswidi Mkhwanazi

Occasion: At a private hearing at Masoswidi's homestead near KwaDlangezwa on 18 April 1976 with Masoswidi's wife, MaXulu and John Wright. Masowidi recited twenty-eight izibongo in all. Most of them were very short and were those of his own generation or his father's. He recited first the izibongo of the sons of Ngokwane of the "right-hand line" ("indlunkulu") and then "the left-hand line" ("ikhohlwa").

44. Umfowabo kaNgokwane / The brother of Ngokwane

1 UGubhu oluzibethakho lukaManzungini.

Wangenza Mame owangenzakho,

wena wamphuzisa amasi ngomlomo ehla ngendololwane.

1 Musical Bow of Manzungini which plays on its own.

Woman, you have done to me what you have done to me!

As for you, you gave him sour milk in his cupped hands and it
1
dribbled down his elbows.

1

To give someone sour milk was a way of refusing any advances from them, a way of refusing further attention.

45. Mbuyiseni kaNgokwane

1 Ngazi uMaphiwa lapha onekhona ngayizolo.

UNokhaphaza umjonjo

wakhaphaza umlaza wakwaLuthuli.

UNsizwana beyisolasola bathi awunkosi yalutho

5 ngoba kukhany' amasi esisweni.

1 I know He who is helped by those he mistreated the day before.

Splasher of his sweetheart's gift of beer.

He splashed the whey of the Luthulis.

Scrawny youth, they mocked him and said he was chief of nothing

5 because they could see the sour milk shining through his stomach.

46. Umfowabo Nikiza / His brother Nikiza

1 UNSusana eyikhunjeni

UNtothoviyane enukela abakwaMkhwanazi

abakwaMkhwanazi laduma lanqamukana kabili phakathi,

bezwa into enukakho.

1 Jostler with another for the highest position.

The Green and Yellow Striped Locust that stinks at the
Mkhwanazis.

The Mkhwanazis rumbled and split in two

as they smelt the thing that was stinking.

49. ¹
uMajubane kaNgokwane / Majubane son of Ngokwane

1 UMajubane amabili elokuya nelokubuya.

Izinduku zamshaya ngemuva nangaphambili.

1 Double-speed Man! One (speed) for going and one (speed) for
 coming back.

The sticks hit him from the back and from the front.

1
 Masoswidi said that Majubane was the senior brother in charge of the family affairs of the lineage (umfowabo obeyinduna yomndeni). All the brothers of Mbuyiseni would come to Majubane for advice with their domestic troubles which concerned, chiefly, their relations with their wives and with their other brothers.

Masoswidi then passed to the sons of the left-hand (i.e. junior) house of Ngokwane, one of whom was his own father.

52. Umunye ubaba / Another father

1 USinaza bethi uyahleka.

UGijimis' ifana eliphezulu.

1 Grinner and they think he's laughing.

He Out-runs the little cloud up above.

53. Ubaba omncane / A younger brother of my father

1 Ugxapha-shelele

ISalukazi esinomsunu unqokolo.

Isibumbu uyadula ngoba uyabiza one hundred pounds!

1 Slippery squelch.

The Old Woman with a cunning vagina.

Ah the mound of Venus is expensive - it costs one hundred pounds!

1

A rueful, ribald comment on the escalating cost of the bridewealth!

55. uMuntu-engenakudla kaMbuyiseni / Muntu-engenakudla son of Mbuyiseni

1 USigoloza esimehl' abomvu

esibuk' umuntu esamjamele.

UMakhab' ukhamba kuf' uphisa.

UMnyakatheli akancengi kanjengayise.

5 UKhaba liyakhula liyabhokoza.

USibhakuza sololukhethe.

*UMagana azibuy' i'ndodakazi.*²

1 Starer with the fierce red eyes

who stares at a man threateningly.

Kicker of the pot and a bigger one breaks.

The Heavy Treader doesn't ask for favours, not like his father.

5 The Corn-cob grows, it flourishes.

The Crashing of the corrugated iron.

*Marrier but his daughters bring him no cattle.*²

1

Masoswidi remembered these from the time the Chief was first married. Before his installation Muntu-engenakudla had worked in towns, in domestic employment, according to Masoswidi. He added that the Chief would have composed some of his praises himself and "then we filled them out as well", ("Sibuya sigwalisela nathi").

2

A tentative translation. The line was added when Masoswidi said the izibongo for a second time, in the course of conversation. Perhaps it was a more recently composed line.

56. uMqinsini umfowabo kaMnumzana / Mqinsini, the Chief's brother

1 UMathanda ezincane ezindala zimbangela umfehlane.

UPhappe lwensingizi olubik' izulu ukuduma.

1 Delighter in young girls the older ones give him rheumatism.

Feather of the hornbill that tells of approaching thunder.

The Mzimela chiefly lineage

The Mzimela chiefdom covers the land to the east and west of the Ngoye range and includes some very fertile land along the banks of the Mhlathuze on the west side of the Ngoye hills. Bryant describes the Mzimela as "an insignificant clan" (Olden Times, pp.280-1), a part of which migrated north "with Nxaba on the journey to Central Africa", while those left behind "gravitated to Shaka". Shaka's contemporary, Sihubela, according to Bryant, built in northern Zululand in the old Ndwandwe territory. His descendant Zimema is described as "one of the Whiteman's aristocracy, a district headman or magnified policeman whose beat comprises the Ongoye hills betwixt the Mhlathuze and Mlalazi". This distinctly unflattering account is somewhat at variance with the imbongi Phemba Mzimela's version of how the Mzimela came to occupy their present land. According to Phemba, the Mzimela came from the north, "people used to call us Tongas", they then went north again and finally settled in what was then the Mthiyane area at Zapholwane on the coast (present-day St. Lucia, I think). The Mzimela myth of origin is that they lived under the sea, then came up to bask and decided to stay! At Zapholwane they were a part of the Myeni clan but then split from them. Sihubela's mother was Sikhova, a sister of Shaka's mother, Nandi (they were, Phemba said, born of the same father). The former joined Shaka in his conquest of the Qwabe and

Shaka then gave the clan, under Sihubela, the former Qwabe territory around the Ngoye hills. (The hills are still praised as "ONgoye Gumede!", the latter being the Qwabe clan praise name.) The most widely used clan praise name for the Mzimela is "Mnguni" and most people of the Mzimela clan in Ngoye are known and addressed by their isithakazelo of "Mnguni!". The present chief is Lindelihle, son of Ntshidi.

Imbongi: Phemba Mzimela is an older brother of Chief Lindelihle. He has a very deliberate delivery style, short, almost staccato, with heavy down beats coming frequently to mark pauses but he always suppressed the natural cadence until the end of each izibongo.

Occasion: The following five izibongo were recorded at a private hearing at Phemba Mzimela's homestead at Ntshidi on April 19 1976. I had heard and seen Phemba (and a second imbongi, Mabonsela) praise at Lindelihle's wedding to Maphibiso Dube in December 1975. At our April meeting Phemba began with the izibongo of Lindelihle and then worked backwards in time through four generations.

57. Lindelihle kaNtshidi / Lindelihle son of Ntshidi

1 USiphundu uMadliwa indlala.

INhlanhlokāzī

UPhushukela kwamdlezanē,

mdlezane owaphuma nesampānzi

5 amshaye ngāso.

UMfishane ungubo ziyanyathēla.

USigawuli semithi em'khulu emincane iyaziwēla.

USibhakuza salolukhethē.

UQham' kwabad' abelungu.

ULindelihle-ke lowo.

- 1 The Meat-on-the-neck One that is eaten in time of famine.
Stiff-stander
Pusher-in on the suckling mother,
the suckling mother with her after-birth with which she smacked
him.
- 5 Short One One whose clothes drag on the ground.
Hewer-down of great trees the little ones fall on their own.
The Crashing of the corrugated iron.
Sudden Appearer between the tall white men.
That is Lindelihle.

1

I had first heard this praise for Chief Lindelihle during a visit to one of his homesteads near the Mlalazi River, a few months earlier. It was given to me by one of his wives and his sister, MaMnguni. Phemba Mzimela confirmed that it was indeed part of his izibongo and had been composed by "people" ("abantu"). It refers, it seems, to an incident when the Chief was arrested in Empangeni for disorderly behaviour and was held by two tall policeman, the Chief himself being a rather short man. Apparently Chief Lindelihle used to be very fond of ukugiya but since becoming a Nazarite he no longer giya'd.

1

58. uNtshidi uyise kaLindelihle / Ntshidi the father of Lindelihle

2

- 1 UBhuqu ukuziwise ezibukweni kwaMkhize,
kufe amadoda abafazi bazila bathwala izinqwazi,
engasayokuya nakwadadewabo uGcabayi,
engasayokuya nakwadadewabo

5 ubakwethu esesaba imilando.

UMasadayi wendaya 'nkunzi.

USibamba 'nkunz' 'imbili enye yakwaZungu
 3
 enye yakwaBiyela kwaQomintaba.

UCiyokazana akafanga zidubulo zasekhweni lakhe kwaZibani⁴

10 ebulawa umkhwekazi,

bethi, "Mdanda!

Uyabukwa yini mntakaNjingili ezweni?"

1 The Faller-down on purpose at the fords at the Mkhizes,²
 men died and women mourned, they wore fillets of mourning,
 no more will he go to his sister's place, uGcabayi,
 no more will he go to his sister's place,

5 he fears the incriminating tales.

Tall Deep-chested One, the old bull,

Catcher of the other two bulls, one, of the Zungus,
 3
 the other, of the Biyelas at Qomintaba.

The Little Lark did not die from the blows at his in-laws
 4
 place at the Zibanis,

10 where he was "killed" by his mother-in-law

and they said, "Tall One,
 5

child of Njingili are you showing off in front of everyone?"

1 His izibongo highlight Ntshidi's aggressive disposition and propensity for fighting, particularly with those he was related to by marriage! In his old age he became a believer and a member of the Nazarite Church but this fact is not recorded in his izibongo.

2 Ntshidi fought with the Zungu chief at Empangeni, beyond the Mhlathuze, whom his sister had married. After this he was unable to visit his sister again.

3 The Zungu chief and the Biyela chief from Qomintaba, near Melmoth, joined forces against Ntshidi but it appears that he got the better of both of them.

4

Ntshidi was also related through marriage to the Zibani, one of whom was a headman of Chief Mkhwanazi in the land adjoining Mzimela territory. He fought with his Zibani brother-in-law and also incurred the wrath of his Mkhwanazi mother-in-law who was there at the time.

5

Njingili was Ntshidi's great-great-grandfather.

59. uZimema kaSigodo / ¹Zimema son of Sigodo

1 UMv' emnyama eyehlula abaqophi

ngoba yehlul' uMunci obezalwa uMngeni

yehlula(he cannot remember the second name)

UDambuza-mthabathe

5 UMabhala ngozipho abanye bebhala ngephensili.

UGojela kwezibomvu kwezamasosha eSandlwana.²

UMajubane akalingananga esaya phambili

ngoba wath' ebuya

abakwabo babesebefile.

1 The Black Sheep which defeated the kilt-makers

because it defeated Munci born of Mngeni

it surpassed(he cannot remember the second name).

Walk-carefully-and-grab-him.

5 Writer with a fingernail while others write with a pencil.

The Plume of feathers (disappearing) among the red ones, among the
soldiers at Sandlwana.

Swift One who went ahead but with unequal eagerness

because on his return

his brothers lay dead.

1

Zimema lived to be a very old man indeed, and according to Phemba he only died in 1939. Phemba said that he was of the Mxapho regiment (also known as Mpunga). Bryant (Olden Times, p.646) lists this as a regiment of Mpande, the men of which were born c.1841 and the regiment formed in

1861. Robbins Guma (Native Teachers Journal, January 1929, pp.40-41) tells the story that Zimema as a young boy was an attendant at the homestead of Prince Mbuyazi at Zwangendaba. He only escaped death at the battle of the princes at Ndongakusuka because he had been allowed to go home for a while to eHebezeni. Webb and Wright (James Stuart Archive Vol. 2, p.52) note that "Zimema kaSigodo was inceku to Cetshwayo, responsible for bringing his food", and that he was an induna of a regiment. Phemba remarked that besides fighting at Sandlwana, Zimema also fought in the battles against Zibhebhu kaMaphitha.

2

Sixteen sons of Sigodo fought at Sandlwana and only six returned from the battlefield. Phemba recalled that one of the others who returned was of the Ingobamakhosi regiment of Cetshwayo (born c.1850). One of Zimema's two sons born before he fought at Isandlwana was of the Felaphakathi regiment of Dinuzulu (born c.1870).

1

60. uSigodo kaSihubela / Sigodo son of Sihubela

1 UMamba ziyaholana

ngingeze ngazibona izimamba ziholana

ngoba kwaholana uNdwandwe

kwaholana uZulu.

2

5 USibhukuza sangumutsha wezindlovu. (?)

UGaqa kubeyigaqa

uze wabuya noTidwane kwabakwaDlamini eSwazini.

Uphinde igaqa wayigaqa wabuya noMsunsu kwabakwaNcube eSwazini.

IGaqa kwayigaqa wabuya noNkanyezi kwabasebaThenjeni eSwazini.

10 USihlangu simagqabha, simagqabha nje,

yimikhonto yamadoda.

3

Ubeyigaqa elakaMthungandaba elentombi yaseMdletsheni.

1 The Mambas are pulling at each other.

Never before have I seen mambas pulling at each other,

because there was pulling by the Ndwandwe

there was pulling by the Zulu.

2

5 Stump like the loin girdle of an elephant. (?)

Spear which was a spear indeed

and then he came back with Tidwane of the Dlamini from Swaziland.

Again the Spear was a spear indeed, he came back with Mnsunsu
from Swaziland.

The Spear was a spear indeed, he came back with Nkanyezi of the
Mthembu from Swaziland.

10 The Shield has marks, it has marks

(and) they are from the spears of men.

He was the Spear of the daughter of Mthungandaba,³ she of the
Mdletshe.

1

The early part of Sigodo's izibongo would seem to refer to Shaka's conquest of the Ndwandwe under Zwide and the subsequent lines, to the Swazi campaigns under Dingane. Phemba said that the descendants of the Dlamini and Mthembu children whom Sigodo had captured in Swazi territory were still living close by.

2

This line is obscure and Phamba did not know what it meant.

3

Mthungandaba was the name of his mother's father. According to old Zulu custom his mother was known as "okaMthungandaba", "the daughter of Mthungandaba".

1

61. uSihubela kaNjingili / Sihubela son of Njingili

1 UbeMdeyi kaNtaba owadela i'ntaba.

Wahlala elwandle

abanye behlala ezintabeni.

UbeSithebe-sihle sisezintabeni zasoNgoye

5 esasidlela oPhakathwayo²

sidlela oKhondlo

inamuhla sidlel' 'ena okaNtshintshwayo.³

1 One who has Abandoned, Mountain, who abandoned the mountains.

He lived by the sea

others lived in the mountains.

He became the Beautiful Eating Mat on the hills of Ngoye

5 from which the people of Phakathwayo once ate²

(and) from which the people of Khondlo ate

and today he of Ntshintshwayo eats from it.³

1

These are in some ways obscure and difficult izibongo but also interesting because of their historical references and their use of word formations peculiar to izibongo, as in line 4 and line 1. Possibly the opening reference to mountains hints at an earlier sojourn in mountainous regions before moving to the flat and marshy lands around Zapholwane (St.Lucia). Phemba quite often substitutes "y" for "l" as he does in the opening praise name "UbeMdeyi".

2

The Qwabe leader Phakathwayo and his son Khondlo were driven from their old territory by Shaka who then, according to Phemba and to these izibongo, set Sihubela and his people there.

3

Ntshintshwayo was the grandfather of Sihubela. Phemba gave the genealogy as Ntshintshwayo the son of Vezi, the son of Sidwala, the son of Sibankulu and knew no names beyond Sibankulu.

The Dube chiefly lineage

The Dube occupy a portion of land slightly north-east of the Ngoye hills and south of present-day Richards Bay. The land is flat, inclined to be marshy and the soil is sandy. Bryant notes (Olden Times, pp.106-7) that the Dube under Khushwayo adjoined the Mbonambi and were "brother clans from the same parental stock". Nzwakele was chief when Farewell and Isaacs visited the area in 1827 and Bryant records that there were once a lot of elephants in that part. According to Bryant, Nzwakele was killed in about 1835 by Dingane. After some time his grandson, Ntungelezane, returned from Natal and was recognised as chief of the Dube. Bryant records that

Ntungelezana died in August 1925. He was succeeded by his son, Magemegeme who was Chief until his death in 1975. Ndesheni, son of Magemegeme, was installed as Chief in November 1975.

Izibongi and Occasions: Adelina Dube, a member of the chiefly umndeni praised the Dube chiefly lineage at the marriage of Maphibiso Dube, daughter of the late Chief Magemegeme to Chief Lindelihle at Ntshidi, on 21 December 1975. The following selection of Dube chiefly lineage izibongo (with the exception of 62 and 66) were recorded immediately after the wedding ceremony as the onlookers were drifting homewards and the bride and bridegroom's party were returning to the homestead for refreshments. When I checked the izibongo with MaDube many months later, in July 1976 I omitted to ask many historical questions. Numbers 62 and 66 were recited by Elias Nhlanhla Mjadu at Mpembeni in July 1976. Also present were my assistant, Norbert Mbonambi, a companion of Elias', and two geese.

Delivery: Elias Mjadu recited at a great speed and sometimes recited a long string of syntactic units without drawing breath. I have marked his pauses by // in the text below and the line divisions mark syntactic divisions only. Adeline Dube had a similar fast delivery although the izibongo were more clearly marked by pauses which tended to coincide with small syntactic units. I have used a similar // in only one of the izibongo she recited, no.63.

62. Ndesheni kaMagemegeme / Ndesheni son of Magemegeme

1 UMjuma Somjumase

UFulathela eshikile.

UNduku azimshayi ngoba zameq' ikhanda

- ngoba zadl' i'khulu zihlangene zimbili phansi kwelaseMthunzini.//
 USigubhu esaphuma kabi ngoba saphuma khona enduneni
 khona eMagazini khona kwaNongoma,//
 abathi manje bethi basishaya phansi,
 saphenduka sangafa,
 kwaze kwabuz' indunankulu uMagwaza.//
- 10 Wathi, "Ube nize lapha nje, nize ngeqiniso yini?"//
 Elifanele.//
 UMam' omkhulukazi,
 lomama akakhulumi, uyalevuza.
 Sithi uma sithi siyamlalelisa lomame
- 15 uyamomutha ulingis' ibhungane.//
 UGoqo yase ekhaya nayasandle.//
 UMashiya kubalansiwe nakobaba nakomame.//
- 1 Attacker with fury
 He Turns round and shows his buttocks
 The-Sticks don't hit him because they skim over his head,
 because they finished off the two great ones as they met the
 other side of Mthunzini.//
- 5 Gourd that sprang up in the wrong place because it sprang up at
 the headman's place
 there at Magazini, there at Nongoma.//
 They took their chance and whacked it down
 it bent down but didn't break
 and then the head induna, Magwaza, questioned them.//
- 10 He said, "You who have come here, have you told the truth?"//
 Indeed it was that.//
 As for the great fat Mama,

that Mama doesn't talk she gushes words out.

We say that if we make that Mama listen to us,

15 she buzzes, she's like a bumble bee.//

Gate pole (that protects) at home and in the wilderness as well.

You who manage things fairly both with your father's people and
your mother's.

63. uNzwakele kaKhushwayo / Nzwakele son of Khushwayo

1 UNzwakele kaKhushwayo

ukhishwa enqabeni

aphephel' etsheni

athi khona itshe lizomsindisa.//

1 UNzwakele the son of Khushwayo

One Plucked Out from the fortress,

he took refuge in a rock

thinking the rock would help in his escape.//

64. uNtungeyezana ubabamkhulu¹ / Ntungeyezana (my) grandfather

1 UMhuhuluzi we'nyoka zakhwela emthini zingenenyawo.

UMkhuthumkhuthu uSigobongo samafutha.

INyoni e'bomvu ezahlala uPhunga noMageba.² (?)

1 Glider on your stomach like the snakes that climbed trees
having no feet.

Knobbly, bumpy Gourd for keeping fat in.

2

Red Birds that perched on Phunga and Mageba. (?)

1
Bryant refers to Ntungelezana. The pronunciation as "Ntungeyezana" is caused by the Thefula dialect substituting "y" for "l". Adelina frequently substitutes "y" for "l" in these izibongo.

2
The translation of this praise is tentative. Phunga and Mageba are royal Zulu ancestors and the red feathers, particularly of the lowrie (igwalagwala) are a symbol of royalty. Perhaps the line is a statement of loyalty to the Zulu house.

1

65. uMshingase omunye ubabamkhulu / Mshingase another grandfather

1 USidanga esimaxubexube.

UNxaphanxapha uMafutha enkabi.

USikaza ngobhoko nje ngiyesaba umnta kaSokhaya.

1 Twisted beads of many colours.

Spluttering bubbling Fat of an ox.

He merely feints with his pointed fighting stick and I am afraid,
child of the Head of the homestead.

1
Adelina thought Mshingase might have belonged to the Mavalana regiment of Dinuzulu (born c.1885) but she was not sure.

1

66. Magemegeme

(imbongi: Elias Mjadu)

1 UMahlal' othini njengenyoni.

UMpi kayishayi thina ishaya uGuphithuka.

INyoka zakhwel' emthini zingenanyawo.

Bantabami dlanini ukudla mina ngizodl' onyoko.//

5 UBhushubhushu nezinqe khona ekhaya kwaMbokazi.//

USikhwil' sivimbel' amashingana ayikh' impi.//

UNtombi kazishayanga yena zashaya ubhelebhane.//

- 1 Percher on a twig just like a bird.
 Fight that doesn't hit us it hits Guphithuka.²
 Snakes climbed trees yet they were without feet!
 My children eat up your food as for me I shall enjoy your mothers.³
 Flasher with your naked buttocks at the Mbokazi homestead.⁴
- 5 The Fighting Stick blocks off the young scallywags , there is no
 fight.
 The-Girls didn't hit him because they were "hitting" (playing)
 their mouth-organs.

1 This version of the late Chief's izibongo and Adelina's (which follows) share some praises although only one praise is identical and even then the ordering is different. Thus fluidity and the stamp of individual expression are evident, together with the pull to stability.

2 Guphithuka was the name of one of Magemegeme's father's homesteads. There was a fight there during a wedding and the group from Guphithuka came off worse.

3 This and line 3 (also his father's praise) are formulas. The play on words and the audacity of the line caused great amusement when I was replaying the izibongo in the presence of Adelina and several other women at Mpembeni in July. Line 7 also uses a play on words and this is considered particularly skilful when it combines with a balancing, binary device such as the "negative to positive", as it does in this case.

1
 67. uMagemegeme
 (Imbongi: Adelina Dube)

- 1 Umpi kayishayi thina ushaya uGuphithuka.
 UMgoqo ovimbel' amashinga akwaGuphithuka.
 UBantwana dlanini ubisi mina ngizodl' onyoko.
 * UNombengula kalukhakhasi iMpisi ithatha ngesamba.

5 Qukula kaqukula!²*
INTaka eyakha amadlangala phezu kweCush'.

1 The Fight doesn't hit us it hits Guphithuka.
The Gate Pole which keeps off the young scallywags of Guphithuka.
Children finish up your milk as for me I shall finish off your
mothers.

* Slicer like the sharp-edged grass, Hyena that takes all in a
flash,

5 Lifter of lifters!²*
Tiny Finch which built its rough nests above the Cush' (stream).

1 Adelina said that Magemegeme was of the iNqabayembube Regiment,
nominally formed by Solomon, the members of whom were born c.1896.

2 The lines between asterisks were known in Ngoye as the izibongo of
the hyena.

69. uZinqe omunye ubaba / Zinqe, another "father"¹

1 UZinqe zimdindi zimdindini zingangezikadadewabo uBaqondile.
UNomahoho uNomahohonono.
Ugubazeya umuntu ngehemu.
UNsuku ziyabalwa ezokufa nezokuphila.

1 Huge and even huger Buttocks as large as his sister's, Baqondile.
Tall One and Taller still.²
He covers a man with his shield.
The Days of living and of dying are reckoned.

1 Zinge was of the uVukayibambe regiment of Dinuzulu, born c.1887 and formed in 1912 (Bryant, Olden Times, p.646).

2 Adelina said that this praise referred to his height. The translation is tentative.

69. uGundane, omunye ubaba / Gundane, another "father"

1 UMakhubayo zimbe emzini wendoda.
UMkhovu ubashile uMkhovu onesilevu.
UMcumbazi we'nkehli.

1 The-Protective Medicines, dig them yourself in a man's homestead!
Midget of a goblin Goblin with a beard.
Prodder of young women.

70. uMagxuma omunye ubaba / Magxuma, another "father"

1 UMagxuma ayibambele.
UMakathi ayiziphunga.
UNgwe bafana!
UGiliva odliwa zinjinga.

1 Jumper who holds on for himself.
Cat with the long fur.
(The man) is a Leopard boys!
The Gravy consumed by the well-to-do.

1 Magxuma was also of the Vukayibambe regiment.

71. uFalaza ubabamkhulu omunye / Falaza, another grandfather¹

1 UKhamba luyizihlephu zakwaVobo.²

1 The Pot that is in little pieces at Vobo's.²

¹ Adelina would normally have praised Falaza before moving to the next generation. Men were often known by their regiment's name and in this case Adelina seems only to have known that. Men of Cetshwayo's Falaza regiment were born c.1856 (Bryant, ibid.).

² Vobo was Falaza's mother.

72. uFashinentsha / Fashinentsha (New-Fashion)¹

1 USikhax' amathangeni njengumntwana.

1 Grabber of thighs like a little child.

¹ I think Fashinentsha was a younger brother of Magemegeme. Adelina did not say so, however.

73. uBaba walomntwana (MaMphibisa) / The Father of this child (MaMphibisa)¹

1 USigadla bekhamise bethi "Dube lendoda!"

UMaxabana nentombi kuf' isoka.

UGologo ophuzwa zinjinga eMpangeni.

UMxhophela 'ndwendwe zingayi kuwe kazi kuwe zoyishaya nini
mntakaNzwakele na?

- 1 Striker and their jaws drop, they say, "That man Dube!"
 Quarreller with a girl and the lover dies.
 The Hard-stuff drunk by the well-to-do at Empangeni.
 Dazzler at (others') weddings but not your own - when will you go to
 your own, child of Nzwakele?²

1 The bride's father. His izibongo were greeted with cries of "Musho!" ("Speak him!) and with laughter when Adelina recited them in the arena.

2 This formula praise is difficult to translate. It also appears in the izibongo of Elias Mjadu (No.112).

The Mbonambi chiefly lineage

I have included the following izibongo of a single Mbonambi chief, the late Chief Manqaba, who, according to the imbongi Azariah Mthiyane (see No.2) was chief during the Bambatha rebellion ("Impi yamakhanda") and who died in 1974. The present chief is his son Mtholeni. The Mbonambi territory adjoins that of the Mthiyane north of Richards Bay.

Imbongi: Azariah Mthiyane recited the following izibongo at Emkayideni during a visit when I was checking the izibongo of Isaiah Shembe with him.

73c. Manqaba Mbonambi¹

- 1 UMakhathakhatha m'thi muni?
 UMbokodwe 'zofa nini?
 UGqamu njengelangabi.
 UPhaphe lwensingizi oluphezu kwendlu kaKhoto.
- 5 USisunduzi sabanolaka.

UMagwaz' ethetha njengonina.

UNyokana zehl' emthini zingasenanyawo.

UNokhonjwa ngeminwe emide nemfishanyana.

UMashay' inkosana yek' ikhohlwa.

10 UGqamu njengelangabi.

USihlahla sishayana kuvel' abasha.

1 Smearer of which medicine?

The Grinding Stone - when will it die?

Sudden Appearer like a flame.

Feather of the hornbill that is above the house of Khoto.

5 Approacher of the enraged.

Stabber as he scolds like his mother.

The-Little Snakes slither down trees although they have no feet.

He who is pointed at by the tall and the rather short.

Beater of the senior one he leaves aside the junior one.

10 Sudden Appearer like a flame.

The Bush brushes against another and the young appear.

1

Azariah gave the late Chief Mangaba's regiment as uDakw'ukusutha of Dinuzulu, the men of which were born c.1878 and the regiment formed in 1902.

- 5 USombangeya / ungamtsheli izindaba
 ngob' uSombangeya / uma ungamtshel' izindaba
 uthukuthela agijimela emkhontweni
 agijimela emahaweni.
 Ngoba wadla uNongalo / ezalwa kaNala,
- 10 washiya umfowabo uNohaya
 wathi bayosala bakhayana.
 IMPunzi / iyemuke nomkhonto / emahlombe.
 Yagxumela ezibayeni zabathakathi / akwabandaba zalutho,
 ngoba uGodongwane akazitshel' izindaba³
- 15 ngoba uma umtshel' izindaba
 ugijimela emkhontweni
 agijimela emahaweni.
 UNqengendlela / ubomvu / izingazi zamadoda.
 INgqambi / ehlu la amakhosi / ngokuqamba,
- 20 nina bezizwe / nizwil' umsindo / ubangwa eZengweni / uzibongwa na?⁴
 Bekukakwe indlovu yakoDeyase
 besekebongana namanxebe omkhonto.

 AbeThembu babaleke
 bakhwezela / bakhuphukela / ezintabeni.
- 25 UNkomo zabantu / kayizokubuya ekhaya / seziyokwemuka namanzi,
 ziyosala emafindweni
 zibenjengemvula engeyakoMnise.⁵

 INkomo yanganene / yasendlunkulu
 mayithengwa nayiphi / enye yasendlunkulu
- 30 mayithengwa noNombangambi⁶
 yena owaz' izindaba.

- 2
- 1 The Needy One of Delase
 who was in need in the meeting places of men
 in the large homesteads of the Mdletshe.
 Spear which carried off Ndiyane.
- 5 Father-of-action - don't tell him things
 Father-of-action - if you tell him things
 he flares up, he runs for his spear
 he runs for the shields.
 Because he destroyed Nongalo born of Nala.
- 10 He left behind his brother Nohaya,
 he said they could stay behind and cry together.
 The Grey Buck that received a spear between its shoulders.
 It leapt over the cattle kraals of wizards and (their charms)
 were of no avail,
 because Godongwane does not let out secrets
- 3
- 15 if you tell him things
 he runs for his spear,
 he runs for the shields.
 The Lark he is red with the blood of men.
 Inventor, overcoming chiefs through his inventions,
- 20 you other nations you have heard the noise coming from Zengweni,
 is he praising himself?
 The Elephant of Delase is surrounded and they are praising each
 other with spear wounds.
 The Thembus ran away
 they scrambled and climbed up the hills.
- 25 The Cattle of people will not be returning home, they will drown
 in water.

They will remain (struggling) in knots,
 let them be like the rain, like Mnise's rain.

The Cow of the second great wife
 which other member of the royal house will barter for it?

30 Let it be bartered for by Nomangambi
 he who has knowledge of secrets.

1 The story of Dingiswayo is told by Stuart in uBaxoxele, pp.14-44. His informant was Mashwili a grandson of Dingiswayo. Unusually, Stuart stated in the text book, his informant and the date of the interview (November 1903). Zizwezonke included Mashwili's izibongo in those he recited for me, and mentioned that he had been the head of the lineage and was killed at the battle of Zinsimba at Maphumulo during the Bambatha rebellion in 1906. These izibongo have much in common with those in Cope, Izibongo, pp.122-127, although they are much shorter. The "narrative style of the coastal tribes", to which Cope refers (pp.61-2) is evident in these izibongo which deal in a fairly oblique way with Dingiswayo's betrayal and the attempted assassination, his escape and subsequent successes. I did not ask Zizwezonke as many questions about people and places mentioned in the izibongo as I could have done, largely because I was distracted by the number of snakes around the place. A black mamba had been shown to me and returned to its box but there were said to be many others around. Zizwezonke himself was very kind and helpful, however, both on this occasion and on a subsequent visit in May.

2 Cope has "Delwase" (p.125, 1.136, and see note 10); this may be a reference to Dingiswayo's mother. Zizwezonke sometimes slipped into "thefula" dialect in the izibongo and may have done so here. See also 1.11, "bakhayana".

3 Godongwane was Dingiswayo's old name; when he returned to claim his inheritance he called himself "Dingiswayo", "The Rejected One" and, according to Zizwezonke, "his own people did not know him".

4 EZengweni was the homestead of Dingiswayo's father, Jobe.

5 Mnise, the Thembu chief was a rain wizard.

6 Nombangambi, is said to have had a hand in the attempt to assassinate Godongwane (as Dingiswayo was first called). The last praise points, in a sinister and beautifully allusive manner, to the family intrigues culminating in the attempt on his life.

75. Mngoye kaDingiswayo / Mngoye son of Dingiswayo

UMngoye-ke:

- 1 UMbebe / onjengengwe.
UDambuza-mthabathe
UMabhala ngazipho.
IThol' elehle / ngamandla / kwaMpisintshaka
5 laze lakwehla koFabase / ebaThenjini.
IMbaxa-matsheni
ezivimb' izintaba / zombili
yavimba iSadoko neNsungweni,²
bathi uma bekungezansi
10 bafik' isivimbile,
bathi uma beya kwelengenhla
bafik' isivimbile.
UGagane luklwebe / abantwana esibunjeni
uyasa kusasa sebeyathunukala,
15 kuyasa kusasa sebehamba begxamaTaza.

IMbabazane uMathandela
ngoba ulithandela eyiShowe.³

INKonyane ujikel' emaweni
kuze kwasa eyengayenga.

20 IMbabazane uMathandela / baphelile amadoda.
UMngoye-ke lowo okaDingiswayo.

UMngoye:

- 1 The Young Child that is like a leopard.
Walk-carefully-and-grab-him

Marker with his claw.

Calf that descended fiercely at Mpisintshaka

5 until it descended on Fabase of the Thembu.

Hider among stones

who blocked off the two mountains.

It blocked off Sadoko and Nsungweni,²

when they were down country

10 they got there and it was blocked;

when they were over there up-country

they got there and it was blocked.

Thorn tree which scratched children down below,

at dawn the next day they were itching,

15 at dawn the next day they were walking with straddled legs.

Stinging Nettle, Wrapper-around

because you wrapped yourself around the one from Eshowe.³

Calf that was suspended over the cliff-faces

until dawn it was swaying to and fro.

20 Stinging Nettle, Wrapper-around - and men are done for!

That is Mngoye, the son of Dingiswayo.

1

Mashwili's account in Stuart's Baxoxele, pp.41-2 mentions that his father, Mngoye, after crossing the Thukela River, lived first at Dukuza and then moved to Zinsimba. Mpande had killed his father, [his uncle, Dingiswayo's brother?] Khuzwayo, and Mngoye thought that he too would be killed after Mpande returned from his Swazi campaign, so he "crossed and came into the White man's land" i.e.Natal.

2

The names of areas in the Maphumulo district.

3

"The one from Eshowe" is a tentative translation.

77. uManingi kaMngoye¹ / Maningi son of Mngoye

- 1 ---
 UManqindi ezinkomo.
 UGininda wezimbande.
 UBubi kabulali
 iba buyabulala
- 5 kwakoqeda uMthethwa
 emdumo wakoTshanikazi
 emdumo wakoKhonjwa.²
 UNtamo uyaphenduka,
 uNtamo unamalunga,
- 10 injengemfe.
 UXaka njengomvemve.
 UMshishizelwa / unjenganja
 beziy' enqineni.
 UNogangath' umuntu.
- 15 UMqwayiba / obuye lapho
 ibingasabuthwana insizwa / kwabasemaLangeni.
 Ingcuba yensizwa baThethwa / ningayitshingi / noma isifile.

 UNogangath' umuntu oMqwayiba.
 INguklu edl' amahleza / kaMngoye.
 UManingi lowo ozala-ke uBaba uFocela.
- 1 The De-horned one among the cattle.
 Lopper off of shin-bones.
 Evil does not destroy,
 if it did destroy,
- 5 Mthethwa would have been finished off

in the thundering of the daughter of Tshanikazi,
 in the thundering of the daughter of Khonjwa.²

The Neck turns around,
 the Neck that has marks on it,

10 it is like sweet cane.

Quick lifter like a wagtail.

He Who is Urged-on to fight, as dogs are
 when they are off hunting.

Fierce hitter of another.

15 Biltong that returned there,

when the young Langeni man had not even been called up.

The worthless young man, you Mthethwas, must not be thrown away,
 even if he is dead.

Fierce hitter of another, (he) who is (tough like) Biltong.

The Big Belly that gobbles up the corn cobs, Mngoye's son.

That is Maningi who begat my father, Focela.

1
 Zizwezonke said that Maningi was Mngoye's full brother, next in age
 after Mngoye.

2
 The first word was very hard to catch. OkaTshanikazi and okaKhonjwa
 are the names of Maningi's mother.

79. Zizwezonke Mthethwa

1 ---
 UMhume olal' izingwe nezingonyama.

UBantu / baphelele emgodlweni.

UGxamalaza kwaMsipha,

imisiph' eyizigidi.

5 UDonsadonsa umuntu / ngomthonjwana.

- Ulibazis' umuntu okusomeni
 ngoba ulibazis' uMhlezebonwa,
 uMasithela / ezalwa kaGcabāshu.

 UMudli we'nkomo 'zinyawo 'mbili
- 10 ngoba udle uNogidela-mawondini / ezalwa kwaQwabe,
 wadl' uFulans Mlapo kubeSuthu
 wadla Stifane kwabakwaSishi.

 UHolobha kaholobha,
 uNdlela ziyacentwa ziyaheshwa,
- 15 nam'hla esefile / zobe zimlungele.
 USiphindlaphindla siyizindlondlo
 siyizimamba / singamabululu.
 UQhamuka kwabaleka izimbubu ezimhlophe nezimnyama,
 kanti abanye ziyabaqhobozela.
- 20 IVimbela elibuke izintaba / zasithibala,
 labuka izintaba / zaphum, amanzi.
- 1 Den in which leopards and lions sleep.
 The-People are stuffed in the large bag.
 The Stander with legs apart at Tendons',
 the tendons that are thousands.
- 5 Puller of a person by his little penis.
 He delays a man on the way to his sweetheart
 because he delays He-who-is-always-gazed-at,
 Masithela born of Gcabashu.
 Destroyer of the beast with two legs
- 10 because he destroyed Dancer-on-the-Mountain of the Qwabe people,
 he destroyed Frans Mlapo of the Basotho,
 he destroyed Stefan of the Sishi people.

- Fierce Galloper,
 The-Roads are worked over and the grass is cleared from them.
- 15 The day he has died they will get the better of him.
 Oh The Attacking Movement of hooded vipers,
 it is that of mambas and also that of puff-adders.
 He appears and the conspiracies scatter - the white as well as
 the black,
 even though they destroy others.
- 20 The Fabulous Water-snake that cast its eye to the mountains and
 they were covered in cloud,
 it cast its eye towards the mountains and the water poured down.

Two members of a Qwabe lineage, grandfather and grandson

Sogidika Qwabe from Mbongolwane, Eshowe, recited the following two izibongo (and those of his father) in the midst of a small crowd outside the Ntuli chiefdom courthouse on May 25th 1976. As he recited the izibongo of his father and grandfather he was overcome with emotion and fought to control his tears. (I recorded Nos.89, 90, 91 and 112 on the same occasion).

82. uQondo Qwabe

After reciting the izibongo of his father, uNdukuphi, Sogidika continued: "...ozalwa ubani? Uzalwa...[and he begins:]"

- 1 UMGwazi kaGqogqoshe.
 I'nhlamvu ziyacishelwa esiswini.
 Abathi, "Usiswana singakanana nesiGumede na?
 Esehlule izinhlamvu na?"
- 5 UNofulathela simbuke, uMgadlela.

"...and who was he the son of?" He was the son of

1 The Stabber of Gqogqoshe.

The bullets are hidden in his stomach.

They say, "How big is the little stomach of a Gumedede man¹
that it can get the better of bullets?"

5 The-Turn him round and let us look at him, the Striker.

1 "Gumedede" is the most widely used clan praise name, isithakazelo, for members of the Qwabe clan. Sogidika was a fairly elderly man and those present addressed him too by this isithakazelo.

83. uSogidika Qwabe

1 UVundla konkolo, uMdidimbane wenkehli.

UNozihibe uyahilela.

UMkhumbi wasEngilandi.

UGungqugungqu , isilwane sihamba nendlu yaso.

5 UMadoda phumani endlini kaMlaba ...¹

USimayedwa abagwaz' udonga.

USimayedwa abagwaz' indlwana.

UKhehlana lakwaMlaba eleq' indlela lafa!²

1 Fierce-pusher against the concrete, Ah! The Well-built young woman.

Noose that entangles.

Ship from England,

Wallower-from-side-to-side - creature that takes its home with it.

5 The-You Men come out of Mlaba's hut...¹

He Stands alone - they don't stab the wall.

He Stands alone - they don't stab the little hut.

The Young woman of the Mlabas who jumped the path and bit the
²
 dust!

1

I have missed a line here, as it is inaudible. The speaker decribed briefly how those of his age group would - in his youth - compose praises for him during stick-fighting, and then added the three lines that follow.

2

This is a formula which is usually heard as, "IQhude eleq' indlela lafa!" / "Rooster that crossed the road and died!"

Two ancestors of an Mhlongo lineage

Mr Mhlongo, son of the diviner (isangoma) MaShezi, recited three of the Mhlongo lineage izibongo at his homestead in Mbongolwane during the course of a general discussion about the ancestors, praising and diviners. Also present were his wife, the diviner MaNgwane, two other wives and Delisiwe Mthiyane. Besides the usual occasions on which the ancestors would be praised, in this household they were also praised when the apprentice diviners who had trained under MaNgwane were about to return to their homes. Mr Mhlongo's mode of delivery was very staccato with a break between almost every word, giving the effect of a jerky, though regular beat. He suppressed the natural downdrift until the end of the whole izibongo and his method of delivery generated in a very marked way a sense of tension and excitement which (in 84 in particular) mirrored the vivid impression of dramatic action which the izibongo themselves conveyed.

1

84. uNjomane kaMgabhe / Njomane son of Mgabhe

1 UNjomane kaMgabhe eyaduka iminyaka
²
 kwathi ngowesine yabonakala.

- ISithole sikaNgobe
 ebesiyosiswa lapho enyakatho
- 5 lapho inkunzi yakhona izikhwela
 izithole ezincane nezinkulu nezintuthukazana.
 UNohamba bemloyile.
 Wafika kwaQwabe waqwabalandela.
 Wafika kwaZulu wazula phezulu.
- 10 Gqabula Thole zonk' izizwe sezikukakile.
 IThole elehle ngamandla egoqoba.
 UDunge umfula.
 Wadungeka bathi, "Njomane kawusekho."
 Sebebona amanzi ebomvu
- 15 akubomvu wona amanzi
 kubomvu inxeba abakugwaze lona.
 Phakathi kwezitha kwadungeka amanzi
 wawusuwelela ngale.
 UZitho zimbobho zimbobhonono,
- 20 zinjengudadewenu uBhobhonono.
 UNomantiyanta,
 unjengodadewenu
 wayentiyazelephi?
 Wayebhekephi?
- 25 Wayebheke kwaKhuma lo waphuma kanjani?
 Kwakukhona uNozibongo kungenozibongo.
 UNogwaza abantu bengafanele.
 UdI' abamhlophe.
 WadI' amampondo.
- 30 WadI' abelungu.
 Wabonakala ukuthi uwe ngoba wawusuphakathi kwabo.

- 1 Njomane son of Mgabhe who lost his way for years
but in the fourth (year) he was seen.
Heifer of Ngobe
which was loaned out to up there in the north
- 5 where the bull of that part mounted it
(as well as) the little heifers and the large ones and the little
silly ones.
Traveller against whom they laid charms.
He arrived in Qwabe territory and he struck hard.
He arrived in Zulu territory and wandered right up high.
- 10 Break out Calf many foreign powers have hemmed you in.
Calf that came down at full tilt all stiffened up.
He stained the river.
It was stained - they said, "Njomane you are gone",
seeing the red water,
- 15 (yet) the water itself was not red,
the red was from the wound they gave you.
In the midst of your enemies the water was stained,
and then you crossed to the other side.
Sturdy-calves, sturdy indeed,
- 20 they are limbs like those of your sister Sturdy-calves.
Wanderer,
you are like your sister,
where did he wander to?
Where did he head for?
- 25 He headed for the Khumalos (and) how did he get away?
Nozibongo was there but there were no izibongo.
Stabber of people who are not fitting.
He destroys the Whites.

He destroyed the Mpondo.

30 He destroyed the Pale Ones.

It was clear that it was you because you were in the midst of them.

1

I was unable to discover any historical details about Njomane ("Horse"). In some parts his izibongo are similar to praises in Dinuzulu's izibongo. For example the punning on the names of sisters, ls.19-26. These izibongo have more semantic wordplay than most. In addition to the puns on sisters' names, there are the puns on "Qwabe" and "Zulu" in lines 8 and 9 which I have not been able to reproduce in translation. As a whole the izibongo convey a strong sense of a wanderer and an indomitable fighter and they contain the heroic motifs of blood and the crossing of rivers.

2

The first two lines are widely used as the clan praises (izithakazelo) of the Mhlongo.

1

85. uMahlokohloko Mhlongo

1 UMahlokohloko uyofa kusasa.

Izintaka ziyofa ntambama.

Ujojomshololo.

USowanya wakhula belibele,

5 wayenjeng' abakwaMchwazi.

UMkhonto owemuka nomSuthu

bebheka kwelakwaMshweshwe

kwelakwaMphiwa nganhlanye

kanti nganhlanye uyabuyiselana. 2

10 Hawu wemfokazana, ungangiphathi kabi!

Uma ngikhuleka ungiiphathe kahle!

Awungiboni yini ukuthi ngiyinsizwa enje?

UNogadla ukuzisiza.

Ukuma ndawonye mntakaMhlongo,
 15 uyofela ndawonye.
 INcuncu ephuze kwezid' iziziba.
 Yaphuza kwemfushane yagunduk' umlomo.

1 The Yellow Weaverbird will die tomorrow.
 The finches will die this afternoon.
 Long-tailed Finch with a scratch of a wound.
 Quick-grower, he shot up while others took their time,
 5 he was like the Mchwazis.
 Spear which came away with an mSotho
 the time they made for the land of Mshweshwe,
 for the land of Mphiwa on the one side
 but on the other side the spear helps its neighbour.²
 10 Hey you miserable stranger, don't treat me badly!
 If I pay my respects to you, you treat me well!
 Don't you see what kind of a young man I am?
 Threatener to save your own skin.
 By standing on the same spot, son of Mhlongo,
 15 you will also die on the same spot.
 The Honeybird drank from the deep pool.
 Had it drunk from the shallow one it would have broken its beak.

¹ Mahlokohloko was Mr Mhlongo's grandfather. The last praise is also in the izibongo of Solomon kaDinuzulu and may have been a nascent formula.

² I am uncertain about these two lines.

Three izibongo from Mzondeni Buthelezi

Mzondeni Buthelezi of Mbongolwane recited the following izibongo of his grandfather and father and those of the man who had brought him up after his father had died of malaria (in the 1930s). Mzondeni himself was born at Nsongweni on the Thukela but his fathers had come from Ndinda in Mahlabathini. He recited soon after Sogidika Qwabe and was as full of vigour as the former was tremulous.

89. uZizweyibili kaNondinda / Zizweyibili son of Nondinda (Buthelezi)

1 UShishiliza kwelimaholo limshaye limbhedule uMshishiliza
longanja.

UMgoqo ovimbel' i'nkomo zasoDidini.

USihawuhawu webekuyinkondlo ebivunywe abaseMachubeni
yaze yavunywa nabaphezulu.¹

UZizweyibili lowo kaNondinda uBabamkhulu.

1 Bumper down over the rough rock, it bites and scratches him,
Bumper down like a dog.

Gatepost that keeps in the cattle of Didini.

Song of joy which the people of Machubeni sang.

Later it was sung by those in authority.¹

That is Zizweyibili (Two-nations) son of Nondinda, my
Grandfather.

1 Dinuzulu has a similar praise in his izibongo.

90. uMpatheni kaZizweyibili / Mpatheni son of Zizweyibili

1 UHuluhulu wehle kanjani eMbulungweni.
 IThole likaNkondloba elibamba i'ndonga zisale.
 UMdada kungemdada.
 UMaqoph'inja enz'ibheshu.
 UBaba-ke ozala mina.

1 Wild Fellow - how did he get down from Mbulungweni?
 Calf of Nkondloba which could stop walls from falling.
 Rear loin skin that wasn't really a loin skin.
 He cuts a loin skin from a dog's hide.
 That is Father who begat me.

91. uHalakashana Ntuli¹

1 UManxeshana kaSoshangane.
 UHalakashana akavinjelwa,
 uvinjelwa ngamad' amahlahla.
 IMbub' edla igcogcoma kaSoshangane.

5 Washay' inkosana washiy' ikhohlwa.
 UMaqhath' impi azilwele.

1 Little Wound descendant of Soshangane.
 Fierce Runner whom nothing stops,
 he is only stopped by the tall bushes.
 Lion that eats on the move son of Soshangane.

5 He struck his senior son and left aside the junior one.
 He sets the army on to fight and joins himself.

1

Mzondeni recited these izibongo after he had finished those of his own lineage. Having recited them he said, in a slow and serious manner, "I will stop here, and think about him, because he was a man indeed. It was he who taught me that people fight on this earth, it was he, because my father died - of malaria - it was he who taught me to fight". He then repeated his izibongo.

Izibongo from an Mthethwa lineage

The father of the bridegroom of the Mthethwa-Sikhakhane wedding, which took place on 16th May 1976 at Sihuzu, Ngoye, recited for me, the day before the wedding, the izibongo of the Mthethwa lineage. He included izibongo of his brothers and his father but not of his grandfather. The following is a selection of those he recited.

93. uMehlo-engane Mthethwa, (an older brother of the reciter)

1 UZinja ziyamqhuza zimthela kofenisi.

UMathang' amahle afanele okwenziwa.

IBonwa elabonwa zingane zalibalekela.

UMehlo eyingane yasemzini.

5 UThuthuka zibili esenkunzi nesenkomazi.

ISihlangu sibomvu iyingazi yamadoda.

Uye-ke lowo uMehlo-engane.

1 The-Dogs throw him out and hurl him at the fence.

Beautiful Thighs, perfectly formed.

Sight which the children sight and run away from.

(Watchful) Eye over the children of the homestead.

5 The Progress of the two, of the bull and of the cow.
 The Red Shield it is the blood of men.
 That is him, Eyes-of-a-child.

94. Another older brother

1 UVemvane olunamabalabala oluhlala eyihlangeni yamadoda.
 UMabizwa-sabela njengohlanya.

1 Butterfly of many colours which alights on the shields of men.
 The-Call-and-he-answers - like a madman!

96. A brother

1 UHalahala bobebakuloyile.
 USikhumba esidalwa esedlula abashuki.
 UMngqikingqiki ihashi lakwaKopoletsheni.

1 Energetic One they will do their best to work charms against you
 one day!
 Skin from the real thing, better than the imitation ones.
 Great leggy youth (like) the Corporation horse!

98. Another brother, Masofeyisi¹

1 UNondela umzimba awunike abezizwe.
 UMkhongimkhongi.
 Wafa ezibalile ethi, "Zi-onain Mthethwa".
 UTshodo lutshodo,
 5 khona le ngaphesheya kuBashibisi.

1 He offers his body in the ^{fight} against other nations.

The Go-between.

He died , the one who was counting them, as he was saying "There
are nine Mthethwa".

The Bright Chestcloth

over there beyond (the Mlalazi) at Bashibisi.

1 These are one version of the izibongo of Masofeyisi. His own ver-
sion of his izibongo is No.103.

99. The reciter's own izibongo

1 UMathanda eyincane eyasemzini.¹

USinikiniki sangamatwani.

UNoqgiza ngegazi ekhweni lakho , khona le kwaDlamini.

UNombeswa ngeyikhakha.

5 UNgaze ngambona umuntu embeswa ngeyikhakha khona le eMatholanjeni.²

1 Lover of the young girls of the homestead.¹

The Tattered Pleats of the cow's stomach.

Decorator with blood there at your in-laws' home at the Dlamini's.

He who was hidden in a woman's skirt.

5 The-Never before have I seen a person hidden in a woman's skirt
over there at Matholanjeni.²

1 Like many speakers in the Ngoye district, Mr Mthethwa often
substituted "y" for "z".

2

Matholanjeni was the neighbouring ward, and the men of Sihuzu and Matholanjeni were on very bad terms. The reciter hid under a woman's skin skirt during a skirmish and so saved himself.

102. Another brother

1 UPhind' amshaya njengentelezi.

USikspense kaMlungu!

Umlungu 'thengel' abantu bakulingene.

1 He Comes Back and hits again like a protective charm.

The Sixpence of the White man!

The White man hires people and they are all the same.

Section D

Izibongo of men, women and children

Izibongo of men

The following three izibongo were all recorded after the main celebrations at the Mthethwa-Sikhakhane wedding at Sihuzu, Ngoye on 16th May 1976. In each instance the bearers recited their own izibongo.

103. Masofeyisi Mthethwa¹

1 UNike umzimba awunike abezizwe mina.

²
UMshayi weyingane zizokhonga,

wabe washaya insizwa kwathiwa ushaya iziyingayingane.

UMdwaya eyishelelezi

5 elashelela abaseMakhwanyaneni, uKompoza benoTshibongo.
 Lashelela abasekhaya konina eLangeni,
 uMakhala-kuzwebani no...(he hesitates) Mazinyo-engane, umfo
 kaMthethwa.

UMasofeyisi ukhetha oyithandayo.

Mfulathele simbuke utshodo. [slight pause]

10 USihlangu simagqabhagqabha izingazi yamadoda.

UMkhongikhongi,

wafa eyibala ethi, "Z'-onain."

Ngamshaya waze wafa umuntu ebaya.³

[He pauses. Voice: Zisho i'bongo zakho zonke! He replies: Eyil
 Sengikhohliwe, zinde kabi, zingange'kaShaka, ngimi lapha. Then he
 continues:]

Inkomo ekhathaza umelusi wayo.

15 INkosi yensizwa uMaphikelela.

Ziphelile-ke manje.

E.G. Ezakhe ngempela? Many voices: Ehe!

1 He offers his body, he offers it to other nations, that's me.
 Beater of the children acting as marriage go-betweens,
 then when he beat the young men it was said he's beating little
 nincompoops!

The Smooth Slippery Rock,

5 it was slippery for the Mkhwanyanes, Kompoza and Tshibongo.

It was slippery for those of his mother's house, the Mhlongos,
 (for) Makhala-kuzwebani (Cry-and-who-will-hear) and.. [he

hesitates] Mazinyo-engane (Teeth-of-a-child), son of Mthethwa.

Face, he chooses whom he loves.

Turn him round so we can see his (bright) chest cloth. [slight pause]

10 Shield that is spattered, spattered with the blood of men.
The Go-between.

He died as he was counting them, saying, "There're nine!"

I hit the man and he died - out there in the open.

[Voice: "Say all your praises!" He replies: "Hey! But I've forgotten them, they're very long, as long as Shaka's. I'm stopping now". Then he continues:]

Cow that exhausts the herdboys,

15 King of a youth the Perseverer.

They [praises] are finished now.

E.G.: "Are they really his?" Many voices: "Oh yes!"

1

For his brother's version of Masofeyisi's izibongo see No.98.

2

The speaker follows the Ngoye habit of frequently substituting "y" for "z".

3

Here the speaker, in thefula dialect fashion, substitutes "y" for "l" as speakers do frequently in the following izibongo.

104. uNodlalisa Mzimela

1 Yimi uNodlalis' ingane ngokuthand' unina.

UNomuzwezwe mntakaNomzwayiba kazihlabi ziyayibhovula,
ngoba zizwa ukuvunda.

Umfana uyahloma uyahlasela unjengoShaka

5 ngoba uhlasela kwabezizwe uMkhonto 'gwaz' amabuka.

Umfo ka¹Vezi lowo, uNkonka lomancusha, ehe,

umfo kaDonda lapha, umfo kaMnguni, ehe.

Yimi-ke lowo, uMfana uyabizwa, uybizwa,

ubizwa yindoda, ehe.

10 UNTombi kayishingi kushing' abakhwekazi.

UMama uyayenyunda uyisa kwaneksdo,
ngoba wayenyunda wayisa emaKhaledeni.

UMfana ume ngenainti kwaButhelezi.

Ngiyagcina lapha, umfo kaMzimela, uNodlalisa.

1 It is I, Cuddler of the young child through love for its mother.
One with (a cock's) Fighting Spurs, child of Nomzwayiba, (the
cattle) don't gore, they bellow excitedly
because they smell the blood of the wound.

The Boy storms and attacks, he is like Shaka

5 because he attacks in the midst of foreign nations, Spear that
stabs traitors.

1
Son of Vezi, Buck with the sharp horns, yes,
son of Donda here, son of Mnguni, yes.

That is me, the Boy is summoned, he is summoned,
he is summoned by a man, yes.

10 The girl doesn't play him up, it's her female relatives who do.
The woman slanders and causes trouble with her neighbours
because she slanders and causes trouble with the Coloured family.

The Boy stands with a ninety pound sack at the Buthelezis.

I'm stopping there, the son of Mzimela, uNodlalisa.

1

UNodlalisa uses one of the clan praise names of the Mzimela here, "Vezi", (which is also a praise name of Dingana) and follows this with two more, "Donda" and the widely used "Mnguni". This is perhaps a way of playing for time as he prepares and recalls his other praises.

105. uSwidi-nonkamfela Mhlongo¹

Sengiyadedela-ke : Kusho mina

1 USwidi-nonkamfela.

USoka lamanyalala.

USigodo siny' amanzi,

nang' ungungu kaManukelana

5 ngoba wanukel' abezizwe.

USiwiliwili 'beLungu "betok Ingilishi".

Uyinja uMlungu lunyele ebhakedeni!

Kusho mina usigodo somnqawe uMasinya kome.

UNgungu kaManukelana

10 ngoba wanukel' abezizwe.

Mhlakaza-zinhlansi zingamshisi.

Kusho mina -

UNgwinya kushisa kuyaphola ngaphakathi.

UMzimba kawudinwa ukushaywa.

Zimbi izindawo kulukhuni kuyasabeka,

15 amadoda amadala angasekho nasekhona - [he breaks off] -

Sengiyemuka umfo kaMhlongo. [There is a general hubbub and then he goes on:]

Mina uGxamalaza aphum' amatshitsho namajongosi.²

USwidi-nonkamfela uSoka lamanyala.

Yimina uMmbila khahlela sidl' ihlobo.

Yimina uMathunzi entaba.

20 Yimina uSheyi 'mlabalaba uyadlala 'beSuthu.

UHotso ovela ngamehlo eyitezi.

Ngangingehla ngihlangene nembila enhla nezwe langikhona ngangi-

hluphekile kulezo'ndawo. [sounds of sympathy from listeners]

Kwakungekho uMama kungekho uBaba nganginabani?

Ngathi uma sengibuya lapha ngabuya sengihluphekile.

25 ...Ngase ngihamba...[he pauses]

Ngase ngithi izintaba ziyadilika ngoba-ke mina...[he tails off]

Ngase ngific' ummbila usukhona kwelakithi KwaDlangezwa.

Ngase ngiwudla.

Ngase ngibuya ngiphinda ngasho ngathi, "Yimina sengibuyile",

30 uSwidi-nonkamfela.

USoka lamanyala.

1 Sweet-tied-tight-in-the-middle.

The Sought-after Bachelor.

Tree trunk that drips water,

here is the broad-shouldered fellow, the Smeller Out,

5 because he smelt out those of other nations.

The Strange Noise of the Whites "tokking Ingleesh".

He is a "dog", the White man, he defecates in a bucket!

So say I the Stump of the thorn tree - He Drips and dries.

The Broad-shouldered fellow, the Smeller-out

10 because he smelt out those of other nations.

Scatterer of the embers but they do not burn him.

So say I -

The Swallower of something burning but it's cool in his insides.

Body that never tires of blows.

Terrible are the places, it is difficult, it is frightening.

15 As for the older men some are not here and some are here - [he breaks off] I am stopping now, the child of Mhlongo. [There is a general hubbub and then he goes on:]

I am He-who-stands-with-his-legs-wide-apart and out come the

2

young girls and maidens.

Sweet-tied-tight-in-the-middle, The Sought-after bachelor.

It is I Maize-please-blossom so we can eat the ripe fruit.

It is I The Shadows of the hills.

20 It is I Sheyi the (draughts) game the Basotho play.

Hotso - only his eyes were seen on the stairs.

I met a rock-rabbit from up-country. Oh what trouble I had in
those parts. [sounds of sympathy from the female listeners]

I was without Mother and without Father, whom did I have?

And then when I returned home I returned sick at heart.

25 ...Then I went...[he pauses]

Then I thought the mountains were tumbling down because...

It was then that I found maize still to be had in our own place
of KwaDlangezwa and I ate.

Then once more I spoke and I said, "It is I, I have come back",
Sweet-tied-in-the-middle.

30 Bachelor-among-bachelors.

1

Swidi-nonkamfela actually recited his izibongo before the above two and on finishing, urged Masofeyisi to say his. The latter agreed, after a little persuasion and urging on from the listeners, but remarked to his cousin, "Ezakho usunqamulile!" / "You cut yours short!"

2

"Amatshitsho" (instead of the usual "amatshitshi") was a form I often heard in Ngoye and in Hlabisa; the variant is not noted in any dictionary as far as I know. Nevertheless it exists! The line itself was one I often heard in izibongo.

106. uShishiliza Dube

Shishiliza recited his izibongo in the midst of a small, admiring group, during a break in the proceedings at a Zibani-Mhlongo wedding in early January 1976 at Sihuzu, Ngoye. When it was known that I wished

to record izibongo somebody went to fetch Shishiliza, and it was clear from the listeners' responses that his izibongo and his delivery were enjoyed.

1 Ng'uShishiliza kwelimaholo limshaye limbhedule,
limphose phezulu ubuye sekumhlophe kuthe wa!
Amhloph' amahawu amhloph' amagabela,
"Ayife sisik' amahawu!"

5 Ubhucu 'kagezanga kwelenhlangano
ngoba wesaba umlando uwenza.
UHaza kamshipiliza ayidl' umuntu idl' amathopisi.
Simba 'mgodi yonk' indawo, abomvu amagede.
UDumo lwamasosha ebhek' Engilandi.

10 Umkhovu lesifetshana.
Hawu mkhwekazi wami wazewashisa kangaka?
Uzokhwela umkhuhlane yini?
Makoti ulima lapha uzawuthola yini?
UMjahaza-khathale, iMfene yasoNgoye.

1 I am The Slitherer over the rough rocks it cut and grazed him.
It tossed him up and when he came down he was (scraped) dead white!
White are the shields, white the shield laces,
"Let (that bull) die we want his hide for our shields!"

5 He flicks off (the water) before he's washed at the river
because he's afraid of the consequences of his past deeds.
Hot-tempered Swiper (yet) he doesn't eat a person he eats the
tops of the sugar cane.
We dig holes all over the place and the empty spaces are red.
The Fame of the soldiers who head for England.

10 Goblin of a little prostitute.

Ha! my mother-in-law, what has made you so hot-tempered?

Do you want to catch a fever?

Bride you are ploughing here, what do you expect to get?

Hurrying-one-who-tires-himself-out Baboon of Ngoye (forest).

108. Obed uMuntu-ongafiyo Mzimela

Obed Mnguni (he was always addressed and referred to by the Mzimela isithakazelo) owned a store at Matholanjeni, Ngoye and was the son of Mvuzimvuzi Mzimela who had been acting-chief in the Mkhwanazi chiefdom for a number of years in the 1960s. There appears to have been much bad feeling between the Mkhwanazi supporters and those who supported Obed Mnguni's father and this may account for the strong persecution theme in these izibongo. The sense of restless travelling which the izibongo convey points both to a general theme in izibongo (of leaders in particular) and also to the circumstances of his own life. As a schoolboy and youth Mr Mnguni spent a number of years amongst the Xhosa as it was felt unsafe for him to be at home in Ngoye. As to the composition of the praises, Mr Mnguni said that very few of the following lines were composed by him, most were composed by others. These izibongo were recorded in two parts: I recorded the first 12 lines while we were at the homestead of Chief Lindelihle (to whom he was related), before the wedding celebrations began on 21 December 1975. They were written out and then spoken into the microphone. The remaining lines were also written out and then spoken by Obed Mnguni when I visited him two weeks after the wedding. It is worth noting that Mr Mnguni uses the impersonal third person all through the izibongo (until the last three lines when the vocative is used). This increases the impression of the praises as a record and a collective

comment by others. Indeed, the impression is of someone other than the bearer reciting the praises, because of lines such as "He whom I speak of" (1.4) and, "If I mention his name..." (1.9)

- 1 INyakanyaka eyanyakazisa abafazi namadoda.
 ISikhukhula somoya okwabe kwathathe enyakatho sishone eningizimu.
 Kwabe kwathathe iningizimu sishone enyakatho.
 Engikhulume nje,
- 5 UBhova owehlule amadoda.
 UHlanya olusemehlweni amadoda.
 Abanye bathi, "Ningamthinti unemithi".
 UBhovungana ngiyesaba ukumemeza ngoba ngizofa ngisemncane.
 Uma ngiliphatha igama lakhe ngizoshaywa yizulu,¹
- 10 liphathwa izazi esezazigoma.
 UPhunyuka bemphethe ingani kwehluleka amadoda.
 Bemzingela ngezibamu nangezinhlamvu kwangabindaba zalutho.
 INyakanyaka 'Sitimela samaMpondo.
 Gugu lamagugu elituswa abafazi namadoda.²
- 15 Mabuthela obuthela izinsizwa nezintombi.
 'Mgodi kawugcwali ngoba ubuthela zonke izinhlobo.
 Abadala bayamfuna abancane bayamdinga.
 Ndumandumane ekhalelwa zinhlanga zonke.
 Ndumandumane ofunwa emaMpondweni kanti ucashe kwaZulu.³
- 20 Ngodlomane Ngqongqoza 'Sitimela sakwaZulu.
 UMdidiyeli wezinto zonke ngoba abashay' uhabhu bamdingile.
 UMhambi womhlaba ubewafika emaMpondweni kwakulungela.
 WayakwaXhosa kwalungela.
 Wafika kwelakini kwaZulu kwalungela.
- 25 Kukhulume uZulu wonkana wakufuna.

4

Iziqu zakho kuze kube namuhla ziyafuneka.

- 1 The Commotion that shook women and men.
The Whirlwind that began in the north and disappeared southwards.
Then it started in the south and disappeared northwards.
He of whom I speak
- 5 is The Large Dog that overcame the men.
The Madman in front of men's eyes.
Some said, "Don't touch him, he has (powerful) medicines".
Bhovungana - I am afraid to call his name because I will die
young.
- If I mention his name I will be struck by lightning,¹
- 10 it is only mentioned by the strong ones who have taken powerful
medicines.
Escaper as they grab him - the men were defeated,
they were hunting him with guns and bullets but it was of no avail.
Train of Crowded Commotion, the Mpondo train.
- Treasure of treasures recommended by women and men.²
- 15 Collector who collects together young men and girls.
Hole that is never filled because you bring together all the
clans.
The old want him, the young need him.
Famous One cried out for by all the clans.
Famous One who was wanted by the Mpondos but he hid in Zululand.
- 20 Fearless One Knocker in the dark, the Zulu train.³
Generous Giver of all things because those who play the mouth harp
need you.
Traveller of the Earth he arrived in Mpondoland and it was good.

He went to Xhosa territory and it was good.

He came to your own Zulu territory and it was good.

25 Zulus from all over spoke about you and needed you.

Your degrees are in demand to this very day.

1

An interesting example of the clear expression of the power associated with an individual's name. In this case the power seems to be associated with the praise name "Bhovungana" as well as with his "great name", Muntu-ongafiyo.

2

These and the following two lines were also the izibongo of his father, Mvuzimvuzi. A son may take over parts of the praises of his father if he has similar qualities to those which the izibongo describe. This was Mr Mnguni's explanation of how the lines came to be in his izibongo.

3

The Zulu train (i.e. the one coming up from Durban) is known as "Knocker" because travellers on it arrive at Mthunzini at three a.m. and have to knock people up when they reach home. The name is applied in this case because the bearer was not afraid of "knocking people up" to get things done; he had energy and determination.

4

Before becoming a store-keeper Mr Mnguni had taught at Khandisa school in KwaDlangezwa and also at Bhekuzulu College, Nongoma. His education meant that he was respected and that people came to him for help and advice.

109. Mr Zibani

These were recited by the bearer at a Lutheran wedding at Manzamnyama, Ngoye, in July 1976. There was no "ukugiya" after the church service. Mr Zibani was with a small group of youths who had come along obviously in the hope that they could join a group and giya. Accompanying him was the son of Mcasule Dube (see No.129). The bearer, whom I had not met before, was holding a stick, had a scarf around his head, was short and very jolly. He recited very fast but with clear pauses.

devices. They suggest, too, that there may sometimes be what could be called "a district style" among izibongo from the same area: like No.84 (recited by Mr Mhlongo who lived a few miles from the court house), they have an elaborate pun on a sisters' name; 1.5 is also very like 1s.12-14 of No.85. His delivery was fast and without the staccato breaks favoured by Mr Mhlongo.

- 1 UZalukazana nihline nje kufe esinye yini?
 UNxovanxovana mabhungana niyashawo¹tha ngokudl' onyoko.
 Induku ziyamdada ngoba zada' udadewabo uThekile,
 uMagadl' athek' njengodadewabo uThekile.
- 5 UGadla ukuyisiza mntakaSompisi, ukubaleka ukuyithel' ichilo!
 UMBabala zihogela ngoba zihoge khona ezansi komuzi ekhaya konina
 kwaNtanzi.
 UNomamoklomoklo uSikhwili siyamokloza.
 Ngiyema lapha.
- 1 Little old ladies why are you grinning? Has one of your number died?
 You're getting things mixed-up young fellows you're bragging that
 you've had sex with your mothers!
 The sticks give him a hard time because they give his sister
 Thekile a hard time,
 Attacker and its understood like his sister, It-is-Understood
 [i.e."Thekile"].
- 5 The Attacker to help yourself, child of Sompisi, to run away
 would cover you in disgrace.
 The Bush-bucks sniff the wind because they're sniffing the wind
 below the homestead of his mother's people, the Ntanzis.

The Cracking-and-the-Snapping The Fighting Stick cracks it open.

1

An ancestor of the Ntuli clan, father of the famous general Ndlela who was active in the reigns of Shaka and Dingane. See Cope, Izibongo, pp.186-7.

111. Somandla Hlabisa

These izibongo were recited by the bearer, who was the son of MaZulu ("UKhasi lomdloti" / "The Bitter Tobacco leaf") from Madondo, Hlabisa. He recited his izibongo for me on a number of occasions always at a tremendous speed; he frequently changed the order of praises, added new pieces and was obviously very pleased with his praises. This is his first version. The line divisions are based on my judgement rather than on Somandla's breathless delivery!

1 Hobhu Hanewu!

Kanti lenkomo iyahlaba nakwezinye ziyahlaba.

Mabhende swayi,¹

angihambi ngendlela ngihamba ngehlanhlatho.

5 Ho lolo Mama mfazi we'Kholwa!

Ngimnene ngiyingwenya,

angidl' umuntu ngidl' udaka.

Ngiyisigobongo sabagitsheIwayo.

UNogas' omnyama onjeng' owasoVukeni.

10 Ng'uBantu baningi badl' iphalishi phansi kondenda.

Ng'uPhilikici Phalakaca.

Uname owangishaya ngesampanza.

Ng'uHomela kahome,

ngoba nakwendala nakwencane ngiyahomela.

15 Ho lolo Mama mfazi we'Kholwa.

- 1 Whoa! Hup!
 Yet that beast gores and the others gore as well.
 The bends are full of turns,¹
 I don't go on the main road I go by the side path.
- 5 Ha! Mama, woman who is a Believer!
 I am gentle, I am a crocodile,
 I don't eat a person, I eat mud.
 I am the gourd on which people ride.
 The Black One who Moves Menacingly Forward like (the royal) one
 of Vukeni.
- 10 I am The-Many people, they eat porridge beneath the "ndenda"
 bush.
 I am The Slippery Sloser.
 The mother who hit me with her belt.
 I am The Insatiable of insatiables
 because whether they're old or young I am insatiable.
- 15 Ha! Mama, woman who is a believer.

1
 This is the meaning I understood "-swayi" to have when I questioned Somandla immediately after he recited the izibongo. It may be coined from the Afrikaans "swaai", "swing round".

112. Elias Mjadu

For details of the recording of Elias' izibongo see the introduction to No.62.

- 1 UMcophela 'ndwendwe zabanye,
 'kazi-ke 'zoyishaya manini?
 UPushela kwelakwaMdlebe.
 UMhlez' ebukwa njengelanga.

- 5 UMqomisa intombi yangena enye eshel' enye.
 UNTombi eqonyelwa ngonina kwaDlangezwa,
 UNTombi eyashaya 'mkhwekazi.
 Wona ngokushay' (?) inkosikazi kwaDlwanembila.
 USibambana-nkuzana abayesaba abakwaNtenga.
- 10 Indoda iyakhala khona esangweni komkhulu.
 UPhunyuka bemphethe abafazi namadoda.
 Amadoda ahayizana nasekhaya nangasenhle.
 UNhlamvu azimshayanga ngoba zashaya abasekhaya konina kwaNtuli.
 Ngoni ngendoda emnyama kwabaseNyakatho
- 15 ngoba ngona ngenkuxa.
 UMudli wentombi ejinge engayenele ayinike umnewabo.
 Umnewabo eyinike abakwaMpukunyoni abasindwa zinene.
- 1 Dazzler at others' weddings
 but when will he attend his own?
 The Newcomer there at Mdlebe.
 The Constantly Gazed at One, like the sun.
- 5 Proposer to a girl - another came along and he courted her.
 The-Girl is proposed for by her mother at KwaDlangezwa.
 The-Girl who hit her mother-in-law.
 You did wrong to hit the married woman at Dlwanembila.
 Little Wrestler with the little bull which frightens off the
 Ntengas.
- 10 The man is making his complaint at the gateway of the Chief's
 place.
 Escaper as they grab him, the women and men.
 Men fight among themselves both at home and up-country.
 The-Bullets didn't hit him because they hit those of his mother's
 place at the Ntulis.

I am sinning like a black man from the North,
 15 because I am sinning like a man with a pot-belly.

"Eater" of the girl that pestered and was never satisfied, whom
 he passed on to his brother.

His brother passed her on to the Mpukunyoni ¹ fellows with the
 weighty private parts.

1

I.e. Someone from Mthubathuba, some one hundred kilometres north near
 the coast.

112a. The izibongo of a young man with the clan name of Mjadu

Elias recited these (and Nos.113 and 114) after he had recited his own
 praises.

1 UNomasikisiki, iNyoni esindwa sisila.
 UMagula uvunguza nalendoda nalenkomazi.
 UBhebha ongaphansi kumithe ongaphezulu.
 OKing lozimendlela!

5 OQomis' intombi ey' esokeni layo.
 UFish lofak' izicathulo.
 UMadel' intombi edl' iKhaladi
 ngoba iKhaladi elifana noMlungu.

1 Cutter-up, Bird weighed down by its tail.

The (full) Gourd makes a slapping sound whether it's a man's or a
 cow's.

He mounts in the lower region, there's expansion in the upper
 region.

The King, the medal man!

5 The One who courts a girl as she's on her way to her chosen one.

Mr Fish, the one that wears shoes.

Happy is the girl who has sex with the Coloured man

because the Coloured man looks like a White man.

114. The izibongo of a young man in the same age-grade as Elias, with
the clan name Zulu

1 UMquphane oyishaya etsheni.

Abantu bakhulu ngaphambili.

Hanyanamahanya intombi enegqajo,

intombi eyikholwa eyinegqajo.

5 UNxaphanxapha uthuvi lamakholwa agcwele izwe lonke.

UMquphane oyishay' etsheni.

UBantu bakhulu ngaphambili.

UMam' omkhulukazi omnyama owayipheth' amaloya

e'ntabeni (?) zikaMabondo.

10 UMthunzi othamel' amaledi.

Nombhobho lwendlovu,

ilebe alibonwa libonwa abaqaphelisa.

INkosi ekhaya uyinja ekuhambeni.

1 Little Bird that hits itself on a stone.

People are large in front (as well as behind).

Hard-mouthed nagger, the girl full of scorn.

The girl who is a believer is one full of scorn.

5 Filthy Stains - the excrement of the Believers who are filling up
the whole country.

Little Knuckle that hits itself on a stone.

People are large in front (as well as behind).

The Very Large Black Woman who carried powerful medicines
in the mountains of Mabondo.

10 Shade for the ladies to bask in.

Trunk of an elephant.

The "lip" (below) is not seen by anyone but only by the sharp of
eye.

A King at home, he is a dog on his travels.

115. Nyonyovu Mdletshe

Nyonyovu (or Nzolobela) Mdletshe, who was about sixty-five years of age in 1976, recited over forty izibongo of brothers, members of his age-grade, and others who were known to him. He lived near the Dindi homestead with his wife and two grandchildren whose parents worked on a nearby sugar farm in the White farming area. The izibongo he recited, over two recording sessions, are in a way the personal poetic records of a generation of young men who moved to and fro between the reserve and the city in the 1930s and 1940s. He had worked for a number of years as a domestic servant in Durban (he received a State pension) and many of his contemporaries had worked there. Most seemed to live at The Point, in Durban and many worked on the railway; they would work for six months and then return to Ngoye, then return again, and so on. A characteristic of a number of the izibongo he recited was their high incidence of alliteration and assonance, and this may have been a feature of his own style which he reproduced when re-creating the izibongo of those whom he knew.

- 1 UNyonyovu zoThiyane.¹
 Umncele zinsika makoti!
 UMabathubathu labaneka.
 UKhambikhamel' amashingana.
- 5 UHlangu simagqabha simagqabha 'zingazi zamadoda.
 USiziba simnyama sinzonzo sinzonzobele.²
 UMsiminzisa umuntu ethi uyageza waze wangena nesicoco.
 Nzolobela leyo...uNyonyovu zoThiyane.
 Umncele zinsika makoti! Yimi lowo.

- 1 The Streamlined ones of (Cetshwayo's) Thiyane regiment.¹
 The boundary is the house posts young bride!
 The Dappling of clouds as lightning flickers.
 Forceful whacker of the wild young fellows.
- 5 Shield that is spattered, spattered with the blood of men.
 The Pool is black, it is deep, very deep.²
 He drowned a man who went to bathe but entered (the water) even
 to his headring.
 That is Nzolobela...The Streamlined ones of Thiyane.
 The boundary is the house posts, young bride!...That's me.

1 The Thiyane Regiment was one of Cetshwayo's regiments of girls (Doke and Vilakazi, Dictionary, p.797). Nyonyovu Mdletshe said that "Thiyane" was a reference to his mother; perhaps she had taken the name from her own mother.

2 This and the following line are among the best known of Dingane's izibongo but Nyonyovu had no knowledge of Dingane's izibongo. They must therefore have circulated quite widely and become formulas.

119. Mashekelela Dindi (i)

These izibongo were recorded during a celebration at the homestead of Alec Dindi, at Qwayinduku, Ngoye, on February 6th 1976. It was arranged by Mr Dindi mainly to allow me to see and record izibongo and ukugiya in a smaller and more controlled situation than would normally be possible. I have tried to give an idea of the interaction of "ukugiya" performer and participatory group in the Zulu transcription of the izibongo and izigiyo as called out by Mashekelela and by the other men. In the English translation I have set out only the izibongo, the "self-explanation" and izigiyo. There were about twenty-five men present in the yard, including Alec Dindi the head of the household, and two younger brothers of Mashekelela. About ten women were also present, including MaMbutu, Alec and Mashekelela's mother, his wife, MaLinda, other female relatives and a few neighbours.

Mashekelela Dindi strides into the centre of the yard, holding aloft his small dancing shield and a stick. He breaks into one of his favourite izigiyo, the royal anthem, "Uyamqal' okaNdaba" to which the men give the responses. The anthem continues and voices call out snatches of praises:

¹
Dube: Bhozomil' ibhakede!
Sobesimnyama isilwane amnyama amathunzi ezintaba. (Black will the wild animal be, black are the shadows of the hills.)
Voice: Bhozomil' ibhakede!
Nxumalo: Shekelela Mashekelela!
Voice: Bhokloz' amavoklo!²
M.D. [in a fierce loud voice]
Thula wethu! Ngizishololo mina. Ngizozishololo.

Bakhuza bathi, "Nkalankala mus' ukuwadung' amanzi kuzonakala".

20 INkalankala yadung' amanzi yawelela ngaphesheya.

[M.D. breaks into the anthem again.]

Nxumalo: Shekelela Mashekelela!

[M.D. then breaks into his "self-explanation", as is often done during "ukugiya": Ngikhona lapha kwaQwayinduku; induna yami ikhona lapha nguShwabana-kalulimi Manqele, uQunga-isibindi elikhulu igama, into ngiyesaba ukumbiza. Inkosi yami uLindelihle, igama lami nginguMashekelela eyibongweni, eyinsizweni, njengoba kade ngizisholo mina. Mina ngazalwa indoda...(He then gives the praises of his father and an uncle. Next, after a short return to the same anthem he moves into two chanted izigiyo:)]

M.D. Thula! Thula!

Voice: UBhokloz' amabhoklo.

M.D. (1) Ngimfuneyini na?

All: Mfuneyini!

Voice: UBhokloz' amabhoklo. Mnyama isilwane, mnyama i'mpisholo.

UNomathiyela!

M.D. (2) Ngigwaz' into enkulu?

Ngigwaz' isidlo.

All: Ugwazile!

Ugwaz' int' enkulu.

Ugwaz' isidlo.

Ugwazile.

Dube: Shekelela Mashekelela!

English Translation of Izibongo

M.D. [in a fierce loud voice] Silence [brother] of ours! I am speaking for myself! I will speak for myself!

- 1 So say I Sudden-Springer at the bucket (The Ox)³
 Crocodile that goes down the river bank.
 So say I Wiggler of the mouthorgan⁴
 You are hard up for money where do you work?
- 5 I work at the chief's place.
 So say I Stirrup, the water at Gugushe stream.⁵
 The Tail, Masongayiyana.
 So says The (mischievous little) Dwarf at Gusha's.
- 9 So say I The Pack of Ten Goblins from Empangeni.
 10 The Smasher of smashables.
 The Big Talker.
 Mouth seen by the children and they ran away from it.
 Girls give him a kiss even on the day he no longer desires one.
 Tearer of petticoats - those with needles are left to repair
 them.
- 15 So say I Chief whom they installed in the morning, in the
 afternoon they rejected him.
 He was rejected by his sister, Ntozokudla.
 They sent (people), saying, "Go and find the chief there at
 his home. And will you find him?
 Ntozokudla said, "There's no chief here".
 The Crab disturbed the water.
 They admonished him, saying, "Crab don't cross the water,
 the thing will go wrong".
- 20 The Crab disturbed the water and crossed over to the other
 side.

His "self-explanation"

I am here in Qwayinduku; my headman here is The-Shrivelled-up-thing-does-not-plough Manqele, his great name is The Encourager, indeed I fear to call him by it. My chief is Lindelihle; my name is Mashekelela in izibongo, amongst the young men. (My praises are) what I have just expressed. I am the son of a (fine) man...

His izigiyo

1) The royal anthem, "He provokes the son of (royal) Ndaba".

2) M.D. Shall I desire her?

All: Desire her!

3) M.D. I have stabbed something big!

I have stabbed a meal!

All: You have stabbed!

You have stabbed something big!

You have stabbed a meal!

You have stabbed!

1

I have put names in the cases where the caller, or the person commenting, could be identified.

2

Some callers said "amavoklo" and others "amabhoklo". Both seem to be coined from the ideophones "voklo" and "bhoklo" which mean "of breaking with a crash" and "of smashing or bashing in" (Doke and Vilakazi, Dictionary). My translation is tentative.

3

I was told that this was a name for an ox.

4

I was told that "ibhelebane" was a mouth organ but it is not in Doke and Vilakazi's Dictionary; David Rycroft has noted in the ms of his "SiSwati English Dictionary" the word "-bhelebane", as "a large form of harmonica (mouth organ) with the trade name "Brass Band Harmonica". Possibly the word is a fairly recent coining in both siSwati and Zulu.

5

The meaning of this praise is not clear to me; "Gugushe" is the name of a stream near the Dindis. I think the stream is referred to in the first instance, and in the second I think "Gusha" is the Zulu version of the name of a white farmer. It is likely that Mashekelela once worked for him, or at least knew people who did.

120. Mashekelela Dindi (ii)

This version of the bearer's izibongo were recited as I was making my way to a puberty celebration at Manzamnyama, one of the wards adjoining Qwayinduku. Mashekelela recited them to me quietly, with no audience except myself. He stopped halfway through to listen to the recording and then continued with his remaining praises. While some praises are substantially the same as in his earlier performance, some are here for the first time and there are other small changes.

- 1 UBhazomil' ibhakede.
 INgwenya ehlel' emsingeni.
 NguBhidla 'bhelebane.
 NguTokoloshe owakwaGusha.
- 5 NguShumi lem'khovu Empangeni.
 Ngon¹ ngembabala ewundeni (?).
 ayidl' amabons' eNtabayezulu.
 NguKaka lemfene eyondile (?).
 UChaz' amanzi ngepayipi,
- 10 kodwa kubhaliwe ezulweni.
 NguGad' nguFokisi.
 NguGamtili umuthi wabeLungu.
- 13 UMnam'nam' woza sohlangana (?). [Pause while I play the above back
 to him, then he continues:] Ezami lezo-ke engibongwa zinsizwa.
- 14 UBhamuz' ngamlomo.
- 15 Umlomo owabonwa zingane ziyawubalekela.
 UMdabula zidwedwe bosala beyithunga abapheth' inayiti.
 UNTombi zimcel' ukhis' namhla engasafuni.
 UNkalankala 'dung' amanzi.
 Bayikhuz' 'nkalankala, bathi, "Mus' ukuwel' Nkalankala,

20 ungewelela ngaphesheya ngoba uzodung' amanzi".

INKalankala yawelela ngaphesheya.

UNkosi bayibek' ekuseni bayiphik' ntambama.

1 Sudden-Springer at the bucket.

Crocodile that goes down the river bank.

I am Wiggler of the mouthorgan.

I am The (mischievous little) Dwarf from Gusha's place.

5 I am The Pack of Ten Goblins from Empangeni.

I am trespassing like a bushbuck at the short-cropped place (?),¹

it does not eat beans at Ntabayezulu.

I am the excreta of a skinny baboon.

The Dripping water from the pipe,

10 but that is written in the heavens.

I am a Guard, I am a Detective.

I am the Gum tree, tree of the White people.

13 The Sticky stuff come let us join together (?).

Those are mine that I am praised with by the young men.

14 The Big Talker.

15 Mouth seen by the children and they run away from it.

Tearer of petticoats - those with needles are left to repair them.

The-Girls beg him for a kiss on the day he no longer desires one.

The Crab disturbed the water.

They waved back the crab, saying, "Crab don't cross,

20 don't cross to the other side because you will muddy the water".

The Crab crossed to the other side.

The Chief whom they installed in the morning and rejected in the
afternoon.

1

Possibly a coined locative from the ideophone "wundu",- "of grazing, cropping grass" (Doke and Vilakazi, Dictionary, p.857).

Izibongo of women124. MaMhlalise Mkhwanazi, (MaMbambo)

These izibongo were recorded during a visit to Mamhlalise at Mtshiva, Ngoye on January 22nd 1976. She was a widow of the late Chief Nikiza Mkhwanazi and had, after his death, become the wife of one of his brothers, Japane Mkhwanazi. She and all her three sons (who, with their wives and children lived in the same homestead) were members of Shembe's Church of Nazareth; and the song she sang as an adjunct to her izibongo was, I am fairly sure, a Nazarite hymn. MaMhlalise was a very strong, energetic and dominating individual and these aspects of her personality are clearly expressed in her izibongo which are a compound of those composed before and after her marriage. Mamhlalise spoke in the "thefula" dialect, see, for example ls. 5, 9 and 12.

- 1 U¹Xam-phaph-alele (?) kwadadewabo uNomchitheka.
 Ng'²uMbambo zangiminya
 ngangiyoba intombi enkuyu.
 UMajub' avuk' adl' uthayela.
 5 UN³duyana eziyuhlazana
 bayoke bezeq' omaqalashu.
 UGagane lokubathiya
 om'sunu yawonina! [a burst of laughter from the listening women]
 Ng'⁴uXhafaza bath' unyiye,
 10 ingani akunye yena kunya uzakwabo.
 US⁵ishayi sabamsisa oKwamabhodwe,
 ngusiShayi sabavaya ngeyinkethe. [she pauses here as if recalling
 other praises and continues:]

NgiNkuz' enjani
ezeka ngaphandle
ekhaya beyilele.

15 ekhaya beyilele.

Awu! Uthini Khandempemvu!⁶

1 The Monitor lizard wild even when asleep at her sister's, Nomchitheka.¹

I am Ribs pressed me in²

I was going to be a well-built girl.

The-Doves wake up and eat (on) the roof.

5 The High Greenish Grass³

one day the clever ones will jump it.

The Mimosa Bush with thorns for keeping out

those (wretched) vaginas of their mothers!

I am Squish on something and they say, "She's defecated!"⁴

10 But she hasn't defecated, a co-wife's defecated!

The Beater of those who stand, legs apart, the Hangers-around-the-cooking-pots.

I am The Beater of those who close their huts with (pieces of)
corrugated iron.⁵ [she pauses here as if recalling other praises

and continues:]

I am the sort of Bull

that mounts outside

at home it goes to sleep.

Hah! What do you say (to that) you (old) Khandempemvu fellow!⁶

1 I am unsure about the meaning of this praise name, although I questioned MaMhlalise about it on a number of occasions.

2 As her own clan name is "Mbambo" she is neatly bringing her clan name into her izibongo and making use of a popular formula.

3

The use of the rhyming "-ana" seems to be mainly to give a pleasant auditory balance to the praise.

4

MaMhlalise said that this and the next three lines were added after her marriage.

5

I.e. her lazy co-wives who stood talking and perhaps eating around the cooking pots instead of getting on with their chores. The second line chastises lazy wives who put corrugated iron at the entrance to their huts instead of taking the trouble to make or acquire the traditional woven grass hanging mats.

6

Possibly a mocking reference to an older man; by calling him "Khandempvu" (i.e. a member of one of Mpande's regiments) she makes him seem impossibly ancient, as he would have been born c.1847. In discussing her izibongo we never touched on the allusion behind this praise.

129. Mcasule Dube, (MaMhlongo)

These were recorded at the Dube homestead, Sihuzu, Ngoye, on March 25th 1976 with only myself present, a friend of Mcasule's and her eldest son. Men of the Dube umndeni and close family friends were seated outside in the yard eating and talking; a beast had been killed and offered to the lineage ancestors the day before.

1

1 Ng'uSidlukuya-dlwedlwe besihlukuza abafazi namadoda.

Bathi bamphe ngaphansi bamphe ngaphezulu.

2

Dlula bedlana o'nto zawonina.

3

Abayosala emhlabeni bayosala edla amakhanda e'nyoni.

5 Wombuza uthanathanakanyoko

ngoba ngiyesab' amazondo.

Ngeke ngidlul' esangweni kini.

Nawe wena nsizwa

obuthi uyakhuluma ukhuluma nami;

10 akukhonto angasuyenze phambi kwami.

[Ngisaqhubeka:]

Kusho mina nguSidlukuyadlwedlwe

insizwa yendawo yasesigodini

kulesisigodi sakhona laph' eduzane,

kangilali emgwaqweni ngilala ngapha kwendlela. [A short interval during which Mcasule talks about when women's izibongo are used and then continues:]

15 Kusho mina NgiwumaKati adla imifino,

UNkuku zishaya ihlombe khona emzini

lapha ngiqome khona.

Ngaguqa, ngathandaza³

ngathi, "Suka mfana ngiyakuthanda,

20 ngeke luphele olwami uthando nami nawe".

1 I am The Wild Staff-Shaker shaken¹ by women and men.

They say, "They've given it to her down below they've given it to
her up above.

She passes as they're having sex

those (miserable) private parts of their mothers.²

5 Those who remain on the earth will live long and be wealthy.³

You go and ask that (wretched) little private parts of her mother
because I myself am afraid of the ill-feeling.

And as for you, young man

if you're talking to me to make us intimate;

there's nothing you can do to me.

[I'm going to continue:]

15 So say I, I am the Cats eating the green vegetables,

The Chickens flap their wings (in applause) there at the homestead

4

where I made my proposal.

I knelt down I begged (him),

I said, "Truly boy, I love you,

20 may the love between you and me never end".

1

Mcasule's opening praise name is also found in Shaka's izibongo although she gives the second part an emphasis typical of women's izibongo, with the verb "-hlukuza" suggesting a figurative "shaking" and abusing.

2

A term of grievous insult which occurs quite often in women's izibongo.

3

Literally, "Those who remain on the earth will remain eating the heads of birds".

4

According to Zulu custom the girl proposes to the youth who may in the usual way accept or reject her proposal.

131. Zondo Mthethwa

I saw Zondo Mthethwa at three weddings which I attended in Ngoye in January and February 1976. I recorded her izibongo at the second wedding where the ceremony was conducted by a Zionist priest and attendants and which she was attending as an onlooker. She told me that she was betrothed, i.e. she had proposed and her proposal had been accepted. She spoke her izibongo at great speed but with clear pauses; a small group of young girls of about her age were with her and encouraged her.

1

1 Mafunda-fobele uMthamo unenyembezi [She pauses and repeats the line and continues:]

2

UBhasi Blankie phum' egalaji sikubone,
sijahe ukugibela siye kwaNongoma.

Yebiya 'zintombi ziyaqoma ziyafika kusal' ukutshelwa onina.

5 Nansi iNqomanqomane yezintombi.

Ntombi qom' ubhuti nami ngizoqom' owakho.

Mfula angiphuz' ozakho ngiphuz' i'nduku 'zomile.³

1 Gulper-down without chewing Cheek with tears on it.¹

Whitey Bus come out of the garage so we can see you.²

We're in a hurry to ride and go to Nongoma.

Oh yes the girls are proposing, they're coming - they don't heed
their mothers' advice.

5 Here is the Famous Proposer among girls.

Girl, you propose to my brother, and I'll propose to yours.

River I don' drink what is yours I drink the dry sticks.³

1

This was a popular praise in Ngoye, particularly in children's izibongo. It suggests a quick eater, gobbling food so that the eyes begin to water.

2

I am unsure about my translation of this line; "Blankie" is possibly from the sign in Afrikaans "Blankes" ("Whites") which is in evidence in towns. Perhaps she means "Whitey Boss"!

3

This is perhaps an oblique statement of loss?

Izibongo of children

The izibongo of two boys in their early teens. Both these were recited to me by Norbert Mbonambi from Qwayinduku, Ngoye, who worked as my assistant in his school vacations. He had started his schooling late and when I met him was about to enter secondary school and was aged fourteen. Both the boys whose izibongo follow were neighbours and friends of Norbert's.

133. Bheki Dladla¹

1 Bhabhalazi bha!²
 Waze wazibeka umuntu obala.
 UNtaba kayikhonjwa ikhonjwa ngamasalamuzi.
 USinqamu sengane umntakaNomatishela.

1 Faller flat on the ground.²
 And then he placed himself - the person out in the open.
 The-Hill is not pointed at, it is pointed at only by those with
 magic powers.
 The Short child son of The Teacher.³

1 Bheki was a few years older than Norbert and had left school after Standard Five (i.e. the last year of primary), having failed.

2 This is obviously used for its striking alliteration and assonance but is difficult to translate; my translation is tentative. According to Doke and Vilakazi, Dictionary, p.16, "ibhabhalazi" is "a hangover". Norbert said Bheki was a very good dancer, and the second line suggests his holding all eyes as he dances.

3 His father was a teacher.

134. Bongani Gumede¹

1 Klwii! Sasuka esikagesi isitimela.
 Kwathula umoya kwashisa phansi.
 Ngaqandulwa uvalo.
 Kwehla izinyembezi mntakaMvelase.
 1 A tearing screech! The steam train was gone.
 The air was still, it was hot under foot.
 I was overcome with grief.
 The tears flowed, child of Mvelase.²

1 These izibongo seem to be concerned with a single, painful parting and the tone of intense sorrow contrasts markedly with the exuberance of No. 133.

2 "Mvelase" is the most widely used clan praise name (isithakazelo) for those with the clan name (isibongo) Mthembu.

136. Z.M.E. Buthelezi

The following were written out and given to me by MaZondo, of Ntshidi, Ngoye, mother of the young boy concerned, who was in fact only about eighteen months old. She had composed them for him and used them in the normal way. She called them "izibongo" not "izangelo". Apart from the first two lines, they are humorous and suggest how enormously popular with the opposite sex her son will be when he grows up! As with other izibongo composed by women they include they include a miniature dramatic scene and different personae.

1 UMgudugudu ngowani,

int' embi sengiyithathile.

I'ntombi zimcela uthando noma engayithandi.

I'ntombi zikaZungu zimlinda elawini.

5 Intombi yathi ilele nesoka yayiphupha mina.

Yathi, "Ngimbonile uButhelezi usefikile!"

Kanti ima ezofika.

Intombi yaphuma elawini,

yashiya isoka yeza kimi.

1 The Grope-groping one's way at one in the morning.

I have taken something bad.

The girls beg him for love even when he doesn't want them.

The Zungu girls wait for him outside his bachelor's room.

- 5 The girl says she slept with her chosen one (but) she dreamt of me!
 She said, "I've seen Buthelezi. He's come!"
 Whereas he was standing about to come.
 The girl rushed out of the bachelor's room.
 She left her lover and came to me!

137. Busangokwakhe Xulu

Busangokwakhe of Ntshidi, Ngoye, was about eight years old and recited his izibongo very fast. He had just been having a stick fight with a friend and one of the small boys standing around had called out his izibongo. The boys in the group of about ten children who were present called him by one of his praise names, iSihlahla sikapelepele, (Pepper Bush). The first part of the izibongo relate to an incident not long before when the bearer and his younger brother, Mduduzi, had been caught trying to milk a neighbour's cow; the composer was given a good hiding while his brother managed to escape.

- 1 NgiSengasenga uyimBuzana
 uMbuzana kaqedindaba, shayashaya 'qedindaba,
 kwavuvukala umlomo!
 Ingabe wena Mduduzi waphuma kanjani, wawusemsamo nje - ndri!
- 5 Ngizihlahla zikapelepele ziyababa!
 UPhondo lukabhejane lusemsamo.
 O! Jiya matshwele!
 UMyama i'mpisholo 'nduku zezulu.
 INkunzi yensizwa uMathukuthela.
- 10 Ngibathe ngiphos' ehlathini ngivuk' uhlanya
- 1 I am the Half-finished Milker, the Bush Warbler,

the Bush Warbler of the finished affair, hit-hit finishes the affair,
the mouth was swollen!

Whereas you, Mduduzi how did you get out? You were there at the
hearth and then - wheet, gone!

5 I am The Pepper Bushes, they are bitter!

The Horn of the rhinoceros.

Oh do grow up little girls!

Black and very black are the lightning sticks.

Bull of a young man! The Angry One!

10 I have said to them, "If you throw me into the forest, I shall wake
up a madman!"

139. Khadlana Mtshali

Khadlana was a friend of Busongokwakhe Xulu and was also aged about
eight years. This version of his izibongo was recited by Bonginkosi
Buthlezi.

1 UMashiqela kanye nedilozi.

Matshitshi qomani saf' umsindo wonyoko.

Izintombi zimcel' ukhis' noma engathandi.

UMathanda ezincane ngoba eyindala zimbangela ufehlane.

1 Wearer of the too-small pants.

Young girls do make your choice we're sick to death of the noise
of your mothers.

Girls beg him for a kiss even when he is unwilling.

Lover of young girls older ones give him a fever.

142. Themba Dindi

Themba was the nephew of Alec Dindi (see No. 119) and was aged four when I recorded his izibongo. He recited part of them himself and then his mother, MaCele, recited a longer version. I first heard them at the Dindi homestead when I was recording men's izibongo and ukugiya in February 1976. One reason why he knew his izibongo at such an early age was that his grandfather used to practise them with him and play "giya-ing" and stick-fighting with him. I heard a number of slightly different versions of the following at other times.

- 1 Ng'uBhojongwane oyishaya ishingane.
 UMashaya-shumpule iSagila somthakathi.
 UNongqungu uyesabeka uNongqungu omkhulu,
 owaseMdletsheni omncane ungaka, yena omkhulu.

His izigiyo Leader: Shumpu!

Others: Ngakushumpula!

- 1 I am the Little Trickster who hits the little rascals.
 Hitter and it's off! Club of a wizard!
 The Great Big Fellow is frightening, Great Big Enormous Fellow,
 the Mdletshe² (boy) is so small, while he is enormous.

His izigiyo Leader: Wham!

Others: I've whammed it off.

- 1 This was his mother's explanation of the name; Doke and Vilakazi, Dictionary, p.42, give "a simple-minded person".

2 I.e. the Dindis' neighbours.

144. uMkholi Mthethwa (a young girl)

These were recorded at Ebuhleni School, Ngoye. Mkholi was in Standard Two and was about eight years old. Their class teacher, Sister Johanna Ntuli told me that Mkholi herded the family cattle after school as there was no older brother and that is perhaps why she is referred to as "umfana"; in fact her opening praise was generally thought to suit a boy rather than a girl. When I took the praise and used it for my own small daughter I was told it wasn't suitable!

1 UNogadla bethithiza, umfana ongenamhawu.
 ISikhukazi esinamatshweletshwele,
 esinye siyafukumela esinye siyachamusela.
 Gadla bethithiza!

1 Striker and they scatter, boy who has no pity.
 Hen who has her brood of chicks,
 another is sitting on her eggs and another is just hatching hers.
 Strike and they scatter!

1 The stem reduplication is a poetic device to give pleasing repetition.

148. Rosemary uNtombeziningi Mngema

Rosemary was also in Standard Two at Ebuhleni School. Her izibongo, which she recited, are more like izangelo in that they allude to grievances and are a vehicle for her mother's expression of unhappiness. She said that her mother believed that an uncle had put an evil spell on one of her children. Her mother worked in Durban.

1 USomzondwase Sonjengonina.

Unina uhamba nje bayamzonda bayamlwisa.

USidumo emabandleni nasemabuyeni.

Unina bangwaza ngemikhonto nangezibhamu.

1 The Hated One, One like her mother.

Her mother just walks along (and) they hate her and make her fight.

The Notorious One at the men's meeting place and where the women
meet to wash.

They wound her mother with spears and with guns.

150. The bull of Mdlavuzza Mnyango, of Qwayinduku, Ngoye

I never saw the bull, but according to people whom I asked, it was very large, white and still alive at the time Mr Mnyango gave me its izibongo. The izibongo were recorded at Alec Dindi's homestead on March 3rd 1976.

1 UHlaba olumanyamfu.

UNyamfuza kanyamfu.

ULokoza kamaloko.

UMthakathi ebomvu nenqoza yakhe.

5 Ugadla ngembemba kwebezizwe kwabakwaQwayinduku;

kwenyel' abafazi ngoba kwenyela ashiy' amadoda khona. ¹

INhlala beyisongela

bethi, "Mhlophe sobona nini eMlalazi na?"

1 Stabber in the thick of things.

Mover in the thick of the throng.

Conspicuous when alone.

Terrible Wizard with his hump.

5 Striker with his battle axe among the peoples, among those of
Qwayinduku.

Women were disappointed because men were disappointed and left
the place!¹

Sedentary One, they threaten him continually

saying, "White One", when will we see you at the dip at the Mlalazi?

¹

The translation of this line is beset with difficulties! My translation is tentative.

Section E

Izigiyo

What follows is a selection of items used by solo performers and the supporting group during "ukugiya" performances; I have not included izigiyo already quoted in Chapter 4. I heard most of the following in the Ngoye district at weddings, and engagement or puberty celebrations. I have divided them for convenience into: (A) Rhythmic Statements, (B) Songs / War Songs, (C) War Chants / War Cries. Many of the items in (B) and (C) had very beautiful melodies, some haunting and melancholy, some very bright and lively and so on. I regret being unable to include musical transcriptions. Certainly they deserve to be far more widely known and appreciated than they are at present.

In (A) I have marked heavy, imposed, rhythmic stresses with /. These "rhythmic statements" seem close to Rycroft and Ngcobo's account (1981) of "non-melodic song" where metre is of great importance.

(A) Rhythmic Statements

Most of these were accompanied by fast, regular hand-clapping. The content of these cryptic statements is usually related to courage, danger or women. They may be repeated any number of times, depending on the inclination and good judgement of the solo performer who has to integrate them into the total ukugiya performance. The abbreviations "L." and "Oth." stand for "Leader" and "Others".

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. / / /
ISingawunqawu
/ / / /
Umfaz' ohlu' indo-oda. | The Quick-tempered One
The Woman who gets the better of a man. |
| 2. L. Ngafa! Ngavuka!
Oth. Wafa! Wavuka! | I died! I rose up!
You Died! You rose up! |
| 3. / / / /
Yash' induku kubafazi. | The stick hit out amongst the women. |
| 4. L. Ngibatshiwe!
Ngibatshiwe esifebeni!
Oth. Ubatshiwe!
Ubatshiwe esifebeni! | I got stung!
I got stung at a whore's!
You got stung!
You got stung at a whore's! |
| 5. L. Ngithathile!
Ngithath' unondindwa!
Oth. Uthathile!
Uthath' unondindwa! | I snatched!
I snatched a prostitute!
You snatched!
You snatched a prostitute! |

6. L. Uyisitha ekhaya! Vuma hee! He's an enemy at home! Back me up!¹
 Oth. Uyisitha ekhaya! Uyisitha! He's an enemy at home! He's an enemy!

¹
 A widely used command giving the signal for the group to respond.

7. Ushel' intombi. He courts a girl.
 Bakhulum' abafazi. The women talk.

(B) War Chants / War Cries

In some cases these were accompanied by fast, rhythmic hand claps.

1. L. Igaz' lethu! Our blood!
 Oth. Jibilibilibilibi! It qui-ui-vered!
2. L. Yaphind' inkunzi! The bull came again!
 Oth. Yahlaba! It stabbed!
3. L. Dedel' endleleni! Get out of our path!
 Oth. Wathinta thina! You've provoked us!
 Singamaphikankani! We are the courageous ones!
 I'nhliziyo yethu zibomvu igazi! Our hearts are angry - as red as
 blood!
4. Ikhaphi? Where does it call from?
 Induku yethu? Our stick?
 Sizwa ngosi! We can tell by the smell (of blood)!
 Ukuthi ikhaphi! Where it calls from!

5. Osho jii! Uthi jii! He who calls in triumph is he who
cries "Jii!"

6. L. Yicij' inkunzi! Urge on the bull!
Oth. Inkunzi itheniwe nje! The bull with his trimmed horns!¹
UMashananda! Mashananada!
Yicije! Urge him on!

¹

This translation seems preferable to the usual meaning of "-theniwe" which is "castrated".

7. L. Wawuthini besishay' eNtembeni na?¹
Oth. Impi, impi, impi yasishaya ngamatshe.
L. Wawuthini besishay' eNtembeni na?
Oth. [as before]
L. What were you saying as we struck at Ntembeni?
Oth. The army, the army, the army showered us with rocks.
L. Were you there when we struck at Ntembeni?
Oth. [as before]

¹

The response seems to be the imagined answer of the defeated enemy.

8. Hayi suth' impi The army still hungers
Hayi suth' impi The army still hungers
Uhlehle the uhlehle the. He goes back a step, he goes back a step.

9. Sajila! Impi yethu! We were stubborn! Our army!
Sajila! We were stubborn!

L. Uhlab' izitha. He stabs (his) enemies.

O! Bayede!

O Hail King!

1

This is also a royal anthem. I am not completely sure of the words; I think there are many versions. David Rycroft has pointed out that some of the lines bear resemblance to a song reputedly composed by Cetshwayo in honour of the Thulwana regiment (to which he belonged) when they returned victorious from the battle of Ndondakusuka:

"Izwe lonke! The whole land hark!
OkaNdaba uzithulele! The son of Ndaba is keeping his peace!
Kaqali muntu..." He provokes no one...!

(Samuelson, Long Long Ago, 1929, pp.280 and 282)

Another version is noted by Stuart in uKulumetule, p.189; he notes that it was the great war song of the uSuthu following of Cetshwayo ("Igama elikhulu elalihutshwa nguSuthu, kusekuCetshwayo"):

"uZithulele, kaqali muntu;
Izwe lonke, hawu!
Deda singene,
Siminy' abafo.
Nango-ke!
Bayamqal' O! Hawu!
Kaqali muntu!"

6. Ixoki liyathutha. The trouble maker is stupid.
Thina solibamba lexoki. We're going to catch that trouble maker.
Solibamba ngamadevu. We'll catch him by his moustache ends
ngoba livuk' ekuseni. because he gets up early in the morning.

7. Elakwabani? Whose is this?
Lixwayis' amehlwana. It looks with small wide eyes.
Ivezandlebe. The illegitimate child.

1
8. MaZulu wazal' ingane, MaZulu has given birth to a baby,
omhlophe. which was white.
Waze wamubi lengane! Ah that baby was ugly!

1

Any name could be used. All Zulu babies are "white" at birth, so perhaps this song is a way of showing preference for brown not white skin colour!

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**SONGS OF INNOCENCE AND EXPERIENCE:
WOMEN AS COMPOSERS AND PERFORMERS OF IZIBONGO,
ZULU PRAISE POETRY**

Elizabeth Gunner

Zulu praise poetry (*izibongo*)¹ is a contemporary genre of oral literature with a distinguished past. Because of its association with war, and with authority, it is usually regarded as a male preserve (see, for example, Lestrade, 1935, 1937; Kunene, 1962; Dhlomo, 1947, 1948). The praise poems of such outstanding royal women as Nandi², the mother of the famous Shaka; Mnkabayi³ the kingmaker, aunt of Shaka and Dingane; Manchoboza;⁴ and Monase⁵ have been documented; but there is little in print to suggest that praise poetry is an art form in which women as a group also participate. Furthermore, what has been written⁶ tends to give a false picture of the main direction of women's praise poems: the chief impression gained from comparing extracts of the praise poems of the four women mentioned above is of a robust realism, an uncompromising, shrewd, and even harsh appraisal of appearance, personality, and action:

She whose thighs do not meet
They only meet on seeing the husband . . .
Loud-voiced one from the upper part of the court.
(from the praise poem of Nandi, translated by Cope.)

Cunning one of the Hoshoba people,
Who devours a person tempting him with a story; . . .
Norass of Menzi,
That caught people and finished them off.
(from the praise poem of Mnkabayi, translated by Cope.)

Thou Glutton
Who swallowest groundnuts unpeeled.
(from the praise poem of Manchoboza, translated by
Vilakazi.)

Hefty one . . .
Thou art a woman with whiskers like a man.
(from the praise poem of Monase, translated by
Vilakazi.)

Vilakazi's claim that the praise poems of women are compositions dealing with "something beautiful and praiseworthy" seems in some

instances to ignore the statements of the poems themselves. Women's praise poems are not composed by men in praise of women as desirable objects. They are for the most part composed by women themselves. The poems reflect the facets of life important to women, while displaying at the same time the sharp-eyed concern with individual identity that characterizes all Zulu praise poetry. The discussion that follows does not touch on women as bards (*izimbongi*). Although it is unusual for a woman to perform in this way, some do acquire renown as bards. The praise poems recited on public occasions, however, are always those of men and never those of other women. The poems below⁷ are divided, partly for the convenience of discussion, into four categories: (A) *izibongo* of married women; (B) *izibongo* of royal women; (C) *izibongo* of infants and young children, composed by their mothers (known also as *izangelo*); (D) *izibongo* of diviners. Because the categories have much in common I shall begin by discussing them as a group and then move to a more detailed discussion of each category and of representative examples. Section A in particular emphasizes *izibongo* as "verbal art in performance."⁸

The language of the poems in each of the categories is highly figurative, the most common figure of speech used being the metaphor. In some cases the metaphor used has a wide enough application to be recognizable and in this case the composer's intention may be clear. In other cases the metaphor may depend for its full effect on some inside knowledge that, once lost, renders the metaphor less meaningful, for example the "swallows' clothes" metaphor in the *izibongo* of the Ngqumbazi poem (see poem 6 below). Much of the metaphorical language that women use in praise poems is domestic in flavor, for instance the strong pepper, the ants, the cockroaches, the bitter tobacco leaf to be ground for snuff, and, lastly an image that is perhaps not strictly domestic but very much a part of every rural woman's life, the hoe.

Allusion is also a typical feature of all these poems. The allusion usually recalls an unspecified event in the life of the poem's owner known possibly to no one except the owner. This kind of private allusion is not considered a mark of inferior composition. The poems are statements of individual identity and therefore some private allusions are permissible. Usually, however, an allusion is cast in language that gives it some significance for others even though the private origin of the allusion may be the secret of the composer. Consider for instance "splasher in the Ngcobo's potty" (see poem 5 below), where the idea of mischievous interference

in the affairs of other people is vividly expressed through metaphor, although the actual event is not referred to.

A second kind of allusive language commonly found in women's praise poetry is different only in intention. The composer alludes metaphorically to a person or group of people by whom she considers herself to have been ill-treated or maligned. The allusive reference becomes first a means of stating the grievance and in some cases a means of attack. It may also serve as a means of righting the relation through a public airing of it. In "the bitter tobacco leaf ground and powdered by men and women" (poem 4) the complaint is generalized and alludes to "men and women," although the composer may know to whom, exactly, she is referring. In poem 1, however, the complaint is so bitter that it amounts to an attack on the composer's mother-in-law for harsh treatment of her⁹. It is in Section C, the *izibongo* (or *izangelo*) composed for young children, however, that this mode of indirect attack through allusion is most used. Into these praise poems of infancy a mother could, if she had the skill and the desire, pour all the bitterness of pent-up emotions. In the hands of an accomplished composer, such as Princess Magogo kaDinuzulu (see poem 9), the cumulative effect of these indirect, but powerfully stated, recriminations against co-wives is devastating.

Function: A praise poem is a poetic statement of identity: a woman may be widely known among her circle of friends and acquaintances, by one or more of the praise names in her praise poem. She will often be greeted or referred to by her praise names. Her praise poem, or a part of it, may be quoted if she is the topic of conversation. Thus in a sense a woman's *izibongo* stand as a celebration of her personality and achievement.

The women who possess and compose praise poems are usually traditionalists who do not belong to any of the mission churches, and many are married in polygynous households. The tensions and rivalries that often arise among cowives and between a husband's mothers and his wives may find an outlet in praise poems largely, as we mention above, through allusive diction. The statement of a complaint or accusation in a praise poem is an effective and socially acceptable way of publicly announcing one's anger or grief. Once a complaint has been made in a praise poem it remains long after the incident is past,¹⁰ acquiring its own artistic objectivity and serving as an expression of its owner's identity: in this way life is turned into art.

Composition: Praise poems are not composed on a single occasion and they are not (except in the case of the praise poems of

infancy) necessarily composed by a single individual. A person may have a praise name or a number of lines given to her. These then become an addition to the already existing set of *izibongo*. The owner, too, adds to her *izibongo* throughout her life. It is more usual for *izibongo* to grow through additions than for a whole set to be scrapped and a new praise poem composed. In some cases, though, women do appear to have abandoned their existing praises fairly late in life and to have started fresh with a new composition.

The subject matter of *izibongo* is usually personal. There is also a degree of license in the subject matter. One may, if one wishes, refer to one's sexual talents. References to male and female sexuality are also fairly common. Such remarks may be approving; they may also be insulting as, for instance, "The broad lipped woman . . . with labia like a puff adder" (poem 10) and used for attack. In general there is a lusty frankness about sexual matters reminiscent of the racy confessions of Chaucer's Wife of Bath or the bawdy talk of the nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*. A woman, however, composing for herself, or adding to the existing praise poem of another woman, is aware of the limits of license and of the constraints that exist: to go beyond these hidden boundaries would be to invite criticism, even censure. For instance, praise poems that are wholly sexual in their content are considered to be in poor taste and to be inferior compositions.

In a living tradition of oral poetry there are always a great number of well-known lines in circulation. Some of these lines are fixed [for example, "the sticks of the sky are black" (poem 3)]; others contain one or more slots into which the individual composer fits the word or words of her choice. For example in lines 1 and 2 of poem 4 there are three slots: "The Bitter Tobacco Leaf [slot 1] / Ground and powered [slot 2] by men and women [slot 3]." Here slots 1 and 2 are variable; slot 3 is fixed. A competent composer will have at least a fair knowledge of the lines in circulation; but, more important, she will be able to exploit the various communicative means that key the performance of praise poetry (compare Bauman, 1975). The pattern in praise poetry comes largely from "syntactic structure" (Nkabinde) and other forms of parallelism (Jakobson). Thus a composer attempts to use and interlace various syntactic structures and the other parallel devices available to her. The choice of material will normally include lines or half-lines that are already known, as well as some that are unique to her. In this way the interplay of the artistic tradition and the skill or talent of the individual is a continuous, ongoing process.

There is no secret language or secret code in women's praise

poetry (compare Ardener). The complaint motif, however, is so common as to be almost a convention of composition. For the complaint allusive diction is so widely used that listeners know almost automatically how to move from the surface meaning to the real meaning. For instance, the lines "The Bitter Tobacco leaf / Ground and powdered by men and women" are immediately recognized as a general complaint against those who have tried to sully the composer's good name through slander. The extended metaphor of the reluctant cattle that dominates the *izibongo* of the young boy Mphakamiseni Shando in poem 8 is recognized as a complaint that the bride price of cattle has not been paid. The extended metaphor of the mamba in poem 9 would be immediately understood by listeners to be a reference to malevolent action by a cowife. Only in this very general sense can one talk of a code in women's praise poetry.

A. The Praise Poems of Married Women¹¹

Performance: Married women usually perform their praise poems in the company of other women.¹² They are performed on a variety of social occasions, sometimes in the privacy of a homestead house, in the open courtyard, in the fields, or merely somewhere in the open. Wherever they take place it is normally expected that there will be no men present. The feeling of group solidarity and a shared social identity is often very strong on these occasions. The emphasis in Zulu rural communities on one's social identity as a married woman is very clear. The imposition of such a social identity is in some ways restrictive, yet Zulu women have a corporate strength, an assurance, an ability to act cohesively as a group, that could well be the envy of their western sisters. This sense of corporateness, of dynamic unity, is very much in evidence in the performance of *izibongo*.

In the performance of a praise poem, an individual leaps to her feet and in the center of the circle she begins to dance. She leads with a song which may either be well-known or composed by her to accompany her praise poem. There is usually a short and simple refrain that is taken up by the seated women around her. The fast beat for the dancing and for the song is supplied by the onlookers clapping; at times a drum (*isigubhu*) is also used. The individual performer's praise poem is then called out by the seated women and by the performer herself. It is called out at great speed and may be repeated several times. It is not spoken in unison: a person may call out the praise poem or a line or more from the praise poem

at the moment she chooses. The individual performer continues to dance as vigorously and expressively as she can. The song and clapping continue as a background accompaniment against which the praise poem is performed. The length of time given to a performer depends on her skill as a dancer and reciter and on the popularity of her *izibongo*. After the praise poem, a new song may begin or the first one may be continued. Then a second woman leaps up and enters the circle and she in turn launches into her *izibongo*. At this point the first performer usually retires. These are the essential ground rules that pattern the performance of *izibongo*. The atmosphere on these occasions is intensely convivial. Apt lines in a praise poem may be greeted with great amusement and often a combination of mirth and shock; a particularly telling line or section may receive shouts of approval. There is pressure on the individual to perform well: to dance well, sing well, to "say out" her praises as vividly and as vigorously as she can. The interaction between individual performer and the seated group of participants is constant and essential, the seated participants provide the background singing, clapping and calling out *izibongo*. It is in this performance that a woman's praise poem is completely realized. Then it is seen as a poetic statement of identity, giving expression to the dynamic tension "between the ethics of community solidarity and the striving egotism of the individual." (Davidson: 176)

(1) The *Izibongo* of MaCele¹³ of Zenzele, Melmoth

Even in her old age a woman's *izibongo* are still potentially available for performance. The communicative means that key such a performance can still be seen even if the *izibongo* are written. Unlike most *izibongo* these of MaCele (see poem 1) contain no praise names, instead the praise poem as a whole is built on a number of progressions formed by linking. Thus in the *izibongo* of MaCele, the idea of something unpleasant smelling at Zenzele, links lines 1 and 2 (*Kunukani kwaZenzele? / Kunuk' upelepele*). Lines 2 and 3 are connected by the crosslinking of "the bitter pepper" (*upelepele*). The figurative equation of the pepper with "words that stab" at the end of line 3 then sets off the next set of progressive linking. The "stabbing" links lines 3, 5, and 6 (*ahlabayo/ahlabe/ahlabe*) and pushes further the idea of the malicious destruction of relationships that words can cause. The stabbing is first directed at the husband's heart, thus affecting, it is implied, his affection for his wife. It then turns to the wife's own parents, thus, it is implied, threatening the marriage contract to which they are also parties.

MaCele's *izibongo* are short but illustrate the way in which figurative language used in conjunction with parallelism can create a tightly unified expressive whole.

A complaint couched in these formal, allusive terms could not be taken as an insult, but it might well go some way towards restoring the damaged domestic relations. Fortune (p. 74), writing of Shona women's poetry, notes that a similar socially acceptable way of expressing complaints figures in harvest and threshing songs and in grinding songs. In the latter, young brides may complain of bad treatment at the hands of mothers-in-law, and in all such songs great use is made of indirection and metaphor. Once it is in the form of *izibongo* though, such a complaint as MaCele's becomes part of the set of praises that identify their owner. It is not uncommon for people to say, if questioned about their *izibongo*: "My praises will be with me until I die" ("*Izibongo zami zizokufa nami*"); in the context of this remark it is not surprising that an experience of early married life should remain as part of one's praises, even in old age.

- 1 Kunukani kwaZenzele?
Kunuka upelepele
Upelepele ngamagam' ahlabayo
Aphethe imikhonto nemicibisholo
- 5 Ahlabe enhliziweni yomkhwenyane
Aye ahlabe nasebukhweni lakhe.

- 1 What is it smelling at Zenzele?
The pepper is smelling.
The pepper is words that stab,
They carry spears and arrows,
- 5 They stab the husband's heart
And they stab at his in-laws' home as well.

(2) The *Izibongo* of MaJele of Hlabisa

MaJele is the junior third wife of a former chief of Hlabisa. These *izibongo* are unusual in that they are the praises she composed before marriage and has retained. It is normal for married women to put aside the praise poem of their unattached courting days and to start afresh with a new composition. These *izibongo*, although regarded as competent, were not received by listeners with the hilarity and enthusiasm accorded to poems 3 and 4. In her praises the factors that key performance and mark off *izibongo* from ordinary

speech can be seen. MaJele uses initial linking in lines 1 and 2 (*Ngiwudabula isiqwu / Esingadatsbulwa intombi*) and midline linking in line 3 (*Ngusibindigidi ogidela abathakathi*). In line 6 the two halves of the line are neatly balanced with their syntactic parallelism, the semantic linking of "cold-shoulders" and "despises" (*Ushika amakhosi wazonda abantukazane*) and the antithetical kings and commoners (*amakhosi* and *abantukazane*). The language of these praises is not rich in metaphor and MaJele does not make use of the complaint motif. She chooses, instead, to place the emphasis on her personality: her courage, her determination, and her independence; possibly because these praises were composed and initially performed before marriage when the goals of the performer are focused primarily on showing herself off to the opposite sex. Here too, the structure of the performance event would differ in some respects from that involving only married women. The fact that MaJele considered the *izibongo* to be closely linked to her premarriage days emerges from her account of the occasions when these had previously been performed:

If we went to the river and saw the young fellows there sitting down waiting to court us we'd start saying praises as soon as we caught sight of them. The young fellows would perform the *giya* war dance as they came into view at the river—we too would go there—then a girl on her own would do the *gqashula* dance and say her praises, while the others [girls] would egg her on and say her praises as well.

- 1 NgiwuDabuli isiqiwu
ESingadatshulwa intombi
NguSibindigidi ogidela abathakathi
Uphikelelela ngenkani
- 5 UZulu wafunga waphindekezela
Ushika amakhosi wazonda' abantukazane.

- 1 I am she who cuts across the game reserve¹⁴
That no girl crosses.
I am the boldest of the bold, outfacer of wizards.
Obstinate perseverer,
- 5 The nation swore at me and ate their words.
She cold shoulders kings and despises mere commoners.

(3) The Praise Poem of MaHlabisa of Hlabisa

The following version of MaHlabisa's praise poem is from her granddaughter, Elizabeth Dube. It was recited in the company of a highly appreciative audience of ten or so young girls and women. Again, although in a very different way from poem 2, the personality conveyed is of tremendous energy and activity. There is the comic, caricature-like "skinny little legs" in line 3, her zest for drinking, her energetic pursuit of the opposite sex, and finally the references in line 6 to her feverish energy in agricultural work.

Once again the communicative means that key performance are evident: the figurative language of lines 6, 7, and 16 (the "furnace" and the "red bird" references); the initial linking of lines 4 and 5 (*Uminyela . . . / Waminyela . . .*) and lines 14 and 15 (*Kumnyama . . . / Zimnyama*); the final linking in lines 9 and 10 (*uyabaminyela . . . / Uyabaminyela*); the morphologic and semantic balancing of *-qwandela* and *-limela* ("scratch up" and "plow up") in lines 7 and 8; the vowel harmony of line 15 (*-nduku / -zulu*), the alliteration of line 12. All these knot together to form the distinctive and recognizable *izibongo* patterns.

Artistic verbal performance, as defined by Bauman, implies language usage "which takes on special significance above and beyond its referential and informational dimension" (Bauman, 1972: 39). One finds in *izibongo* the deliberate use of language that has either little or no referential dimension and in which the affective dimension is of primary importance. For instance the alliterative "Vi! Violet!" works purely affectively, not cognitively. It is a popular line in both men's and women's *izibongo*; inquiries as to its *meaning* invariably drew a blank except for one informant who suggested that "Violet" was a derivation from "Chevrolet," a model that has long been a speedy traveller over the roads of Zululand! Similarly lines 14 and 15 "*Kumnyama woshi! / Zimnyama izinduku zezulu*" ("Hey but they're black! / the sticks of the sky are black!") with their initial linking, assonance, and alliteration work primarily on an affective level. The meaning may be that the sticks used by the lightning wizards (*izinyanga zezulu*) to ward off lightning are black, but that in no way accounts for the popularity of the lines in *izibongo*. They are used for their affective resonance and for the way in which they heighten emotion and excitement during the performance of praises.

In the *izibongo* of MaHlabisa (or Boyiza,¹⁵ as she was often called), as in all the *izibongo* in this section, paralinguistic and kinesic markers are an essential element of their presentation in performance. Then, the rate of utterance is intensified and the volume of the voice is raised, but there remains, however, no hard and

fast rule as to how quickly or how loudly the *izibongo* are said. Both these factors will depend on the degree of support from the audience and participants, and the liveliness of the performer—both of these latter are themselves sometimes dependent on the amount of beer (Zulu beer, *utshwala*) available. Even though the performance on which our present text is based was not accompanied by the vigorous dance movements that are ideally part of *izibongo*, the performer made great use of expressive dramatic gestures.

With these particular praises in mind it is worth discussing also what Bauman (1975: 303) calls “the emergent quality of performance.” There is, as has frequently been pointed out, no single standard text of an oral poem. The emergent text structure in an individual’s *izibongo* depends a great deal on the skill and enthusiasm of the performer and on the support that she receives from her audience-participants. As we stated earlier on, any member of the audience is at liberty to call out a line or a number of lines from a performer’s *izibongo* and may even call out a new line or set of lines. In MaHlabisa’s *izibongo* the lines are either end-stopped or in linked couplets (thus, 1/2/3/4–5/6/7–8 / 9–10/11/12/14–15/ 16–17 /). Each unit of a line or couplet relates back to the owner independently and thus order is not important in the overall structure. This autonomous nature of the units within the total *izibongo* is an important element of *izibongo* in performance; it allows participants and the performer the freedom to call out the units in any order or (as often happens with audience-participants) to repeat one or more units many times. The awful monotony that would accompany the printed repetition of, say, lines 14–15 ten or more times is absent in a performance event when the *izibongo* occur as an element, albeit the focal element in an integrated whole consisting of a background song (*ingoma*) or a short repetitive chant (*izigiyo*) and the dancing of the performer.

1 Boyiza eseMsebe!

Uqoma ukufa kukababa beseDanawuza

UNocakacaka ngemigconjwana ezimpunganeni

Uminyela Madondo uholoza

5 Waminyela Madondo waminyela eNsindwana

Gqopha! Ngobhayela!

Inyoni ebomvu elimela zonke eziqhwandela amadoda

Mina ngazilimela

Hoboloza uyabaminyela 'Madondo

10 Uyabaminyela eNsindwana

Boyiza kaMcikwana
 Vi! Violet!
 (Bese bethi)
 Kumnyama woshi!
 15 Zimnyama izinduku zezulu!
 Inyoni ebomvu enye yazilimela
 Mina ngaziqwandela.

1 Boyiza of Msebe!
 She chose her father's death at Dannhauser.
 She scurries up and down with her skinny little legs,
 where the old men are.
 She outdrinks the Madondo crowd, she knocks it back.
 5 She outdrank the Madondo lot and the Nsindwana people.
 Dig! As fiercely as a furnace!
 Red bird that plows up everything and scratches up men
 for food.
 And I plow for myself as well.
 Knock it back, you're outdrinking the Madondo crowd,
 10 You're outdrinking those from Nsindwana.
 Boyiza, daughter of Mcikwana!
 Vi! Violet!
 (Then they say,)
 Hey but they're black!
 15 The sticks of the sky are black!
 The single red bird plowed up men for food.
 And I plowed for myself as well.

(4) The *Izibongo* of MaZulu of Hlabisa

These were recited by their owner on a number of occasions. MaZulu's opening praise name and its extension in line 2 illustrate the way in which a composer may use her ingenuity in choosing an original or unusual praise epithet and may at the same time create a recognizable *izibongo* opening. The use of a praise name (here *UKhasi lomdloti*—the Bitter Tobacco leaf) is one of the most obvious ways of preparing one's audience for the recitation of a set of praises. It operates as an opening formula helping to key the performance. The second line, the extension of the opening praise name first uses the devices of syntactic and semantic parallelism (*beligaya* and *belishikiza*, literally, they it ground, they it turned to powder) and then adds a widely used end position stock phrase (*abafazi namadoda*, women and men). Here again these particular

stylistic devices are part of the communicative means that the performer uses. In addition, the use of the extended metaphor in lines 1 and 2, coupled with the conventional complaint motif in line 2, illustrates the ease with which MaZulu is able to exploit the communicative means at her disposal.

The emphasis on humor, on communal enjoyment, and on entertaining through performance is shown in MaZulu's comment, "I made these (praises) when I was quite old, well, when I was married. I didn't want to sit and be mournful, and hold back" ("ukubainyube"). Ma Zulu's avowed intention of not wanting "to sit and be mournful" is reflected also in the comic ant-cockroach sequence in lines 3-7 of her *izibongo*. The humor in these lines comes from the particular combination of fantasy and realism in the imagined situation; ants and cockroaches do not talk but they are rival foragers for food around the domestic hearth; the scavenging ants would like MaZulu dead on the ground, a great bonus meal! The cockroaches, lurkers in the rafters and in the thatching, are horrified—they would be without their benefactor and without their wooden spoon smeared with tasty sour milk or porridge and stuck in the thatch especially, the cockroaches think, for their benefit. This miniature dramatization, with Ma Zulu towering like Gulliver among the Lilliputian ants and cockroaches was always received with great mirth by her audience. In this instance, the lack of such usual devices as linking, semantic or syntactic parallelism, and vowel harmony, all of which provide structural balance and pattern for the listener, did not seem to hinder enjoyment or to impede recognition of the lines as *izibongo*. Line 8, a stock line, used in the praises of men and women, stands on its own and relates back to the owner-performer independently of any other part of the *izibongo*. Again, like lines 1 and 2 it has a typical *izibongo* structure showing as it does both syntactic and semantic balance in the two halves of the line. The syntactic balance comes from the repetition of verb plus noun. The semantic balance comes not from repetition but from a pairing of related actions and objects, thus, comfort-content and infant-mother. Lines such as this that are popular and widely used can reflect not only typical and aesthetically pleasing structures but also values that are considered important. The emphasis here is on kindness and warmth in interpersonal relationships.

- 1 UKhasi lomdloti
Beligaya belishikiza abafazi namadoda
Untuthwane zimbiza phansi

- Amaphela ayenqaba athi "Ndabezithia
 5 Sosale sidlani? Ngoba uthi 'Ngadla'
 Uthathe ukhezo uhlome phezulu
 Besisikhotha thina amaphela."
 8 UNodlalisa ingane kuthambe unina.
- 1 The Bitter Tobacco leaf,
 Ground and powdered by men and women.
 The ants want her down [to eat on],
 The cockroaches refuse, they say, "Oh Royal Madam,
 5 What will we eat when we're left alone? When you say
 'I've finished,'
 You take your spoon and stick it up in the rafters
 Then we cockroaches can have a lick."
 8 Comforter of the baby, and the mother is content.

(5) The *Izibongo* of MaMpanza of Hlabisa

The *izibongo* of MaMpanza were recorded from her great-niece Elizabeth Dube. Through her raised voice and her use of dramatic gestures she gave an indication, albeit a shadowy one, of the paralinguistic and kinesic markers that accompany a full performance event. These, and the other communicative resources used by MaMpanza and reproduced by her niece, made the *izibongo* immediately recognizable as such to her audience. The end-stopped lines produced a typical staccato effect and would in full performance have been easily detached, either singly or in a bunch, and called out by participants in the audience, as the owner danced and herself called out her *izibongo*. These *izibongo* do contain both metaphor (for example line 6) and metonymy (line 8), although the usual stylistic devices of initial and final linking, syntactic and semantic repetition, pairing or antithesis are less in evidence here. Line 4, however, contains the semantic pairing of "wee" and "shooshes" that is reinforced by the negative-positive of the paired verbs. This pairing is itself another popular *izibongo* device. The onomatopoeic *-hoboza* with its rasping velar aspirates serves as a further means of foregrounding the line. The neatness of the stylistic devices, plus the naughty humor of the line may account for the relish with which this line and the *izibongo* as a whole were both pronounced and received. UGeja (the hoe) herself seems to have been a popular old lady; on more than one occasion her *izibongo* were recited to me with great glee by frail old ladies who knew their age-mate's *izibongo* as well as they knew their own. The

shared knowledge of the *izibongo* of members of one's age group, and of others, binds a group together. It illustrates also the fact that although in one way *izibongo* belong to a full performance mode they also exist outside performance as expressions of identity and as bond-makers between individuals.

There is a further point of general interest as regards women's praises that emerges from the *izibongo* of Ma Mpanza. The references to "weeing and shooshing" and "splashing in the potty" and the fairly explicit "you prodder" (see Krige: 190) demonstrate the degree of license on sexual matters and bodily functions that is considered permissible in women's *izibongo*. It is perhaps partly because of this license that *izibongo* are largely eschewed by women *amakholwa* (believers) who would apply the censorious "*inhlamba!*" ("filth!") to such language. Outside the more domestic realm of women's *izibongo* and in the wider public arena where men's *izibongo* may operate, the question of license can also be a thorny one. What popular, traditional opinion regards as permissible may here too be regarded (by others) as at best indelicate. Thus a leading Zulu politician used to have as his opening line of *izibongo* "the Stinging Nettle which stings _____ (another leading politician) on his testicles." The official bard now declaims "the Stinging Nettle which stings men," and the offending reference has been removed. The earlier version is still popular in many quarters, however.

Although the question of license in *izibongo* may at times cause raised voices and heated argument, it is not of central importance. The overriding concern in *izibongo* is to give expression to the personality of the owner. In MaMpanza's praises the qualities of endurance and perseverance are strongly suggested in "the Perseverer on the single road pointing to the sky" and in "the Shawl that ascends and descends Mantaba hill." Both these lines also evoke the wild and mountainous terrain of the Hlabisa district. In contrast to this austere inner and outer landscape stand the humor, gaiety, and vitality of the "elephant" and "Mrs. Little Tin" epithets and the suggestive allusions to unknown people and events. MaMpanza's *izibongo* may be typically telegraphic; they nevertheless provide a rich and satisfying medium for the expression of her personality.

- 1 UGeja
UGeja elibomvu
UMqamathi wendlela eyodwa ebheke ezulwini
Vi violet! Ayithundi iyahohoza
- 5 UMGcophozi wesikiki sakwaNgcobo

quette of a royal household also illustrates the way in which praise poetry may be used to reinforce notions of rank in a hierarchical society.

Composition: It is generally assumed that people of any eminence are more likely to have their praise poems composed by others and less likely to compose them themselves. Certainly in the case of poem 6 below, this would seem to be the case; in poem 7, however, it seems less likely.

(6) The *Izibongo* of Ngqumbazi of the Zungu Clan, Mother of King Cetshwayo

Here, as in the *izibongo* of Ma Jele (poem 2), a single quality of the owner is focused upon, in this case, her stinginess. She is tight-fisted not with money but with food. We see this first in the specific example given in lines 3-5; the same idea is presented as reinforcement in the humorous, pithily balanced statement in the last line, where it is implied that all around her suffer because of her. The obscure metaphorical praise name "swallows' clothes" has its genesis in the fact that the queen liked at all times to wrap herself up, as if constantly feeling the cold. She would wear a black shawl, and two of the corners would hang behind her like the forked tail of a swallow, hence the name.

- 1 USogqayi
UNgubo zenkonjane
UMsweyazi wakomgengeni
Uzincisha yena
5 Waze wancisha ngisho inkosi yohlanga
UMsizi wabakude abaseduze bekhala naye.

- 1 Close peerer,
Swallows' clothes,
The needy one at the grain basket.
She stints herself,
5 She went even further and stinted the Royal One himself.
Helper of those far away, the close at hand cry with her.

(7) The Praise Poem of Nomvimbi of the Mzimela Clan, Mother of King Dinuzulu

In this poem the complaint motif features twice. In the first instance it is stated in a general way, reminiscent in structure and

- MaKopana odlala kwaNongoma
 Ngqobho! Ntabayezulu
 8 Uyibhayi elisehla 'senyuka Mantaba
 9 UNdlovu edla ophinela.

- 1 The hoe!
 The red hoe!
 Perseverer on the lonely road pointing to the sky.
 Vi Violet! She doesn't wee she shooshes.
 5 Splasher in the Ngcobo's potty.
 Mrs. Little Tin who dances at Nongoma.
 Prodder! You of the Ntabayezulu regiment!
 8 She is the shawl that goes up and down Mantaba mountain.
 9 Elephant that devours the great ones!

B. The Praise Poems of Royal Women

The two following praise poems were recorded from Princess Magogo, daughter of King Dinuzulu and mother of Chief Gatsha Buthelezi. Poem 6 would have been composed c. 1830 and poem 7, c. 1860. Both are almost certainly only fragments of longer poems. In their fragmentary state they illustrate the ephemeral, vulnerable quality of the individual oral poem. Women's praise poems are rarely used after death in ritual praising of the lineage ancestors and they are, thus, in normal circumstances unlikely to outlive their owners by very long.

Performance: The praise poems of royal women are not performed socially as are those of married women. They would be used rather as salutations or greetings by both men and women upon their arrival at the royal home. They would be used also by the women attending the queen. They would in addition be called out, as thanks by men after they had eaten food prepared by the royal lady.¹⁶ In the latter case it would not be necessary to repeat the whole praise poem; it would be considered sufficient to call out a single praise name, such as, for example, "Msizi!" ("Helper!") from line 6 in the first poem.

Content: It might be assumed that the praise poems of royal women would, in keeping with their owners' elevated social position, be more polite, even eulogistic in content. This is not the case. They show the same close eye for detail and the same shrewd assessment as do the praise poems of other women.

Function: The praise poems of royal women still function as poetic statements of identity. Their use as part of the elaborate eti-

the child's mother. Unlike the poems in the other sections, these are likely to be composed at a single sitting or on a few occasions within a limited period of time. All three below, especially poem 9, show a skillful handling of poetic devices and of the language range of communicative resources available to the composer of *izangelo*. The ability to compose with such competence comes first through the skill of the individual composer. This ability, however, is itself only brought into play through intimate acquaintance with the genre, through listening to a great many other such poems that use similar techniques yet strive to express an individual and particular experience.

(8) The *Izibongo* of Mphakamiseni Shando

This poem was recited by his mother. Through the extended metaphor of the cattle the mother makes clear her despair over her continuing unmarried state. She may only move from her father's home (at Madondo) to the home of the groom's father (at Elenjani) when the bride price of cattle has been paid. She can initiate nothing; she can only wait. The perverse, stubborn cattle provide the objective correlative for her emotions. Her despondence and impatience are openly voiced in the last "For how long . . . ?" The success of her concealed message was obvious in the sympathetic response of the listening women. There were cries of "bantu!" ("what a shame") and other similar expressions of concern.

- 1 UMshikashika
Izinkomo ziyenqaba ukukhuphuka Elenjani
Zigudl' amaqele
Zithi zingasebaleni
- 5 Zingasebaleni zithwele amashoba
(Kusho umfo kaShando-ke)
Ziyenqaba ukuza kwaMadondo
Ziphindela Elenjani
Ngabe koze kube nini zingakhuphuki
- 10 Ukuza kwaHlabisa emzini omkhulu
Kwala kwaMadondo?

- 1 Toiling one.
The cattle refuse to climb up from Elenjani,
They skirt the sides of the hill,
They head back for the open,
- 5 They turn back, their tails up high

content of lines 1-2 of MaZulu's *izibongo* (poem 4). Here, however, the passive is used, indicating a certain helplessness on the part of the slandered one. The second complaint, in lines 4-5, refers obliquely to the hostility of cowives and mothers-in-law that one could be faced with after marriage. Line 3 suggests, however, that Nomvimbi could give as good as she got, and better.

- 1 USomakhoyiswa
Owakhoyiswa abafazi namadoda
UNqumbana uyawahlupha amakalishi
UMnxitshwa wahamba wayogana
- 5 Amakhosikazi ahamba icecelegwana.

- 1 The slandered one,
Slandered by men and women,
Little wagon that is a nuisance to the [big]carriages.
The desired one, she went on her wedding journey;
- 5 The married women went [too], a bunch of conspirators.

C. The *Izibongo* of infancy (Known as *Izibongo Zengane* or *Izangelo*)

Performance: These are recited by the mother when she is with a group of married women on a social occasion. In some cases women have a special song that is sung after the praise poem. The poems are also recited by the mother to her child in the homestead where the hidden complaints would carry particular weight. The mother is in one sense reciting the praise poem to and for her child, but she is also reciting it for the benefit of whoever else may be listening; if the persons referred to indirectly in the poem hear it, so much the better. The poem, however, is also recited long after infancy, on any occasion when a mother wishes to express, publicly or privately, the emotions of joy, pride, or gratitude to her child.

Function: The inward-looking, confessional aspects of women's praise poetry is most obvious in this category. Often only the opening praise name, or first few lines refer to the child (as in lines 1 in poems 8 and 10), while the rest of the poem is a vehicle for the composer to give vent to a range of stronger emotions that she might otherwise be able to express. The emotions of anger, grief, defiance may all find formal expression in an infant's praise poem.

Content: The complaint motif dominates; it is accompanied by an almost exclusive use of figurative language. In this section particularly allusion, the language of indirection, is used a great deal.

Composition: Here the composition is always by a single person,

(so says the child of Shando).

They refuse to come to Madondo,
 They go back to Elenjani.
 For how long, I wonder, will they refuse to climb up
 10 And come to the great house of Hlabisa,
 Here, at Madondo?

(9) An Extract from the *Izangelo* of Chief Gatsha Buthelezi

The poem was composed by the chief's mother, Princess Magogo of the Zulu royal house.¹⁶ The composer's contentions that she was bewitched in early pregnancy by a cowife is expressed first through the image of the otter squirting her with evil medicine and second through the miniature allegory set in a dream. The mamba, an evil, destructive force, coming appropriately from the cursed forest of Sondaba, attacks her and she is saved only by journeying to a doctor in a remote part of the Buthelezi territory. The composer then turns to a second cowife, "the Wicked one," mentioned earlier; and the poem becomes more openly aggressive. The attack on her by the "commoner's daughter," (line 11) is contemptuously dismissed, the thin, light "switch" suggesting the ineffectual nature of the attack and of the woman herself. To reinforce this, the composer's own royal heritage is referred to, in contrast to the common descent of the other woman. The final three lines attack the speaker's mother-in-law who is hostile to the USuthu section of the Zulu royal house and hence to the performer herself. Just as her father won at Ndunu in his fight against the opposing Mandlakazi group so she, his daughter, will win at any second "battle" of Ndunu between herself and her female enemies. She speaks with the weight of royal authority and past victory behind her. In this way, through skillful rhetoric, she challenges her enemies. The combative nature of a praise poem, such as this one, should not make us forget that, although it may have served as a highly effective weapon on a domestic battlefield, it functions also as a celebration of its owner, the young child, in whose honor it is composed; it is *his* praise poem of infancy.

- 1 Umendo ngabe ngiwendile 'mfana kaShenge
 Ukuba angigananga noNombiba
 Ngangithi ngilele abengichinsa usengumthini
 Nginxanelwe luhududu lunye lungahlali lakwaSondaba
- 5 Lungumamba yehlane lakwaSondaba
 Yona ilala ohlungwini engethuswa umkwani

- Ngithe mina ngiyahamba yangilum' isandla
 Yangilum' unyawo lokunyathela
 Ngijuwwe imamba ehlanzeni
 10 Ngaye ngavuswa isibibi samagceke
 Ndansundansu yangishay' intombi yomuntu
 Yangishaya yangehlula-ke mina
 Loluswazi lungishaya-nje mina
 Angiqondene nalo
 15 Ngoba angibangi lutho mina
 Mina nginefa lami lokudalwa
 Amaxheg' amadala nehlule empini yaseTshaneni
 Nisazithembisa nisathi niyabuya kwaNdunu ningahlabana
 Kanti eyakwaNdunu sekuyintombi kaMamonga.

20 Shenge!

- 1 Married life would be sweet, son of Shenge,
 If only I were not married in the company of the wicked
 one.
 I felt as I was sleeping that an otter squirted me.
 I was pursued by another long trailing thing that would
 not remain in the [cursed] forest of Sondaba.
 5 It was like a mamba there in the wilderness of Sondaba,
 The one that lies in the freshly burnt veld, where the
 mealie leaf does not disturb it.
 And I felt as I walked along that it bit my hand;
 It bit my foot as I set it down.
 I was struck down by a mamba there in the thick bush
 country
 10 And I was brought back to life by medicine from the
 lonely highveld.
 Touch and touch again, a commoner's daughter struck me.
 So, a switch struck me,
 She struck me and she lost against me.
 I don't care in the least
 15 Because I compete with nothing,
 I have my own ancient inheritance.
 You old dodderly men, you won at the battle of Tshaneni,
 You still promise yourselves that you are going back to
 Ndunu for another battle;
 But I tell you the one at Ndunu is Mamonga's daughter.
 20 Shenge!

(10) The *Izangelo* of Princess Magogo

This poem was composed by the mother of Princess Magogo, Silomo of the Mdlalose clan, and recited by Princess Magogo. Like poem 9 this poem uses highly figurative language. Also, like poem 9 it focuses first on the hostility of others and then moves on to open aggression. The bitter invective of the last five lines is scorching but controlled; the parallelism of the last three lines provide a framework containing and at times intensifying the force of her bitterness. Again as in poem 9, the *izangelo* were no doubt a valuable vehicle for airing deeply felt grievances. It is also, however, the owner's praise poem of infancy, *her* poem; and when it was recited to her it functioned in spite of its content as a celebration of *her* identity.

- 1 Somthambeka 'mbululu unamazwela
Kazi-ke Baba ingizwe lapho ngithini imbulu
Inxanele idebeshekazi lingandebe zingabululu
Bangiphothel intambo kaquluselane
- 5 Yonk' indlunkulu isingiqulusele
Ngiphumile nomamekazi kaNdaba
Mhla ngiye evunweni ngihlekwe ngamanqe
Ngahlekwa ngamakleledwane
Ingabuthini-ke wena kimi unyana kaluthi
- 10 UKhanda 'gegebu-nje
Ungathi lokhu ngizokuthuka lokhu
Ungathi uyisishwapha somnewethu
Ungathi uyisishwapha sikaZinyo
- 1 Sensitive one, easily moved.
I wonder, father, if the deceitful creature over there hears
my words?
The broad-lipped woman pursued me unmercifully, the
one with labia like a puff adder.
They plaited for me the rope of mutual disdain,
- 5 All the royal household turned in disdain from me.
I have come out with the great mother of the royal line.
The day I walked out to the harvest gathering
I was mocked by the vultures,
I was mocked by the cuckoo shrikes.
- 10 And what could you say to me? You with a twig for off-
spring,

With your lop-sided head.
 You're like this and I will insult you like this:
 You're like the shrivelled-up buttocks of my brother-in-law,
 You're like the shrivelled-up buttocks of Zinyo.

D. The Praise Poems of Diviners

Diviners (*izangoma*) are usually women. Their powers of divination are employed in the detection of those guilty of a wide variety of crimes. A diviner may achieve a countrywide reputation and may receive clients from hundreds of miles away. The celebrated MaShezi was such a diviner. Her daughter-in-law MaNgwane, who was trained by her, is now building up her own following, using as her base the homestead of her famous mother-in-law at Embongolwane.

Performance: These poems are performed at gatherings of diviners during a celebration to mark the completion or partial completion of training by apprentices (*amathwasa*). They are also called out as salutations by those approaching the homestead of a well-known diviner.

Function: These praise poems celebrate the identity of the owners, but they do so by listing their public achievements, their professional successes. A diviner, widely respected, sometimes even feared, has more status and more independence than an ordinary woman. Hence, it seems, the function of a praise poem as a vehicle for the airing of personal grievances falls away. The praise poem mirrors the wider public arena in which the diviner moves; and, by focusing on her successes, it reinforces her public image and her status as a diviner.

Content: Gone is the intimate, at times stifling, atmosphere of domestic intrigue that tends to dominate poems of the earlier sections. As the praise poems of famous warriors list their victims, so do the praise poems of diviners enumerate theirs: the people whom they have brought to justice. The concentration on public achievement drives out the domestic imagery, the allusions, and the blistering attacks. It drives out also the delicate sense of closeness to the owner's personality that one is aware of in, for instance, the poems in Section A.

Composition: The praise poems of diviners are jointly composed, both by their owners and by members of their family circle, friends, and admirers.

(11) The Praise Poem of MaShezi of Embongolwane, Eshowe

This poem was recited by MaShezi's son, of the Mglongo clan. It is very difficult for a diviner to receive official recognition from the Bantu Affairs Department in Pretoria. The slow progress of Ma Shezi's papers, from Eshowe to Pretoria to Pietermaritzburg to the office there and finally back to Eshowe, is referred to in the poem. It is claimed that she received official recognition, and the officials in Eshowe who gave her no encouragement are mocked for their obtuseness. Then follow the names of the victims in her most celebrated cases. The marked parallelism and the inclusion of names and genealogy are reminiscent of a praise poem of an eminent warrior or of one of the Zulu kings.

1 Usibambana nenkunzi abayesabayo
Indlovu edl' ofakazi
Umhlane (?) usehlul' amajaji

Uncwadi zahamba zimnyama eShowe
5 Ziyepitoli zabuy' ePitoli sezimhlophe
Zafike eMgungundlovu bayebukisisa
Bathi "ake zedlule
Nina 'madoda aseShowe nibhale kanjani?
Nibhale ubudididi esingabuboniyo
10 Akeyihlehle lendaba kesiyoyizwa"

Udle uMletheni kwabaMajola ebezalwa uZululiyaduma
Wadla uDwabeni wabakwaButhelezi koludumayo
Wamgingqa phansi
Wathi "Wawuwenzani? Wavunyelwa wena
15 Wadla uMnkaiyana kwabakwaMphambo
Wamshaya phansi
Wadla uDingiswayo kwabakwaBiyela
Wamshaya phansi
Wadla uMbambo laphana
20 Umfo kaMkungumane phesheya koMhlatuze
Wadla abakwaNcanana koludumayo
Wabakhomba eMahlabathini eMashona

Indlovu edl' ofakazi
Unyathela ngamasandaza
25 UMhlane (?) ehlul' amajaji
Wehlul' uNdlavela ebezalwa Mathingi
Khona kwaMondi khona eShowe
UFoshenithela

- 1 Grappler with the bull that others are afraid of,
Elephant that devours the witnesses,
Buck [?] that overcomes the judges.

The papers that left Eshowe were black,

- 5 They went to Pretoria, they came back from Pretoria,
white.

They went to Pietermaritzburg and [the officials] studied
them.

They said "Let the papers pass,
You people at Eshowe, how did you manage this?
You wrote an illegible scribble.

- 10 Defer the decision, let us hear the matter."

She has devoured uMletheni of the Majolas, son of The
Rumbling Sky,

She devoured Dwabeni of the Buthelezi people in the noise
of battle,

She rolled him to the ground

She said "What were you up to? You had been given per-
mission."

- 15 She devoured Mnkayana of the Mphambo people,
She hurled him down.

She devoured Dingiswayo of the Biyela people,

She hurled him down.

She devoured Mlambo from near here,

- 20 The child of Mkungumane from beyond the Mhlatuze.
She devoured the Ncanana fellow in the noise of battle.
She pointed out the ones from Mahlabathini, from Ma-
shona.

Elephant that devours the witnesses.

Heavy trader with her sandals.

- 25 Buck [?] that overcomes the judges.

She overcame [the magistrate] Ndlavela born of Mathingi,

There at Mondli, there at Eshowe.

The Fortune teller!

(12) The Praise Poem of MaNgwane of Embongolwane, Eshowe

Ma Ngwane's praise poem was recited in her presence by her husband. It concentrates on her most notable success to date: an Indian foreman had set fire to his white employer's sugar fields after

he had been dismissed and the job had passed to a second Indian. The blame had at first fallen on the new foreman, but MaNgwane had pointed to the real culprit. The striking opening praise name stands out against the narrative quality of the rest of the praise poem.

- 1 Bhula ngonyezi sekuhlwile
Udl' amakula abephuma eMathikulu
Emabili ebang' ubukhulu
Elinye elincane lagijima
- 5 Elinye ikula layontshontsha leya impahla yomunye
Obelifuna ukubusa lona
Ngoba leli selibona lingaphansi
Walishaya leli
Wathi wena hawukela ukuba sekuyadunyiswa lona
- 10 UNohamba bemloyisa
Uloyiswe abasemaBomvini
Bathi "Soke sikubone uyoke uphile na?"
Kodwa namuhla usekhona
- [Bathi] Bhula ngonyezi
- 15 Udl' iBhunu laseShowe
Kungafanele lithand' induna yalo
Lithi ayinduna yalo
Yiyo induna eshish' ipulezi lalo
Ngoba leli ipulezi lenduna [?]
- 20 Usuwayikhamanisa yancane!
- 1 Divine by moonlight, at twilight,
She has devoured the Indians from Mathikulu,
The two of them were fighting for power.
The little one ran away
- 5 The one that wanted to steal the other's possessions,
The one that wanted power,
Seeing that he was a mere nothing.
She hit at that one,
She said, "You, you're jealous because the other one is ac-
claimed."
- 10 Traveller whom they poison on her way
She was poisoned by the Ngubane people
They said "And now we'll see if she keeps well or not?"
But today she is still alive.

- [They say] Divine by moonlight
 15 You have devoured the Afrikaner from Eshowe
 Who mistakenly trusted his foreman,
 Saying "It's not that foreman,"
 "That is the very one that burnt the farm
 Because that is the very foreman [?] you turned into a no-
 body, a little nothing."

Conclusion

The term *praise poetry* does not convey adequately the extent to which, among the Zulu, such poetry identifies and appraises the individual. With women as with men, a praise poem celebrates the identity of its owner. To own a praise poem, to be known by it, is to strengthen one's sense of belonging to a particular community and to a particular cultural group.

Future research will map out more clearly the interaction of song with praise poem in performance. There are many questions concerned with composition that need to be more fully investigated. The social context of women's praise poetry needs also to be more fully explored. For this to be done adequately, scholars in the disciplines of sociology, linguistics, literature, and musicology need to pool their skills and their resources.

NOTES

1. *Izibongo* is a generic term for praise poetry. It is plural in number and can refer (a) to praise poems collectively, (b) to the praise poem of an individual, or (c) to the various units of praise or praise names, that make up an individual's praise poem. We shall use *izibongo* in all three senses and trust that the context will make the precise reference clear. We shall also use the terms *praises* and *praise poem* interchangeably to cover (b) above.

2. Cf. Cope, 174-75 and 171.

3. Cf. Cope, 172-73 and 170.

4. Cf. Vilakazi, 51-52. Manchoboza was not of the Zulu royal house. She was the great wife of Phakade, son of Macingwane of the Chunu clan, cf. Cope, 120 and 130-31 and Bryant 1929: 262-65.

5. Cf. Vilakazi, 50. Monase was the mother of Mbuyazi, the contender for kingship with Cetshwayo. He was defeated by his brother, Cetshwayo, at Ndondakusuka in 1856.

6. Cf. Vilakazi: chap. 2.

7. All the poems below were collected during field work in Kwa Zulu from October 1975 to September 1976. The translations (and any mistakes) are my own. I would like to thank A. B. Ngcobo for help with the final Zulu versions and translations of the two poems in Section A; A. C. Nkabinde for early assistance and encouragement with women's *izibongo*; and A. T. Cope for much shrewd advice over the whole period of my field work.

8. I am indebted to Bauman's article for introducing me to a range of new terms and concepts that were of great use as tools in the analysis of oral poetry.

9. For a similar use of poetry among Shona women see Fortune, 74.

10. Stuart noted the same fact from an informant in 1920. He notes first that "each wife applies as eulogies to her own child, epithets of a disparaging nature directed at another wife and her husband" and continues: "Once such an *isibongo* [sic] is given it remains, even though the thing complained of is disentangled by wife and husband." The Stuart Papers, Notebook 76, 96ii, Killie Campbell Africana Library, University of Natal, Durban.

11. For an account of women's praise poetry among the Bahima of Uganda see Morris.

12. Rosemary Joseph reports that women also recite extracts of their praise poems while singing and accompanying themselves on the *umakhweyana* bow. A woman's praise poem may also be called out by others as she plays the *umqangala* mouth harp. (Information and recording from R. Joseph, University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies.) Both these performing situations could well be more solitary than the one I describe below.

13. It is standard practice for Zulu women to be known after marriage by their own family surname and not by their husband's surname. We follow the same procedure in this paper.

14. Hlabisa adjoins the Hlulhuwe game reserve and the game corridor joining Hlulhuwe with Umfolozi reserve. Both reserves and the corridor teem with game.

15. It is quite common for a woman to be known to her friends by the opening praise name in her *izibongo*. The name Boyiza ese-Msebe was her grandfather's; the Msebe reference is to the battle between the Mandlakazi and USuthu sections of the Zulu nation in which the first Boyiza fought.

16. *Ukubonga* means "to thank" as well as "to praise." At times in the performance of *izibongo* the two activities are so intimately related as to be indistinguishable. For an account of Princess Magogo as musician and composer see Rycroft 1975 and 1976.

FORGOTTEN MEN: ZULU BARDS AND PRAISING
AT THE TIME OF THE ZULU KINGS

ELIZABETH GUNNER

It was the Zulu poet B.W. Vilakazi who used the term 'forgotten men' when referring to the *izimbongi*, or bards, of the Zulu kings Shaka, Dingane, Mpande and Cetshwayo. But are they forgotten? Or do they merely sleep in the minds of many Zulu, powerful unseen influences that shape their use of language and guide the flow of their creative imagination? The importance of *izibongo*, or the praise-poetry of the Zulu kings, chiefs and eminent men, in the Zulu cultural traditions was clearly recognised by James Stuart when he compiled his set of Zulu readers for schools, in the 1920s. These readers, referred to below, abound in texts of *izibongo*, accounts of Zulu history and details of the lives of leading figures of the Zulu nation including their most famous *imbongi*, or bard, Magolwana. Stuart, showing a foresight still uncommon among today's educationists, realised that contact with Western culture and Western education should by no means presuppose a total jettisoning of one's own literary and cultural heritage. A later collection of *izibongo*, C.L.S. Nyembezi's *Izibongo Zamakhosi* (1958) which is based partly on Stuart's work and partly on independent sources, bears witness to the same fact. Nyembezi's book is still, almost twenty years after its initial publication, widely used in schools, colleges and in university courses and is in fact a *sine qua non* for any adequate Zulu course. This old, developed and time-honoured art form has also exerted its influence on the young written literary tradition. Vilakazi himself, although initially under the sway of the English Romantic poets, in some of his later poetry shows a return to the style of *izibongo*. Other younger poets such as J.C. Dlamini have followed Vilakazi's lead in attempting to harness the rhetorical power and stylistic devices of the traditional praise-poem in written composition. Thus in formal western education and in the written literary tradition the influence of *izibongo* is real and living. Behind the *izibongo* stand the shadowy figures of

the bards, Vilakazi's 'forgotten men'. It is to them that we now turn.

If we wish to understand the art of praise poetry among the Zulu it is essential that we look closely at the bards, the *izimbongi*, who were the practitioners of this art. I say 'were' because all the bards referred to below belong to the last century or to the early years of the twentieth century. However, praising, or *ukubonga*, is still a living art form among the Zulu (see Rycroft 1974: 66-7). Just *how* it has been modified and adapted to changing conditions, field work alone will be able to demonstrate. Certainly among the Xhosa, the tradition of praising is very much alive, as recent work by Mafeje (1963, 1967) and Opland (1975) has shown.

As my sources I have used Bryant, Samuelson, Fuze, Stuart and Vilakazi - the material ranges from the compressed and general statements of Bryant to the often vivid and particularised detail of Stuart and Vilakazi. The bards who are mentioned span a period of some ninety years - from 1818, the year in which Shaka was made chief of the Zulu tribe, to 1907 when Stuart (1924a: 82) recorded many *izibongo* and matters of Zulu history from Shingana kaMpande. By this time the independent Zulu kingdom was a thing of the past. The drastic social and political upheavals which took place during that period must have affected the bards and their praises but on the other hand we can assume that there were also strong conservative forces within the culture which would work for the continuity of such a developed art form as praise poetry. The language of a people can survive the vicissitudes of history, and praise poetry is one of the most eloquent expressions of the Zulu language at work.

If we turn to that established chronicler of Zulu history and tradition, A.T. Bryant, we see that his attitude to the praises and to the bards is equivocal: although he recorded several royal praises and praises to the early Zulu chiefs, his remarks are noticeably lacking in enthusiasm. After quoting four lines of Ndaba's¹ praises he writes, 'The above is not verse; much less is it poetry. It is what the Zulus are very fond of and style *izibongo*' (Bryant 1929: 39; for other *izibongo*, see pp.45, 69-70, 89, 166, 663). His comments on the bards themselves reveal his bewilderment:

They lived in a chronic state of vociferous delirium; though otherwise quite intelligent. They would keep up a continuous harangue, addressed to nobody in particular, and,

so to say, for hours at a time, whether sitting at home or marching alone across the veld. They had the gift of 'speech' in a most extraordinary degree; and extraordinary memories too (Bryant 1949: 485-6).

But, bewildered or not, Bryant was a careful recorder and much of what he goes on to say is confirmed, in a way, by Stuart's informants, as we shall see. He continues:

They made it their business to know everything that the king and all his ancestors ever did or ever had done; then to frame the several events into terse phrases, mostly simply commemorative, but frequently disguised by metaphor or even humorously satirical; and finally to recite their compositions before king and public, by incessant shouting, whenever opportunity occurred. Dressed in the most grotesque of trappings ... they would stride wildly up and down, especially on great festal occasions, blazoning abroad, in a never-ending rigmarole, such references to every creditable and even discreditable, incident in the king's and his ancestors' lives ... and like the jesters of old, they were permitted such extravagant freedom of speech that they put on record much that it might otherwise have been dangerous to state. Such a procedure was termed *ukuBonga inKosi* (to-tell-the-praises-of-the-king), and the several statements themselves were termed his *isiBongo* (praises) (Bryant 1949: 486).²

Samuelson, writing in *Long, Long Ago* (1929), that strange mixture of accurate recording, intimate knowledge of his subject, and wild speculation, is more reticent, more objective - 'The Zulus had Bards as an important order of their "institutions"' - and he goes on to draw attention to the bards' involvement in the militaristic pattern of the Zulu kingdom, and also to their wider role in the nation as a whole:

... every military kraal in Zululand had an *imbhongi* besides the special *imbhongi* of the King who lived at his chief kraal ... all headmen in Zululand had an *imbhongi*, who would carry on his duties in the headman's kraal only; these were subordinate to the King's and National *Izimbhongi* and would not dare to carry on their avocation in the King's kraals or military kraals.

Samuelson then outlines their duties for us:

... the said *izimbhongi* or native poets and bards ... select the most brilliant incidents in the career of their Chief or in the history of the nation and people for the songs and ballads, which they chant at royal festivals in the presence of their Chiefs, at their homes and on many other occasions. These they hand down to succeeding generations through their successors in office (Samuelson 1929: 253).

Samuelson's information is interesting in its focus on the bards as a group, a semi-professional body of performers with a hierarchy topped by the 'King's and National *izimbongi*'. It is worth remembering that without this large, unknown and undistinguished body, there could have been no outstanding performers - no Magolwana (for whom see p.75 below) and no tradition. The question of transmission is one that he also touches on when he talks of the praises being 'handed down to succeeding generations', but he does not elaborate. Certainly the use of 'brilliant incidents' in the praises must have given the recitations points of stability but, from what Stuart tells us, it seems there was room for the introduction of new material into the existing praises of a chief or king - at least in his lifetime. Magolwana, Klwana, Mnyamana, as we shall see, are all remembered as the authors of certain memorable verses of praise.

Fuze, the first Zulu to attempt a history of his people, makes, to my knowledge, only one reference to a bard, and that is the well-known incident concerning Mxamama, an *imbongi* of Shaka - it may well be apocryphal, but it does demonstrate, even if in a highly exaggerated fashion, the great bond of affection and loyalty that joined the bard to his 'master'. He writes:

When they had finally killed Shaka [i.e. Dingane and Mhlangana, his brothers] they buried his corpse in an empty mealie pit. When that was all done, Mxamama son of Ntendeka of the Bisini people, the chief steward, who was his bard, was sent for. When he arrived he found his king was no more, they had already killed him. He uttered a fearful cry, he swore at Mhlangana and Dingane comparing them to dogs, begging them to kill him but they would not agree to do so. He went on to insult them in foul language and then they killed him. Mxamama was the one who, as he saw vultures circling above, would praise the king, saying, "Your birds are hungry, they beg for food," wanting the king to kill people (Fuze 1922).³

Bathi uba bambulale bamqede uShaka, isidumbu sakhe basimbela emgodini wamabele, engasekho konke lokho kwenziwa nje, kakho uMxamama kaNtendeka was' eziBisini, inoeku enkulu, eyabe iy'imbongi yakhe, utunyiwe. Uthe efika wafunyana ingasekho inkosi, sebeyibulele. Wakhala ukukhala okwesabekayo, wabathuka oMhlangana noDingane wabafanisa nezinja, enxusa ukuba bambulale naye. Wazigingqa phezulu kweliba, ecela ukuba bambulale. Kepha abavumanga ukumbulala naye; waza wabathuka ngenhlamba enukayo, anduba bambulale. Nguye uMxamama lowo owabe ethi angabona amanqo ezula phezulu, ayibonge inkosi, ethi "Izinyoni zakho zilambile, zicela ukudla"; efuna ukuba inkosi ibulale abantu (Fuze 1922).

Fortunately there is no evidence that other bards shared Mxamama's passion for feeding the vultures!

After Bryant and Samuelson's brief and generalised observations on the bards and on praising, Stuart's discursive and often vivid accounts (1923: 69-74; 1924b: 132-42; 1925: 93-114) come as a surprise. This, it seems, is the voice⁴ from within the culture as opposed to the interested and knowledgeable commentary of the outsider. What comes across most strongly from Stuart is that within Zulu society praising mattered - it was above all an activity intimately connected with the ideal of bravery and, usually but not always, bravery in battle: the individual warrior could gain new praises through his valour in battle and these would then be shouted out for him as he *giya'd*⁵ to an admiring audience and to his king or chief, after the return from the battlefield. The praises of a king or chief were dependent on how his army fared in battle:

... a person would never be praised by any reference to an army which defeated him; he is praised concerning the army he defeats. This is an important rule in the praises of all people. Dinuzulu was not praised by any reference to the battle of Msebe⁶ because his men ran away; and likewise Cetshwayo is not praised by reference to the battle of Mahlabathini or of Ondini;⁷ only Zibhebhu is.

Praises originate in war - because a great many of those of Cetshwayo are from the battle of Ndondakasuka, against Mbuyazi.⁸ And the same goes for those of Mpande; he earned his praises by fighting against Dingane at Maqongqo⁹ (Stuart 1925: 112).

In his third chapter, on *Izibongo*, Stuart (1925: 103-114) provides us with a vivid if typically disjunctive picture of the man reputed to have been the greatest of all the Zulu bards, the Homer of praise poetry, Magolwana. The portrait is extended in the chapters in *uTulasizwe* (1923) - *Be Quiet, Let's Listen* - and *uHlangakula* (1924b) - *Let the Nation Grow* - which tell us of Magolwana's defeat of Mzilikazi's bard in personal combat when the army was on campaign, and of his death. Vilakazi (1945b: 412-21) also makes Magolwana the subject of one of his three brief 'life histories of the forgotten *izimbongi*'. His material appears to be a curtailed and heavily edited version of Stuart, although on one or two points such as, for example, the physical appearance of Magolwana, he differs from him.¹⁰

In praise poetry, as in most oral literature, the act of reciting, the performance itself, is of great importance. Lord's case

(1960: 101) for synthesis in oral poetry may be an overstatement - "oral transmission", "oral composition", "oral creation" and "oral performance" are all one and the same thing' but he is right to remind us that performance is an essential element of oral poetry.¹¹ And in the case of praise poetry it is possible that body movement may relate to, and provide a kind of metronome for, the actual recitation.

Let us now turn to Stuart's description (1925: 108-9) of Magolwana performing:

When he was about to praise Mpande, Magolwana would begin by haranguing his audience - he would do so as follows:

Nxa ezobong' uMpande, uMagolwana wayeqala ngokuthetha; ethetha kanje:

Pay attention to the one who is shouting!
 Pay attention to the one who is shouting!
 What is he shouting out?
 He is mourning.
 Why is he weeping?
 He is weeping for the cattle.
 He is weeping for those cattle - are they yours?
 Are they not in fact your brother's at Bulawayo?
 Do you realise that he and his settlement have already died?

*Lalela lomunt' omemezayo!
 Lalela lomunt' omemezayo!
 Umemez' uthini na?
 Uyalila.
 Ukhalelani na?
 Ukhalel' izinkomo.
 Usikhalela lezonkomo, ezakho yini na?
 Lokhu, esomnewenu, kwaBulawayo, na?
 Ubona ukuba sekwafiwa na?*

He would continue chiding and chiding in that way until he felt that everyone was silent. When they agreed to be quiet they would hear the Prime Minister Masiphula and some would be fined. Then everyone would keep quiet. No one would stir. And then when it was obvious that the whole place was quiet, and everyone was listening, Magolwana, so that he could begin praising, would say:

Uzobelokh' ethetha, ethetha-ke, esho kanje, az' ezwe ukuthi sebethule bonke. Nxa bengavum' ukuthula, bazokuzwa indun' enkulu, uMasiphula; abanye bahlawuliswe. Sebezothula bonke-ke, nya; kungakwehleli muntu. Sekuzothike, ma kubonakal' ukuthi sebethul' indawo yonke, sebelalele bonke, uMagolwana, ukub' esezothath' ukubonga-ke, usethi:

List - e - e - e - e - n !

Destruction, the elephant spoke and there was utter
silence!

Destruction, the elephant spoke and there was a deathly
silence!

The branches of the trees broke and there was utter
silence!

You see the thick tufts of grass,
They will be pulled out!
When they turn, men will have died.¹²

*Yizwa-a-a-ke! (lo "a" mude kakhulu).
Yathi "Sikihli" indlovu, kwathi nya!
Yathi "Sikihli" indlovu, kwathi nya!
Kwaphuk' amagatsh' emithi, kwathi nya!
Uyabon-k' izidindi semithi,
Ziza ubheka phezulu!
Zizothi ziphenduka, bekuf' amadoda!*

He would speak like that when he was beginning to praise; he would finish off the scolding. And then he would press on and he would say:

Mpande of Noziqubu and his people ...

*Wayesho njalo, usaqal' ukubong' impela; iseqed' ukuthetha.
Usezoqhubekela phambili-ke manje, usethi:*

Umpande wawoNoziqubu !... (Stuart 1925: 108-9)

and Stuart continues:

Magolwana would not rest before finishing the King's praises. When he was almost finished he would say, "The elephant has drowned" (referring to the King he had just been praising). "He is inscrutable, Sky that is above! He is inscrutable, Lion! He is inscrutable, Leopard! He is inscrutable, Great Elephant!" and then, still speaking in this way he would stamp and stamp; he would stamp in one place. He would stamp tremendously; and all the trappings he had on would swing to and fro; because he had a lot on, he had dressed up; he adorned himself tremendously.

Then at that very moment he would stand still; he would be silent; he would just look in the direction of the King. And then he would begin another one, the praises of another King. And then also he would still praise with great power; he praised thus, standing in one place, as well as walking around. And he would praise as he walked.

As for the King, he was there with his councillors. He listened. Then he would whistle when he really appreciated something, but he would say nothing. And he alone would whistle... he [Magolwana] would walk around a great deal all this time. And the King would whistle and would point firmly at him with his finger, and Mpande would be deeply moved (Stuart 1925: 110-11).

Kaphumul' uMagolwana iNkos' engakayiqedi. Uz'ay'aqeda, abes' ethi: "Yaminza-k' iNdlovu" (esho iNkosi, le ekad' eyibonga). "Ulibinda, Zulu eliphezulu! Ulibinda, Ngonyama! Ulibinda, Silo! Ulibinda, Ndlov' enkulu!" Uthi-ke, asasho njalo, abe'egqum'egquma; ugqumela ndawonye. Ugquma kakhulu; ikhaphuze yonke lempahl' ayifakileyo: ngoḁ' ufakile, uvunule; uvunule kakhulu.

Usema-ke kalokhu; usethula; useth' ukubheka ngaseNkosini. Useqal' enye-ke, izibongo zeNkos' enye. Nalapho futhi, usebonga ngamandla; ubonga njalo, kemile ndawony, uyahamba. Uth' ebong' ebehamba.

iNkosi yona, nansiya nebandla layo. Ilalele. Id' ihlab' umlozi ingezwa kumnandi; ingakhulumi lutho kodwa. Iyona yodw' ehlab' ikhwelo ... Usehamba kakhulu-ke lapho. NeNkos' isihlab' umlozi, ilokh' imkhombakhomba ngomunwe. Usethukuthel' uMpande (Stuart 1925: 110-11).

Magolwana was a superb performer, an actor who could use voice, movement and words to capture and keep captive his large audience. The bard is a spectacular figure, eloquent and visually compelling. The description serves as a forcible reminder to us that despite the undoubted power and beauty of much praise poetry, the complete art form is more than the words alone. Parry's insistence that:

a comprehension of oral poetry could come only from an intimate knowledge of the way it was produced; that a theory of composition must be based not on another theory but on the facts of the practice of the poetry (see Lord 1960: vii-viii),

is relevant here: the poetics of praise poetry must be self-generated.

The performance is also set in a social context with the King and his subjects as necessary parts of the audience, and Magolwana in his praising both reinforces the prestige and authority of the King and speaks to the King with the voice of the people - the electric current flows both ways. Let us look more closely now at the exchanges between Mpande and Magolwana as recorded by Stuart. The praises of Mpande that we have here are shrewd and assessing as well as celebratory¹³; having harangued his audience into silence he would say:

Mpande of Noziqubu and his people,
Mdayi, who cut through the country with knives.¹⁴
Ndaba,¹⁵ the cattle are inquired about from afar,
They are inquired about by Tinsila and Sigonyela,
They say "Show me how they rule
At the place of your king in Zululand."
I said: Ndaba son of Sobangwayo,
They fought over him,
He was fought for by the English and by the Boers.
He who dared the country [?]; he dared for it [?].
He said it would be traversed by the whiteman and
by the Boers.

Mdayi, answer the land over yonder,
Who can summon Mdayi here, amongst our people
in Zululand?¹⁶

He would go on in this vein, praising and praising incessantly
with tremendous power [*kakhulu isibili* - in italics!]. As he
finished, he would look at Mpande and he would say:

Well done, the joke of the headmen
Who did not like you!
You overcame them with the spear! (Stuart 1925:109)

Umpande wawoNoziqubul
UMdayi, owaday' izwe ngommese.
Ndaba sibuzw' ekudeni,
Zibuzwa uThinsila, benoSekonyela,
Bathi: "Ngibonisel' ukubusa
KweNkosi yakini kwaZulu."
Ngathi: UNdaba kaSobangwayo,
Bambangile;
Ubangwe ngamaNgisi namaQadasi.
Olokothe izwe, lalokotheka.
Wathi liyohanjwa ngabamhlophe namaQadasi.
Mdayi, sabela kweliphesheya,
Uban' ongabis' uMdayi kwelakithi kwaZulu?

Usehamba njalo-ke, ebong' ebong' ebonga, kakhul' isibili.
Uyagcina-ke kuMpand' usethi:

Yebuya lutheku lwamaduna!
Ayengakuthandi!
Wawahlula ngem'khonto! (Stuart 1925:109)

This again may be praise and celebration of success but it does not
gloss over unpalatable facts, and is far from being blind adulation.

Magolwana could also be uncompromising in spoken exchanges with
Mpande. He seems to have admired Cetshwayo greatly:

As for Cetshwayo many of his praises were composed by Magolwana.

"Wild beast who looked at his father's offspring and
they bowed down", was always Magolwana's. Mpande said, "Ah,
Magolwana! You have aroused bitter feelings in me. Did you
say I must not weep for my children? And are they all gone?
Will you begin by abusing me? Then will you give Cetshwayo
the praises of my dead children just like that?"¹⁷

Magolwana replied: "But on the other hand have you not
killed your father's offspring? You, Nkonzaphi, did I not
compose for you, didn't you kill your father's offspring,
you and Mhlangana?¹⁸ As you cross all these rivers thus,
what makes you cross? Is it not me who ferries you over?
Who said that you crossed each river pretending to be
ignorant of what you were really doing? Don't you agree?
Who has composed for you such great praises as these, and
did you just possess them?" [i.e. didn't you earn them

through your actions?]

Then the King answered: "That's enough, Magolwana. Just get on and praise. Other people may not praise Cetshwayo because I will weep. Because at Cetshwayo's death, Mbuyazi would not be praised, nor would Tshonkweni, nor Mantantashiya nor Somklwana."¹⁹

Only Magolwana praised Cetshwayo saying:

"The powerful bull who covered himself with leaves at Dlunduma."²⁰ (Stuart 1925: 107-8)

NoCetshwayo lona, ezining' izibongo zakhe, wazethiwa uMagolwana.

"Isilwan' esibhek' abakayise bakhothama"; esikaMagolwana njalo lesa. Wath' uMpande: "Hawu, Magolwana! Wangivusel' umnyu. Wathi kangikhale na, ngabantabami na? Baphela bonke na? Uzo-fike wethuke mina na? Ubusufik' wik' uCetshwayo izibongo sabantabami abafa na?"

Uthik' uMagolwana: "Wena kanti wawungabulel' abakayihlo na? Wena Nkonzaphi, kangikuthanga na, ubulel' abakayihlo, ninoMhlangana na? Uze uwel' imifula yonke nje na, uwezwa yini? Kawuwezwa yimi na? Wawuthiwa ubani ukuth' uwel' imifula yonke, uhamb' uzibuzise? Akuzami na? Ubani owakuth' izibongo ezingaka lezi na, wawungenazo nje?"

Isithi-ke iNkosi: "Yeka-ke Magolwana. Bonga-ke. Abanye abantu bangambongi, ngoba ngizokhala. Ngoba kuye kuf' uCetshwayo nje, kabongw' uMbuyazi, noTshonkweni, noMantantashiya, noSomklwana.

Kwakubonga yen' uMagolwana kuphela, ethi:

"Isiguqa esizifulele ngamahlamvu kwaDlunduma". (Stuart 1925: 107-8)

Mpande was from all accounts a mild man, unlike his brothers Shaka and Dingane, but he was still the Zulu King; Magolwana seems to have been able to offer rebuke for rebuke with impunity. He seems to have had the licence to say to the King what other men would not dare say, and go unpunished. This indulgence on the part of the King came perhaps from his recognition of the bard's talent, and of his need for him as celebrator of his achievements and the achievements of his lineage, his role as creator of Mpande's very identity.

In the chapter in *uHlangakula* (Stuart 1924b) entitled '*Ukubulawa ka Magolwana*', 'The Killing of Magolwana', this reliance of the King on the service of praising performed by his bard is again emphasised - this time it is not Magolwana who reminds the King how much he needs him; the admission comes from Mpande himself:

[Masiphula, Mpande's Prime Minister, has just reported to Mpande that Magolwana mounted a war party against a private enemy, without royal permission, a treasonable offence and

punishable by death.] The King said: "What! Do you think that Magolwana would really do this? Has he not lived happily with other kings? He must have been tired of life. And now who will recite the praises for me? Eh, Mkhanyile? Seeing that Klwana son of Ngqengelele has already died? Alas! Since he has now had enough of life, no longer wanting to live happily, now I too shall die, seeing that Magolwana is about to die."

Isith' iNkosi: "Hawu! Uthi uMagolwana angakwenza lokhu na? Ingathi kad' ebusa kwamany' amakhosi na? Use-dinwe ukubusa. Sengibongelwa ubani na? Mkhanyile na? Lokh' uKlwana kaNgqengelele usewafa na? Wo! Lokh' usesidelile, kasathand' ukubusa. Kanti nami sengizokufa, lokhu sokuzokuf' uMagolwana." (Stuart 1924b: 139)

On this occasion, not even the bard's great talent and Mpande's need of him could come to his aid, and he was killed but, as we shall see, his death was his last, spectacular performance.

I mentioned earlier that praises were won in battle (see p.75) and Samuelson, like Stuart, has emphasised the link between the bards and the militarism of the Zulu state. It seems to have been common practice for the bards to accompany armies to the field of battle. In his epic account of the wanderings of the AmaNgwane, the bard Msebenzi has this to say when he is about to describe a battle between Matiwane (chief of the Ngwane) and Mpangazitha, the Hlubi chief: 'While they (the AmaNgwane) were still handing their spears to one another, the "Angry Talker" [i.e. Mpangazitha] appeared on the scene and an "imbongi" was heard reciting the praises of the Angry Talker like the heavens above' (Van Warmelo 1938: 36/7, and 36 n.20).²¹ Magolwana's ability as a fighter is the subject of the chapter in *uTulasizwe* (Stuart 1923) entitled '*Ukugwazana kwe zimbongi*' - 'The Bards' Duel'. The duel took place during the first campaign of Dingane against Mzilikazi²².

[The two armies are drawn up facing each other.] And then the bard of Mzilikazi appeared on the scene asking for Magolwana son of Mkatini the most outstanding bard of the Zulu people. He shouted and questioned the Zulu army saying, "Do you know why it is that the vultures and ravens are non-existent in our territory? Do you not know that the Guinea Fowl, and the Nsinde and the Nzanayo (regiments of Mzilikazi) are coming?" Magolwana then came out from behind Ndlela²³ who was leading the whole army ... Magolwana came into view, coming forward, holding forth praising the Kings, praising them with tremendous vigour. He said:

Destruction! Ruin! Devastation! And utter silence!
Is he coming? He has already come!
Vezi! Nonyanda! Mgabadeli!

ZULU BARDS AND PRAISING

The one who pranced in the courtyard at Bulawayo,
 Vezi of Simanganyawo,
 The black chatterer! [?] (Stuart 1923:70)

Sokuphum' eyakwaMzilikazi imbongi. Isifuna uMagolwana kaMkhathini, iyamemeza, ibuz' impi yakwaZulu, ithi "Kanazi yini ukuthi kuz' iziMpangele, neNsinde, neNzanayo na?" (ama-buth' kaMzilikazi). uMagolwana usephum' emuva kuNdlela oku uyen' opheth' impi yonk' iphela - ... Useqamuk' uMagolwana, useyake, ekhuluma, ebong' amakhosi, ebabonga kakhulu. Uthi:

*Sikihli! Sikihli! Sikihli! Nya!
 Uyeza na? Usefikil'
 UVezi, uNonyanda, uMgabadelii!
 Owagabedel' inkundla yakwaBulawayo,
 UVezi wakwa Simanganyawo,
 Umbombosh' omnyama (Stuart 1923:70).*

In the fight that followed Magolwana defeated his challenger. After a wound has healed he is summoned by the King to *giya*:

He *giya*'s and is given the name 'He who Causes the Buffalo to Kick! He who Causes the Buffalo to Kick!' And this is how he is addressed in the King's presence:

Perform, He who causes the buffalo to kick!
 Stabber with your flank,
 Powerful bull destroying the other one,
 Because he overcame Mzilikazi's one.
 Ribs of the cow of Mashobana [i.e. belonging to Mzilikazi]
 Return there!
 Ribs of the cow of Mashobana!

*Dlala, Mkhabisa-nyathi!
 Hlabana ngomhlubulo;
 Isiguq' esadla esinye,
 Ngoba wadl' esikaMzilikazi.
 Mbambo zenkomo yakwaMashobana
 Phindela khona!
 Mbambo zenkomo yakwaMashobana! (Stuart 1923:73)*

Magolwana, it seems, was both fighter and performer, as the incident emphasises.

Finally we come to the manner of the bard's death.²⁴ He was killed by a war party sent at the king's command:

And when the bard of the King saw for certain that there was a war party concealed there, he begged the commander of the group to let him adorn himself in his regalia. Truly he put on his monkey-skin girdle, he took out his special brass armet, he put on his necklace of metal beads and he asked them to leave him so that he could praise the Kings. He praised and praised them and then he sat down and said "Now kill me..." (The party of warriors hesitate.) Then at last as he sat there he threw his spears right away. And they killed him. (Vilakazi 1945b: 414-5)

Kwathi lapha imbongi yamakhosi isiyibona nebala impi lapha icashe khona, yacela kumphathi wempi ukuba kebayiyeke ivunule. Bala yabhinae umqubula wayo, yafaka ingrotha yayo, yagaxa umnake wayo, yathi ake bayoyeke ibonge amakhosi. Yawabonga, yawabonga, yahlala phansi yathi: "Ngihlabeni-ke!" Iyesaba impi, yesab' iqhawe, ukuthini sikhathini lingahle libadumise ngobikadi (umkhonto) limuke nabo. Lase lihlala phansi, selijukujela imikhonto yalo ekudeni. Baligwaza. (Vilakazi, 1945b: 414-5)

There appears to be no detailed report of any other eminent bard of the Zulus in Stuart's readers; there is a list of those who were all considered by Stuart's informant(s) to be inferior to Magolwana (see Stuart 1925: 103-4) but we are told only their names, their fathers' names and, in a few cases, which king they served. One of these, Shingana a son of Mpande, will be mentioned shortly but let us in the meantime turn to another bard who seems of have been dear to Mpande's heart - Klwana son of Ngqengelele of the Buthelezis. Apart from being in the list of bards he figures only in a footnote of Stuart's appended to two lines of Mpande's praises which refer to him. Stuart (1925: 138, n.5) writes, 'Klwana fought for Dingane at Maqongqo but did not die there. He was killed by Mpande because he jostled for power with Mnyamana.'

Vilakazi has Klwana as the second of his 'forgotten *izimbongi*': he gained fame both as a warrior and a bard and began his praising during Shaka's reign. He was also a man of influence in other ways and was sent with Dingane's general Nzobo as an emissary of appeasement to the Boers after the defeat at the Ncome (Blood) River. His affection for Mpande is mentioned - while still serving under Dingane he sent Mpande warning of a plot to kill him when he came to thank Dingane for a gift of cattle (it was at this point that Mpande fled across the Tugela River only to return with an army and with covering Boer support to fight it out with Dingane at Maqongqo). The lines referring to Klwana in Mpande's praises are couched in the oblique, allusive language so typical of praises:

Hacked at by Klwana of Mbongombongweni
[Klwana's homestead], hardwood tree, and tree
with the thick white sap.

*Isihlahla somshungu, sombelebele,
Sigawulwe uKlwana, waseMbongombongweni. (Stuart 1925:138)*

Stuart tells us that the second tree grew in profusion around the battle site of Maqongqo...! The implication here is that Klwana may have 'hacked at' the tree (i.e. Mpande) but he did not succeed in

felling it. Finally (after giving us a totally different version of how and when Klwana died) Vilakazi tells us that Cetshwayo and his brother Hamu, desirous of keeping up 'the friendship between the royal house and the people of Klwana' gave Mpande's daughter Mthabayi in marriage to Bantubensumo, the son of Klwana who was also a bard.

Although we are told nothing of Klwana's actual performing, he too evidently combined the roles of bard and fighter, and his pre-eminence in public affairs is noted.

The third bard in Vilakazi's 'lives' is Cetshwayo's famous prime minister, Mnyamana, of the Buthelezi people:

He learnt how to praise the Kings in the time of Mpande ... Mnyamana had his first outstanding success as a bard when he praised Cetshwayo saying:

He of the bandy limbs,
Through being deceived by his father's offspring.
The black retreator,
He is like the clotted blood of leopards and lions,
The red-winged lowry of Menzi
Which was red at eNtumeni and also at Eshowe.²⁵

Ufunde ukubongela amakhosi kusekuMpande ... Lapha uMnyamana efike waqhama khona ngobumbongi uqhame sekuku-Cetshwayo, obembonga athi:

*UZitho zimagwegwe
Ngokugwegwa abakayise,
UJininind' omnyama
Ongabubende bezingwe nezinyonyama,
IGwalagwala likaMenzi
Elibhej' eNtumeni kwaye kwabhej' iShowe. (Vilakazi 1945b: 420)*

He seems to have waited in the wings listening to the old bards praising the Kings and then he burst out with his own praising [i.e. his own *izibongo*]:

Gnawer gnawing fiercely at Somsewu²⁶ child of Sonzica,
The man had no sleep till dawn,
USuthu²⁷ supporter with your wildly flapping garments,
They are like those of the missionaries coming
from church,
The small hen with wings,
Who gives shelter to the young ones of the lion.

*UNdlaph' edlaphun' uSomsewu ezalwa nguSonzica,
Umuntu kwaze kwas' engalele buthongo,
UMsuth' ongubo zimawunguwungu
Zinjengezabefundisi bavela kusonta,
USikhukhukazan' esimaphiko
Esifukamel' amazinyan' engonyama. (Vilakazi 1945b; 420)*

We are told nothing further about him as bard and the piece concludes by referring to Mnyamana's political role:

And when Cetshwayo was imprisoned by the whitemen and was sent far far away, Mnyamana remained looking after affairs together with Ndabuko of Cetshwayo's family, because it is said that he was the one who was the mainstay of the Zulu nation.

Also, after the death of Cetshwayo, at the time when Dinuzulu was imprisoned by the whitemen it was he, Mnyamana, who governed. Furthermore in those difficult days when Dinuzulu was quarrelling with Zibhebhu, he was Dinuzulu's main support (Vilakazi 1945b: 421).

Kuthe uma uCetshwayo esebanjwe ngabelungu, sebemusa lephesheya, wasala uMnyamana ephethe izindaba noNdabuko wakwaboCetshwayo, ngoba kuthiwa nguyena nsika yezwe lakwaZulu.

Nangemuva kokufa kukaCetshwayo esebanjwe ngabelungu uDinizulu, nguyena uMnyamana owaphethayo. Nangezinsuku ezinzima uDinizulu engaphathene kahle noZibhebhu nguyeyinsika (Vilakazi 1945b: 421).

What is important for our purposes is not so much the historical ground covered by the informant as the fact that again we have a bard who is also an eminent public figure, in this case one deeply involved in the political fortunes of his people.

Finally, and briefly, there is Shingana son of Mpande who figures in the Stuart bards' 'roll of honour'; Stuart also mentions elsewhere (1924a: 82) that he obtained many of the *izibongo* included in *uTulasizwe* (1923) from him, 'He was of the Ludloko regiment; a great authority on Zulu ancestral history and a great *imbongi* of the Kings.' We know that Shingana was, as Stuart implies, a warrior as well as a bard: because of his loyalty to the Zulu royal house and the USuthu section, Shingana and his family were exiled from Zululand in 1910 when he would have been about seventy years old (Marks 1970: 353), and well before that, in 1891, he had been heavily involved in the fighting that broke out when followers of the rival Mandlakazi section were given permission to settle on lands long held by supporters of the USuthu group. Because of his part in this affair Shingana was sentenced to twelve years' imprisonment and exiled to St. Helena with Dinuzulu and his uncle Ndabuko (Marks 1970: 92-3). Here again, from the turbulent years of 1879 and after, we have a bard who combined this role with that of a warrior and a man of public affairs.

No stereotype of the Zulu bard emerges from this brief study. We can only say that certain characteristics or tendencies recur: the

bard was not only a warrior, he was often a distinguished one; he was close to the King whom he praised yet was allowed a certain licence in his comments; prominent bards were also frequently holders of high office under the King. Might one also say that they were necessary to the King as a means of identifying him and presenting him to his people, so that in spite of the licence allowed them to criticise, they were in the long run a part of his authority?

It is clear also that the Zulu bard was not a full-time professional, as for instance were [are?] the dynastic bards of Ruanda (Finnegan 1970:128); equally it is clear that, although the bard had some freedom to introduce fresh praises into his composition as a means of impressing his audience, his 'inspiration' would be guided by conventions and usage that would be known to his fellow bards and approved by his audience.

NOTES

1. Ndaba was the grandfather of Senzangakhona and the great-grandfather of Shaka.
2. It is possible that in this description Bryant is also following accounts by Gardiner (see Bird 1888: I:290) who uses the phrase 'grotesque trappings' and by Stuart himself. Whether or not this is so, his account is interesting as an example of recording, accompanied by a cultural shift of perspective: the recording may be fundamentally truthful but the values behind what is described are distorted or ignored.
3. Fuze was a Lala Zulu, and was A.T. Bryant's chief informant for *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* (1929). He was for a time tutor to Dinuzulu on St. Helena but was removed as he was thought to be an unhealthy influence (see Marks 1970: 114 n.4). Fuze as a schoolboy also accompanied Bishop Colenso on his visit to King Mpande in 1859. He kept a journal of his visit which was subsequently published (see Nyembezi 1961).
4. In fact it was probably a collage of several voices plus, in places, Stuart's own as most of the material comes from testimonies obtained over a period of 24 years - 1888-1912; one has the impression that Stuart has attempted to retain the utmost fidelity to the spoken word; the style is - to one raised on a fairly heavy diet of print - rambling and repetitive. It twists and turns and goes back on itself, like a cattle track up a mountain-side. But repetition is one of the hallmarks of an oral style and, whether it appears in prose utterances or in poetry, in its right environment it is neither inelegant nor inconvenient. As it is basically oral tradition, however, it needs where possible to be checked against other evidence.
5. To *giya* is to perform a solo dance mimicking battle movements.
6. At the battle of Msebe in March 1883 Zibhebhu defeated a force three times the size of his own consisting of three divisions, the USuthu, the Umgazini and the Buthelezi (see Gibson 1903: 247-50).

7. On 21 July 1883 Zibhebhu overran and destroyed Ondini (or Ulundi), Cetshwayo's royal kraal, in broad daylight. The loss to the Zulu people was enormous because of the great number of principal chiefs and notables who were killed there. Gibson also notes that 'the destruction of old men which occurred on this occasion rendered it difficult afterwards to find those in the country who could supply from memory accounts of the incidents of the nation's progress'. For an account of the disaster see Gibson (1903:255-60).
8. At the battle of Ndondakasuka in 1856, Cetshwayo inflicted a terrible defeat on his brother Mbuyazi and the Zigqoza faction. Six sons of Mpande were killed in the course of the fighting, including Mbuyazi, Tshonkweni, Mantantashiya and Somklwana (see p.79). See also Cope (1968:220) for the celebration in his praises of Cetshwayo's defeat of his brothers.
9. For an account of the battle of Maqongqo which took place in January 1840, see Gibson (1903:81-82). It was this battle which secured the kingship for Mpande and which was the end of the road for Dingane.
10. Another possibility is that Vilakazi used the same informant as Stuart, roughly forty years later, but this is highly unlikely; possibly the conservative nature of the oral traditions concerning these men and these events meant that a similar collection of details would be recounted by a knowledgeable informant many years after the earlier testimony. Vilakazi gives no information about his source, merely saying, rather mysteriously, 'it has been recorded from the mouth of the old man who is very familiar with the old Zulu history'!
11. Certainly by laying down these rigid canons for oral poetry Lord narrows the field of what is 'truly oral' and excludes much that would otherwise be termed oral poetry. See Ruth Finnegan's article (1974:esp. p.60) giving the case for a wider definition of oral poetry.
12. For the last four lines Vilakazi has:

These are the clumps of grass!
 These are the twigs!
 When he turned
 He turned with the blood of men,
 Liste-e-e-e-n!
 Zon' izidindi!
 Won' amagatsha!
 Oth' ephenduka,
 Waphenduka nezingazi zamadoda,
 Yizwa-a-a-ke! (Vilakazi 1945b: 413)
13. Kunene (1962) notes how often praises were character studies of their possessors; see pp.64, 66, 69, 84, 96, 98, 106, 113-4, 121, 129-33, 140.
14. Probably a reference to the battle of Maqongqo, see n.9.
15. Mdayi and Ndaba both refer to Mpande. Ndaba was his great-grandfather.
16. The last two lines are an overtly political comment and a warning - 'Take great care over how you handle your white neighbours; in that way you will keep your own authority here in Zululand intact.'
17. Mpande, having lost six sons in this encounter, had every reason to be upset!

18. Shortly after gaining the Kingship Mpande killed his last remaining brother who was suspected of plotting against him. Mhlangana helped Dingane kill their brother Shaka, and was in turn killed by Dingane. Nkonzaphi refers to Mpande and is, as far as I know, untranslatable.
19. These were four of Mpande's dead sons, see n.8.
20. This a reference to Cetshwayo's defeat of his brother Mbuyazi at Ndongakasuka in 1856.
21. The battle took place in March 1825.
22. See Bryant (1929:429-46). On p.429 Bryant mentions this event and quotes Stuart as his source. The breezy style in which he writes it up contrasts markedly with the tone of the Stuart version. Bryant has, 'Then the respective tribal *izimBongi* (praisers) rushed into the arena and vied with each other as to which could shout his own King's praises longest and loudest.'
23. Ndlela kaSompisi Ntuli, Dingane's distinguished general and induna, whom Dingane had executed after he lost the battle of Maqongqo.
24. Vilakazi contradicts Stuart on details such as the name of Klwana's father and the occasion of his death, saying that Dingane had him killed after Maqongqo. Stuart being, besides anything else, at least thirty-five to forty years earlier in his recording must seem the more reliable source.
25. These two places are close together in the hills of central Zululand. Cetshwayo used to hunt frequently in the Dlinza forest at Eshowe, and eNtumeni was where he set out from to the fateful battle against his brother Mbuyazi at Ndongakasuka.
26. Somsewu was the Zulu name for the White Natal leader Sir Theophilus Shepstone.
27. USuthu was the name given to those who supported first Cetshwayo and later Dinuzulu against Zibhebhu, whose faction was called uMandlakazi.

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NEW WINE IN OLD BOTTLES:
 IMAGERY IN THE IZIBONGO
 OF THE ZULU ZIONIST PROPHET, ISAIAH SHEMA

It is a characteristic of some oral art forms that they adapt to changing social and political conditions. In some cases new pressures produce a new genre, as in the case of Somali *heello*. In other cases the form remains the same but the content reflects and comments on the changing circumstances. In many instances oral art forms part of changing rituals which are themselves crucial cultural symbols. The *izibongo* (translated as 'praise-poem' or 'praises') of Isaiah Shembe, founder of the Zionist Nazareth Church, are of interest in a number of ways. Firstly they show the extension of a praise-poem to convey a new set of beliefs. Secondly they are an example of *izibongo* for a leader who is not royalty but who has modelled his leadership on the patterns of Zulu royalty, and thirdly the *izibongo* show the ability of a praise-poem to incorporate new imagery and also to capitalise on and in some cases redeploy existing images. This third point will be my main concern in this paper.

Shembe was born in 1870 and died in 1935 at which point the leadership of his Church was taken over by his son Johannes Galilee Shembe. He began his ministry at a time when the Zulus had suffered loss of power, territory and national identity. It is significant that he was baptised in 1906, a year after the Bambatha rebellion which was a short-lived (but long-remembered) expression of anger and outrage at an alien and repressive administration.² Shembe started his own Nazareth Church in 1916, three years after the Natives Land Act whereby blacks were debarred from buying land. He acquired land in reserve territory eighteen miles from Durban, and Ekuphakameni (The Exalted Place) became the centre of his Church. Here he adapted Zulu rituals

trates the ease with which a richly associative cattle metaphor can be used for modern political comment. The Xhosa bard is commenting on the plight of a chief exiled by the South African Government:

... up to now, nobody has made any reference to Joyi,
The dark bull that is visible by its shiny horns,
Horns that today are smeared with streaks of blood.
It is for that reason that today he is not among us.
(Mafeje, 1963, p.91)

Mathabela and Cope⁵ provide a rare example of a modern Zulu praise poem, performed for the KwaZulu Minister of Education at a Durban school's speech day. Here great play is made of the Minister's illustrious ancestry and in this example a stock martial metaphor is transferred to the classroom:

He overcame me with the spear of arithmetic,
He overcame me with the spear of English,
He overcame me with the spear of the Zulu Treasury,
He overcame me with the spear of the deep thinker,
The depth and solidarity of the Zulu Storehouse.
(Mathabela and Cope, 1976
p.21)

The *izibongo* referred to above serve to demonstrate that praise-poetry is not imprisoned in a rhetoric binding it to a crumbled social structure and a past glory. Yet only Shembe's *izibongo* have attempted eulogy for a contemporary Christian leader on a scale usually reserved for Zulu royalty. With his *izibongo*, past and present fuse in a way not found in other contemporary praises.

Shembe's *izibongo* are clearly the work of bards deeply familiar with the royal *izibongo*. There are many parallels which are obviously intentional and this is not surprising given the way in which leadership in the Nazareth Church is modelled on the Zulu kingship pattern. (Sundkler, 1961: 102, 104). The praises of Shembe are therefore in a sense 'royal'. Yet they are also very clearly the praises of a Zionist prophet and not of a Zulu king. There are clear differences where the needs of communication have forced the composers to new modes of expression and new points of reference. The parallels with the royal praises are as follows: it is essential that a bard include in his composition a number of references to places associated with the hero. In the *izibongo* of the kings from Shaka to Dinuzulu the place names refer largely to conquest and victories. Those in Shembe's praises list many of the places that this untiring traveller visited in the course of his ministry and instead of referring to homesteads associated with the hero the *izibongo* return insistently to Ekuphakameni; so much so that this holy village of the Nazarites, their earthly Zion, becomes a *leitmotif* of the praises moving in its associations from the earthly to the heavenly Zion.

One of the ways in which prestige and crucial lineage links are underlined in the royal praises is through the mention of early ancestors of the royal line. Thus Shaka is praised as *UNodumehlezi kaMenzi*, He-Who-Thunders-At-Home-descendant-of-Menzi. The names of other ancestors such as Phunga, Ndaba and Mageba carry the same eulogistic connotations and help to establish the exalted aura of the royal praises. Shembe had no royal connections whatsoever, his lineage was obscure and though the names of his father, grandfather and great-grandfather are mentioned in the *izibongo* they would obviously carry no affective charge. The bards compensated for this by using metaphorical praise names which stress Shembe's appeal to royalty and to the chiefs while other praise names underline his support for their authority. The following praise suggests not only attraction but dependence as well:

(98) *Nduku yethusi edondolozela makhos' akithi ohlanga.*
USwazi oluncokazi
Luyelwabonwa amakhos' akithi oSwayimani bakaZiphuku.
Bathi, 'Nanti uSwazi oluncokazi lukaThixo.

(98) The Copper Staff on which our royal leaders lean.
 Switch of many colours
 Which was seen by our chiefs Swayimani and his people
 the children of Ziphuku.⁶

They said, 'Here is the many-coloured switch of God'.
 Shembe in turn is drawn to them:

(38) *IMPukane ijing' isilonda*
Wobujing' abohlanga lwendlu eSenzangakhona.

(38) Fly which pesters a sore
 As it pestered the royal line of Senzangakhona.

Besides setting out these indirect links with the chiefs and the royal line the bards attempt closer associations by working into Shembe's *izibongo* praise names already associated with one or more of the kings. For example they open and close with the praise name *uGugabadele*, Kneeler-and-they-are-satisfied, a praise that is used for Cetshwayo kaMpande but also for God. Shembe's *UVemvane olunamabalabala*, Butterfly-with-many-colours, echoes the butterfly praise epithets of Shaka and Dingane and the 'Copper Staff' referred to above is also a praise epithet for both Shaka and Dingane.⁷ What seems to matter in taking over such praise names is that the affective charge accompanies the praise. The precise denotative meaning of praise names is often not important; they can convey a heroic aura while they defy explanation. Innes remarks on a similar phenomenon with Mandinka praise names in the Sunjata epic: the meaning of the praise name may be opaque but its affective power for a Mandinka audience is striking.⁸

Besides the metaphorical praise names associated with a particular king there are also metaphors which are normally confined to royalty or to people of status and examples of these

too appear in Shembe's praises. The sometimes ambiguous metaphor of the eagle - it can suggest both protection and potential destruction⁹ appears as a praise name for the prophet. Shembe, personified as a great protective bird, is the 'Eagle beating its wings above our own place at Ekuphakameni'. The royal image of 'the horned viper' is also used but in a specifically Nazarite way: the ferocity is balanced by love and Shembe is praised as 'Horned Viper with the compassion of his fathers'.

The praises of Shembe may have these strong and intentional echoes from the royal praise poems yet there are other techniques used which link the *izibongo* to the wider tradition. One of these is the inclusion of formulae in Shembe's *izibongo*. In Zulu praise-poems where the emphasis is on composition before performance and on memorisation the formulae serve as recognised ways of referring to character and action. Although they appear to show no metrical regularity they often exploit standard stylistic devices, and figurative language which features frequently in the formulae, adds to their aesthetic appeal.¹⁰ Shembe's qualities as inspirational leader, his courage and his great thirst for new converts are conveyed in formulae some of which are expanded so that the specific Nazarite message is clear. In two instances the bare formulae suffice. He is described as

(10) *Usambula 'nkwezane kuvel' ukukhanya,*
Scatterer of the fog and there is light,

and in a line first recorded in 1868 as 'a typical warrior's praise' (H. Callaway, *Nursery Tales, traditions and histories of the Zulus*, London: Trübner, 1868) he is

(12) *Umlamula 'nkunzi ungayeki zibulalane.*
Peacemaker among the bulls instead of leaving them to kill
each other.

In another instance, the expansion significantly shifts the thrust of the single line formula by describing Shembe's evangelising ministry. The formula 'Spear red even at the haft' with its evocation of bloody combat is expanded and turned into an image of evangelism:

(54) *UGaq'elibomvu ngasekuphathweni,*
Kuhlasele ngalo kuMpukunyoni
Ngoba kuhlasele ngeVangeli.
(54) Spear red even at the haft,
You attacked with it at Mpukunyoni
Because you attacked with the Gospel.

The themes of combat and more especially conquest provide another rich source of adaptation for the Shembe bards. Instead of listing the victims of battle, the *izibongo* mark off those who succumbed to his preaching, becoming members and priests of his Church. The imagery of the elements in turmoil - derived from

the fierce electrical storms of the region - has martial connotations in the royal praises, for example in those of Shaka (Cope, 1968: 92, 100). In Shembe's praises the idea of spiritual power dominates; the sky thunders and hurls down bolts of lightning to inspire and convert rather than destroy:

(129) *Lidumela liphos'imbane phezu kwentaba eNhlangaazi.
Lamthath' uGwabhaza kwabakaShangase,
Lamshaya ngamasango esEkuphakameni.*

(129) (The Sky) thundered and hurled down lightning above
Nhlankakazi mountain.

It took hold of Gwabhaza of the Shangases,
It struck him at the gates of Ekuphakameni.

Cattle imagery which features so prominently in the oral poetry of East and Southern Africa is a vital source of reference for composers of *izibongo*. Cattle play an important part in Zulu society and metaphors of bulls and calves in particular permeate the praise-poems. Yet far from becoming hackneyed as might be the case in a written tradition they continue to give aesthetic pleasure. D. Kunene (op.cit) associates cattle imagery in Zulu and Sotho praise poetry with status but in the Zulu praises they also in many cases stand for a general sense of worth and often have additional associations of strength, virility and beauty. Once again the Shembe bards exploit the metaphors for their own purpose while capitalising on their intrinsic appeal. Using the trinity of colours which dominate Zulu thought patterns the praises refer to Shembe as

(81) *(IThole lakithi) eliwaba elihle ngokutshekula kwaNontand-
abathakathi*

(Our Calf) of black, white and red, Graceful Mover of the
Place-of-the Lover-of-wizards.¹¹

Elsewhere he is *Luncokazi*, The Many-Coloured Calf, and a little later in lines which hint at the divine qualities which some of his followers ascribe to him he is

(114) *IThole lakithi kwaNontandabathakathi
Elifihle ngamahlahla enhla komuzi kaJan Dube,¹²
Lithe eliqhamuka laselim'bal' imithathu.*

(114) Our Calf of the Place-of-the-Lover-of-wizards
Which hid among the lopped-off branches at the upper end
of John Dube's home.¹²

Then it appeared in a trinity of colours.

In an essay attacking the emasculating effect of Christianity on African traditions Ali Mazrui¹³ argues that images of virility such as the bull cannot be absorbed into the new religion. Certainly there is no evidence of any such loss or emasculation in the Shembe praises. Here the prophet is at one point seen as a bull caught by a hostile crowd - a reference to resistance met

during his preaching - and elsewhere, in reference to a successful campaign, he is personified as

(138) *INKunzi yakithi emdwayidwa egweb' ezinye emantshwebeni,
INohlasela ngeVangeli kwaMpukunyoni.*

(138) Our Tall Bull which gores the others in the flank,
Warrior with the Gospel at Mpukunyoni.

Not all the imagery of the prophet's *izibongo* is set in the aggressive and martial 'Shakan' mould (see Cope, 1968:50 and R.M. Kunene, *An Analytical Survey of Zulu Poetry*, University of Natal M.A. thesis, 1962:60-107) of so many of the examples cited so far. In an attempt, perhaps, to convey a different aspect of conversion and the softer aspects of Shembe's personality the bards use the metaphors of the hornbills, the heavenly messengers of traditional thought (A.I. Berglund, *Zulu Thought-Patterns and Symbolism* London: Hurst 1976) and a buck:

(143) *I'nsingizi zakhal' esangweni kwaNduli waze wavuka.*

UManaxala aphande esangweni koMhlakazi waze wavuka.

(143) The Hammerheads which called out at the gate of Nduli's
place until he awoke.

Buck which pawed (the ground) at the gate of Mhlakazi's
place until he awoke.

Similarly, in moving from a record of Shembe's life to the attitudes of the Nazarites towards their leader, the imagery the bards employ is more lyrical. Examples i and ii below convey a sense of the mystical and the visionary as they express the Nazarite view of the prophet's role as intermediary at the gates of heaven (see Sundkler, 1961 pp323; 1976 pp200-201). This sense of other-worldly revelation is also present in the third example below. Here a formula line containing the metaphor of the moon is expanded to describe Shembe's risen presence returning to his old haunts and remaining protectively over the gates of Ekuphakameni. There is no precedent in earlier *izibongo* for the gate image which appears so frequently in Shembe's praises. Sundkler (ibid.) mentions its recurrence in the Shembe hymns and its importance in all Zionist dream life. In the praises the gates symbolise entry into a new mode of existence, acceptance by a greater being and protection from the dangers and evils of what lies outside. The use of this key Zionist symbol underlines the visionary dimension in the Shembe *izibongo* which so distinguishes them both from the royal praise-poems and from other contemporary *izibongo*.

Example i

(133) *UPhuhlu njeng' ikhowe emasangweni asEkuphakameni.*

Sudden springer-up like a mushroom at the gates of
Ekuphakameni.

Examples ii and iii

(105) *UMqhibuka njeng' ithanga*

Oqhibuka ngaphakathi ngamasanga asEkuphakameni.

*INyanga bath'ifile kanti basho nje iduke emafini.
 Ugudlagudla i'ntaba zoMkhambathi.
 Uthe ngimbona eshona ngaleziya 'zintaba zakwaMadladla.
 Uthi namhlanje unempilo eside simbona.
 Waseqhamuka esekhazimula esexhophha ngaphakathi kwamasango
 asEkuphakameni.*

- (105) Sudden Blossomer like a pumpkin
 Bursting into flower inside the gates of Ekuphakameni.
 Moon which they said had died but it was only wandering
 in the clouds.
 He skirted the mountains of Mkhambathi
 And then I saw him disappearing in the direction of those
 far off hills.
 Even today he is alive and we behold him constantly.
 He appeared shining, dazzling the eyes, within the gates of
 Ekuphakameni.

The way in which the Shembe *izibongo* resemble and yet differ sharply from the royal praises is also evident in the centripetal and centrifugal tensions contained within them. On the one hand they, like the nineteenth-century royal praises (but unlike the more muted royal praises of Solomon kaDinuzulu d.1933) are intensely nationalistic. They deliberately stress the distinctively Zulu nature of Shembe's Church. Whereas other churchmen are shown worrying over doctrinal niceties:

(26) *Baphenya amadastamente namaBhayibheli abavumela,
 Athi, 'Kubhaliwe kanjalo !'*

(26) They brandished their Testaments and their Bibles in unison saying, 'It was written thus !'

Shembe's Zulu separatism is applauded:

(28) *Uhlamuka simuke siye kithi kwelakwaZulu,
 Ngoba uhlamuka ngevangeli,*

(28) Breaker-Away, let us leave and let us head for our own
 Zululand,
 Because he broke away with the Gospel.

And in a striking compound metaphor which plays on the double meaning of 'Zulu' i.e. (a) 'the heavens' and (b) 'the Zulu people', the exclusive nature of Shembe as a Zulu prophet is expressed:

(70) *ISihlahla esihle somdlebe engasihlalwa 'zinyoni,
 Siyasehlalwa 'zinyoni zeZulu.*

(70) Beautiful Euphorbia Bush on which no (ordinary) birds perch
 It is a perch for the birds of the Zulu.

Yet the praises also touch upon the universality of Christianity. They chronicle Shembe's incessant travelling not only in Zululand and Natal but to the Transkaai and mention is made of a hoped-for journey to the territory of 'Mzilikazi of Mashobane' in present-day Zimbabwe. In lines which stress the supra-national message

of Christianity he is praised as

(135)The Star which brought light to the darkness,
It enlightened all nations beneath the sun.

(135)INKanyezi ekhanyise emnyameni
Yakhanyisela zonk' izizwe phansi komthunzi welanga.

Gerard (*Four African Literatures: Xhosa, Sotho, Zulu, Amharic*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971: 184) refers to Shembe's hymns as a phenomenon of transition from oral to written literature. The *izibongo* represent a different kind of transition in that they show bards working in the oral mode and using an established poetic genre to express new concepts and new ideals. Shembe's praises are therefore both conservative and profoundly innovative. It is perhaps significant that these *izibongo* which are still performed for Shembe's successors¹⁴ were for the most part composed at a time when the Zulu kingship was weak. Certainly the praises of Solomon kaDinuzulu (Isaiah Shembe's royal contemporary) do not bear comparison with the prophet's *izibongo* either in the richness of their language or the boldness of their vision. Although they are in one sense an important religious statement Shembe's *izibongo* can also be seen as serving a function sometimes ascribed to epic: they create a sense of national consciousness, pride and purpose at a time of national crisis and weakness. In their nationalism and their continued success as a vehicle of cultural and religious identity the *izibongo* demonstrate how an oral art form can exploit the past and maintain its relevance to the present.

NOTES

1. See Abner Cohen, 'Political Symbolism', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 8, 1979, pp. 87-113.

2. See S. Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1970. The sources for details of Shembe's is John Dube, *UShembe*, Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter 1936; for an illuminating interpretation of Shembe as a Zionist leader and a great poet see Bengt Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1961 (2nd ed.), also, B. Sundkler, *Zulu Zion*, Uppsala: Gleerups with Oxford University Press 1976.

3. See A.T. Cope, *Izibongo: Zulu Praise-Poems*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1968, especially pp. 27-38; J. Opland, 'Praise Poems as Historical Sources', in C. Saunders and R. Derricourt, eds., *Beyond the Cape Frontier*, London: Longman 1974, pp. 1-37; and J. Opland, 'Imbongi nezibongo: The Xhosa Tribal Poet and the Contemporary Poetic Tradition', *P.M.L.A.*, Vol. 90, 1975, pp.185-208.

4. Janet Hodgson, 'The Genius of Ntsikana', paper read at a conference on Literature and Society in Southern Africa, University

of York, September 1981.

5. See A.C. Jordan, *Towards an African Literature; the Emergence of Literary Form in Xhosa*, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973; A. Mafeje, 'A Chief Visits Town', *Journal of Local Administration Overseas*, 2, 1963, pp.88-99. Also Mafeje, 'The Role of the Bard in a Contemporary African Community', *Journal of African Languages*, IV, 3, 1967, pp. 193-223. E. Mathabela and A.T. Cope, 'Sabela Zulu: A Zulu Praise-poem', *Theoria*, 46, 1976, pp. 17-25. An early example of Zulu *izibongo* for a contemporary figure is the praise-poem for Harriet Colenso composed by Mboza Matshiwulwana, one-time bard of the Hlubi chief Langalibalele. See Alice Werner's translation in *Ilanga laseNatal*, May 31, 1907.

6. Line references are to the 156-line version recited by and checked with Azariah Mthiyane of Emkayideni, Richards Bay, May-August 1976. My thanks also to Thandiwe Mngadi for checking the transcriptions and translations at the University of Zululand, Ngoye in 1976.

7. See Cope, 1968, p95 and D. Rycroft and A.B. Ngcobo, Unpublished transcription of the *izibongo* of Dingane kaSenzangakhona recorded by James Stuart, Zonophone 4176, 1927.

8. G. Innes, 'Formulae in Mandinka Epic: their affective function', in *The Oral Performance in Africa*, ed. I. Okpewho, Ibadan and London: Ibadan University Press and Longman, forthcoming 1983.

9. See D. Kunene, 'Metaphor and Symbolism in the Heroic Poetry of Southern Africa', in *African Folklore*, ed. R. Dorson, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979, pp.295-318.

10. See Gunner, 'Wand or Walking Stick?: the formula and its use in Zulu praise-poems', in Okpewho op.cit.

11. One of Shembe's houses at Ekuphakameni. He is said to have converted and therefore loved many wizards.

12. The Zulu writer and politician who was also Shembe's biographer and neighbour. See note 2.

13. A. Mazrui, 'Phallic Symbols in Politics and War: an African Perspective', *Journal of African Studies*, Vol.1, part 1 (1974) pp. 40-69.

14. The Nazareth Church has now split into two sections following a succession dispute after the death of Johannes Galilee (J.G.) Shembe in 1977.