The organisation and layout of Zulu military homesteads (*amakhanda*)

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Abstract

The nineteenth century witnessed the spread and development of a number of northern Nguni kingdoms throughout southern Africa. Central to the success and stability of these kingdoms was the regimental system. A critical aspect of this system was the military settlements or *amakhanda* (singular *ikhanda*). These settlements provided housing to soldiers, but also acted as centres of royal authority. Due to the specific function and nature of these settlements, they had a settlement organisation and layout that differed from that of a family homestead (*umuzi*). This study identifies a number of differences that may enable archaeologists to distinguish between amakhanda and other settlements. An *ikhanda* was organised into four structural sections, each of which was used for very specific purposes: the central enclosure; regimental housing; the great *isigodlo*; and the *isigodlo*. *Amakhanda* represent a fundamental change that had occurred among the northern Nguni, a change that ultimately resulted in the formation of the Zulu kingdom and the reshaping of the socio-political organisation of southern Africa.

Introduction

The rise of the Zulu kingdom, as well as the large-scale disruptions that cumulated in its development, have long been a topic of research. The rise and spread of the various northern Nguni kingdoms during the nineteenth century, among them the Zulu and Ndebele, forever altered the social-political distribution and organisation of communities living within southern Africa. Central to the success and stability of these kingdoms was the regimental system or *ibutho (*pl. *amabutho)*, with its accompanying military settlements called *amakhanda (*sing. *ikhanda*). During this period both the *ikhanda*, as well as the normal family homestead, were utilised. However, the organisation and layout of an *ikhanda* differed from those of a normal family homestead (*umuzi*). This article provides a settlement model for these *amakhanda* to assist in their archaeological identification and interpretation.

Background and function of the *ikhanda* settlement

The culturally distinct group known today as the Nguni, originated around the fifteenth century AD (Maggs 1989; Laband 1995). The term derives from the word *abaNguni*, a name that these communities used when referring to themselves (Bryant 1965). By the end of the fifteenth century, the Nguni occupied the entire area of northern KwaZulu-Natal, expanding inland from the coast (Maggs 1989; Mitchell 2002; Huffman, 2007) and continued to move southward, crossing the Mtamvuma River and entering the northern part of the Eastern Cape Province (Huffman, 2004). Although the exact reasons for these migrations are unknown, it appears that they were likely due to an increase in regional population and ecological pressures (Guy 1994). As a result of these southerly migrations, the Nguni are divided between those who stayed in the north (northern or Natal Nguni) and those who moved further south (southern or Cape Nguni) (Bryant 1965; Hammond-Tooke 1993). Today, the southern Nguni constitute many groups, such as the Xhosa, Thembu, Mpondo, Bhaca and Mfengu, while the northern Nguni of southern Africa constitute the Zulu, Swazi and Ndebele (Matabele) (Bryant 1965; Hammond-Tooke 1993). Historically the northern Nguni included far more communities than mentioned above, with all but the Swazi and Ndebele being incorporated into the Zulu kingdom (Figure 1).

The nineteenth century saw the development of more centralised chiefdoms within the region of modern KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa (Maggs 1989; Bonner, 2008; Wright, 2008). Central to the consolidation of political power within these chiefdoms were the age sets called *amabutho* (sing. *ibutho*), meaning a regiment or a person who is part of a regiment (de Schryver 2010: 68). The *amabutho* provided the rulers of these emerging chiefdoms with a large military and labour force (Krige 1965: 262, 266–267). Previously, the employment of circumcision schools had dictated that initiates be kept separate from the rest of the population while undergoing initiation. When circumcision was abandoned (for unknown reasons) by the northern Nguni sometime in the eighteenth century, these schools developed into the *amabutho* used by groups such as the Zulu (Krige 1965: 261).

These alterations resulted in two key differences to the initiation practices as used by the Zulu kingdom. Firstly, the length of military service was increased to the age of forty and individuals who had passed that age could still be told to rejoin their *ibutho* if there was
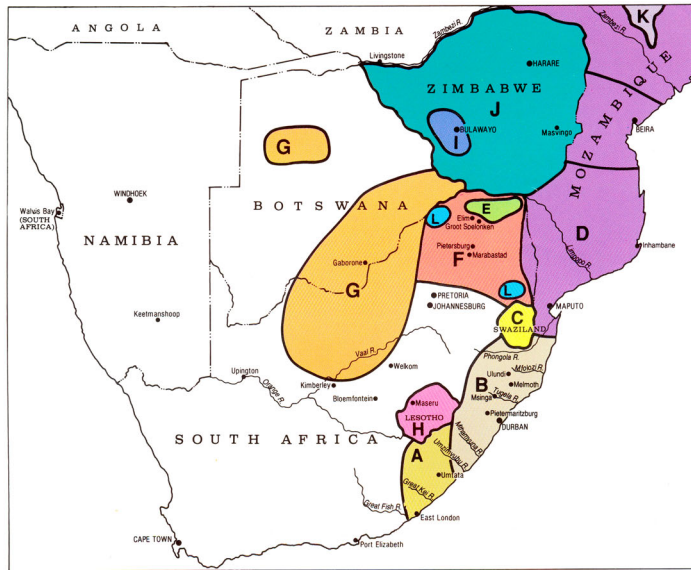
Figure 1. Southern African cultural groupings (after Hammond-Tooke 1993: 14).

need (Krige 1965: 264–266; Omer-Cooper 1966: 24–48; Knight 1995: 32–35; Laband 1995: 23–25). As the practice of keeping initiates separate from the general population was maintained (Krige 1965: 261), initiation practices had to be adapted to accommodate the large number of individuals undergoing initiation. Furthermore, as the primary function of these youths was now military service how and where they were housed became a matter of state importance. Therefore, which regimental commanders (and their regiments) were stationed at which *amakhanda* (Figure 2) is likely to have reflected both internal (administrative) requirements as well as political needs. It was the combination of these aspects that resulted in the *ikhanda* settlement obtaining its specific organisation as well as its central role in the social-political organisation and stability of the Zulu kingdom.

Regimental system

A detailed description of the northern Nguni regimental system can be found in van der Merwe (2014) and only a summary is therefore given here. As mentioned above, *amakhanda* were used to house the soldiers of the *amabutho*. Both the nature and organisation of these *amakhanda* were thus influenced by the function and organisation of these *amabutho*. This system was called *ibutho* among the Nguni, *libutfo* among the Swazi, *mophato* among the Sotho-Tswana and *libandla* among the Ngoni and is referred to in the literature as regimental groups, age regimental groups, age sets or just as age groupings (Kuper 1954; Hughes 1956; Hoernlé 1962; Krige 1965; Omer-Cooper 1966; Hedges 1978; Hamilton 1985; Kuper 1986; Knight 1994; Knight 1995; Laband 1995). Although the term *ibutho* refers to a regiment and not the system, it is still sometimes used within the literature when referring to the system as well. These regimental groups are found throughout southern Africa, except among the historical Shona (Kuper 1954) and constituted a
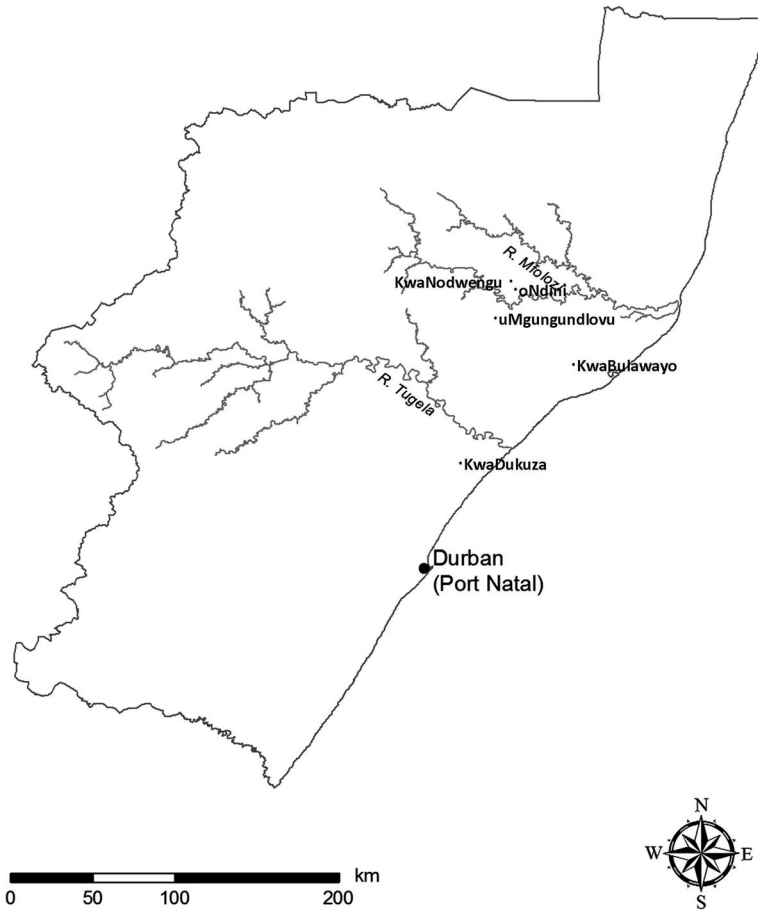
Figure 2. Location of nineteenth-century Zulu royal *amakhanda* discussed in the text.

system based on the grouping together of youths (initiates) based either on age or group affiliation. When a youth (male or female) was of the required age, something that differed from one group to another but was usually around 13–16 years, they underwent initiation (Hughes 1956: 9–19). When this process was over, youths were seen as being adults and were allowed to wed and start a family. During their time in a regiment, they were available to local chiefs/rulers as a source of labour and soldiers (Kuper 1954; Hughes 1956; Hoernlé 1962; Krige 1965; Omer-Cooper 1966; Hedges 1978; Hamilton 1985; Kuper 1986; Knight 1994; Knight 1995; Laband 1995). The marshal aspect of this system eventually came to dominate the northern Nguni model, resulting in prominent differences between it and related expressions among Sotho-Tswana and southern Nguni speakers.

Among the northern Nguni, the main function of the *amabutho* was to act as soldiers for the chief and later for different kings. Although circumcision was no longer practised among the northern Nguni, the reward for service in an *ibutho* remained the right to be seen as an adult and to marry. Initiates from all parts of a ruler's territory were grouped together to form a single *ibutho* (Krige 1965: 36). This practice removed any regional loyalties found among the initiates and replaced them with loyalty to the king (Knight

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1995; Laband 1995). Despite the abandonment of circumcision by the northern Nguni, the practice of constructing a circumcision lodge was maintained. However, due to the new function and nature of the *amabutho*, these circumcision lodges were modified and ultimately developed into the *amakhanda*. An *ikhanda's* location was determined by the king to meet the political and administrative needs at the time and acted as an extension of his authority throughout the kingdom. The regimental system was divided between boy and girl age sets, called *ontanga* (sing. *untanga*) (Krige 1965: 38; de Schryver 2010). Members of a female *ibutho* could also live within the *isigodlo* of an *ikhanda*. The term *isigodlo* does, however, need clarification as it has multiple uses within the ethnographic and historical accounts. It is primarily used when reference is made to the upper part of an *ikhanda*. However, it was a common practice in the nineteenth century to name an area after its function or after the people who lived there (Stuart and Malcolm 1986: 24–25). As a result, since the women who lived within the *isigodlo* section of an *ikhanda* were members of a female *ibutho*, the term has frequently been used when reference is made to female *amabutho* (Webb and Wright 1976: 44–45). However, an *ibutho* could be either male or female (Krige 1965: 38), with some members present within the *isigodlo* of the *amakhanda*. Although all female *amabutho* were seen as being symbolically under the king's protection until they wed, only a few would live within the different *izigodlo*. Furthermore, *isigodlo* (pl. *izigodlo*) could also mean 'royal kraal' (de Schryver 2010: 106), indicating its close association with the king and his position. As a result, even though the term is sometimes used in reference to a female *ibutho*, it primarily refers to the members of a female *ibutho* living within the *isigodlo* section of an *ikhanda*. An *isigodlo* was organised according to a three-tiered hierarchy that included the biological relatives of the king, women selected during the annual first fruits ceremony or sent to join the *isigodlo* by their fathers to gain the king's favour, the daughters of men executed by the king or of others who had angered him and orphans. Membership of the *isigodlo* resulted in a high social standing as all members of the *isigodlo* were seen as forming part of the king's family and were often called the 'king's women'.

Structural layout of an *ikhanda*

Although the *ikhanda* is found among most of the northern Nguni, the following model describes that version as used by the Zulu kingdom since each of the different northern Nguni kingdoms had their own *ikhanda* variations (van der Merwe 2014). The model was developed by combining archaeological excavations of known *amakhanda* such as uMgungundlovu (Parkington and Cronin 1979; Plug and Roodt 1990; Roodt 1992, 1993) and oNdini (Rawson 1985, 1987; Watson and Watson 1990), ethnographic studies of the Zulu, historical sources (Webb and Wright 1976, 1979, 1982, 1986, 2001), the accounts of travellers/missionaries (Drummond 1875; Corry 1926; Smith 1955; Holden 1963; Bird 1965; Gardiner 1966; Baldwin 1967; Booth 1967; Isaacs 1970; Stuart and Malcolm 1986; Bourquin 1986; Grey 1992; Merrett 1995) in which they describe *amakhanda* such as kwaBulawayo, kwaDukuza, uMgungundlovu, Nodwengu and oNdini (Table 1), as well as other historiographic sources. An *ikhanda* can be divided into four different sections namely: *isigodlo*, the great *isigodlo*, regimental section and the cattle enclosure (Figure 3). This model incorporates descriptions off multiple *amakhanda* illustrating slight variations amongst them.

Table 1: Zulu monarchs and their associated capitals

Zulu monarch	Capital (*ikhanda*)
Shaka kaSenzangakona (±1816–1826)	KwaBulawayo, KwaGibixegu; KwaDukuza
Dingane kaSenzangakona (1826–1840)	uMgungundlovu
Mpanda kaSenzangakona (1840–1872)	KwaNodwengu
Cetshwayo kaMpanda (1872–1879)	oNdini (I, II and III)

1:   Great *isigodlo*
2:   White *isigodlo*
3:   Black *isigodlo*
4a: Senior *induna*'s hut
4b: Second most senior *induna*'s hut
5:   Regimental soldiers hut (organised in a linear pattern)
6:   Double gated with gate guards huts
7:   Central cattle enclosure (Great enclosure) which may have smaller enclosures within
8a: King's bathing and meeting area
8b: Secondary area were the king had meetings
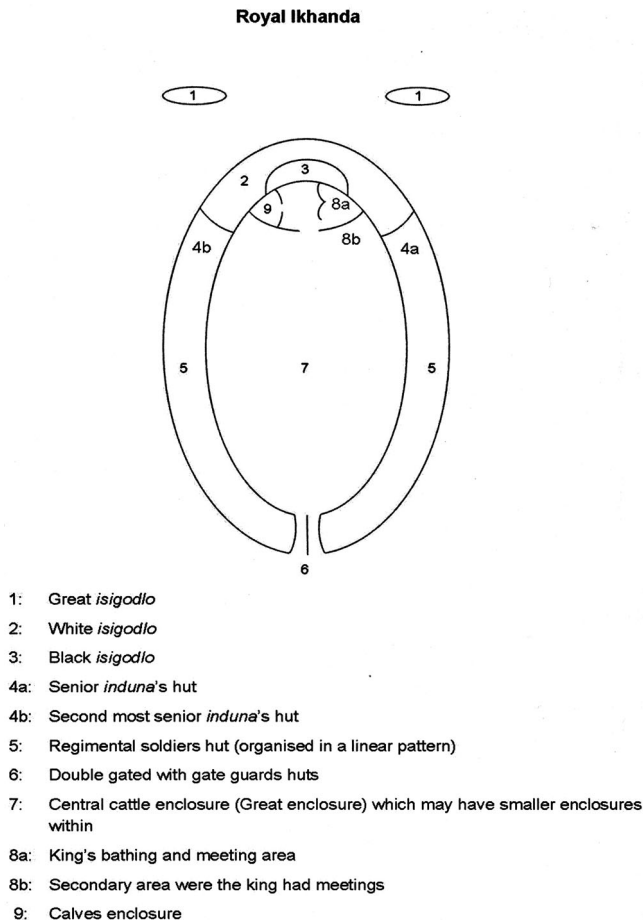9:   Calves enclosure

Figure 3. Diagram of the spatial organisation of a Zulu royal *ikhanda*.

Isigodlo

Two aspects need to be considered when examining the *isigodlo* section (Figure 4), namely its social organisation and how this impacted the organisation of the area in the settlement called the *isigodlo*. We describe both of these here.

Social organisation

As mentioned earlier, an *isigodlo* was organised into a three level hierarchy. Occupying the highest level of the hierarchy were the *amakhosikazi* (sing. *inkosikazi*), followed by the

ondlunkulu (sing. *undlunkulu)* with the *izigqila* (sing. *isigqila*) occupying the lowest level (Gardiner 1966; Webb and Wright 1976). It is unclear to what extent this hierarchy was visible outside the *isigodlo* itself, as interaction with any of the *isigodlo* women by the general population was punishable with death (Cory 1926). Furthermore, the terms *inkosikazi* and *undlunkulu* are frequently used interchangeably within the ethnographic and historical accounts (Webb and Wright 1982: 152). One informant, Mkando kaDhlova, also mentioned that all the women of the *isigodlo* were called *undlunkulu* (Webb and Wright 1982: 153). A large degree of inconsistency can therefore be found in the source material regarding the names used for the individual groups constituting the *isigodlo*. It would be strange for this to be so if there were clear and easy ways to distinguish the different members of the *isigodlo* from each other. Considering the secretive nature of the *isigodlo* and the general population's tendency to avoid contact with them, it might be that only individuals in close contact with the *isigodlo* would have been able to distinguish its different members from each other.

Inkosikazi was the term used to denote 'principal wife of a chief or headman; applied by courtesy to any one of the chief's wives' (Doke and Vilakazi 1948: 405) or 'wife, madam or lady' (de Schryver 2010: 91), including the aunts of the king as well as his father's wives. *Undlunkulu* can be defined as a 'girl or girls of royal blood' or 'maid or maids of honour in a royal household, sent to the king as tribute by prominent tribal headmen, and waiting on the king's wives, until married with the king's permission to some high office' (Doke and Vilakazi 1948: 541), as well as 'member of the royal family' (de Schryver 2010: 243). Lastly, *isigqila* (pl. *izigqila*) can be defined as a "female servant, menial, female household slave (girls originally without responsible relatives)' (Doke and Vilakazi 1948: 263). Each level of this hierarchy had its own duties and responsibilities.

In his account, Gardiner (1966) provides a description of not only the nature of the *amakhosikazi*, but also of their function within the larger system:

> 'The appellation Incosa-casi [*inkosikazi*] (literally female chief) is applied to all the women of high rank, many of whom, from their practice of polygamy, are to be met with in every part of the country. These, as well as the immediate relations of the king, are generally placed as pensioners, one or two together, in the different military towns where they preside and are particularly charged with the distribution of provisions' (Gardiner 1966: 146).

The *amakhosikazi* can therefore be seen as occupying a position similar in power and social standing to that of an *induna* (pl. *izinduna*), i.e. the commander of an *ibutho*. This equality of position was, however, limited to the settlement where the *amakhosikazi* oversaw all the activities of the *isigodlo* (Cory 1926; Gardiner 1966; Booth 1967; Bourquin 1986; Merrett 1995). There seems to be some disagreement within the historical accounts as to the precise nature of the responsibilities of the *amakhosikazi*. Some sources like Ross (Grey 1992) state that they did not have any duties and that all duties (cooking, cleaning, working in the fields etc.) were the responsibility of the under-wives or *ondlunkulu*. Others like Owen (Cory 1926), Champion (Booth 1967) and Barter (Merrett 1995) state that they were responsible for brewing beer and cooking for the king, as well as cultivating the king's fields (Cory 1926; Booth 1967; Webb and Wright 1976; Merrett 1995). This conflicting perception over the role of the *amakhosikazi* can possibly be attributed to the fact that the social ranking of the *isigodlo* was not prevalent outside it. As such, it was not easy for European visitors and informants to distinguish between the different members of

the *isigodlo*. James Stuart's interviews with three Zulu informants (Lunguza kaMpukane, Mkando kaDhlova and Ndukwana kaMbengwana) illustrate this point as they tended to use *undlunkulu* to describe both the *amakhosikazi* and the *ondlunkulu* (Webb and Wright 1976: 304, 339; Webb and Wright, 1982: 152, 162; Webb and Wright 1986: 347). In another interview, Mkando kaDhlova also stated that 'the *isigodlo* had no distinguishing mark about them' (Webb and Wright 1982: 152), further illustrating the difficulty in distinguishing between the different members of the *isigodlo*.

The second level of the social hierarchy was occupied by the *ondlunkulu* and constituted the largest portion of the women to inhabit the *isigodlo*. This group can be divided into three sections. The first comprises women selected by the king during the annual first fruits ceremony. Second were the daughters and other female relatives of the king who did not form part of the *amakhosikazi,* while lastly came women sent to the king to form part of his *isigodlo* or others who were captured during raids (Drummond 1875; Cory 1926; Smith 1955; Gardiner 1966; Booth 1967; Webb and Wright 1976; Bourquin 1986; Stuart and Malcolm 1986; Grey 1992; Merrett 1995). Despite the differences in social and political standing between the *ondlunkulu* and *amakhosikazi*, their daily functions appear to have been similar. Both were responsible for attending to the needs of the king as well as tending to his fields (Bourquin 1986; Webb and Wright 1979). However, the *ondlunkulu* never had the same political authority as the *amakhosikazi*. If an *ondlunkulu* girl could no longer bear children, the king might decide to elevate her to the position of an *inkosikazi*. The similarities in the responsibilities of the *ondlunkulu* and *amakhosikazi* would have made distinguishing between them difficult. An interview with Lunguza kaMpukane, documented in the James Stuart archive, further shows that it was difficult to distinguish between the *ondlunkulu* and *amakhosikazi*:

'What Lunguza is most shaky about is the inside of the white and black *isigodlo*. He says the *undlunkulu* occupied both and does not know why one was given one name and the other another' (Webb and Wright 1976: 339).

The lowest level of the social hierarchy was occupied by the *izigqila*. As this status was held by either orphans or the daughters of men executed by the king, it meant that they occupied a level lower than the rest of the *isigodlo* women. One can argue that since the other women were chosen to be part of the *isigodlo*, and often came from important family lineages, they would automatically have seen themselves as being of higher status than these 'orphans' whose father had either angered the king or died for another reason (Webb and Wright 1986). James Stuart's interview with Mkando ka Dlova provides a clear description of the nature of the *izigqila*. He stated that:

'Nothing in the way of slavery as ordinarily understood used to go on among the Zulu people. There were, however, what were known as the *isigqila* i.e. maidservants. The *isigqila* were attached to the *mndhlunkulu* [*undlunkulu*] and were daughters of men who had been for some reason killed off by the kings' orders. Children of such men were called *isizi*, and became *isigqila* at one or other of the royal kraals. … As regarding duties, the maidservants were well treated; they might go and cultivate with the other girls in the gardens [agricultural fields], they fetched water, gathered firewood, cooked and had also to empty the chamber pots used by the princesses and other girls of high position. Mkando saw *isigqila* at Mgungundlovu' (Webb and Wright 1982: 162).

Although the primary occupants of the *isigodlo* were women, a few men also lived within it and were called *isinceku* (pl. *izinceku*) meaning 'steward, butler, attendant' (Doke and Vilakazi 1948: 529; Webb and Wright 1976; Bourquin 1986). They were the manservants and messengers of the king. The king's body servant also had a hut within the king's section of the black *isigodlo* (Bourquin 1986), whereas the rest of the *izinceku* slept outside the huts of the women (Webb and Wright 1976).

The women of the *isigodlo* could be distinguished from the rest of the female population in a number of ways. One of the most visible was by the colour and type of beads that they used as ornamentation. Although all women in the kingdom wore beads, certain colours were reserved for the *isigodlo* and the king's use (Drummond 1875; Cory 1926; Smith 1955; Gardiner 1966; Booth 1967; Isaacs 1970; Stuart and Malcolm 1986; Grey 1992; Merrett 1995). These colours did not remain constant, with changes being apparent from the reign of Shaka kaSenzangakona (1816–1828) through that of Dingane kaSenzangakona (1828–1840) to that of Mpanda kaSenzangakona (1840–1872). Despite these differences, green, yellow and red seems to have been generally reserved for the king and the *isigodlo* (Drummond 1875; Cory 1926; Smith 1955; Gardiner 1966; Baldwin 1967; Booth 1967; Isaacs 1970; Stuart and Malcolm 1986; Grey 1992; Merrett 1995). Likewise, the dresses worn by the *isigodlo* were also adorned with large amounts of beads. The historical accounts furthermore mention the extensive use of brass as ornamentation among the women of the *isigodlo* (Gardiner 1966).

Structural organisation

There are two main sections within the *isigodlo*, namely the black *isigodlo* (Figure 4:2a, 4:2b) and the white *isigodlo* (Figure 4:1) (Drummond 1875; Cory 1926; Smith 1955;
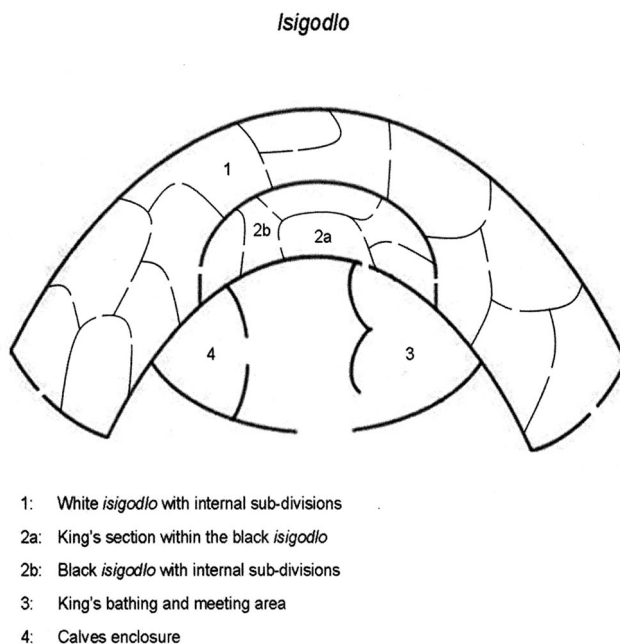
Isigodlo

1:   White *isigodlo* with internal sub-divisions
2a: King's section within the black *isigodlo*
2b: Black *isigodlo* with internal sub-divisions
3:   King's bathing and meeting area
4:   Calves enclosure

Figure 4. Diagram of the spatial organisation of the *isigodlo*.

Gardiner 1966; Booth 1967; Isaacs 1970; Webb and Wright 1979, 1986; Bourquin 1986; Stuart and Malcolm 1986; Grey 1992; Merrett 1995). The black *isigodlo* can be further sub-divided into two sections housing the *amakhosikazi* (Figure 4:2b) and that used by the king (Figure 4:2a). The *ondlunkulu* and *izigqila* lived in the white section. Each of these sections was further divided into smaller subsections, triangular in shape and containing between three and six huts (Drummond 1875; Cory 1926; Smith 1955; Gardiner 1966; Booth 1967; Isaacs 1970; Webb and Wright 1979, 1986; Bourquin 1986; Stuart and Malcolm 1986; Grey 1992; Merrett 1995). These compartments were separated from each other by a fence measuring between 1.2 and 1.8 m high,[1] which also separated the black and white *isigodlo* from each other. The size of the *isigodlo* ranged from 365–548 m wide and 54–182 m across (Drummond 1875; Cory 1926; Smith 1955; Gardiner 1966; Booth 1967; Bourquin 1986; Stuart and Malcolm 1986; Grey 1992; Merrett 1995).

This large variation in size suggests that the size of an *isigodlo* depended on situational requirements. The number of women forming part of the *isigodlo* ranged from 400 to 600 at the capitals to between 20 and 60 at smaller *amakhanda*[2] (Drummond 1875; Cory 1926; Smith 1955; Gardiner 1966; Booth 1967; Stuart and Malcolm 1986; Grey 1992; Merrett 1995). Of the 400-600 found at the capitals, 70-150 would have been *amakhosikazi*, with the rest being *ondlunkulu* and *izigqila*. Only two *amakhosikazi* were present at smaller *ikhanda* (although the account of Catherine Barter mentions 20; Merrett 1995). The high number of *amakhosikazi* mentioned by Barter was most probably a result of her not being able to distinguish between the different members of the *isigodlo* (Cory 1926; Gardiner 1966; Booth 1967; Stuart and Malcolm 1986; Grey 1992; Merrett 1995).

Variations in hut design can be seen between the white and black *isigodlo*. Huts constructed within the white *isigodlo* were of similar size and design, with the open spaces found between the huts also being of similar length. In contrast, huts constructed within the black *isigodlo* showed variation in size and design with the distances between them also varying. These variations may have been a means for individuals to display their higher status when compared to those living within the white *isigodlo* (Drummond 1875; Cory 1926; Smith 1955; Gardiner 1966; Booth 1967; Parkington and Cronin 1979; Rawlinson 1985; Stuart and Malcolm 1986; Grey 1992; Roodt 1993; Merrett 1995). Within the black *isigodlo* was a hut called the *eNkateni*, which housed all the sacred artefacts associated with kingly authority, i.e. his *inkatha* (an emblem symbolising the unity of the people) and the nation's *inhlendla* (a ceremonial barbed assegai or axe) (Bourquin 1986).

The king's section was separated from the rest of the black *isigodlo* in the same way as the black *isigodlo* was separated from the white (Bird 1965: 204; Booth 1967: 34; Stuart and Malcolm 1986: 24; Grey 1992: 119). There is some slight variation in the historical accounts as to where the king's hut was located. The majority of sources agree that it was located in the black *isigodlo*, although its location might vary between different *amakhanda*. Huts constructed in the king's section also showed variations in size, design and spacing with a large open area being located in front of the king's hut. In this open area, the king would have held council (with occasional trials), as well as meeting visitors who were in his favour (Drummond 1875; Cory 1926; Smith 1955; Gardiner 1966; Booth 1967; Stuart and Malcolm 1986; Grey 1992; Merrett 1995).

Guard huts were placed at the entrances to the *isigodlo* with the guards sometimes being called janissaries by Europeans (Booth 1967) in reference to those guarding imperial

Ottoman harems (Cory 1926; Gardiner 1966; Booth 1967; Merrett 1995). Women of the *isigodlo* were only allowed to leave it while doing chores and had to return to their huts every night. It was therefore the guards' responsibility to keep them in and any unauthorised person out. Entering the *isigodlo* without the king's permission was punishable by death (Drummond 1875; Cory 1926; Gardiner 1966; Booth 1967; Bourquin 1986). Besides the huts used as living areas, there were also a number of kitchen and storage huts (with the king having his own), along with shield storage huts, although the latter were also found throughout the rest of the settlement (Cory 1926). Lastly, a portion of the large upper central cattle enclosure also formed part of the *isigodlo*. Within it calves had separate enclosures (Figure 4:4), with the king having a small enclosure area (Figure 4:3) where he bathed and sometimes held meetings (Cory 1926; Gardiner 1966; Booth 1967).

An interesting feature found only within the black *isigodlo* of oNdini, the *ikhanda* of king Cetshwayo kaMpanda (ruled 1872–1879), was a square four room brick structure (Bourquin 1986; van Schalkwyk 1999). Called the *indlu mnyoma* (black house), it served as living quarters and a meeting place for the king, although he still had a private hut. Within the black *isigodlo* lived two *amakhosikazi* who had the keys to the building and were called the keepers of the keys (Bourquin 1986). This detail illustrates how, by the second half of the nineteenth century, the Zulu had started to incorporate Western architectural styles and designs into their settlement patterns.

Great isigodlo

The area of an *ikhanda* that is termed great *isigodlo* in this model has a number of limitations. In some of the sources, especially the James Stuart archives, a name given to this area is Beje/Bheje or also iBeja (which was also the name given to the *isigodlo* in general at uMgungundlovu; Webb and Wright 1976: 28 and 1986: 370). Another name given to the great *isigodlo* at uMgungundlovu was *eNgome* (Webb and Wright 1979: 91). Furthermore, it appears that the names used for the great *isigodlo* also varied between the different kings as was the case at oNdini where they were called *Zinkimbini* and *Mapotweni*, the *ikhanda* Qwageni, where they were called *Zinhlendhleni*, and at *Babangibane*, where they were called *Nketa* (Baleni kaSilwana, interviewed in Webb and Wright 1976: 24). In another interview informants listed another set of names that were also used to describe the great *isigodlo* (Webb and Wright 1976: 24). In an interview with James Stuart, Mkando kaDhlova, whom we have already mentioned, stated that 'the great *isigodlo* at Nodwengu, Umlambonwenya, Emdumezulu, Esiklebeni … It [homesteads above uMgungundlovu] was not an *umuzi* but the great *isigodlo*' (Webb and Wright 1982: 149–150). This interview illustrates the historical use of the term 'great *isigodlo*' to describe the homesteads located at the upper end of *amakhanda*. It is therefore clear that no single name was used when referring to these homesteads. In order to keep the model as inclusive as possible, none of the specific names, such as Bheje, will be used here when referring to the complex of homesteads located at *amakhanda*. From the interviews recorded by James Stuart it appears that each individual homestead in this complex might have had its own name, with these names also being unique to each *ikhanda*. Consequently, a more generic term needs to be used to avoid confusion when discussing these complexes at multiple *amakhanda*. We choose to use the term 'great *isigodlo*' as this

illustrates its close association with the *isigodlo* and the king, as well as avoiding any possible confusion among specific *amakhanda*.

The great *isigodlo* was found at all the royal *amakhanda*. Van der Merwe (2014) describes the existence of three different variations of the Zulu *ikhanda*, each having a specific function. The capitals (including those used in winter) were always royal *amakhanda* and served as the king's residence. Divisional *amakhanda* acted as divisional administrative centres and were occupied by important *izinduna*. The last variation was regimental *amakhanda*, which acted as housing for specific *amabutho*. These *amakhanda* were temporary and were moved around the kingdom as was required. A royal *ikhanda* was the largest version, followed by the divisional with the smallest being the regimental. Regimental *amakhanda* appear to have been similar in size to an *umuzi*, which may make them difficult to locate in the archaeological record (van der Merwe 2014).

As can be seen in Figure 5, the great *isigodlo* had either a linear (Parkington and Cronin 1979; Roodt 1992) or circular (Holden 1963; Ritter 1995) hut construction pattern. A great *isigodlo* could consist of either two or three small circular homesteads as can be seen in sketches of uMgungundlovu (Holden 1963; Gardiner 1966; Ritter 1995) and Congella (Gardiner 1966). Survey of uMgungundlovu (Parkington and Cronin 1979) found the remains of eight hut floors arranged in a linear pattern. Subsequently, Roodt (1992) also found evidence for partitions within the huts that indicate that two of these huts
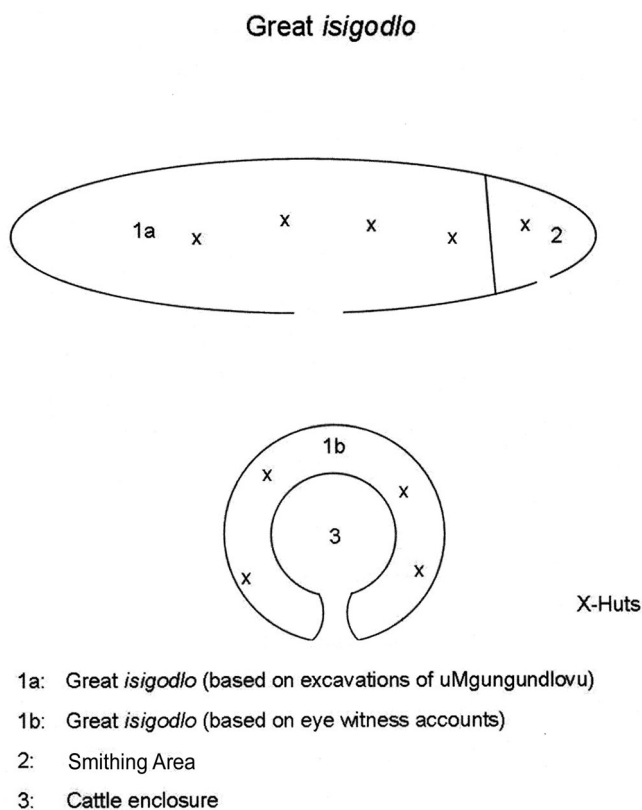

Figure 5. Diagram of the spatial organisation of the great *isigodlo*.

were used for initiation purposes. The ethnographic accounts of James Stewart support these findings and add the detail that the children of the *isigodlo* women were also born in this area (Webb and Wright 1976: 45).

Each small homestead that formed part of the great *isigodlo* had a different function. The linear or circular arrangement of huts found within the great *isigodlo* may thus have depended on the specific function of each homestead. It is also known that metal (brass) working occurred in this area (Cory 1926; Booth 1967: Webb and Wright 1976: 24) as confirmed by survey and excavations at both uMgungundlovu and oNdini that found slag and tuyères in this area (Parkington and Cronin 1979; Rawlinson 1985, 1987; Roodt 1993). That metalworking occurred in this area is further supported by both historical and ethnographic accounts that also inform us that cattle, as well as grain, were kept within this area (Booth 1967: 36; Webb and Wright 1976: 24). We can therefore say for certain that both smithing and initiation/child birth occurred in the great *isigodlo* and that it was used to keep cattle and to store grain. The question remains, however, as to how all these activities were accommodated within this space.

By combining the information provided in surveys and excavation reports of uMgungundlovu (Parkington and Cronin 1979; Roodt 1992, 1993) and oNdini (Rawson 1985, 1987), first-hand accounts of Champion (Booth 1967) and Owen (Cory 1926) and ethnographic studies (Webb and Wright 1976, 1979, 1982, 1986, 2001) with the sketches (Figure 6) of Holden (1963) and Ritter (1995), it is possible to reconstruct the multiple functions of the great *isigodlo*. The excavations, in particular, found evidence for smithing, cattle keeping and grain storage, all three of which are indicated on Holden's (1963) sketch.[3]

The central homestead (Figure 6) had a linear hut placement pattern and was surrounded by a circular fence. This homestead was used for initiation/child birth as well as for smithing (Webb and Wright 1976; Parkington and Cronin 1976; Roodt 1992). The purpose of the circular fence and enclosure was to keep the cattle used by the individuals within this homestead. To the left of this central homestead was another homestead that housed 'special' cattle, although the origin of this designation is a matter of dispute within the historical and ethnographic accounts. One view is that they descended from the original stock owned by the Zulu when Shaka became king (Webb and Wright 2001: 373). Another possibility may be that they were cattle selected from the herd for a specific function, such as a gift or for a ritual, and were kept there instead of in the main livestock enclosure. To the right of the central homestead was another homestead used to store the king's grain that was harvested from his own fields and was used by
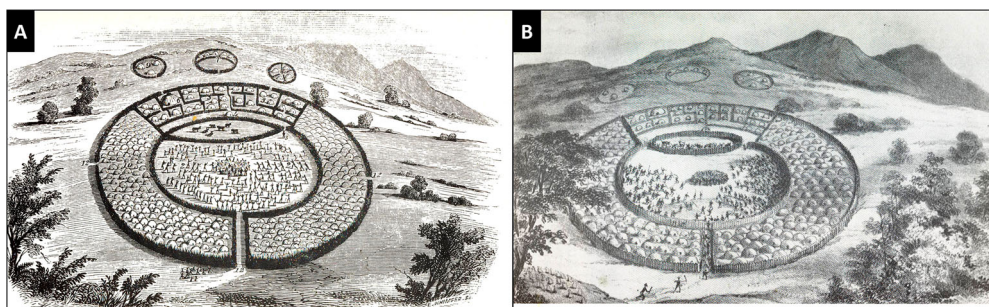

Figure 6. Sketches of uMgungundlovu: left Holden (1963); right Ritter (1995).

him and the *isigodlo* (Webb and Wright 1976, 2001: 373). In cases where only two home-steads were present, the cattle and grain would most likely have been kept in the same homestead. As a result, the great *isigodlo* had a circular appearance with a linear hut placement in the central one and a circular placement in the two adjacent ones. However, further research is needed in order to determine whether all great *izigodlo* shared this structural layout. The existence of the great *isigodlo* and its presence at *amakhanda* is further supported by Gardiner's sketches of uMgungundlovu and Congella (also spelled kwaKhangela) (Figure 7).

Regimental section

The regimental section (Figure 8) comprises the rest of the *ikhanda* settlement. This section includes the right and left sides of the settlement (Figure 8:2a, 8:2b), as well as the main central enclosure or great enclosure (Figure 8:5). The great enclosure could be further divided into a number of secondary enclosures (Figure 8:4), located on either side of the main entrance to the settlement. The two main parts of the regimental
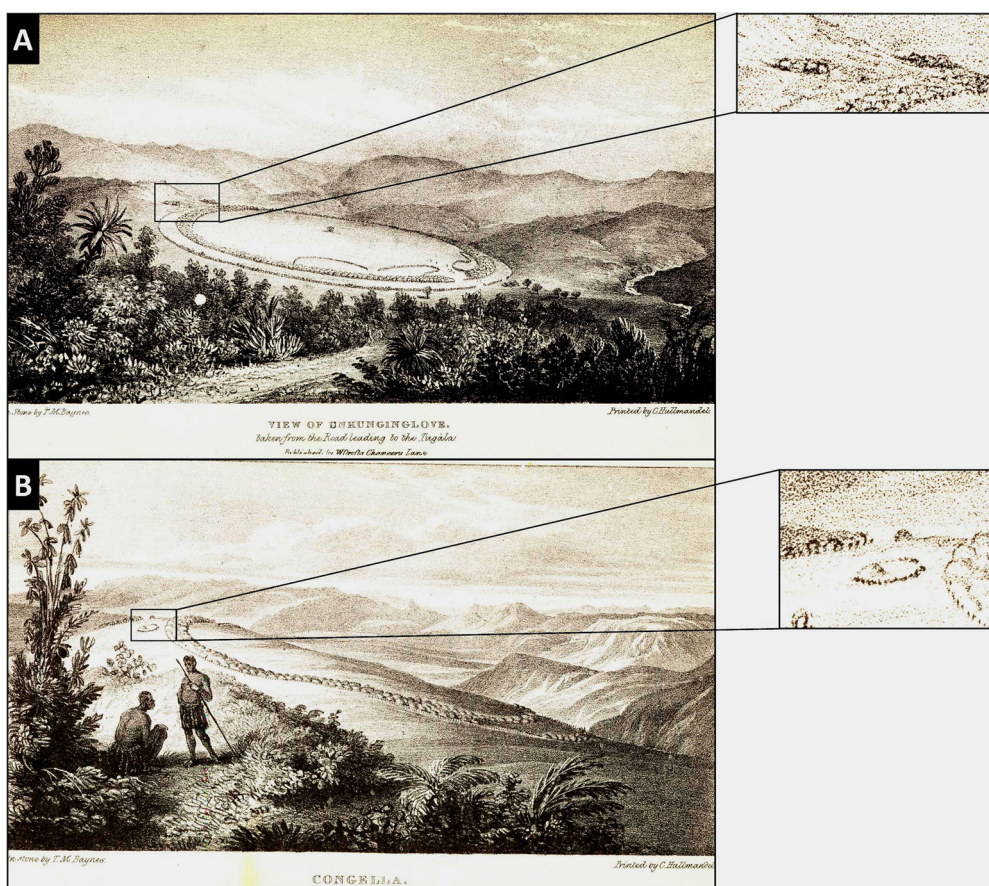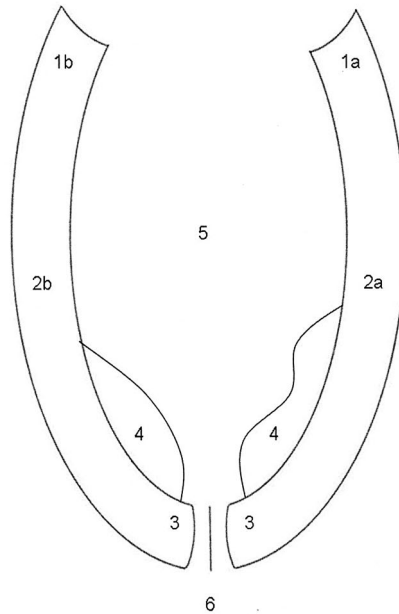

Figure 7. Gardiner's (1966) sketches of two Zulu *amakhanda* indicating the presence of the Great *Izigodlo*: top uMgungundlovu; bottom Congella.

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Regimental Section

1a: Commander hut (most senior)

1b: Commander hut (second most senior)

2a: Right side regiments (most senior)

2b: Left hand side (second most senior)

3: Gate guard huts

4: Secondary enclosures within the great enclosure

5: Great enclosure, including areas were cattle were kept, yet was not fenced

6: Settlement entrance with gate division

Figure 8. Diagram of the spatial organisation of a regimental section.

section are therefore the residential area (Figure 8:2a, 8:2b) and the great enclosure. The residential section housed the bulk of the settlement's population, with the status of those living there being indicated from right to left (Krige 1965). Thus, the most senior commander's hut (Figure 8:1a) was located at the upper part (next to the *isigodlo*) on the right side as viewed from the lower gate towards the *isigodlo*. The second highest commander's hut (Figure 8:1b) was in turn located on the left side near the *isigodlo*. Each commander had a second in command and two wing commanders. Selected *izinduna* were also given the right to have their wives present at their individual *amakhanda* (Krige 1965: 265). Regiments (*amabutho*) stationed at the *ikhanda* were similarly arranged, with the most senior on the right, the second most senior on the left and the third again on the right (Krige 1965; van der Merwe 2014). Each *ibutho* was organised into a number of platoons of between 20 and 60 individuals. An *ibutho* could incorporate anywhere between three and 80 platoons, with no fixed rules regarding the *ibutho's* size

(Bryant 1965; Rawlinson 1987). When new soldiers were conscripted into the army after their cadetship, they were either sent to an already existing *ibutho* in order to strengthen its numbers or commanded to create a new *ibutho*. In the latter case, the new *ibutho* was given its own name and insignia and also expected to construct its own *ikhanda* (Bryant 1965; Rawlinson 1987). Each regiment also had conscripted boys, who were too young to fight and served and assisted the soldiers of the *ibutho* as carriers for the regiment when on campaign and in maintaining the *ikhanda* when at peace (Rawlinson 1987; Webb and Wright 1976). During his service in an *ibutho*, a man was not allowed to live within his own *umuzi*. However, in practice it was common for soldiers to live at both their family *umuzi* and the *ibutho*'s *ikhanda*. It was, however, expected that enough of the *ibutho*'s members be present at the *ikhanda* to maintain it (Krige 1965; Omer-Cooper 1966; Knight 1995; Laband 1995). The result was that many members of an *ibutho* often remained as bachelors in their father's *umuzi* (Hughes 1956).

At the lower part of the residential section, nearest to the main entrance, were the gate-keepers' huts (Figure 8:3). Their number varied according to the settlement's size and they may not have been directly next to the gate, although they will have remained in close proximity to it. These gatekeepers should not, we must note, be confused with the *isigodlo* guards. Rather, their role was to ensure that the main gates (which may have been double-gated) were opened and closed every day (Cory 1926; Smith 1955; Gardiner 1966; Booth 1967; Isaacs 1970; Webb and Wright 1976; Stuart and Malcolm 1986; Grey 1992). Further-more, they were responsible for meeting all visitors and sending word to the king or *induna* of their arrival. Security was the responsibility of all the soldiers stationed at the *ikhanda*. Huts constructed within the residential section were constructed in more-or-less linear rows. Historical and ethnographic sources make reference to regimental huts having been built in rows (Webb and Wright 1976: 24) and Parkington and Cronin (1979) found at uMgungundlovu that they were similar in size and design.

The great enclosure was the focal point of the settlement and served both as an area for keeping cattle and for holding meetings and gatherings. Although the main entrance was the largest access point, the enclosure also had a number of secondary access points from both the *isigodlo* as well as the residential areas (Cory 1926; Smith 1955; Gardiner 1966; Booth 1967; Isaacs 1970; Webb and Wright 1976; Stuart and Malcolm 1986; Grey 1992). Large *amakhanda* will also have had secondary enclosures (Figure 8:4) located next to the main entrance. The numbers of cattle kept at a large *ikhanda* often exceeded that which could be kept within these secondary enclosures. As a result, groups of cattle were also kept within the great enclosure, but outside the secondary enclosures (Webb and Wright 1976). These areas outside the secondary enclosures were not fenced and are likely only to be identifiable archaeologically by the accumulation of dung or by the use of phos-phate analysis or other biomolecular markers as their locations remained constant. The upper section of the great enclosure housing the calves, although physically part of the great enclosure, was seen as being part of the *isigodlo* (van der Merwe 2014).

Conclusion

This paper has shown that a nineteenth-century Zulu *ikhanda* settlement consisted of four parts, each with a specific function and organisation. The organisation of each *ikhanda* was also adapted to fulfil a specific function, resulting in three different settlement

variations. It is currently unclear whether this variation was also present among the other northern Nguni or whether it was a feature unique to the Zulu kingdom.

Amakhanda acted as both administration centres as well as a means for kings to exert greater control over the different areas of their kingdom. Due to the importance of *amakhanda* in the stability and organisation of these kingdoms, how these settlements are organised will to some extent also reflect the organisation and nature of each kingdom. Research is now focusing on whether the differences between *amakhanda* (both those of the Zulu as well as those of the other northern Nguni) can be used to determine the origins of this settlement form. It is still unclear as to when the northern Nguni started to use *amakhanda*, as well as why this shift in social organisation occurred among the northern Nguni. Understanding the nature and extent of the variation found within each kingdom, as well as between the various kingdoms, is critical in understanding why this system of social and political organisation was limited to the northern Nguni.

Notes

1. Measurements used in the model were derived by combining the lowest and highest measurements given in the different historical and ethnographic accounts. It should be kept in mind that the measurements given in the accounts are not precise and should there-fore be viewed as estimates.
2. These amounts are derived from the minimum and maximum amounts provided in the historical accounts and should be viewed as estimates.
3. Holden's sketch and description of uMgungundlovu were based on the lectures given by H. Cloete (Lectures on the Emigration of the Dutch famers, &C) at Pietermaritzburg after the destruction of the settlement in 1838.

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